Guardians of Living History

Heritage and Memory Studies

This ground-breaking series examines the dynamics of heritage and memory from a transnational, interdisciplinary and integrated approach. Monographs or edited volumes critically interrogate the politics of heritage and dynamics of memory, as well as the theoretical implications of landscapes and mass violence, nationalism and ethnicity, heritage preservation and conservation, archaeology and (dark) tourism, diaspora and postcolonial memory, the power of aesthetics and the art of absence and forgetting, mourning and performative re-enactments in the present.

Guardians of Living History

An Ethnography of Post-Soviet Memory Making in Estonia

Inge Melchior

Amsterdam University Press

Cover illustration: Juss, 2 years old, nourishing his great-grandfather's land, returned to the family in the 1990s
Source: Picture made by Inge Melchior

Cover design: Coordesign, Leiden
Lay-out: Crius Group, Hulshout

ISBN 978 94 6298 902 3
e-ISBN 978 90 4854 143 0
DOI 10.5117/ 9789462989023
NUR 764

For Jonah, Saar, & Koos,
My past, present, and future

Table of Contents

Part 2 The Meaning of Closure

Figures and Tables

Figures

Tables

Abbreviations

ECP	Estonian Communist Party = EKP = *Eestimaa Kommunistlik Partei*
ENSV	*Eesti Nõukogude Sotsialistlik Vabariik* = ESSR
ERSP	*Eesti Rahvusliku Sõltumatuse Partei* = Estonian National Independence Party (ENIP)
ESSR	Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic, existed from 1940–1941 and 1944–1991
EU	European Union
GULAG	the Russian acronym for 'Chief Administration of Corrective Labour Camps'
KGB	*Комитет государственной безопасности* = Committee State Security
MRP-AEG	the Estonian Group for the Disclosure of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact
Muinsuskaitseselts	(Estonian) Heritage Society
NKVD	*Народный комиссариат внутренних дел* = *Siseasjade Rahvakomissariaat* = People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs
Nomenklatura	People who held key positions in the former Soviet Union
Rahvarinne	Popular Front (of Estonia)
WWII	World War Two

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all those who have made this inspiring journey possible. My informants, academic colleagues, and friends did not only provide me with food for a theoretically sound book, but also taught me major life lessons along the way.

Aitäh, to all Estonians who walked short and long paths with me, for sharing your stories, your lives, and your wisdom. Special thanks to Kristi, for our special summer memories; to Ivar, for becoming my Estonian father; to Hille, Toomas, Oskar, Juss, and Leenu, for giving me a home away from home; to Tiina, Toivo, *vanaema, ja lapsed*, for teaching me about life on the land; to all members of Memento, for sharing your stories even when it hurt; to Tartu's memory activists, for embracing me despite our different world views; to *Torbikud*, for teaching me to dance from the heart; to Ülle, Enn, and Kairit, for being honest, open, and sincere, even if that clashed with the conventions; to my friends since 2007, Triinu and Triinu, for making me fall in love with Estonia.

Thank you to all academics, from Estonia, Europe, and the world, with whom I have shared conferences, who have offered their feedback, ideas, and encouraging words. You have made this book more critical and meaningful. Special thanks to Janine Klungel, for the very start; Freek Colombijn, Pál Nyiri, and Dienke Hondius, for a great academic journey and your belief in me; Ene Kõresaar, Éva Kovács, Herman Roodenburg, James Wertsch, Nanci Adler, Rob van der Laarse, for your critical questions on my work; Aigi Rahi-Tamm, Eva-Clarita Onken-Pettai, Kirsti Jõesalu, Maria Mälksoo, Martins Kaprans, Terje Anepaio, Tiiu Jaago, Uku Lember, and Vello Pettai for our many talks about Estonia and memory politics; Daan, Donya, Duane, Erik, Lidewyde, Maaike, Mijke, Rhoda, Scott, and Ton for all those interesting anthropological lunch discussions, Maaike and Mijke also for your post-VU and writing support; and of course to the reviewers and editors of this book, for bringing more depth to the argument.

Dankjewel, to my dear friends Caroline, Myra, Inge, and Thekla for even following me to the other side of Europe for a cup of tea and a good chat. *Bedaank bedaank bedaank*, to my relatives and relatives-in-law, for your endless support; to my parents, for making me *me*; to René, Stefan, and Mark, for being you; to Jeroen, for supporting me whatever crazy plans I'd make; for Jonah, Saar, and Koos, for distracting me from my work and making me realize what life is all about.

Preface

Since we have children, I seem to live more consciously. What do I want (them) to celebrate in life? And what deserves commemoration? Some celebrations or commemorations evaporate over time, others grow stronger. Our monthly relationship celebrations have changed into annual celebrations, and our minimal birthday celebrations have turned into major festivities that require at least four holidays. Besides the things we celebrate or commemorate as a family, there are also things I do individually. On the day my dear brother passed away I might go out with my family and have some quality time together, but I also need time alone that day.

Commemorating and celebrating are an essential part of our lives as humans. Without it we would feel as if we were living lives without meaning and without meaningful relationships. Commemorating and celebrating lie at the essence of who we are, as they mark what and who we find important in life. The extent to which we attach importance to celebrations and commemorations, however, differs between people.

I wonder whether my deep interest in this topic is related to how I was raised to celebrate and commemorate. My parents seem to think that things should not be made extraordinary in order to mark their importance. In fact, as long as they remain in the realm of the everyday, they believe, they maintain their value, and lose it once they require collective rituals. This is not to say that we did not celebrate birthdays and holidays at home, as it is impossible to escape social norms. But these events were always celebrated modestly, in an attempt to mark them without making them extraordinary. And of course we had rituals on important days, yet they were never explicitly performed and always hidden under a blanket of intended ordinary, everydayness.

It is therefore perhaps no wonder I became intrigued by the questions that provide guidance to this book. In 2006, in my last bachelor year in Cultural Anthropology, I followed a course which questioned the dichotomy between modernity and tradition. In the same year, I organized a study trip to Estonia and Latvia. Not only did I fall in love with the spirit of the 'kissing students' on *Raekoja Plats* in Tartu, I also saw the theoretical lessons I had learned in Nijmegen reflected in society. Young students with many international friends and a strong worldly perspective sang the national anthem for us with a sincerity that made many of us Dutch students shiver. They asked us to sing the Dutch anthem, which we did while seated and we were not even able to sing more than the first line. At the time I recognized that national

identity was of immense importance to them, and the essence of their being as individuals. We had felt so similar as students, yet so different in relation to our respective nation's pasts. I became so intrigued by these questions of history and national identity, that I devoted my whole academic career to its exploration.

In the book you are holding, you will be able to read about this journey and the many encounters with interesting and dear people that I came to know, understand, and befriend.

Introduction: Persisting Pasts in the Margins of Europe

Abstract

The introduction introduces the question of how people that live in a society with an extremely complicated, violent past and only a short history of independence engage with the past, both within their families and as members of a national community. According to the literature, they will long for stability, a strong collective story and closure. The chapter then describes the 'War of Monuments'; the context of insecurity in which the ethnographic fieldwork took place. Subsequently, it positions the book within the literature on the anthropology of post-communist remembering. Finally the Introduction describes which methods have been used to gather the data and it introduces the social groups the book focuses on.

Keywords: Insecurity, collective memory, closure, war of monuments, ethnography, Estonia

It was autumn 2007, when I found myself in the sauna with Anna (born 1987), at her parents' place in Rakvere, a small city in the north of Estonia. We had just met in Tartu, where she was studying law. I had been looking for an Estonian language partner, she for a Dutch one. Just a few weeks later she invited me to her place of birth, as she wanted to show me 'real Estonian life'. She had cooked potatoes, vegetables, minced meat sauce, and had offered pickled mushrooms that the family had gathered during the summer, accompanied by the usual black bread and sour cream. She took me to the garden of the house and told me what grew where. She took me on a tour through the house, showing me how her father had built this house himself, sharing stories about every room we passed. Then she took me to the room with the library, a source of pride in every Estonian household, and began to show me Estonian history by handing books over to me, one by one.

Melchior, I., *Guardians of Living History: An Ethnography of Post-Soviet Memory Making in Estonia*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020
DOI 10.5117/ 9789462989023_INTRO

In the sauna later that evening Anna felt like sharing stories about her family. 'My grandmother tells me stories about how Estonians were deported,' she said respectfully. Suddenly, she began to complain about the Russian minority which does not want to learn the Estonian language: 'I was once in Tallinn in a shop and wanted to buy white bread. The cashier was not able to understand me.'

It annoyed Anna that 'Russians' were not willing to take any steps forward, yet they complained about being treated as second-class citizens. Then she continued the story of her family:

> My granduncle was told to get his stuff in ten minutes [before he was sent to Siberia]. But he had a son of two months old. He put him in a shoebox under the bed. At least his son did not have to go to Siberia. The son was found by another Estonian because he was crying. That woman raised him. Later the father returned but the mother had died.

In order to explain to a Western European how terrible these Soviet deportations to Siberia in the 1940s had been for her family and the Estonian people in general, Anna continued: 'The German period was great. My relatives also say that.'

Anna and I remained friends over the years, even though she was studying in Germany for a long period while I was in Estonia and we did not see each other often. I noticed how she became more tolerant throughout those years. She told me about two Russian students she had met in Berlin who had said sorry for the Soviet deportations. She had been very touched by that. Yet at the same time, she felt she could not escape her family history when she fell in love with a boy in Berlin. She confided me: 'The only problem is that he is Russian. And we have enough Russians in Estonia, I do not want to bring any more.'

Anna's story shows how closely the past and the present are entangled in Estonia. Current events and encounters evoke feelings from decades ago. More than that, Anna uses these feelings to guide her contemporary attitude and decisions. The story also shows the close link between family stories and contemporary national politics. And finally, by the emotional way in which she shared the story with me, you would almost forget that Anna herself has not been deported. Yet the story has affected her almost as if she experienced it herself.

In this book I interrogate how people that live in a society with an extremely complicated, violent past and only a short history of independence engage with the past, both within their families as well as with members of a national community. The short period of independence is significant, as I

will argue throughout this book, because time is required for the formation of an established collective story, which provides guidance in life. Since Estonia became a member of the European Union (EU) in 2004, which increased the visibility of completely different historical experiences in Eastern and Western Europe, this case provides the perfect lens through which to look at the dilemmas that people face while providing meaning to their lives through remembrance and narration. They have to negotiate between their personal experiences, family stories, issues of justice, power, and loyalty. In such a context, an important role is reserved for those who write the collective story. In Part 1 I will describe the making of a collective story in such insecure context as the Estonian case. In Part 2 I will explore the importance of a collective story and the meaning of closure for different groups in Estonian society: the people in the countryside as marginalised voices, the deportees and their voices of experience, the postgeneration and their inherited stories and the nationalists with the more radical voices in society. In Part 3 I will look at all these social groups and their emotional national history in the wider context of Europe.

The ghosts of the past

Just like many other people in Eastern Europe, the inhabitants of Estonia have not been spared the horrors of the twentieth century. Being a small country (1,133,917 inhabitants in 1939, source: stat.ee) with a short independent history (1920-1939) and a strategic geo-political location, Estonia became a kind of plaything of history. From 1939 to 1941, the country was annexed by the Soviet Union. In 1941, the German troops arrived and took over control. Both the Soviet and the German army mobilized Estonian men. In 1944, when the Soviet army again approached the Baltic States, ten thousands of Estonian men joined the German army voluntarily in order to defend their home country. On the battlefields they faced their own brothers, fathers, friends, and neighbours; men who had been recruited into the Soviet army. Eventually the Soviet authorities expelled the German rulers and again took over until 1991.

Eliisa, born in 1940, told me in a twelve-hour long interview what these dramatic political turns in history have meant for her personal life story:

> On the 25th of March 1949 we were taken away from our house. [...] We saw how they set everything on fire, and how they filled their own pockets with those things that could still be of any use. From the trip I remember

> mainly how those Russians were screaming at us: 'fascists'. And the cold. There was so much snow outside and people were sleeping in front of the door. We hadfive families in our wagon. [...] We were in the train for about a month before we arrived. Imagine how often we stopped on the way. After the train ride, we went by car to a village and met the other families. We got ten kilos of potatoes, which was really too little. [...] No vegetables or anything. And every month someone would come to see whether we had not escaped. I could not speak Russian yet at the time. The first word I learned was 'fascist', because these Russian guards in the train called us that way. There were many mountains in this area and after we had returned to Estonia, I missed the mountains. My mother did not but I was a child and I missed them. But here in Estonia we have the forest instead, which I missed when I was there.

Eliisa was deported from Estonia to Siberia in 1949. With her, another 33,861 Estonians (3% of the total population of 1939) lived parts of their lives in Gulag (Soviet forced labour camps) for being 'enemies of the people' (Rahi-Tamm, 2005). This number excludes political prisoners sent to Russia, men mobilized by the Red Army and people arrested and murdered on the spot. In total, 134,600 Estonians – men, women, elderly people, children, intellectuals, farmers, and workers – were repressed by the Soviet regime between 1939 and 1991 in one way or another. Not only Estonian families were deprived of their freedom by the Soviet authorities. People of all ethnicities living in Soviet territory – Russians, Ukrainians, Latvians, Georgians, Uzbeks, Jews, Chechens, etc. – were in potential danger if they did not live according to the communist rules (Mole, 2012; Polian, 2004). Historians have estimated that between 1928 and 1953, in total about 25 million people circulated through the Gulag system (Gheith & Jolluck, 2011, p. 3).

In other words, Eastern Europeans grew up in the 'bloodlands', the land between Moscow and the German border; the place where Hitler and Stalin fought each other's armies and where terror would inevitably intrude the everyday lives of the locals at some point (Snyder, 2010, pp. vii-viii). Unfortunately, these experiences have remained largely unknown to people outside of the region. I – a Dutch person born in 1985 – remember the maps in my history textbooks; capitalist Europe in the west in danger of communist Russia in the east, and – what we nowadays call – 'the Eastern Bloc' in between; as a black spot, hiding the lives – even the existence – of millions of people. After the defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945 by the US and the Soviet Union, the world became divided between two super powers, which both had different political and economic ideals. The Cold War drew

the Iron Curtain between parts of Europe and while no longer 'physically' present since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, it still exists in the minds of many Europeans. This 'imagined curtain' is reflected in stories of the past, of those who grew up in either capitalist or communist Europe.

What struck me the most while listening to the stories of both young and old Estonians were not in the first place their different and painful historical experiences, but rather the emotions with which they shared their stories. It felt as if the ghosts of the past were still haunting them and had not been able to find rest in a meaningful and coherent history, as victims of trauma whose wounds will not heal. Traumatic memory 'is text out of context, a story that is repeated in the mind of a person who cannot escape from it' (Winter, 2010, p. 19). The absence of a story is problematic because memories of painful events that cannot be put into words will return as experiences rather than discursive memories: 'they can never be representations, but only presence' (Argenti & Schramm, 2009). Without a meaningful history, thus, painful historical experiences are a burden in the present, and are doomed to determine the future because one is not able to live fully in the present (Kattago, 2012). Stories of the past are essential to guide us through life (Cattell & Climo, 2002, p. 1):

> Without memory, the world would cease to exist in any meaningful way, as it does for persons with amnesias or dementias that make them forget the self through inability to remember some or all of their past and or to create new memories in their ongoing life.

Meaningful and coherent stories are not only important for individuals but also for communities. By means of writing (national) history, they inform their members where they come from and what binds them to their neighbours. Performing the past can be a move towards transcending it: 'by speaking out they lose some of the passivity of victimhood; by defining themselves, they set aside the story inflicted on them years ago' (Winter, 2010, p. 19). An officially acknowledged history, moreover, can restore historical injustices by acknowledging the victims and condemning the perpetrators and helps to recover a community's identity (cf. Müller, 2002, p. 18).

In the absence of such an official story, the past will leave 'indelible marks upon their group consciousness' (Alexander, Eyerman, Giesen, Smelser, & Sztompka, 2004, p. 1). The absence of an established collective story not only threatens the identity of the group but also risks that the past keeps informing political decisions in the present (Hodgkin & Radstone, 2003; Lambek & Antze, 1996), or as the well-known quote says: 'Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it' (George Santayana). Such

societies might get excessively preoccupied with the past. According to Huyssen (2003), the past stays alive when it 'is still not in place', when it 'has no possibility to settle down'. Jay Winter (2010, p. 12) has argued that 'less fortunate are people overwhelmed by it'. In other words, power holders in society find themselves on the 'slippery slope of memory': 'too much memory can make one a slave to the past, but too little can undermine identity and lead to repetition' (review by Olick in Kattago, 2012).

As we will see in Part 1 of this book, Estonia's history of the early 1990s has been based on individuals' life stories and has come into being at a time that personal and national pains completely overlapped. The injustice inflicted by the Soviet repressions and the victimhood of the native inhabitants of the region, became central to the new story of the national community. Almost every family knew someone who had been deported, arrested, or murdered by the Soviet authorities (Feest, 2007; Kõresaar, 2007). In other words, the story that 'restore[d] a nation-state' (Ahonen, 2001) has been based on 'responsive memory', which is likely to evoke emotion rather than a story (Rüsen, 2005a), instead of on 'constructive memory', which is based on a discourse, 'moulded [...] into a meaningful history and those who remember seem to be masters of their past' (Rüsen, 2005a, p. 340). Hungarian anthropologist Éva Kovács (2003, p. 156) has argued that this is often the case with memories of communism, because the 'wheels of communicative memory are [still] turning', which means 'we have in our possession no coherent, condensed narrative of communism'.

The aim of this book is to provide an understanding of citizens' relationship with such an emotional national history and the extent to which it provides guidance in life. I will look at my informants encountering their nation's past at commemorations, in the urban landscape, in politics, but also on birthday parties and on their family's farm. I question what a collective story means to various individuals and groups in society. What I will argue is that a strong and established history in a peripheral and small state like Estonia is desired by many, yet at the same time this brings along new insecurities in a world where people and stories are increasingly on the move. That is why the wounds of the past are kept open: to keep one awake and active and to safeguard their future freedom.

Context of my fieldwork: insecurity in the margins of Europe

The very first time I arrived in Estonia to do fieldwork was in the late summer of 2007. It had been sixteen years since Estonia regained its independence

and a couple of years after it joined the EU. It was a period often described as a 'transition' or 'transformation': the reconfiguration of a post-communist and post-authoritarian society to a more European and democratic society (e.g. Bennich-Björkman, 2007; Berdahl, Bunzl, & Lampland, 2000; Burawoy & Verdery, 1999; Calhoun, 2004; Elster, 1998; Jaskovska & Moran, 2006; Lauristin & Vihalemm, 1997, 2009, 2010; Mole, 2012; Teitel, 2005). That year in particular was a very restless year, as I fell right into the 'War of Monuments' (Brüggemann & Kasekamp, 2008; Burch & Smith, 2007) or 'War of Memories' (Pääbo, 2008). As it is this war which urged me to study the persistence of the past in Estonian society, a description of this war is an essential introduction to this book. It will illustrate the relation between the Russian minority and Estonian history at the time of my fieldwork, between the Estonian majority and the nation's history, the political stance on the matter, and what happened in the years after.

War of monuments

In April 2007, only a few months before I arrived, the 'War of Monuments' had escalated into a major clash between Russian-Estonians and ethnic Estonians. In order to understand this 'war', we need to go back to the year 2002, when the Freedom Fighters' Union [*Vabadusvõitlejate Liit*] wanted to erect the 'Lihula' monument in Pärnu 'to all the Estonian soldiers who fell in the Second War of Independence for their homeland and a free Europe 1940-1945'. The problem with the monument was that it portrayed Nazi symbols, including the uniform in which Estonian men had fought against communism.

The Lihula monument: hurt Estonian nationalists

The Freedom Fighters' Union initiated the erection of this monument in a time of intense societal debate about how the Estonian state should deal with the Soviet legacy. In 2001, Arnold Rüütel was newly elected as president of Estonia (2001-2006), which caused public discussion. Should a former Communist Party member have the right to become president of Estonia? Rüütel argued that Estonians who joined the Communist Party did so for patriotic reasons, in order to secure an 'Estonian say' in politics (Jõesalu, 2012, p. 1022). With the approaching EU accession, another urgent question at the time was to what extent the Estonian state should deal with history as 'the West' would like to see it. Estonia had to fulfil several requirements for joining the EU, such as improving the status of the Russian minority and critically investigating the role of Estonians in WWII. Afraid of reactions

from international bodies, the national government urged the local authorities to remove the monument even before its unveiling (Brüggeman and Kasekamp, 2008).

This removal was rubbing salt in the wounds of these Estonian veterans. Why were they not allowed to commemorate their compatriots in an independent, free, and democratic society?[1] Two years later, when the Estonian state had just realized its entrance into the EU, the Freedom Fighters' Union made a second attempt to erect the monument. This time in a different municipality – Lihula – and with a different plaque: 'To Estonian men who fought in 1940-1945 against bolshevism and to restore Estonia's independence'. The monument drew strong critique from the international Jewish community and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) (Pääbo, 2008, p. 13, and see for example Uudised ERR, 2004). Estonian state authorities were invited to the unveiling ceremony, but declined the offer. Prime Minister Juhan Parts stated that although he honours the Estonian WWII soldiers, they should be remembered by 'honouring their actual aims and motives and not a uniform that has been forced unto them' (Postimees, 2004). Kristiina Ojuland, of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said: 'The Lihula monument is not understood in the world' (Uudised ERR, 2004). Most of all, the state authorities were afraid that their international reputation would be damaged if they would allow the monument to stay (Feest, 2007, p. 259). A couple of days after its unveiling, the monument was again removed under heavy protest from Estonian national radicals and veterans (Pääbo, 2008, p. 13) and eventually ended up in a museum.

The Bronze Soldier: a hurt minority

These nationalists have a history and social network that provides them with quite a powerful position in society (more on this in Chapter 5). When they got hurt for the second time, they successfully managed to mobilize an old fear among the wider ethnic Estonian population: Estonia is still a non-sovereign, 'spiritually occupied' country (Feest, 2007, p. 259). The question how to deal with the Soviet legacy began to engage a much larger part of society than just veterans/nationalists, politicians and cultural intellectuals.

President Arnold Rüütel felt that he needed to act. In an attempt to lessen the fear that was spreading among the Estonian majority and to reckon with the desire for a stronger political stance, he announced that he would not attend the 60th anniversary of the defeat over Nazism, organized in Moscow

1 This feeling has been clearly voiced in the many interactions I have had with Estonian veterans who served in the German army in the fight against communism.

in 2005. The end of WWII, Rüütel argued, meant freedom for a large part of Europe, but not for Estonia (Onken, 2007a). This decision polished his personal image, confirming his earlier statement that former *nomenklatura* members can simultaneously be patriots.

As predicted by members of Estonia's cultural elite who had tried to convince Rüütel to decide otherwise, Russian-Estonians felt hurt by this decision, as if they were second-class citizens.[2] This was not a new feeling. When Estonia regained its independence in 1991, the status of Russian-Estonians in society changed drastically. In the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic (ESSR), the Soviet authorities had considered them more reliable than ethnic Estonians, and were thus given the higher job positions (e.g. Estonian Communist Party) and better houses (often of Estonian intellectuals who had fled the Soviet occupation in 1944) (Raun, 2001). Because Russian was institutionalized as the primary language in the Soviet territories, these Russian-speakers were not encouraged to learn Estonian. Once Estonia regained its independence, they were suddenly unable to speak the official language, did not have citizenship, and became an ethnic minority. Only those Russian speakers who had lived in Estonia from before the war and those who had registered as Estonian citizens in the late 1980s were granted Estonian citizenship. Many Russian-Estonians lost their jobs.

Nowadays this group makes up 24.8% of the population of Estonia (census 2012: 84.3% of all inhabitants has Estonian citizenship, 8.9% has another citizenship – primarily Russian – and 6.8% has no citizenship). Despite this high percentage, the proportion of Estonian media in the Russian language has been fairly limited (P. Vihalemm, 2006) and many Russian-Estonians follow Russian media sources instead. During the war of monuments, this fact very much divided Estonian society along ethnic lines. Russian media sources portrayed the Soviet victory over Nazism in WWII as central to Russian identity, and framed the decisions of the Estonian state as 'fascist', being based on a discourse that Estonia was not liberated in 1944 but occupied (Pääbo, 2008, pp. 11-12). That is why the decision of the Estonian president not to attend the anniversary of the Soviet victory was so painful for many Russian-Estonians; a historical event of so much importance to them was simply denied in the history of the country in which they live.

A group of radical Estonians could not stand the idea that Russian-Estonians dared to publicly voice a different view about history. This

2 I will use 'Russian-Estonians' to refer to the Russian speakers that live in Estonia. In everyday Estonian language, they are simply referred to as 'Russians' (*venelased*), which does not distinguish them in any way from the Russians that live in Russia.

reminded them too much of the superior position of Russians in the past (Lehti, Jutila, & Jokisipila, 2008). On 9 May 2006 some of these Estonians went to the Victory Day celebration near the 'Bronze Soldier' (or *Alyosha* as he is called in Russian) – a WWII memorial erected after the war by the Soviet authorities – to demonstratively wave the Estonian flag and to put red paint on the soldier. If the Lihula monument was not allowed for being a symbol of a totalitarian regime, then also the Bronze Soldier had no right to stay in the capital's centre, they argued. Radical Russian-Estonians responded to this provocative visit to the 9th-of-May commemoration by carving SS insignia into the gravestones of Estonian soldiers.

An insecure political stance

Both groups were now backed politically. Since the early 1990s, Estonia has been predominantly governed by right-wing nationalist conservative parties. Towards the late 1990s – when critical voices about the 'new Estonia' started to gain ground – it changed in the direction of the centre-left, but quickly returned towards the right in the 2000s. In contrast to other post-Soviet countries, little legitimacy has been left in Estonia for left-wing parties, who are tainted by the Soviet experience. When the war of monuments broke out, the coalition of the new centre-right party Res Publica, headed by Juhan Parts (1966), the Reform Party [*Reformierakond*], and the rural-oriented People's Union [*Eestimaa Rahvaliit*], had just collapsed. Andrus Ansip (1956, Reform Party) – former Communist Party member, banker, and former mayor of Tartu – succeeded Parts in 2005 as Prime Minister, in coalition with the Centre Party [*Keskerakond*] of Edgar Savisaar (1950)[3] and the People's Union. The Fatherland Party in the opposition, headed by Mart Laar (1960)[4] supported the Estonian radicals, with whom they had and still have good connections (see Chapter 5). The small centre-left Constitutional Party – mainly supported by the Russian minority – said they would defend the statue (Pääbo, 2008, p. 13).

3 Savisaar is one of the most controversial Estonian politicians: for some he is a hero who struggled for independence in the late 1980s as leader of the Popular Front (more on this in Chapter 1), for others he is authoritarian, corrupt, and a traitor to Estonian interests. Savisaar's party is the most popular party among the Russian minority and has had a cooperation agreement with Putin's United Russia since 2004 (Estonian Public Broadcasting ERR, 18 March 2014, politics). He was mayor of Tallinn from 2001-2004 and from 2007-2015.

4 Founder of the Heritage Society in the late 1980s, independence activist, prime minister from 1992-1994 and 1999-2002, and an important national historian.

Table 1 Seats of Parliament (*Riigikogu*)

	2003	2007	2011
Centre Party	28**	29	26
Reform Party	19*/**	31*	33*
Res publica	28*		
Pro Patria	7		
Fatherland (3+4)		19*	23*
Moderates/Social Democrats	6	10~	19
People's Union	13*/**	6	0
The Greens		6	0

*=coalition, **=second coalition, same term, ~=left coalition during term

In the name of security, Estonian police forces interfered on that 9 May 2006 and removed the group of radical Estonians from the Russian-speaking mass. After that, public discourse became very heated: why was the Estonian flag removed from the capital of an independent country and the Soviet flag not? The eagerness to remove the Bronze Soldier from the city centre grew among Estonians (Ehala, 2009, p. 145). With the increasing ethnic tension, the ruling parties were also forced to take position.

The Centre Party did not want to lose its Russian-speaking electorate and argued that the monument should stay (Pettai & Mölder, 2011, p. 208): as an important symbol for about 200,000 Estonian inhabitants, its relocation would divide society and increase ethnic tensions (Pääbo, 2008, p. 15). The Reform Party, headed by Andrus Ansip, was afraid to lose votes to Res Publica and Pro Patria in the upcoming elections and chose a strong national stance (Pääbo, 2008, p. 16). Ansip argued in favour of relocating the monument from the city centre to a military cemetery on the outskirts of Tallinn: it guaranteed safety and removed a symbol of occupation from the country's capital. Moreover, the radical Russian-Estonians (organized in 'the Night Watch' / 'Ночной дозор' / '*Öine Vahtkond*', founded in 2006) were said to have close connections with the Kremlin, which could create political problems between Estonia and Russia (Kagge, 2007). Estonian political scientist Evald Mikkel (2006, p. 32) has argued that the Estonian party system is open to such populist rhetoric, as it is not yet consolidated. The rethorics worked. Both the Reform Party and the Centre Party were successful in the 2007 elections. The new social-democratic president Toomas-Hendrik Ilves assigned Ansip the task of forming the new government. He composed a new centre-right coalition consisting of the Reform Party, the Fatherland Party (Pro Patria

and Res Publica Union joined forces), and the Social Democrats. It was mostly in this political climate that my fieldwork took place.

Put differently, the Bronze Soldier transformed from a monument that had not bothered the majority of Estonians for years, into a major stake in a political contest. It shows the viability of ethnic nationalism in the young nation-state. The argument that Estonians had the right to decide what happens on Estonian territory was well met. The situation had escalated to such an extent that just leaving the monument where it was had also become a political stance: Estonians were handing over the power to the Russians again (the Russian minority and Russia). Late April 2007, the authorities decided for immediate relocation, as the confrontations were running out of hand. By relocating the monument from the city centre to the outskirts, the political elite made a clear statement: the stories of the Russians do not belong in the centre. Such silencing of narratives of ethnic minorities is not uncommon (Berger & Lorenz, 2008; Berger, Lorenz, & Melman, 2012). In many societies the dominant classes and ethnic majorities use memory politics to legitimize their actions (Booth, 1999; Friedman, 1992; Huyssen, 2003; Müller, 2002; Olick & Robbins, 1998; Wertsch, 2002; Winter & Sivan, 1999). By relocating the monument, the Estonian political elite conveyed the message that the Soviet period was an occupation and not a liberation. This statement disempowered the Russian minority in two ways: it framed them as an ethnic minority and as the descendants of former occupiers (Kattago, 2009; Melchior & Visser, 2011).

Closure for an insecure majority

The discussion raised by the Estonian nationalists about history and the increasing integration into the EU created chaos in society. Comparable to a 'liminal phase', as defined by anthropologist Victor Turner (1967), old structures dissolved and new ones were yet to be constructed. In this insecure context, the political threat that was being spread was perceived as very real by many Estonians. What I found especially fascinating was that these emotions of insecurity were not in the first place evoked in marginalized individuals, but among young higher educated people like Anna. Some of my informants and friends were seriously afraid that Estonia would lose its independence to Russia again or that the EU would 'unfriend' them. Others felt insecure about how to position themselves in their daily lives. Were they as Estonians allowed to disapprove of the relocation? How should one relate to one's Russian-speaking colleagues? Even Estonians and Russian-Estonians who had lived peacefully together for years, were suddenly

forced to re-evaluate and justify their relationship with their Russian/Estonian colleagues, neighbours, friends, etc. (Melchior & Visser, 2011).

Of course, there were also ethnic Estonians who disapproved of the relocation. As I have argued elsewhere, these were people who did not feel threatened by the Russian minority; who saw them as victims rather than occupiers (Melchior & Visser, 2011). But in the public discourse there was little space for these 'counter-memories' (Foucault, 1977), as the sense of insecurity was so high and history so emotional. Counter-memories were perceived as threatening the homogeneity of the group and state independence. In other words, many Estonians were not 'masters of their past' (Rüsen, 2005a, p. 340) during the War of Monuments. Hungarian memory scholar Éva Kovács (2003, p. 156) explains why it is difficult to be open to the stories of others in a context of insecurity. This would mean that

> despite our own dispersed and fragmentary experiences, we would be capable of accepting not only that other people possess fundamentally different experiences but perhaps that our own experiences, when viewed from our present-day perspective, are unpleasant and difficult to bear.

Fear and insecurity are the soil of nationalism: 'groups held together by the conviction that their security depends on sticking together' (Ignatieff, 1999, p. 45). People become nationalist when they question 'who will protect me?' and the only answer is 'my own people'. It could therefore be expected that in times of uncertainty and crisis people long more for coherent stories of the past (Hodgkin & Radstone, 2003; Lambek & Antze, 1996). 'When identity is not in question, neither is memory' (Lambek & Antze, 1996, p. xxii). Czech writer Milan Kundera (1984) also has recognized that an established story of the past becomes more important in times of a perceived threat:

> The identity of a people and of a civilization is reflected and concentrated in what has been created by mind – in what is known as 'culture'. If this identity is threatened with extinction, cultural life [...] becomes the living value around which all people rally. That is why in [...] Central Europe the collective cultural memory [...] assumed roles so great.

Anthropologist van de Port (1994) argues, while elaborating on Clifford Geertz' claim about belief systems (1973), that in such liminal phases and moments of chaos and insecurity people dream of uncontested and *non*-ambivalent stories, stories that are lived as 'the truth', and that stay unquestioned. By removing the Bronze Soldier in the heat of that moment,

the ruling elite took a clear stance on history and provided the people with such a clear story. That was why the relocation was so widely supported among ethnic Estonians.

It was unfortunately no real solution to the problem. When I returned to Estonia in the summer of 2008, the discussions about the war between Russia and Georgia fed the fears for losing independence. The Estonian media discussed the need for national unity and defence. Mart Laar went directly to Georgia as advisor of president Saakashvili and argued that 'it would be crazy to reduce the defence budget now' (Rudi, 2008a). President Ilves said that 'we are strong when we unite ourselves' (Postimees, 2008). In one of the newspapers, an Estonian reserve Lieutenant Colonel discussed with a map how Estonian citizens should flee the country when Russian tanks would enter and how Estonian defence troops would defend the country (Koorits, 2008). The media and politicians also stressed that the West took a rather passive stance in the Georgian-Russian war (Laar, 2008), so it was better not to rely on their help. My friend Anna showed me that map in that summer of 2008, trying to convince me that Estonia's independence was 'really in danger'. She invited me over to a Georgian restaurant in order to 'support Georgia'. She was not the only Estonian who felt a moral obligation to 'do something'. Estonians donated over a million crowns to Georgia (Asu, 2008), massively bought Georgian products (Rudi, 2008b) and dedicated the song festival that summer to the Georgian people. The sense of insecurity was again not restricted to media or political discussions, but part of people's everyday lives and sorrows.

In this context many Estonians acted in response to the insecurity they perceived, but in times of relative stability Estonian society also invests actively in its national cohesion. Many people participate in folk dance, choir singing, and cherish the national anthem, flower, and traditions. Both state and civic society actively organize public events to bring Estonians together and teach them the greatness of their nation: e.g. the 90th anniversary of the Estonian nation was celebrated with more than a 1000 commemorative and educative events, such as a Song Festival, theatre plays (e.g. *Truth and Justice* by Estonian author Tammsaare), and museum exhibitions (e.g. 'The will to be on our own'). 'The aim of the jubilee year is to deepen the Feelings for One's Country [*Oma Riigi Tunne*]'.[5] Speeches at the Song Festivals emphasized the strengths of the Estonian people, as long as they would unite spiritually and culturally. They reminded the population that independence

5 More information can be found on www.90eesti.ee and www.100ev.ee, accessed on 6 March 2015 and 12 April 2019.

is not something that should be taken for granted and made them believe they as a people needed each other to secure the future (cf. Ignatieff, 1999).

This book thus departs from the observation that the sense of insecurity is very strong in Estonian society. Of course, this sense was stronger in some periods than in others (for more on memory dynamics, see van Vree and van der Laarse, 2009). When I returned for a long fieldwork period in 2010/2011, the ethnic tension had definitely decreased compared to the period of the war of monuments. Yet at the same time, as I will also show, the recurring discourse of national insecurity (also observed by other scholars such as G. Feldman, 2008a; Mälksoo, 2010) remained: when the euro was introduced in 2011, regarding the shrinking population size, during the economic crisis, on Independence Day, Europe's refugee crisis, the Ukraine crisis, etc. It seems always there, and easy to evoke. According to Estonian scholar Piret Peiker (2016), concerns about sovereignty and feelings of insecurity do not disappear that easily with decolonialization. In theory we might expect that an established national history is what would be desired in an insecure context, in order to come to terms with the past and fully live in the present. Yet in practice we see that a clear political stance does not necessarily lead to closure, because an indefinite amount of recognition is needed to close the wounds. In this book we will inductively explore this paradox of closure by looking at what closure means to the marginalized in society, the experienced, the postgeneration, and the nationalists. An enduring sense of insecurity and a lack of closure, as we will see, is what is actually considered to secure Estonia's future independence.

Anthropology of post-communist remembering

'Collective memory' has been extensively discussed over the last few decades. In the post-WWII period, characterized by rapid technological changes and a striving for economic progress and welfare, nation-states have increasingly turned towards their collective pasts for legitimacy (Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, & Levy, 2011b, p. 3). With the baby-boom generation becoming adults in the 1970s, both the interest in and criticism of the WWII experiences of the previous generation increased. Questions such as who the war's victims are essentially, who should accept responsibility for war crimes, and who should remember what, were being raised by politicians and intellectuals in Western Europe and the US (Connerton, 2009; Müller, 2002). These questions were again raised after the fall of Communism, when a reunited Europe had to face the different histories on both sides of the Iron Curtain, as part of a broader

political and economic reconciliation project (Olick, et al., 2011b, p. 8). This increasing contact between people with different historical experiences has made memory more self-reflexive and self-conscious. Modern communication technologies, especially the development of media literacy, have further fundamentally changed how people relate to the past (Olick, et al., 2011b, p. 6).

Scholars from a broad range of disciplines have come to study this 'memory boom' or 'memory industry', from psychology and sociology through history and anthropology (Klein, 2000, p. 127). And yet, or perhaps *because* of this wide interest, the concept 'memory' has remained rather vague (John Gillis in Berliner, 2005; Kansteiner, 2002; Olick, 1999; Wertsch, 2002, p. 30). Psychologists approach memory as preserved in the human brain, which is activated when people retrieve the past (Olick, et al., 2011b, p. 45). Sociologists rather refer to memory as a source and mode of transmission of group identity (Olick, et al., 2011b, p. 41). Historians understand memories as stories about past events that contain a certain truth, despite its selection, distortion, and subjectivity, which can thus help to fill historical gaps (Olick, et al., 2011b, p. 43).[6] For anthropologists the historical accuracy of people's stories are not as interesting as the efficacy of memory as *practice* that generates meaning (Olick, et al., 2011b, p. 46).

One of the key questions that has engaged all these scholars is to what extent memories belong to individuals and/or to communities. Strictly speaking, memories of course live and die with individuals (Reinhart Koselleck & Rudolf Burger in A. Assmann, 2002, p. 21; Berliner, 2005, p. 198). They cannot exist outside of someone's brain and can be 'as primal and lonely as pain' (Olick, et al., 2011b, p. 16). At the same time, though, members of communities share certain memories as we have seen. Moreover, 'it is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories' (Halbwachs, 1992, p. 38). This dual aspect of 'memory', as both individual and collective, creates conceptual and methodological confusion. Memory studies tend to focus either on the production side of memory – in museums, history textbooks, commemorations, memorials, and films, also known as 'cultural memory' – *or* on 'autobiographical memories' / 'communicative memories', the short-term form of memory of what one has experienced oneself or from

6 For instance, in the introduction to their edited volume *Memories of mass repression*, oral historians Nanci Adler, Selma Leydesdorff, Mary Chamberlain, and Leyla Neyzi (2009) argue that memories are extremely important for getting a better understanding of genocide and mass crimes. They argue that genocide can only be fully understood when the voices of those who suffered are heard.

close-by through relatives (cf. Assmann, 1992; Cappelletto, 2005; Halbwachs, 1992; Hodgkin & Radstone, 2003; Nora, 1989; Tilmans, van Vree & Winter, 2010; van Vree & van der Laarse, 2009; Winter & Sivan, 1999).

The current study aims to transcend this duality by looking at the social practice of memory, embodied in dinner-table conversations, commemorations, history classes, on the land of one's grandparents, or in engagement with an object such as an artwork or monument. I will explore the encounters between the individual's memory and a collective memory, between their meanings of memory and history. By looking at the social practice rather than the memory as such, we can *investigate* the dichotomies – collective versus individual, memory versus history – rather than take them for granted. As Karin Tilmans, Frank van Vree, and Jay Winter (2010) have already argued, memory and history are much more overlapping and entangled in actual practice than Nora's theoretical conceptualization makes us believe (Nora, 1989). By looking at memory practices we can not only come to understand the intersection of memory and history, but also appreciate the wide field of creative activity in which people perform the past together (Winter, 2010, p. 14), and pay tribute to the dynamics of memory (van Vree & van der Laarse, 2009). Dynamics are often overlooked when the focus is on *lieux de mémoire* – memory portrayed in a museum, a textbook, or a life story, which stops time; in memory practices – or memory events – it is impossible to overlook its dynamics, as they '"start time" by endowing the past with new life in the future' (Etkind, et al., 2012, p. 10).

This book also contributes with its regional focus. The number of studies and conferences dedicated to memory and history in the post-socialist world has grown tremendously. In this region, memory and history have developed until fairly recently under authoritarian regimes and in newly developing nation-states, which provides new insights into memory studies developed in Western Europe and the US. On the one hand, these studies are being conducted by regional expertise centres outside the region, such as the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES) in Sweden, established in 2005 and the School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES) in London, established already in 1915. A group of international scholars working on East European Memory Studies with a HERA grant on 'Memory at War' (2009-2013), has argued that the memory boom 'has centred on West European memories of the Holocaust and Nazism. East European memories of the twentieth century, which differ sharply from their West European counterparts, have been relatively under studied'.[7]

7 Heranet.info, accessed on 14 February 2019.

On the other hand, since the 2000s, post-socialist memory studies are also being conducted by Eastern European scholars. Key scholars to be named are Estonian ethnologists Ene Kõresaar (2002, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2011) and Kirsti Jõesalu (2005, 2010), Estonian historian Heiko Pääbo (2008, 2011ab), Polish Sociologist Joanna Wawrzyniak and Malgorzata Pakier, Head of the Research Department at the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw (2015), Polish historian Andrzej Nowak (2011), Tatiana Zhurzhenko (2013), Ukrainian Yulia Yurchuk (2017), Latvian Martins Kaprans (2010), Polish-Scandinavian Barbara Törnquist-Plewa (2016), and Bulgarian historian Maria Todorova (e.g. Todorova, Dimou, & Troebst, 2014). Some of these scholars worked from their home countries, others were influenced by memory studies while studying or working abroad.

Most studies on Eastern Europe have focused on the transition period from authoritarian to democratic societies (Bafoil, 2009, p. 1; Clemens Jr, 2001; Jacobsson, 2010; Norgaard, Johannsen, Skak, & Sorensen, 1999; Pabriks & Purs, 2001) and the use of politics of memory in such contexts of transformation. Commemoration days, political speeches, monuments, and textbooks have been at the centre of these studies (cf. Ahonen, 2001; Brüggemann & Kasekamp, 2008; Calhoun, 2004; Eglitis & Zelce, 2013; Feldman, 2008a, 2008b; Kovács, 2003; Mark, 2010; Pääbo, 2011a; Pettai & Onken, 2009; Saarts, 2008; Wulf & Grönholm, 2010), with special attention to transitional justice (Teitel, 2005; Pettai & Pettai, 2015). These studies have questioned how democratizing post-communist societies have dealt with the legacy of totalitarianism. How have new state elites dealt with monuments and history books of Communist times, but also how have they prosecuted perpetrators of human rights violations, reformed laws, paid reparations to the victims, and conducted truth-seeking processes? They have focused on what 'agents with power' do to prevent the recurrence of past violations of human rights, and how 'if properly pursued, transitional justice allows for rebuilding a democratic community' (Stan, 2009, p. xi).

These studies can tell us a lot about how post-communist societies have attempted to create a clear-cut break with the past and become democracies. Studies such as the one by historian James Mark (2010), *The Unfinished Revolution: Making Sense of the Communist Past in Central-Eastern Europe*, support the observation that it is not so easy for post-communist societies to establish that break. Part of the reason is the rapid integration into the European Union, which is another popular topic for memory scholars working on Eastern Europe. Some of these scholars focus on the European level, discussing the challenges that post-communist memories pose in the creation of a common European memory (Maier, 2002; Mälksoo, 2010;

Sierp, 2017). Also the question which problems post-communist societies are facing, by having to reckon with a common European narrative on the past, is being addressed (Himka & Michlic, 2013).

With their focus on the political level and public agents, these studies are however uncapable of explaining what living in a democratizing society – where national history has been based on personal stories – means to ordinary citizens, who are torn between their family stories and their wish to live in a liberal democracy. The current work will fill that gap by inductively exploring the emic understanding of 'closure' in remembering. This is not the only way in which the anthropological approach taken in this book adds to the existing literature. It also allows me to manoeuvre and bridge the rather hierarchical eastern and western European streams of scholarship on memory. Malgorzata Pakier and Joanna Wawrzyniak (2015, p. 11) have claimed that Eastern European literature on memory 'has remained largely unnoticed at the forefront of international memory studies', partly due to language barriers, and partly due to Western memory scholars 'treat[ing] Eastern European processes of remembering [as having] to catch up with the West European models of remembering the past' (Pakier and Wawrzyniak, 2015, p. 1). The few anthropologists studying eastern European societies, used local scholars as well-informed informants, rather than taking them seriously as academic scholars, which stands in the way of the growth of anthropological insights into the challenges and uncertainties of post-socialist changes (Kürti & Skalník, 2009, p. 14).

On conferences and in publications, trans-European discussions on memory have definitely increased in recent years, yet much progress is to be made too. Most thematic journals such as the *Journal of History and Memory* are still fairly dominated by 'Western scholars' writing on the west, and Eastern European memory scholars tend to publish in local journals or regional journals, such as the *Taylor and Francis Journal of East European Politics* (formerly known as the *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*), *Journal of Europe-Asia Studies*, *Journal of Baltic Studies*, and the *SAGE Journal of East European Politics and Societies and Cultures*. The same could be argued about edited volumes.[8] Because I have departed from the stories of my informants, and thus necessarily from local scholars, and because I am a Western European scholar published by a Western European publisher, I hope to contribute by bridging this East-West gap.

8 Also edited volumes on post-socialist memories tend to have a regional specialization, such as *Disputed memory: Emotions and Memory Politics in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe*, edited by Barbara Törnquist-Plewa and Tea Sindbaek Andersen (2016), and *Memory and change in Europe: Eastern perspectives*, edited by Malgorzata Pakier and Joanna Wawrzyniak (2015).

A final remark needs to be made on this point. There is another but related reason for the lack of proper scholarship of Western Europeans working on local memories in Eastern Europe, which has to do with the ethics of remembering, when crossing national historical frameworks. My focus on Estonian national(ists') memory met severe criticism from some Western European scholars. When I was trying to find funding for this project in the Netherlands in 2008, I was asked several times how I would prevent this book from becoming 'a fascist work'. After all, they argued, many Jews had died in the Baltic States, the local population collaborated with the Germans, but no proper memory politics had been installed so far to acknowledge their responsibility. One professor literally told me that 'Estonians do not deserve to be studied'. Luckily I felt that these responses were actually really fascinating and made my research only more valuable. I agree with Michael Ignatieff that liberal democratic scholars tend to write *about* people who are less self-critical and tolerant – e.g. nationalists and populists – without actually talking *to* them; they tend to observe them from a superior position, having built legitimate walls between them and those more conservative-minded individuals or groups.[9] What we should rather do to understand their world is work and live *with* that Other, in *their* society, in *their* language, as equal partners. Piret Peiker (2016, p. 114) argues in a similar vein that

> contemporary human-rights liberalism tends to pathologize all nationalism as 'a moral mistake'. The pathologizing view sees nationalism as tribal and antiquated, failing to analyze it as a modern phenomenon, which frequently involves struggles not only for national sovereignty, but also for new political institutions perceived as more just and democratic. The postcolonial aspects of nationalism – its frequent political and sociocultural role as an anti-imperial force, its potential relevance in the contemporary circumstance of unequal globalization – are thus ignored as irrelevant or made light of.

It is to these scholarly gaps this book will contribute, by providing an in-depth ethnographic account of a Western European anthropologist observing Estonian citizens' relationships with local memory and history around twenty years after regaining independence.[10]

9 https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/news/honorary-laureate-michael-ignatieff-freedom-and-democracy. Lecture at Maastricht University at 24 January 2019.

10 Other ethnographies that have appeared on the Estonian case tend to focus on places and material Soviet remnants (Martínez, 2018; Rausing, 2004). They leave the explicit question of closure unaddressed.

Estonia within the post-socialist world

German historian Stefan Troebst (2005) has divided Europe's former communist countries into four memory cultures. The first one concerns the societies with a strong anti-communist consensus. The Baltic States are his main example here. The second kind of memory culture he discerns, are the societies where there is a fierce public debate on how history should be remembered, such as Hungary and Poland. In the third type of post-communist memory culture, public attempts to delegitimize the communist past are relatively weak, such as in Bulgaria, Romania, and Serbia. And fourthly, there are societies where authoritian structures continue and where the state does not dissociate itself from communist rule, such as Belarus and Russia.

Although such categorization is a bit artificial and does not pay tribute to the diversity and dynamics within national contexts, it might help the reader to position Estonia among the other post-communist societies. First of all, we need to distinguish between the former satellite states (the post-socialist or post-communist states) and the states that constituted the USSR (the post-Soviet states). The former were officially independent after WWII, but in practice were under the economic, political, and ideological hegemony of the Soviet Union. The latter states were actual Soviet Republics from 1945 to 1991, centrally governed from Moscow. Soviet citizens, like the Estonians, had significantly less freedom to travel or to use prewar national symbols than the inhabitants of the satellite states, as that was considered a threat to the regime. The Soviet republics were, in contrast to the satellite states, to a large extent governed by non-locals. For instance, Communists from Moscow were sent to govern the ESSR (cf. Clemens Jr, 2001, p. xxiv). In 1946, the Communist Party of Estonia consisted of 52% Russians, 21% 'Yestonians' (Estonians who had moved to Russia before 1920 – the 'Y' refers to their heavy Russian accent in Estonian (O'Connor, 2003, p. 124)) and only 27% local Estonians (Raun, 2001). For the Poles, for instance, it was less an experience of foreign occupation.

Secondly, the Baltic States should also be distinguished from the Soviet states which did not have a memory of statehood between WWI and WWII. Right after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia established the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). All post-Soviet states became a member, except for the three Baltic States, who instead decided to seek affiliation with the EU and NATO. Since regaining independence, the Baltic States have had a strong orientation towards the West and abrupt break with the east (Berg, 2002; Lamoreaux & Galbreath, 2008).

Thirdly, it is important to acknowledge that although the three Baltic States – Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania – have a lot in common in terms of history, there are some particularities to Estonian history and society that deserve some attention here. Compared to Latvia and Lithuania, Estonia's Jewry, numbering 4381 Jews in 1934, was relatively small and their settlement in Estonia had a much shorter history. Because three quarters of all Estonian Jews managed to flee to Soviet Russia before the Germans arrived, 'only' 963 Estonian Jews (22% out of 4381 Estonian Jews in 1934) were killed. Because of this small number, communicative memories on the Jews among ethnic Estonians are basically absent and a public Holocaust memory has been perceived in Estonia as 'not ours' (more on this in Chapter 6). The Latvian and Lithuanian people and state simply cannot ignore the legacy of the Holocaust, since they respectively lost 61,000 (65% of the Latvian Jewry) and 195,000 Jews (95% of the Lithuanian Jewry) (Weiss-Wendt, 2008).

Fourthly, another important characteristic is the role of institutionalized religion in national identity formation. In contrast to Lithuania, but also Georgia or Poland, where nationalism and religion have been closely linked to each other during the Communist period and today (Moes, 2009; Pelkmans, 2006), Estonia is the most secular country in Europe. Religion is not a part of national identity in Estonia.

Fifthly, Estonia is different from Lithuania and Europe's post-socialist countries in the size of their Russian-speaking minority and thus by its continuing relationship with Russia. This immigration of Russian speakers changed the experience of Communism, as it inevitably led to Russification. In a society as small as Estonia (1.3 million inhabitants), one of the smallest nation-states in the world, the treatment of the Russian minority is connected to the question of cultural survival of the titular group. Estonia and Latvia implemented a rather harsh citizenship policy, which granted citizenship only to people of Latvian/Estonian descent and to inhabitants of Latvia before 1939 (Verdery, 1998, p. 294). Estonia's geopolitical location adds to that question of fear for extinction: sharing the border with Russia and in the margins of Europe.

Sixthly, Estonia has integrated into the EU and NATO relatively rapidly. As we will see in the next chapter, Estonia has had an extensive network of intellectuals since the 1960s, who read foreign literature smuggled from Sweden and Finland (Stöcker, 2012). Such networks emerged in the Latvian and Lithuanian SSR only in the 1980s. By that time many of Tallinn's inhabitants secretly watched Finnish television and learned about life behind the Iron Curtain. Once Estonia regained its independence, these intellectuals became the new political elite who implemented the market-liberal

measures they had read about in that foreign literature. Unwittingly, they had prepared themselves for life in freedom and democracy. This 'shock therapy' – though it increased the inequality in society – made Estonia's economic growth between 2000 and the economic crisis amongst the highest in Europe and landed it in the top ten of the most liberal economies in the world (Lauristin & Vihalemm, 2009, p. 4). Estonia also scores high on the level of democracy. It ranks second (1.93, after Slovenia – 1.89) of all other European post-communist countries (the lower the better – compared to e.g. Latvia 2.11, Hungary 2.86, Poland 2.14, and Russia 6.18).[11] A final sign of rapid integration into 'modern Europe' is Estonia's successful image of being *E-stonia*; a high-tech, internet-oriented country.[12] Many things that take long bureaucratic processes in other European countries can be easily arranged online in Estonia. Estonia is the only country in the world where citizens can vote online.

This positioning of Estonia might help to better understand the different memory cultures distinguished by Stefan Troebst (2005). Not all post-communist or post-socialist countries have been Soviet states, and not all of the Soviet states have known independent statehood before they became a Soviet Republic. Population size, geopolitical location, the remaining Russian minority, and the perceived support from the EU/NATO all have an influence on how the people and the nation-state deal with their memory and history, as we will see in this book.

The research setting

I chose Tartu as my fieldwork location for various reasons. From the thirteenth century onwards Tartu has been an important international trading centre as part of the Hanseatic League and since the seventeenth century as *the* university city of Estonia. The university was my first entrance into Estonian society, where I was connected to as an exchange researcher. Whereas Tallinn is the business centre of Estonia, Tartu is said to be the country's cultural and spiritual heart and to have a spirit of intellectual freedom, culture, and youth. In this social climate the first anti-Soviet movements of intellectuals emerged in the 1970s-1980s and also the first

11 See www.freedomhouse.org/report-types/nations-transit, accessed on 27 February 2019.

12 Here is an example to show how proud Estonians feel about their internet facilities. This is what president Ilves posted on his Facebook: www.cominghomethebook.com/2012/11/estonia-internet-u-s-culture/, accessed on 8 May 2013.

mass protests against the Soviet occupation started in Tartu. This spirit and history of the city made me curious about the stories of its inhabitants. Despite its national importance, Tartu is a small city (second-biggest city, with 98,522 inhabitants),[13] which I felt I could really get to know.

Important to mention is that the Tartu region (12.2% Russian-Estonian) is different from Tallinn (46.7%) and northeastern Estonia (72.8%) in terms of ethnic composition.[14] Especially in the beginning it was important that I could intensively practise my Estonian, something I had found difficult in Tallinn because of the high number of Russian speakers and the many tourists. Of course, this absence of regular daily interactions with Russian speakers is also a drawback of my choice for Tartu; I did not form many personal relationships with Russian speakers during my fieldwork. I needed to stay focused in order to view this group not only through the eyes of my informants. My main reason for choosing Tartu, at least as a start, was because I had studied in Tartu University during my initial research (2007-2008), and already had established a social network that I could use when I returned. Although my initial plan was to stay only half the time in Tartu and then move to Tallinn, I realized during my fieldwork process how important a personal relationship with informants is for the quality and depth of the information I would be able to gather. Five months after I had arrived in Estonia I went to a commemoration in Tallinn for the first time. Although I had attended many events around Tartu already, I felt as 'alien' as five months before: I did not know anyone and no one knew me. The commemorations in Tartu in the meantime had become a meeting point of acquaintances, and I decided to stay there for one full year. When I was nine months into my fieldwork, I did decide to extend my fieldwork period for two months in order to also gather data in the countryside. I will say more about that in the next section.

Getting acquainted with my informants

When leaving on fieldwork, I had not exactly spelled out which people or social groups I would focus on. I was interested in the theoretical concept of emotional remembering, and wanted to see 'on the ground' which groups would be important to focus on. I wanted to see why the past could be

13 Information can be found on http://info.raad.tartu.ee. Data as on 1 January 2012.

14 Information can be found on www.stat.ee (Estonian Statistics): 'Population by sex, ethnic nationality and County, 1 January 2013'. Retrieved on 28 March 2014. Information on Tallinn can be found on www.tallinn.ee.

so emotional to people, even to younger generations. My aim was not to investigate a representative part of the Estonian population, and that is also not what I did. My findings and conclusions therefore do not hold for the whole Estonian population. What I did do, is focus on different social groups in order to get a diverse picture and to be able to compare and contrast their stories and meanings of the past. Thus, the various social groups of informants that I distinguish in this section where not defined by theory before arriving. Instead, I made a few decisions in the field and then followed the path where my informants were taking me, in order to stay as close as possible to what is important to them. In this section I will elaborate on these decisions and on the various social groups that I managed to reach in this way, as this is important to contextualize the findings.[15]

When I arrived in Tartu, I was interested in both the 'ordinary' and the 'extraordinary', the 'everyday' and the 'official', the 'latent' and the 'manifest' forms of the past (the latter distinction is used by van Ginkel, 2011, p. 25). In order to understand the ordinary I had to look at 'the everyday mythologies and rituals of ordinary life' (Boym, 1994, p. 2). But that sounds easier than it actually is, since '[e]veryday life belongs to the largely neglected realm of the familiar, taken-for-granted, common sense and trivial – in short, the unnoticed' (Jacobsen, 2009, p. 2). For that I needed to have personal relationships, in order to make observations and have informal conversations. I started off with two strategies to find my way to the personal stories I wanted to reach: 1) through the social network I already had, and 2) by attending official commemorations and public events related to history and national identity.

The people I had met during my initial research in 2007 were mostly people who could be referred to as 'young intellectuals': students I studied with, my Estonian language tandem partner, my Estonian teacher, and friends I met through other university-related events. As I did not speak the Estonian language yet at that point, I was restricted to this group. Sirje (born 1982) was the sister of one of my peers in my university course on memory politics; she became my key informant for this group, not only during my initial research but also later on. During my later fieldwork period this group extended by the new contacts I made as an exchange researcher at Tartu University. I participated in conferences, seminars, language classes, and student activities organized there. Several of these intellectuals are thus just like me involved in memory studies. They have thus both the intellectual capacity to reflect upon memory in Estonia, yet they also have their own

15 An overview of all my informants can be found in the appendix.

emotional family stories. This led to very interesting insights into a group with relatively liberal approaches towards memory politics – when it comes to monuments, commemoration days, and street names – yet at the same time they have their family stories of historical injustices haunting them. Especially the intellectuals who suffered under Soviet repression, as they were the ones being deported to Siberia and strictly controlled by the state.

By attending official commemorations and public events I reached a second group: 'active memory carriers'. I started by focusing on the official forms of remembering, because this was relatively easy to get access to. I could make observations at commemorations and other public events that were announced beforehand, without having personal contacts yet. If I would know that it would be a 'special day', I would ask where an event would happen in my academic circle of acquaintances. After attending more and more public events, people started to recognize me and approach me. Simultaneously, my Estonian language skills improved (I was studying Estonian at university four days a week) and it became easier for me to verbally interact with people. From then onwards the boundaries between the official and the everyday started to fade. Through these official, public events I formed personal relationships with people and got access to the domain of the everyday and the ordinary.

Kalev (born 1941) was the first one of this social circle that I met outside of the commemorations. We would go for coffee, he would visit my apartment, he would take me to a museum, show me a film, and bring me to his friends. Kalev eventually became my key informant for this group; he immersed me into the everyday life of active memory carriers, and provided me with an in-depth glimpse of what happens 'backstage'. Kalev and his friends – most call themselves 'nationalists' – spend all their time on history preservation. Many of them were involved in independence activism in the late 1980s-early 1990s, some had been imprisoned in Soviet camps. They thus have autobiographical memories of the recent past. Some of them are 'memory activists' (W.J. Booth, 2009); they act not necessarily on their personal relationship to the past but on a sense of duty towards a person or the community. Another group that I met by attending commemorations were the deportees to Siberia in the 1940s, who were children at that time. Most of the informants I met through this entrance enjoyed high statuses in the early 1990s, because they could fill in the gaps of history and several were very influential in politics in the new nation-state. Generally, they are respected for their suffering and honoured for their sacrifices. However, some active memory carriers are disappointed in independent Estonia, as it has not become the prewar Estonia they had hoped for and are perceived as

'whiners' (Anepaio, 2002). All the 'active memory carriers' I have spoken to, not only encounter the past in their everyday lives: they actively contribute to the production of its memory.

After a couple of months of fieldwork, I realized I was only talking to people who are actively engaged with memory and history. I aimed to reach a third group of informants: 'ordinary people'. I also wanted to know what the past means to them. Meeting 'ordinary people' required a major investment in time and creativity; they were 'ordinary' in the sense that I met them at 'ordinary places' that had nothing to do with the past. My strategy was to participate in as many as possible. I joined a folk dance group (age group 18-30), with whom I trained twice a week and went to several dance camps. I went to film evenings. I went on organized nature trips that I found in the newspaper. I volunteered in nature-cleaning camps. I looked after children. I took sewing classes and cooking classes. It did not only inform me about everyday encounters with the past, it was a place where I formed several long-term relationships with 'ordinary people'. My key informants here were Helena (1975, countryside) and Kaia (1970, nearby Tallinn), the mothers of the families where I babysat. In both houses I stayed for several weeks in total to take care of their children. I lived their everyday lives with them, visited their friends and relatives, ate with them, and celebrated with them. Even though I met them for no history-related reason at all, I soon discovered how much the recent past was everywhere in their families.

The fourth group of informants were 'societal actors'. In contrast to all my other informants, I did not have a personal relationship with them, we met only once and our conversation had a more formal format. It was a prearranged interview where I used a recorder. I asked them for an interview because of their societal role. For instance, I asked Marju because I wanted to understand what the past means to a student organization member, as these organizations are known for their patriotic education. Andres Raid had just published a book which was very critical about Estonian memory politics. Tanel organized the student commemoration on Tartu's central square to commemorate the deportations. Lagle played a crucial role during the process of regaining independence and the first years of building the new republic. Eli was one of the historians of the Memory Institute, an institute about which I wanted to know more. These public figures provided me much more than other informants with 'factual' and 'public' stories rather than personal ones. For example Andres spoke a lot about how society deals with the past, but not about his family history. Because I did not have any personal relationship with him, it also felt inappropriate to ask about that.

The fifth and final group of informants were the 'countryside people'. They entered my research only nine months after the start of my fieldwork. During a visit to the parents (Luule & Tõnis) of my friend Riina, whom I had met in Tartu in 2007, I realized that in order to fully understand the meaning of the national past in Estonia, I also had to speak to Estonians in the countryside. In contrast to the stories in the city, Luule and Tõnis spoke fairly positively about the Soviet period, and negatively about the current political situation. Until then I had been told that only Russians longed for the Soviet past. I wanted to hear more about these publicly silenced stories, not the least in order to contextualize and contest the ones I had gathered in Tartu. Therefore, after one year of fieldwork in Tartu, I moved for two additional months to *Jõeküla*, a southern Estonian village of 217 people, five kilometres away from Luule and Tõnis.[16] They had promised to help me around. Historically this is an interesting region. Known for its variety of mushrooms, forests, and little villages, the majority of Estonia's Forest Brothers – anti-Soviet resistance fighters – was active here in the 1940s-1960s. People in the villages provided them with food, which in many cases led to deportation and expropriation of farms.

I stayed in a guest house located in the centre of the village, having the only restaurant, café, and shop in the area. The village also had a community house, a doctor, an old people's home and a post office. For my folk dancing classes I went to the neighbouring village, where I danced with a group of middle-aged women. Getting in contact with people differed from my experience in Tartu. In Tartu I could move around incognito because people could not tell from my face that I am not Estonian, but in the village people of course knew I was not from there. Because of their curiosity and because of my contacts with Luule and Tõnis, it was fairly easy to meet new people. Luule was a teacher at a local secondary school and thus had many acquaintances in the region. I also engaged as much as possible in public events, such as the day when Estonians collectively clean the country, the village fair, local kolkhoz party. I donated blood when Tartu hospital came to the community house to collect blood donors. I went to Folk Dance Festivals. I hung around at the post office, to chat with Tiia, the post office employer, who was the spider in the social web of the village. I soon discovered that not only the stories but also the historical experiences were different here. People had not suffered food shortages – they depended less on shops – and they did not encounter Russification as the people in the city did. The few

16 The name of the village is a pseudonym, in order to guarantee the anonymity of my informants.

Russians that settled here had no other option than to learn Estonian. Finally, the villages were much better connected to urban life in Soviet times than nowadays, with frequent bus lines and cultural events travelling around.

Although I distinguish five groups here, there are no clear-cut boundaries between them. The distinction is solely based on how I met them. For instance, I also met young intellectuals in the countryside and among the group of ordinary people. Another important point to mention here is that Estonia has a very small population (1.3 million inhabitants), which makes that the ties that people perceive to have with other Estonians very short. Many of my (especially urban) informants have the feeling that they know basically every Estonian, or that at least they know someone who knows that person. This is especially true as well because many Estonians are engaged and connected through the cultural societies of which they are part. According to Zerubavel (2003), that means that they take more the character of ties in a 'small world', the world of acquaintances. For instance, in March 2011, seven Estonians were kidnapped in Lebanon. Someone explained to me how something that is just national news in other countries, is very personal news in Estonia:

> Everyone empathized with them and I think it increased a national feeling as well. Estonia is so small. Everyone knows at least one of them. One was the brother of a friend. Another one I also knew quite closely. That is the thing with Estonia, we are such a small country.

In other words, the five groups that I describe here are not (perceived) as divided as this classification suggests. But the classification does help to contextualize and interpret my findings. Especially since certain social groups are missing from my data, as I will discuss in the next section.

Gathering the data: research methods and decisions

My ethnographic fieldwork consisted of two main approaches: a more informal and a more formal approach. On the one hand I took a very open informal approach. I made acquaintances and good friends, I lived with them, I participated in and observed their everyday lives and I had informal conversations with them. By doing so I got a very in-depth insight into their lives and into the relationship they have with the past. Although all my informants knew I was a researcher, the line between me as a person and me as a researcher was very thin here. With Joosep (1946) for example – who is a close friend of Kalev – I visited the countryside, the graves of his parents,

drank coffee, and had dinner together. At those moments, Joosep did not seem to see me as a researcher. I was often more considered a curious friend, which allowed me to gather very intimate stories. Depending on the context, I would only make observation notes once I arrived home, which also made it very invisible to them that I was actually gathering data. It was of course no secret, but constantly walking around with a notebook felt intrusive to the personal relationships I established with many of my informants.

The more formal research approach I used was conducting interviews. Some interviews took place with the people whom I had already befriended, but with whom I wanted to sit down at some point to ask them specific questions. Most interviews however took place with people that I either met once – like the 'societal actors' – or with people I often met in public settings – at events or commemorations – but not in a private setting – like many of the former deportees. The interviews were therefore also mostly with people who had certain experiences, like being deported, imprisoned, or having been in resistance. For the interviews I sat down with either a notebook or recorder; in that sense it was a rather formal setting, although also here I did my best to create a natural setting as much as possible. The interviews were prearranged and did not happen spontaneously, like the informal conversations. Most interviews were recorded and transcribed in Estonian afterwards.

In the appendix you can find a list with the names of the informants I engaged with intensively in an informal setting (IC), and those whom I interviewed (I). Of course I have met and spoken to many more people at public events or commemorations, but not that in-depth that I gained a valuable insight into their life stories. The kinds of topics I discussed with my informants were very diverse. From people of the 'active memory carriers' group, I mainly wanted to hear their personal life stories and reasons why they are so actively involved in public remembering. I was also interested in the extent to which they feel their stories to be recognized by the state and by younger generations. With 'ordinary people', '(young) scholars', and 'countryside people', I primarily spoke about the ways in which the past is still part of their everyday lives and whether they believe that it is important or a duty to remember collectively. The 'societal actors' I met for a particular reason: because they have or had a specific societal role. With them I mostly spoke about their particular experiences, rather than about their family stories or society's way of dealing with the past.

Besides my (participant) observation notes, notes on informal conversations, and interview transcripts, I also gathered much written material during my fieldwork period: newspaper articles, personal life stories,

personal archive materials (old newspaper articles, letters to power holders, announcements), and information from cultural and historical societies (such as folkdance groups, veterans' organization, etc.). I analysed them to provide context or meaning to the stories of my informants; they did not form a source in themselves.

I have consciously decided to leave out the Russian-Estonians in my research. Since I am interested in how an ethnic people with a small, young nation-state and a complicated history relate to their past, the stories of Russian-Estonians are not able to answer my research question. Being migrants, Russian-Estonians' family stories differ from those of their Estonian compatriots. Their (grand)parents who fought for liberty in the Great Patriotic War are perceived as occupiers from the Estonian perspective, which makes the Russian-Estonians remnants of an unwanted and enforced past (Kello & Masso, 2013, p. 34). Russian Estonians therefore often recognize their own family stories more in the Russian media and history books, which sometimes intentionally try to segregate the Russian speakers from the ethnic Estonians for the sake of political power (Jakobson, 2002, p. 89), as do Estonian language newspapers (Maimone, 2004, p. 6), which widens the gap between Estonians and Russian-Estonians. At the same time research has pointed out that most Russian-Estonians do not identify as Russian-Russian either, but rather as Russian-speaker or Russian-Estonian (T. Vihalemm & Masso, 2000). This makes their relationship between the past and identity different from both ethnic Estonians and Russian-Russians, who do have a nation-state and a legal system to deal with the past.

This raises many interesting questions, but already has attracted quite some scholarly attention, especially from Western scholars (cf. Andersen, 1997; G. Feldman, 2008ab; Maimone, 2004). Estonian scholars, too, have increasingly developed an interest in this subject in the 2000s (Jakobson, 2002; Kello & Masso, 2013; Vetik & Helemäe, 2011; T. Vihalemm, 2005; T. Vihalemm & Masso, 2000). Besides that, anthropologists and memory scholars have questioned memory making among *minority* groups, in order to get a better understanding of the relationship between memory and power (Cappelletto, 2005b; Müller, 2002). A focus on a national but tiny *majority* group – ethnic Estonians – will provide new insights into our understanding of memory and power. Estonians have a nation-state that provides legitimacy and power to processes of memory making, but – as we have seen – struggle with similar insecurities as minority groups, being such a small nation in an enlarged Europe. In addition to being theoretically interesting, it was also practically unfeasible to learn both Russian and Estonian fluently. This does not mean however that Russian-Estonians do

not play a significant role throughout the chapters. They do and should, but only through secondary literature, by means of survey data and in the stories of my Estonian informants.

Another group which is not missing on purpose but unintentionally, are Estonians from lower social classes. Because of the nature of my own entry into Estonian society, I was unable to find and meet them. Even my informants of the countryside or among the memory activists have almost all been to university. Estonians with lower education are very likely to relate differently to the past. Because it was mainly the higher-educated who suffered from Soviet repression, their families might have had different historical experiences. Also, and related to that, they might have different ideas on the need to remember. At least I have been able to contextualize my informants' stories by survey data. In Chapter 4, I will compare the importance that higher-educated Estonians and lower-educated Estonians attach to remembrance.

Anthropological reflection

Personal relationships with the local population based on trust and confidence are essential to gather in-depth data (Cappelletto, 2005a). Anthropologists should therefore carefully reflect upon the mechanisms that underlie the relationships they have with their informants, how they have positioned themselves in the field and the general drive behind their research.

Let's start with the last, but perhaps most important question: 'Why Estonia?' Basically everyone I have met since 2007 has posed me this question, both inside and outside of Estonia. I generally answer that I believe that Estonia is a very interesting country, where people have experienced the Soviet Union and yet live their lives now in Europe. What intrigues me are the small differences: much is the same, and yet it is different, because of different historical experiences. People are often not convinced by this answer. There has to be a 'real' explanation. Do I have an Estonian boyfriend? Relatives? This in itself is interesting, because if I would have done research in, say, France or Ghana, this would be much less of a question, being a Western European and an anthropologist. Estonia is in a way too small, meaningless, peripheral and not different enough; too random to choose out of simple curiosity. This also explains why most studies about Estonia are still being done by Estonians themselves.

To be honest, the fact that I am one of the few non-Estonian researchers with no social duty to choose this region, who studied Estonian, ultimately made it very easy – and meaningful – for me to do my research. The fact that I am young might have helped me as well. Being young and Western

European, I represent two groups of people who are perceived to be little interested in Estonia's past. The endless appreciation I got from Estonians has perhaps been the main drive behind my research. It happened from the very beginning when I could just say a few words in Estonian. I noticed how happy it made people. They saw it as a gesture of being interested in their culture, and of being loyal to their society. As a small nation, Estonians have always had to adapt to others. There is even an anecdote in Estonian that makes fun of this self-consciousness of Estonians:

> A German, a Frenchman and an Estonian see an elephant. The German thinks: How can I catch him? The Frenchman thinks: How would he taste? The Estonian sees the elephant and thinks: What does he think of me?

The welcoming and embracing response to my presence and my effort to learn the language, say a lot about the widespread feeling among Estonians of being unknown and marginal. As we will see in Chapter 6 as well, many have the feeling that most Western Europeans do not even know that Estonia exists. Their happiness, however, also instilled a kind of moral obligation in me. By listening to their largely unknown stories, like the terrible stories of deportation, I felt I had become a witness. 'In communities that were the theatre of extreme events, it is not possible to carry out fieldwork with detachment' (Cappelletto, 2005a, p. 25). Listening to their stories made me complicit (Cappelletto, 2005a, p. 30) and I felt I could not disappoint them. I perceived a responsibility to continue my search for more stories and to pass them on to those who had not heard them yet. While analysing and writing up my data, I needed to detach myself again, which was not an easy process, yet inevitable for analysing my data with a critical eye.

In conversation with other anthropologists, I realized how much this wish of my Estonian interlocutors to be heard had eased my fieldwork. They almost invited me to make an interview with them instead of me asking them. They were curious to hear a 'stranger' speak Estonian, as there are not many non-native speakers. Besides that, people often gave me the feeling they wanted to help me. Considering the fact that a gift is never voluntary (Mauss, 1990), I started to wonder what they were repaying me for. Initially I felt I was the receiver as I needed them for my research. They however felt they were the receivers of my invested time and effort. From their perspective, I had started to give – not to them personally, but to the group with which they identify – before we had even met. In addition, my informants were very willing to invite me into their lives because they saw me as a bridge to the outside world, and to an immortalization of their

stories. Especially several deportees asked me to translate their life story into Dutch or English, or to pass on their stories. All these reasons have coloured my data.

One last methodological reflection has to do with Estonia's small size. Several of my informants are also scholars whose work I cite. Thus, in some places in my book I analyse their personal stories as social constructions, in other places I refer to their scientific stories as 'scholarly truths'. I had a similar challenge with individuals such as Mart Laar, Marju Lauristin, Viktor Niitsoo, and 'the white book'. I have analysed these people as significant individuals in Estonian history, and the book as a political production of national history. Yet at the same time, it was impossible to write this book without also quoting them as scientific sources. I have tried to do this as carefully as possible, and when I had another source available, I chose it instead. Sometimes this was not possible. For instance in the case of Lauristin, initiator of the independence movement in the late 1980s and a widely known public figure, yet at the same time also Professor of Social Communication at Tartu University who works on Estonia's relationship with the EU, I simply could not ignore her scholarly contribution to this field while writing in her area of research. Besides that, she was one of the colleagues with whom I designed the 'Me, the World, Media' survey.

Surveys

In order to contextualize and position the stories of my informants within Estonian society more generally, I used survey data gathered by the Journalism Department at Tartu University: *Mina, Maailm, Meedia* [Me, the World, Media]. The survey was conducted over several years, so changes over time can be studied as well: December 2002–January 2003, November 2005, November 2008, October–November 2011. Tartu University hired trained interviewers to gather the data. First, the interviewer visited the homes of a representative sample of the Estonian population to ask people to fill out about 600 questions in written form. Second, s/he made a second visit to pose 200 additional questions verbally. The respondents were randomly selected and representative of different regions, social, and ethnic groups in Estonia. In each round about 1000 respondents were Estonian speakers and about 500 Russian speakers.[17]

17 In 2003, the question that measures ethnicity was the respondent's mother tongue. After that, I used the highly correlated question that asked about one's self-perception as either Estonian, Russian, or otherwise.

The topics of this survey ranged from consumption behaviour, travelling, and media use to attendance at commemorations, evaluations of the Soviet past, and familial experiences of repression. The latter topics were only included in the 2005 and 2011 questionnaire. In 2011, a special section of the questionnaire was dedicated to attitudes towards the past and to memory. I had the opportunity to discuss and co-formulate the questions to be included together with scholars from the Communication Science and Ethnology department. The questions I proposed concern:[18]

- Whether one feels at peace with the transition to independence and in the slightest misses something from the Soviet past (posed in 2003, 2005, 2008, 2011)
- Participation in organizations and (commemoration) events dealing with history (new in 2011)
- Opinion about the involvement and interest of young Estonians in national history and cultural heritage (new in 2011)
- Opinion about Estonian memory politics, e.g. dealing with former communists, memory of Holocaust (2005, 2011)
- Familial experiences with Soviet repression and forced military mobilization (2005, 2011)
- Importance of several national commemoration/ celebration days (new in 2011)

Based on these data, I compared higher and lower educated Estonians in the importance they attach to commemorations and national traditions. These survey data were also able to draw a picture of the kind of Estonians who have positive memories of the Soviet period: countryside versus city, age, level of education or experience of Soviet repression might all be explanatory variables.

Besides the data from this representative survey, I designed two surveys based on my fieldwork experiences and focused on a specific group and topic:

1. Survey filled out by members of the Tartu Memento organization for those repressed by the Soviet regime. The focus was on the extent to which they experience societal acknowledgement of the repressive past. (N = 36)
2. Survey filled out by two classes of secondary school students in Tartu. The focus is on attachment to place, people, and history. (N = 32)

18 I proposed to keep particular questions in that had been posed in previous years and to add new ones.

The data gathered by these two surveys are of course not representative of a larger group, but are meant to get a better understanding of a certain issue in a certain group.

Structure of the book

This book consists of three parts. Part 1 is an introduction to the production and construction of Estonia's national history. In this part I will describe the main agents of Estonians' collective rupture narrative and I will show how the story has become so emotional as it is nowadays.

Part 2 consists of four chapters focusing on the meaning of the emotional rupture narrative for Estonians from various social groups. In Chapter 2, we will deepen the stories of the Estonians from the countryside, who feel excluded from the national narrative. Being critical of the national narrative is their way of preserving what they consider to be 'real memories'. In Chapter 3, we will explore the stories of 'the experienced': the Soviet deportees. For them the collective rupture narrative is important to extend their personal stories beyond their deaths. The attached emotions are essential, as a settled story poses a threat to its continuation, as we will see. In Chapter 4, we will follow the stories of young intellectuals to see how the emotional story of their families and nation impose a moral obligation on their contemporary everyday lives. The emotions involved make it impossible to escape them. In Chapter 5, we will see that for the 'memory activists' the rupture narrative is often considered not emotional enough. These emotions are necessary to keep citizens alert for possible dangers. Keeping society awake is what incites them to activism. Even though their discourse seems fairly radical, we will see why they occupy a legitimate place in society.

In Part 3, the stories of all informants will be considered with an external Other entering the stage: Europe and its WWII memory. I will question what closure means in a context where the hegemonic discourse in Europe is perceived to threaten *the* Estonian story and approach towards the past.

In the concluding chapter I will get back to the main question of this book, and bring to the fore how established, collective stories of the past – and their attempt at closure – are both desirable and threatening at the same time.

References

Adler, N., Leydesdorff, S., Chamberlain, M., & Neyzi, L. (Eds.). (2009). *Memories of mass repression: narrating life stories in the aftermath of atrocity*. New Brunswick/ London: Transaction Publishers.

Ahonen, S. (2001). Politics of identity through history curriculum: narratives of the past for social exclusion- or inclusion? *Journal Curriculum Studies, 33*(2), 179-194.

Alexander, J.C., Eyerman, R., Giesen, B., Smelser, N.J., & Sztompka, P. (Eds.). (2004). *Cultural trauma and collective identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Andersen, E.A. (1997). *An ethnically divided society was promoted by privatisation in Estonia*. Paper presented at the conference Transformation and integration in the Baltic Sea Area and the Barents Area. Copenhagen: Copenhagen Peace Research Institute.

Anepaio, T. (2002). Reception of the topic repressions in the Estonian society. *Pro Ethnologia, 14*, 47-66.

Argenti, N., & Schramm, K. (Eds.). (2009). *Remembering violence: anthropological perspectives on intergenerational transmission.* New York/ Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Assmann, A. (2002). Four formats of memory: from individual to collective constructions of the past. In C. Emden & D. Midgley (Eds.), *Cultural history and literary imagination* (Vol. 1). Oxford: Peter Lang.

Assmann, J. (1992). Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen. München: CH Beck.

Asu, V. (13 August 2008). More than a million crowns has been donated to support the Georgians [*grusiinide-toetuseks-on-annetusi-tehtud-ule-miljoni-krooni*]. *Postimees*. Retrieved from www.postimees.ee.

Bafoil, F. (2009). *Central and Eastern Europe: Europeanization and Social Change.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bennich-Björkman, L. (2007). The cultural roots of Estonia's successful transition: how historical legacies shaped the 1990s. *East European Politics and Societies, 21*, 316-347.

Berdahl, D., Bunzl, M., & Lampland, M. (Eds.). (2000). *Altering states: ethnographies of transition in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Berg, E. (2002). Local resistance, national identity and global swings in Post-Soviet Estonia. *Europe-Asia Studies, 54*(1), 109-122.

Berger, S., & Lorenz, C. (Eds.). (2008). *The contested nation: ethnicity, class and gender in national identities*. Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillan.

Berger, S., Lorenz, C., & Melman, B. (Eds.) (2012). *Popularizing National Pasts: 1800 to the present*. New York: Routledge.

Berliner, D. (2005). The abuses of memory: reflections on the memory boom in anthropology. *Anthropological Quarterly, 78*(1), 197-211.

Booth, W.J. (1999). Communities of Memory: On Identity, Memory, and Debt. *The American Political Science Review, 93*(2), 249-263.

Booth, W.J. (2009). Kashmir road: some reflections on memory and violence. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies, 38*(2), 361-377.

Boym, S. (1994). *Common places: mythologies of everyday life in Russia.* Harvard: University Press.

Brüggemann, K., & Kasekamp, A. (2008). The politics of history and the 'war of monuments' in Estonia. *Nationalities Papers, 36*(3), 425-448.

Burawoy, M., & Verdery, K. (Eds.). (1999). *Uncertain transition: Ethnographies of change in the postsocialist world.* New York/ Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Burch, S., & Smith, D. J. (2007). Empty spaces and the value of symbols: Estonia's 'War of Monuments' from another angle. *Europe-Asia Studies, 59*(6), 913-936.

Calhoun, N. (2004). *Dilemmas of justice in Eastern Europe's democratic transitions.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cappelletto, F. (2005a). Introduction. In F. Cappelletto (Ed.), *Memory and world war II: an ethnographic approach* (pp. 1-38). Oxford: Berg.

Cappelletto, F. (2005b). Public memories and personal stories: recalling the Nazi-fascist massacres. In F. Cappelletto (Ed.), *Memory and world war II: an ethnographic approach* (pp. 101-130). Oxford: Berg.

Cattell, M.G., & Climo, J.J. (2002). Introduction: Meaning in social memory and history: anthropological perspectives. In J.J. Climo & M.G. Cattell (Eds.), *Social memory and history: anthropological perspectives* (pp. 1-36). Boston: AltaMira Press.

Clemens Jr, W.C. (2001). *The Baltic transformed: Complexity theory and European security.* New York/ Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Connerton, P. (2009). *How modernity forgets.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Eglitis, D.S., & Zelce, V. (2013). Unruly actors: Latvian women of the Red Army in post-war historical memory. *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity, 41*(6), 987-1007.

Ehala, M. (2009). The bronze soldier: Identity threat and maintenance in Estonia. *Journal of Baltic Studies, 1*, 139-158.

Elster, J. (1998). Coming to terms with the past. A framework for the study of justice in the transition to democracy. *Europe Sociology, XXXIX*(1), 7-48.

Etkind, A. Finnin, R., Blacker, U., Fedor, J., Lewis, S., Mälksoo, M., and Mroz, M. (2012). *Remembering Katyn.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Feest, D. (2007). Histories of violence: national identity and public memory of occupation and terror in Estonia. In T. Darieva & W. Kaschuba (Eds.), *Representations*

on the margins of Europe: politics and identities in the Baltic and South Caucasian states (pp. 242-266). Frankfurt/New York: Campus Verlag.

Feldman, G. (2008a). Culture, state, and security in Europe: the case of citizenship and integration policy in Estonia. *American Ethnologist, 32*(4), 676-694.

Feldman, G. (2008b). The trap of abstract space: recomposing Russian-speaking immigrants in Post-Soviet Estonia. *Anthropological Quarterly, 81*(2), 311-342.

Foucault, M. (1977). *Language, counter-memory, practice: selected essays and interviews.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Friedman, J. (1992). The past in the future: history and the politics of identity. *American Anthropologist, 94*(4), 837-859.

Geertz, C. (1973). Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture *The interpretation of cultures: selected essays* (pp. 3-30). New York: Basic books.

Gheith, J.M., & Jolluck, K.R. (2011). *Gulag voices: Oral histories of Soviet incarceration and exile*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Halbwachs, M. (1992). *On collective memory* (L.A. Coser, Trans.). Chicago/ London: The University of Chicago Press.

Himka, J.P. & Michlic, J.B. (2013). *Bringing the dark past to light: The reception of the Holocaust in postcommunist Europe* (Eds.). Nebraska: University Press.

Hodgkin, K., & Radstone, S. (2003). Remembering suffering: trauma and history. In K. Hodgkin & S. Radstone (Eds.), *Contested pasts: the politics of memory* (pp. 97-103). London: Routledge.

Huyssen, A. (2003). Present pasts: urban palimpsests and the politics of memory. Stanford: University Press.

Ignatieff, M. (1999).*The warrior's honor.* New York: Metropolitan Books.

Jacobsen, M.H. (Ed.). (2009). *Encountering the everyday: an introduction to the sociologies of the unnoticed.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Jacobsson, B. (Ed.). (2010). *The European Union and the Baltic States: Changing forms of governance.* New York: Routledge.

Jakobson, V. (2002). *Role of the Estonian Russian-language media in the integration of the Russian-speaking minority into Estonian society.* Tampere: University of Tampere.

Jaskovska, E., & Moran, J.P. (2006). Justice or politics? Criminal, civil and political adjudication in the newly independent Baltic States. *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics 22*(4), 485-506.

Jõesalu, K. (2005). 'The right to happiness': Echoes of Soviet ideology in biographical narratives. *Berliner Osteuropa Info, 23*, 91-99.

Jõesalu, K. (2010). The meaning of 'late socialism': analyzing Estonians' post-communist memory culture. *Asia European Journal, 8*, 293-303.

Jõesalu, K. (2012). The role of the Soviet past in post-Soviet memory politics through examples of speeches from Estonian presidents. *Europe-Asia Studies, 64*(6), 1007-1032.

Kagge, R. (25 April 2007). The shadow of Russian diplomats appears behind the actions of extremists [*Äärmuslaste aktsioonide tagant paistab Vene diplomaatide vari*]. *Postimees*. Retrieved from www.postimees.ee.

Kansteiner, W. (2002). Finding meaning in memory: a methodological critique of collective memory studies. *History and Theory, 41*(2), 179-197.

Kaprans, M. (2010). Social commentary as biographical work: post-Communist autobiographies in Latvia. *Auto/Biography Studies, 25*(2), 249-263.

Kattago, S. (2009). Agreeing to disagree on the legacies of recent history: memory, pluralism and Europe after 1989. *European Journal of Social Theory, 12*.

Kattago, S. (2012). *Memory and representation in contemporary Europe: the persistence of the past.* Farnham: Ashgate.

Kello, K., & Masso, A. (2013). The spatial foci of history teaching: individual views of Estonian history teachers. *Spaces and Flows: an International Journal of Urban and Extraurban Studies, 2*(4), 31-48.

Klein, K.L. (2000). On the emergence of memory in historical discourse. *Representations, 69*(Winter), 127-150.

Kõresaar, E. (2002). The farm as the symbol of the state. Metaphorical depiction of the nation and the state in the childhood memories of older Estonians. In T. Jaago (Ed.), *Lives, Histories and Identities. Studies on Oral Histories, Life- and Family Stories* (pp. 169-187). Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus.

Kõresaar, E. (2004). *Memory and history in Estonian post-Soviet life stories.* Tartu: Tartu University.

Kõresaar, E. (2005). *Elu ideoloogiad* [*Life ideologies*] (Phd). Tartu: Eesti Rahva Muuseum.

Kõresaar, E. (2007). The remembrance culture of the Second World War in Estonia as presented in post-Soviet life stories: on the logic of comparison between the Soviet and the Nazi occupations. In A. Mihkelev & B. Kalnacs (Eds.), *We have something in common: the Baltic memory*. Tallinn: Under and Tuglas Literature Centre of the Estonian Academy of Sciences.

Kõresaar, E. (Ed.). (2011). *Soldiers of memory: World War II and Its Aftermath in Estonian Post-Soviet Life Stories.* Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi.

Kovács, É. (2003). Communism and after: The cynical and the ironical: remembering Communism in Hungary. *Regio: Minorities, Politics, Society*(1), 155-169.

Kundera, M. (1984). *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. New York: Harper & Row.

Kürti, L., & Skalník, P. (Eds.). (2009). *Postsocialist Europe: Anthropological perspectives from home*. New York/ Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Lambek, M., & Antze, P. (1996). Introduction: Forecasting memory. In P. Antze & M. Lambek (Eds.), *Tense past: Cultural essays in trauma and memory* (pp. xi-xxviii). New York: Routledge.

Lamoreaux, J.W., & Galbreath, D.J. (2008). The Baltic states as 'small states': negotiating the 'east' by engaging the 'west'. *Journal of Baltic Studies, 39*(1), 1-14.

Lauristin, M., & Vihalemm, P. (1997). Recent historical developments in Estonia: Three stages of transition. In M. Lauristin, P. Vihalemm, K.E. Rosengren, & L. Weibull (Eds.), *Return to the Western world: Cultural and political perspectives on the Estonian post-Communist transition* (pp. 73-126). Tartu: Tartu University Press.

Lauristin, M., & Vihalemm, P. (2009). The political agenda during different periods of Estonian transformation: external and internal factors. *Journal of Baltic Studies, 40*(1), 1-28.

Lauristin, M., & Vihalemm, P. (2010). The political agenda during different periods of Estonian transformation: external and internal factors. In M. Lauristin & P. Vihalemm (Eds.), *Estonia's transition to the EU* (pp. 3-26). New York: Routledge.

Lehti, M., Jutila, M., & Jokisipila. (2008). Never-ending Second World War: public performances of national dignity and the drama of the bronze soldier. *Journal of Baltic Studies, 39*(4), 393-418.

Koorits, V. (14 August 2008). Leo Kunnas: Estonians have to defend their state themselves [*Leo Kunnas: eestlased peavad oma riiki ise kaitsma*]. *Postimees*. Retrieved from www.postimees.ee.

Maier, C.S. (2002). Hot memory… cold memory. On the political half-life of fascist and communist memory. *Transit online, 22.*

Maimone, C. (2004). The Estonian Russian divide: Examining social diversity in Estonia with cross-national survey data. Stanford, unpublished manuscript.

Mälksoo, M. (2010). *The politics of becoming European: A study of Polish and Baltic post-Cold War security imaginaries.* London: Routledge.

Mark, J. (2010). *The unfinished revolution: Making sense of the Communist past in Central-Eastern Europe.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Martínez, F. (2018). *Remains of the Soviet past in Estonia: An anthropology of forgetting, repair and urban traces.* London: UCL Press.

Mauss, M. (1990). *The gift: the form and reason for exchange in archaic societies* (W.D. Halls, Trans.). London: Routledge.

Melchior, I., & Visser, O. (2011). Voicing past and present uncertainties: The relocation of a Soviet World War II memorial and the politics of memory in Estonia. *Focaal: Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology, 59*, 33-50.

Mikkel, E. (2006). Patterns of party formation in Estonia: Consolidation unaccomplished. In S. Jungerstam-Mulders (Eds.), *Post-communist EU member states: parties and party systems* (pp. 23-47). London: Ashgate.

Moes, J. (2009). CosmoPoles: A mixed-methods study on the European identity of higher-educated Polish youth. *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism,9*(3), 429-451.

Mole, R. (2012). *The Baltic States from the Soviet Union to the European Union: Identity, discourse and power in the post-communist transition of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.* London: Routledge.

Müller, J.-W. (Ed.). (2002). *Memory and power in post-War Europe: Studies in the presence of the past.* Cambridge: University Press.

Nora, P. (1989). Between memory and history: Les lieux de mémoire. *Representations,* 26, 7-24.

Norgaard, O., Johannsen, L., Skak, M., & Sorensen, R.H. (Eds.). (1999). *The Baltic States after Independence*: second edition. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Nowak, A. (2011). *Imperiological studies: A Polish perspective.* Krakow: Towarzystwo Naukowe Societas Vistulana.

O'Connor, K. (2003). *The history of the Baltic States*. Westport: Greenwood Press.

Olick, J.K. (1999). Collective memory: The two cultures. *Sociological Theory, 17*(3), 333-348.

Olick, J.K., & Robbins, J. (1998). Social memory studies: From 'collective memory' to the historical sociology of mnemonic practices. *Annual Reviews of Sociology, 24*, 105-140.

Olick, J.K., Vinitzky-Seroussi, V., & Levy, D. (Eds.). (2011b). *The collective memory reader.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Onken, E.C. (2007a). The Baltic States and Moscow's 9 May Commemoration: Analysing memory politics in Europe. *Europe-Asia Studies, 59*(1), 23-46.

Pääbo, H. (2008). War of memories: explaining 'memorials war' in Estonia. *Baltic Security & Defence Review, 10*.

Pääbo, H. (2011a). From an Eastern outpost in the West to a Western outpost in the East: the transformation of the Estonian master narrative. In B. Törnquist-Plewa & K. Stala (Eds.), *Cultural transformations after Communism* (pp. 251-277). Lund: Nordic Academic Press.

Pääbo, H. (2011b). *Potential of collective memory based international identity conflicts in post-imperial space: comparison of Russian master narrative with Estonian, Ukrainian and Georgian master narrative.* Tartu: Ülikooli Kirjastus.

Pabriks, A., & Purs, A. (2001). *Latvia: the challenges of change*. New York: Routledge.

Pakier M. & Wawrzyniak, J. (2015). *Memory and change in Europe: Eastern Perspectives* (Eds.). Oxford: Berghahn.

Peiker, P. (2016). Estonian nationalism through the postcolonial lens. *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 47(1), 113-132, DOI: 10.1080/01629778.2015.1103516.

Pelkmans, M. (2006). *Defending the border: identity, religion, and modernity in the Republic of Georgia.* Ithaca/ London: Cornell University Press.

Pettai, V.A., & Mölder, M. (2011). Estonia. In S. Habdank-Kołaczkowska (Ed.), *Nations in Transit* (pp. 203-218). New York: Freedom House.

Pettai, V. A., & Onken, E.C. (2009). *'National report on Estonia'*. Tartu: European Commission, Directorate General for Justice, Freedom and Security.

Pettai, E.C., & Pettai, V. A. (2015). *Transitional and retrospective justice in the Baltic States.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Polian, P. (2004). *Against their will: the history and geography of forced migrations in the USSR.* Budapest: Central European University Press.

Postimees. (2 September 2004). The people threw stones at those who removed the Lihula memorial [Rahvas loopis Lihula mälestussamba mahavõtjaid kividega]. *Postimees*. Retrieved from www.postimees.ee.

Postimees. (20 August 2008). President: we are strong when we unite ourselves [president: me oleme tugevad kui hoiame uhte]. *Postimees*. Retrieved from www.postimees.ee.

Rahi-Tamm, A. (2005). Human losses. In V. Salo (Ed.), *The white book: losses inflicted on the Estonian nation by occupation regimes 1940-1991*. Tallinn: Estonian Encyclopaedia Publishers.

Raun, T. U. (2001). *Estonia and the Estonians*. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press.

Rausing, S. (2004). *History, memory, and identity in post-Soviet Estonia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rudi, H. (11 August 2008a). Laar: to decrease the defence expenses now would be madness [Laar: kaitsekulutuste vahendamine oleks praegu hullumeelsus] *Postimees.* Retrieved from www.postimees.ee.

Rudi, H. (12 August 2008b). Latvians started to buy Georgian wine diligently [Latlased hakkasid usinalt gruusia veine ostma]. *Postimees*. Retrieved from www.postimees.ee

Rüsen, J. (2005a). Historical memory and democracy: setting the scene. In U.J. van Beek (Ed.), *Democracy under construction: patterns from four continents* (pp. 337-350). Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Saarts, T. (2008). The bronze nights: the failure of forced Europeanization and the birth of nationalist defensive democracy in Estonia. *Eurozine*. Available at www.eurozine.com/articles/article_2008-10-10-saarts-en.html, accessed 22 September 2010.

Sierp, A. (2017). 1939 versus 1989: A missed opportunity to create a European lieu de mémoire, *East European Politics & Societies, 31*(3), pp. 439-455.

Snyder, T. (2010). *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin*. Philadelphia: Basic Books.

Stan, L. (2009). *Transitional justice in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union: reckoning with the communist past* (Ed). London: Routledge.

Stöcker, L.F. (2012). *Bridging the Baltic Sea: networks of resistance and opposition during the Cold War era* (PhD). Florence: European University Institute.

Teitel, R. (2005). The law and politics of contemporary transitional justice. *Cornell International Law Journal, 38*(3), 837-864.

Tilmans, K., van Vree, F. & Winter, J. (Eds.) (2010). *Performing the past: Memory, history, andidentity in modern Europe.* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Todorova, M., Dimou, A. & Troebst, S. (2014). *Remembering Communism: Private and public recollections of lived experience in Southeast Europe.* Budapest: Central European University Press.

Törnquist-Plewa, B. (2016). Cosmopolitan memory, European memory and local memories in East Central Europe. *Australian Humanities Review,* 136-154.

Törnquist-Plewa, B. & Sindbaek Andersen, T. (Eds.) (2016). *Disputed memory: Emotions and memory politics in Central, Eastern and South-eastern Europe*. Berlin: de Gruyter.

Troebst, S. (2005). Jalta vs. Stalingrad, GULag vs. Holocaust. Conflicting cultures of remembrance in the wider Europe. *Berliner Journal für Soziologie, 3*, 381-40.

Turner, V. (1967). *The forest of symbols: aspects of Ndembu ritual*. New York: Cornell University Press.

Uudised ERR. (23 August 2004a). The OSCE condemns the Lihula monument [OSCE mõistis hukka Lihula mälestusmärgi]. *Uudised ERR*. Retrieved from www.uudised.err.ee.

Uudised ERR (3 September 2004b). Ojuland: The Lihula monument is not understood in the world [Ojuland: maailmas ei mõistetud Lihula monumenti]. *ERR News*. Retrieved from www.uudised.err.ee.

van de Port, M. (1994). *Het einde van de wereld: beschaving, redeloosheid en zigeunercafés in Servië.* Amsterdam: Babylon-De Geus.

van Ginkel, R. (2011). *Rondom de stilte: Herdenkingscultuur in Nederland.* Amsterdam: Bert Bakker.van Vree, F., & van de Laarse, R. (Eds.). (2009). *De dynamiek van herinneren: Nederland en de Tweede Wereldoorlog*. Amsterdam: Bert Bakker.

Verdery, K. (1998). Transnationalism, nationalism, citizenship, and property: Eastern Europe since 1989. *American Ethnologist, 25*(2), 291-306.

Vetik, R., & Helemäe, J. (Eds.). (2011). *The Russian second generation in Tallinn and Kohtla-Järve*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Vihalemm, P. (2006). Media use in Estonia: Trends and patterns. *Nordicom Review, 27*(1), 17-29.

Vihalemm, T. (2005). The strategies of identity re-construction in post-Soviet Estonia. *Pro Ethnologia, 19*, 59-84.

Vihalemm, T., & Masso, A. (2000). Patterns of self-identification among the younger generation of Estonian Russians. In M. Lauristin & R. Vetik (Eds.), *Integration of Estonian society: monitoring 2000*. Tallinn: Institute of International and Social Studies.

Weiss-Wendt, A. (2008). Why the Holocaust does not matter to Estonians. *Journal of Baltic Studies, 39*(4), 475-497.

Wertsch, J.V. (2002). *Voices of collective remembering*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Winter, J. (2010). The performance of the past: memory, history, identity. In K. Tilmans, F. van Vree & J. Winter (Eds.), *Performing the past: Memory, history, and identity in modern Europe* (pp. 11-34). Amsterdam: University Press.

Winter, J., & Sivan, E. (1999). *War and remembrance in the twentieth century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wulf, M., & Grönholm, P. (2010). Generating meaning across generations: the role of historians in the codification of history in Soviet and Post-Soviet Estonia. *Journal of Baltic Studies, 41*(3), 351-382.

Yurchuk Y. (2017). Reclaiming the past, confronting the past: OUN-UPA memory politics and nation-building in Ukraine (1991-2016). In J. Fedor, M. Kangaspuro, J. Lassila, & T. Zhurzhenko (Eds.), *War and memory in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan Memory Studies.

Zerubavel, E. (2003). *Time maps: collective memory and the social shape of the past.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Zhurzhenko, T. (2013). Memory wars and reconciliation in the Ukrainian-Polish borderlands: Geopolitics of memory from a local perspective. In G. Mink und L. Neumayer (Eds.), *History, memory and politics in Central and Eastern Europe* (pp. 173-192). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.