From Victim Hierarchies to Memorial Networks:
Berlin’s Holocaust Memorial to Sinti and Roma Victims of National Socialism

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Sociology
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Abstract

In April 1989, four months after a German citizens’ initiative proposed construction of a central memorial to the Jewish victims of the Holocaust, Romani Rose, chair of the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, published a petition demanding inclusion of the Sinti and Roma victims into the same memorial. Any other outcome, he wrote, would indicate a “hierarchy of victims” (die Zeit). The Berlin Wall fell seven months later, transforming the political and spatial dimensions of Germany’s commemorative landscape. So began a new phase of contestation – a national memorial project at its centre – over the so-called uniqueness of the (Jewish) Holocaust, and the moral and political responsibility of the newly reunified German state for genocide committed against Jewish and “other” victim groups.

This dissertation draws on an entangled understanding of memory production in order to disentangle the social relations and identities that are mobilized in national memorial projects. I define entangled memory in two ways: (1) it refers to the interlinking of dominant memory and oppositional forms in the public sphere (Popular Memory Group 1998); (2) it is multidirectional in that the subjects and spaces of public
memory are defined not only by a competition of victimhood but also as a product of influence and exchange (Rothberg 2009). This framework allows me to argue that the genocide of the Sinti and Roma – historically forgotten victims – is gradually gaining a foothold in the German national imaginary via the dominant status of the memorial to the Jewish victims. In turn, the positioning of the memorial dedicated to Jewish victims has been and continues to be influenced by the commemorative activities of other victim groups. German state legislation in 2009 to link up the memorials dedicated to Jewish, Sinti and Roma as well as homosexual victims – the country’s three national memorials – under one administrative roof is a recent example of an emergent memorial network in the country’s commemorative politics. It is here, I conclude, in the New Berlin’s geographic, symbolic, virtual and cartographic spaces of national memory that we are seeing increasing forms of recognition and integration of historically marginalized groups.
To my aunt and uncle,
Ficuța and Mișu Herscovici
Acknowledgements

This dissertation is about memory and how the process of remembering is really about coming to understand who we are and how we want others to know us. In the final months of writing, as I began to feel sentimental about the project’s completion, I realized that my dissertation is not just about another group’s memory but also about my own memory of researching, writing, and life lived in the years it took to put it all together. Writing the acknowledgments for a dissertation is a way of narrating those experiences. It is an honour to be able to do this now by thanking the many people who have offered guidance, new ways of thinking, support and friendship over the years.

Vince Sacco, from Queen’s University, was my first teacher of sociology. He reassured me of my potential to engage in scholarship and why the pursuit is a worthwhile one. I am grateful for his unwavering encouragement, sage advice and friendship.

This research would have never begun and certainly, would have never come to an end without the direction of my doctoral committee. Michal Bodemann, my supervisor, is what brought me to the University of Toronto. His critical approach to understanding Jewish identity in postwar Germany encouraged me to start thinking about the Holocaust from a different and under-explored perspective. As a mentor and teacher, Michal taught me to trust my own instinct, to read across disciplines and, perhaps most importantly, to know when it was time to say “Schluss damit!” and move on. In Berlin and Toronto, he generously included me in his academic and social networks, was never too busy for conversation, and welcomed me into his family when mine was so far away.

I was lucky to start my PhD studies the same year Anna Korteweg began teaching in our department and so, had the benefit of her expertise from the very first to the very last word of my dissertation. Anna convinced me that conflict and ambiguity are not things to run away from, but the foundation for understanding how identities, memories, and politics are constructed. Patricia Landolt kept me on track, guided me as I brought together the cumbersome literatures on ethnic minority politics and memory, and pushed
me to see the broader implications of my research. Without her theoretical and methodological rigour, I would likely still be drowning in data right now.

Many friends and colleagues ensured that I did not conform to the stereotypical image of the isolated writer in the dusty attic. I thank them here for reading and editing sections of my dissertation and grant proposals, allowing me to bounce ideas off of them, and providing much needed distraction and encouragement along the way. From Toronto, I thank Norah MacKendrick, Lesley Kenny, Shirin Montazer, Amanda Foley, Andrew McKinnon, Yael Maoz-Shai, Agata Piękosz, Tali Boritz, Salina Abji, Joseph Bryant, Djordje Stefanovic, Vanina Leschziner, and Baljit Nagra. A very heartfelt thank you to the graduate coordinator of the Sociology Department, Jeannette Wright.

My field research in Berlin would have been neither as enjoyable nor as fruitful without the company of Gökce Yurdakul, a brilliant researcher and friend. Gökce once said that Berlin is a city brimming with ethnographers and that someone should one day do a study of them. It was through exploring Berlin with her – from the Turkish pigeon handlers in the tree-lined streets of Kreuzberg to the Hederlezi celebrations in Neukölln – that I came to appreciate that the city is indeed a researcher’s delight and how special an opportunity I had to be a part of it all. Irit Dekel’s research about Berlin’s Holocaust Memorial provided so much inspiration for my own analysis. Irit also shared with me her creative approach to ethnographic fieldwork, and gave me a safe space for verbally working through premature ideas and concepts about memory and victimhood in Germany. I am especially indebted to her for putting me in touch with the Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe and directing me to the valuable research materials available there.

Many other people made my time in Berlin so rewarding. In the more frustrating moments of research and writing, I would only have to remind myself that it was well worth it if only because it had brought Soline Laplanche-Servigne into my life. Together we debated the tribulations as well as joys of qualitative research, provided each other with the best and most memorable distractions from our work, and discovered the meaning of transnational friendship. The following friends generously edited, helped with translations, exchanged ideas and welcomed me into their unique experiences of the city:
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In 2007, after a first round of data collection, my participation in the Leo Baeck Summer University (LBSU) in Jewish Studies at the Humboldt University marked a turning point in my research. Through conversations and debates with fellow students and through field trips around Berlin’s spaces of Jewish memory, I began to question the ways in which the “forgotten history” of the Sinti and Roma might also constitute these spaces. I thank the Israeli, German, and North American friends I met there and the program’s first director, Jeffrey Peck, for welcoming and nurturing a different perspective on memory in Germany.

This study is, of course, indebted to my research participants and to the many other people who shared their knowledge with me. In particular, I would like to thank Egon Schweiger, from the Landesverband Deutscher Sinti und Roma in Baden-Württemberg, whom I was lucky to meet early on in my research. He mapped out for me the complex field of Sinti and Roma politics in Germany and directed me to key literature in the area of Romani studies. Joanna Talewicz of the Roma People’s Association of Poland invited me in 2009 to the annual August 2nd Roma commemoration ceremony at Auschwitz-Birkenau and explained the significance of this event to me. I am thankful as well to the staff and researchers at the Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe for telling me about their work and giving me access to their materials. Markus End and the Forum Antiziganismuskritik kept me up to date with the latest forms of injustice taking place in Berlin, Germany and Europe against the Roma population, and demonstrated how academic research can be used to incite political change. Friends Lena Gorelik and Peter Glück gave me a home in Frankfurt and Stuttgart while I conducted research there.

The development of this research benefited tremendously from the Romani Studies summer school in 2009 at the Central European University (CEU) in Budapest.
Generous funding for participation in this program came from the EU Marie Curie Conferences and Training Courses. This was undoubtedly the highlight – intellectually, professionally and socially – of my entire grad school experience. With a small group of talented friends – Henriette Horvath, Kata Halasz, Ketty Smedile and Christiane Otto – we made a short documentary film about a “successful” Roma Holocaust memorial, situated on the banks of the Danube River in Budapest. This monument gives me hope that the Berlin memorial to the Sinti and Roma will one day be completed and equally, that it will inspire curiosity, emotion and thought in those who stand before it. At the CEU I had the privilege of meeting and learning from the top scholars in the field of Romani studies. Yaron Matras clearly outlined the Romani movement in Europe and the unique ways in which it has developed in Germany. Huub van Baar discussed with me commemoration efforts by Roma groups in Eastern Europe and provided invaluable feedback and references at a critical stage of writing. I want to convey my deep gratitude as well to Anton Weiss-Wendt, Fabian Jacobs, Stefan Benedik, Slawomir Kapralski, Tommaso Vitale, Gerhard Baumgartner, Michael Stewart, Jan Grill, and Márton Rövid.

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Finally, a few words to those people who have most meaningfully contributed to the intellectual roots of this project and the life I have created outside of it. Growing up in a family of Jewish Romanian immigrants I was confused early on about the meanings of “home,” difference and belonging, and the legacies of the Holocaust. For teaching me that life’s difficult questions are best approached through education, travel and debate, I am grateful to my parents, Daniel and Gabriela Blumer, and my sister, Irina Blumer.

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By valuing history, the arts and merriment far above material possessions, my aunt and uncle, Ficuţa and Mişu Herscovici, exposed me to the richness of a life driven by the pursuit of knowledge and passion. Their unexpected deaths during my years in grad school have given me an opportunity to think about “collective memory” and loss from a more personal perspective than what I was otherwise trying to make sense of in my dissertation. I dedicate this work to the memory of their lives.
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Abbreviations and translations

SPD – Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (left of centre)
CDU – Christliche Demokratische Union (right of centre)
CSU – Christliche Soziale Union (the Bavarian counterpart of the CDU)
FRG – Federal Republic of Germany
GDR – German Democratic Republic
SED – Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (Socialist Unity Party of Germany: State party of the former GDR)

Bundesregierung: Federal Government
Bundesrat: Upper House of Parliament
Bundestag: Lower House of Representatives
Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien (BKM): Federal Government Commission for Culture and the Media
Bundesministerium des Inneren (BMI): Federal Ministry of the Interior
Land-Berlin: Berlin city-state

Roma: self-appellation for group commonly labeled “Gypsy” [Zigeuner] by non-members (plural form)
Rom: singular male form
Romni: singular female form
Romani: adjective
Romanes/Romani: what is regarded as the standard language of the Roma people
Sinti: subgroup of the Roma, concentrated primarily in Germany and other countries of Western Europe (plural form)
Sinto: singular male form
Sintezza: singular female form
Gadje: Romanes word to denote non-Roma people
Porrajmos: Romanes word used by some activists and scholars to indicate the Nazi genocide of the Gypsies (equivalent to Hebrew word Shoah)

Commonly referenced newspapers:

Tageszeitung (Berlin daily, liberal) – TAZ
Tagesspiegel (Berlin daily, liberal) – TSP
Berliner Zeitung (liberal daily)
Süddeutsche Zeitung (Munich daily, liberal) – SZ
Frankfurter Rundschau (liberal daily) – FR
Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (conservative daily) – FAZ
Die Zeit (centrist weekly)
Focus (Munich weekly magazine, conservative)
Der Freitag (liberal weekly)
Deutsche Welle (Germany’s international broadcaster) – DW
CHAPTER ONE: Introduction and theoretical orientations

INTRODUCTION

Figure 1. Germany’s triangle of mixed memory A: Central Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe; B: Memorial to the Homosexuals Persecuted under the National Socialist Regime; C: Memorial to the Sinti and Roma Persecuted under the National Socialist Regime (Design: Nadine Blumer; Source: http://scribblemaps.com/)

The map of Berlin, featured above, in the area surrounding the Brandenburg Gate reveals a triangle of memory devoted to Germany’s three central national memorials for the victims of National Socialism. The triangle takes shape within a span of two kilometres in the city-centre and is constituted by the Central Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (inaugurated May 2005), the Memorial to the Homosexuals Persecuted under the National Socialist Regime (inaugurated May 2008), and the future site of the Memorial to
the Sinti and Roma Persecuted under the National Socialist Regime (unfinished).¹

Immediately, the positioning of these three memorials suggests that they are in some way related. The topographical view of the map alone, however, does not explain to us how it is that these memorials came to stand in geographic proximity to one another. Key historical and socio-political dynamics are indiscernible in the memory map above, that is, how they are now embedded in the “image’s symbolic codes” (Cosgrove and Daniels 1988:133), although they were fundamental in the formation of its current layout. Concealed are the complexities of the individual memorials’ interrelated genesis as well as ongoing evolution and thus, the realm in which the production of cultural meanings, social and political relations and identities, and the physical world converge.

Unexplained, for example, is that the seventeen-year long negotiations over the first central Holocaust memorial to be built in the reunified Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) ultimately gave way to the construction of a trio of central memorials in the nation’s capital. It was on 25 June 1999 that the Bundestag officially approved construction of a Central Holocaust Memorial for Jewish victims and separate memorials for Sinti & Roma victims and Homosexual victims (the latter two subsumed in the category “other victim groups”). These were deliberations rooted in long-standing debates across civil society and the political sphere over the comparability of suffering in the historiography of the Holocaust and concerned with questions such as: who can claim ownership of the Holocaust and what understanding of history does this propagate?

Neither does the map indicate how the memorial to the Jewish victims has become part of the “founding myth of the Berlin Republic” in the wake of re-unification and the geopolitical re-ordering it triggered in the once divided capital city (Assmanns in

¹ These are the official names of the three memorials, approved at different times by the Bundestag.
Assheuer and Lau 1998; see also Zimmerman 2007; Kirsch 2003). Debates over reunified Germany’s first and subsequent Holocaust memorials became national events and were rendered all the more contentious because of this specific socio-historical context (Carrier 2005; Till 2005; Gay 2003).

Nor do we see on the map the most recent development, in July 2009, when the German Bundestag passed legislation conferring full administrative control of the memorials to the homosexual and the Sinti & Roma victims to the Foundation for the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe so that all three memorials are now “integrated under one roof” (Drucksache 16/12976, 12 May 2009:4). That the three memorials are legally conjoined implicates the German State and thus, issues of German national identity into the triangular form as well; and confers an element of institutional authority to the way in which public memory of the Nazi persecution of the Jews, Sinti & Roma and homosexuals are related in the national narrative.

In sum, the information undetectable on, but in fact constitutive of the city’s memorial landscape is that the central and symbolic positioning of the memorials to the Sinti & Roma and to the homosexual victims is a direct result of prior negotiations and decisions reached between formal political actors, victim group representatives and citizen groups regarding the memorial for Jewish Holocaust victims and contentious debates about whom to label a victim of National Socialism. The relationship is also, in part at least, a reciprocal one. The standing of the memorial to the Jewish victims has been and continues to be influenced by the memory narratives and commemorative activities of other – that is, “non-dominant” – victim groups. Not only have the origins of the individual memorials been connected from the start, but the future development of the
three memorials is also circumscribed by their interrelationship and is closely connected to the geographical environment in which they stand.  

In Berlin’s brief history since reunification in 1990, much has been written about the capital city’s changing memorial landscape (see especially Jordan 2006; Till 2005; Ladd 1997). While many of these works have thoroughly and skillfully analyzed the reinstatement of Berlin as capital city and its relationship to the National-Socialist past, the focus has been guided largely by issues related to the Nazi persecution of the Jews, exemplified in point A of the memory map: the Central Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe. In this dissertation, I shift the analytical gaze to point C – the Memorial to the Sinti and Roma Persecuted under the National Socialist Regime – telling the story of a city’s reinstatement as capital, a nation’s renewed project of identity building and the role of a burdensome past from a less dominant and less known perspective. This is what Foucault (1977) refers to as “counter-memory,” a narrative that not only deviates from the dominant commemorative discourse but also seeks to “resist the disciplinary power of nationalist historiography” (cited in Olick and Robbins 1998:126) and “withstand official versions of historical continuity” (cited in Zemon-Davis and Starn 1989:2).

2 It is important for me to emphasize here that although I draw a clear line of distinction between the memory narratives of the Jews, the Sinti & Roma and the homosexuals, I am neither ruling out that overlap exists between the groups nor the notion that group boundaries – as I discuss in detail below – are dynamic constructs requiring continual scrutiny. There were of course Jewish homosexuals persecuted by the Nazis and, although I am not familiar with any documentation on the subject, homosexual Sinti & Roma or Jewish-Sinti & Roma. See Kleinberg (1983) for an important discussion on the intersectionality of Jewish and homosexual identity in post-Holocaust representation, and Ordover (1995) on the conflicting loyalties of homosexual Jews and the importance of alliance between the communities. This overlap between victim group identities played itself out in the concentration camps as well, most iconically in regard to the assemblage of triangles that variously categorized inmates were forced to wear (see my brief discussion on this in Chapter Six, n125).
There are important reasons for engaging in this type of project. To begin, the Romani people are typically excluded from discourses related to history/memory and place/migration. In the popular imagination, the media, as well as scholarly research, the Roma are perceived, defined and categorized as a people without memory, living always in the present time and unburdened by the weight of history (van Baar 2011; Kapralski 2010, 1997; Lemon 2000). Similarly, the cross-border movement of Romani people is often framed as functioning outside of legitimate processes of migration (Gay y Blasco 2008; Grill 2008; Matras 2000). In a time period when mobility and flexibility are often necessary for competition in the global labour force, historically based prejudices continue to link Romani re-settlement with the population’s so-called inherent nomadism and rootlessness. Such marginalizing discourses inevitably have material consequences. As Huub van Baar (2011) writes, Romani activists and organizations continue to face a number of obstacles both at the individual national- and EU- levels in their struggle to gain recognition for their people’s experience of genocide. These range from inadequate restitution payments, a hierarchization of victimhood, and direct or indirect Holocaust denial to multiple forms of discrimination and exclusions from societal institutions (1-2). In direct response to this, my dissertation charts the campaign for construction of a memorial in Berlin to the Sinti & Roma murdered under the National Socialists. I show how efforts by various ethnic leaders and activists to build the memorial reflect the importance they place on gaining “space” – physical or otherwise – in Germany’s (and Europe’s) grand historical narrative. The memorial project confirms that Roma leaders

3 Sinti & Roma refers specifically to the subset of the Roma (“Gypsy”) population that resides in Germany (and some other part of Western/Central Europe). Roma is thus a broader categorisation that includes a wide range of Roma subgroups. The labelling and categorization of this population is the subject of Chapter Two.
exercise agency in defining and mobilizing the cultural memory of their people, not least in order to stake a claim in the German nation. This challenges common assumptions that Roma are nomadic wanderers divested of any commitment or identification with national boundaries and history (see Lemon, 2000 and Gay y Blasco, 2008 who challenge these stereotypes; see Levinson and Sparkes’ 2004 ethnography, which reinforces these stereotypes). It is in response to these forms of persistent marginalization, and historical as well as scholarly omissions, that I have chosen to produce a “counter-memory” of the Holocaust in Western history. I do this through an analysis of how Germany has dealt with and represented the Nazi genocide of the Sinti & Roma, and in turn, how Sinti & Roma leaders, by way of a national memorial project, have struggled to root their history into Germany’s built environment and claim membership in the national body politic.

I include here a note about my use of terminology. The Central Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, since its inauguration in May 2005, has been commonly referred to as “the Holocaust Memorial.” While this shorthand unequivocally indicates the dominant status of a Jewish-centred Holocaust memory in the German public and political sphere – something that I do not intend to undermine – I will refer to the memorial as the “Jewish Holocaust Memorial” in order to minimize confusion with the two other national memorials under discussion throughout this dissertation: (hereafter) the Homosexual Memorial and the Sinti/Roma Memorial. But I also have a political rationale for doing this, namely, to articulate the forms of parity that do exist between the

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4 On the discrepancy between the official name of the (Jewish) Holocaust Memorial and its usage in popular discourse, see Salomon Korn in Frankfurter Rundschau, 1997. For general background information on the Holocaust Memorial, see Dekel (2009, 2008); Carrier (2005); Legewie and Meyer (2005). For a thorough overview of the media and political debates (1988-99) as well as details of the design competition, see Heimrod et al. (1999).
three national memorials dedicated to the victims of National Socialism.\(^5\) This constitutes one of the key objectives as well as conceptual contributions of this dissertation.\(^6\)

In the following section, I situate the Sinti/Roma Memorial project in the socio-political context in which it was first proposed and then present a chronological overview of the key themes and debates that have arisen during its many years of planning and construction. These include: the interlinked genesis and evolution of distinctive memorial projects; inter- and intra-group competition and victim hierarchy (a continuum of suffering based on the rank order of persecution experiences); the so-called singularity of the (Jewish) Holocaust and the limits of comparing it to other instances of genocide; spatial politics in the New Berlin/New Germany and attendant memorial politics; and finally, intragroup disputes over historical representation, ethnic nomenclature and ethno-national versus transnational minority identity.

\(^5\) As I will show, there are, of course, limits to the parity between these memorials and the standing of the memory of each group in the national narrative. It is for this reason that I leave the word “Holocaust” in the name of the memorial dedicated to Jewish victims but eliminate it from the name I assign to the memorials dedicated to the Sinti & Roma and homosexual victims. The word “Holocaust,” although it is applied to an increasing number of events having nothing to do with the Nazi genocide (typically written with a lowercase “h”), has been associated specifically with the Nazi genocide of six millions Jews since the 1960s. For discussion of the “Holocaust” terminology and the (disputed) range of its application, see Niewyk and Nicosia (2000), especially pp. 45-52. Although many Sinti & Roma activists use the word Holocaust as a way of emphasizing comparison between their experience and that of the Jews, others prefer the alternative Porrajmos, which indicates specifically the Nazi genocide of the Roma people. In the Romanes language it means “tearing apart” or “devouring,” and is used as an equivalent to the Hebrew term Shoah (Kenrick 2007:203). Use of the term Porrajmos, or porrajmos as it is also sometimes spelled, is however contested amongst Sinti & Roma activists and scholars. Throughout this dissertation I choose to use the terminology Nazi genocide of the Sinti & Roma (or Gypsies). Although not entirely neutral, it allows me to keep a distance from the politically charged “Holocaust” terminology. Wherever I do make a reference to the “Sinti & Roma Holocaust” it is meant to highlight the meaning attributed to it by the activists/ethnic leaders in question.

\(^6\) Note that I deal with the Homosexual Memorial only cursorily throughout this dissertation, that is, where it allows me to further my argument about Sinti & Roma memory – a rather helpful device seeing that the Sinti/Roma Memorial is yet to be completed. Since both memorials share equal status among Germany’s three national memorials dedicated to victims of National Socialism (as the two memorials dedicated to “other” victim groups) and are equally administered by the Foundation for the Jewish Holocaust Memorial, I suggest that is possible to refer to the Homosexual Memorial as a barometer of the eventual standing of the Sinti/Roma Memorial. I otherwise bracket off the topic, albeit a fascinating one in its own right. For a more thorough discussion of collective memory and memorialisation of the Nazi persecution of homosexuals in Germany, see Müller (2009); Jensen (2002); Pretzel (2002); Rahe (2000); von Bülow (2000); Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung (ed.) (1999); Hergemöller (1999).
I. CONTEXT AND CHRONOLOGY OF DEBATES: AN OVERVIEW

In Germany, a country that has experienced a “memory boom” (Jordan 2006; Winter 2006; Till 2005; Bell 2003; Bodemann 2002) or perhaps even “monument fatigue” (Langebacher and Eigler 2005), the memorial politics regarding the genocide of the Sinti & Roma, in contrast, can more accurately be described in terms of a Lücke der Erinnerung – a gap of remembrance in the national historical narrative of persecution. Official recognition of the Nazi genocide of Sinti & Roma occurred in 1982, and well into the 1990s, German public and political life was rife with debates about the legitimacy of comparing the Nazi persecution of Sinti & Roma with that of the Jews. These debates were rooted in longstanding controversies regarding the “singularity thesis,” according to which the Jewish Holocaust occupies a special place in the history of genocide, which thus makes it impossible for other victim groups to claim a similar experience of persecution and suffering (Stone 2004; Rosenfeld 1999; Churchill 1997; Marrus 1997; Goldhagen 1996; Rosenbaum 1996; Stannard 1996; Bauer 1978).8

In January 1989, Lea Rosh, a non-Jewish German publicist and media personality, along with Eberhard Jäckel, a German historian of National Socialism, published a

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7 The discourse of “monument fatigue” is especially pervasive in the mainstream German media, with article titles in Der Spiegel such as: “How many more monuments for Berlin?” (2008); “Can Berlin handle any more memorials?” (2007); “Inflation of Memory: Berlin in Memorial Fever…” (2007); “One [memorial] on every corner” (1995); and from the Berliner Zeitung, “Memorial: One is Always Missing” (2006); and Focus, “Holocaust Memorials: a Surfeit of Abundance” (1995). Note, however, that party members of the centre-right Christian Democratic Union (CDU) articulated a similar discourse of “memory inflation” throughout the 1990s as a means of opposing construction in Berlin of a Central Holocaust Memorial and additional memorials to other victim groups. I discuss this in more detail in Chapter Six.

petition in the name of their newly established citizens’ initiative group, *Perspective Berlin*. In it, they called for the construction of a memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe – a “confession to the crime made visible” [*sichtbar gemachte Bekenntnis zur Tat*] (cited in Heimrod et al. 1999:49) – that would affirm Germany’s atonement for its National Socialist past. Prominent political and cultural figures, such as former Chancellor Willy Brandt and Nobel Prize laureate Günter Grass were among the many other signatories of the petition. It was also in this developmental phase of the central Holocaust memorial that fierce debates about representation of the past and acknowledgment of genocide (re-)surfaced in the popular, political and academic spheres of German society. The catalyst was a full-page petition published in the German daily, *Der Tagesspiegel*, by Romani Rose, chairperson of the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma (hereafter: Sinti/Roma Central Council). Rose argued that, “the Holocaust also means the annihilation of 500,000 Sinti and Roma” (11 April 1989). Two weeks later, Rose published a similar petition in *die Zeit* newspaper demanding the inclusion of the Sinti & Roma victims into the same memorial. Any other outcome, he wrote, would indicate a “hierarchy of victims” (28 April 1989).

The inception of the Sinti/Roma Memorial project thus emerged as a direct response to the citizens’ initiative for a Central Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, thereby connecting the biographies and emergent narratives of both memorials from the very beginning. Rose’s petitions in particular would also launch a new phase of contestation over the Nazi genocide’s uniquely Jewish character, and the moral and political responsibility of the German state toward acknowledging past injustice committed against “other” victim groups. Arguably, we can regard the memorial

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9 Translated from the German. All translations by author unless otherwise noted.
campaign of the Sinti/Roma Central Council as having instigated the most hotly- and widely-disputed points of contention in the planning phase of reunified Germany’s first national Holocaust memorial(s) and thus, issues pertaining to the commemoration of Jewish victims in contemporary German society and the state’s own ability at dealing with its problematic past.

In 1992, Rose’s campaign for a shared memorial was undermined by the decision of the Ministry of the Interior to erect separate memorials to the two victim groups. The Sinti/Roma Central Council responded by changing its demands from a shared memorial to a shared memorial site. This plan was ultimately quashed as well – months later in the wake of controversy surrounding Chancellor Helmut Kohl’s (CDU) re-dedication of Berlin’s Neue Wache monument. Initially built in 1816-18 as a guardhouse for the Prussian king, the Neue Wache was later redesigned as the Weimar Republic’s national World War One monument. It was then transformed into the Third Reich’s memorial of honour, and after World War Two, the Socialist Unity Party (SED) of East Germany rededicated the monument, located in Berlin’s Soviet-occupied zone, to the “victims of fascism” (Till 1999). In 1993, Kohl once again rededicated the monument, this time as “the Federal Republic of Germany’s central site of commemoration for all victims of war and tyranny.” He was immediately accused of attempting to whitewash Nazi crimes by recasting the monument as a universal symbol of suffering that equated victims and perpetrators of Nazism to one another, as well as of suggesting a parallel between the

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10 Much has been written about the distinction between monuments and memorials. The former is often associated with the flourishing trend in nineteenth century Europe of celebrating and glorifying war heroes and martyrs (most commonly in the name of the nation-state), while the latter is regarded as a symbol for death and other tragic events (Danto 1987). The distinction, however, is not so unambiguous (Marschall 2006; Young 1993). For consistency’s sake, however, I will use the word “memorial” throughout this work unless the official name of the structure in question specifies that it is a monument, as with the Neue Wache above.
Third Reich and the SED-government (Jarausch and Geyer 2003:335). One of the ways in which Kohl attempted to counter the public backlash that resulted was to appease the interests of one of his harshest critics, the Central Council of Jews in Germany (Koselleck 1998). He thus mandated the construction of a free-standing, central Holocaust memorial dedicated exclusively to Jewish victims. Soon after, the Bundestag committed €2 million toward the construction of a separate memorial for the Sinti & Roma victims on a detached parcel of land, donated by the city of Berlin, that lies between the Brandenburg Gate and the Reichstag.

On 25 June 1999, questions regarding reunified Germany’s first national Holocaust memorial(s) were debated in a special session of parliament, at which point the German Bundestag officially approved construction of a Central Holocaust Memorial for Jewish victims and separate memorials for “all of the other victims of the National Socialist crimes against humanity” (Plenarprotokoll 14/48, 1999:4128). At the same session of parliament, political leaders resolved to supplement the Jewish Holocaust Memorial with a belowground Place of Information (PI), whose mandate included integrating the representation of non-Jewish victim groups into its exhibition space. Delegates also voted to establish the Foundation for the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe – a state-funded institution whose charter committed it to realizing the construction of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial, overseeing the maintenance and administration of the complex upon completion, and finally, “ensuring the dignified commemoration of all victims of National Socialism in an appropriate form” (Drucksache 14/1238, 25 June 1999, §3; emphasis added). These concessions would allow the state to claim its commitment to a decentralized ideology of commemoration,
that is, a democratic form of remembering that, among other things, also acknowledges a more heterogeneous range of histories.

Although the prominent location in between the Reichstag and the Brandenburg Gate had been approved for construction of the Sinti/Roma Memorial in 1994, following the Bundestag Resolution in 1999, several federal-level as well as Land-Berlin (municipal) politicians attempted to halt the construction of a memorial for the Sinti & Roma in Berlin altogether. Instead, they pushed for a peripheral location in Marzahn, an outer suburb of Berlin. The most vocal advocate of this plan, then-Berlin mayor Eberhard Diepgen (CDU), claimed that the Berlin Senate had never drafted a legally binding decree confirming the central location of the Sinti/Roma Memorial. Diepgen insisted on Marzahn because of the historical authenticity of the site – it had functioned as an internment camp for Sinti & Roma residents of Berlin from 1936 until the start of World War Two, at which point it was transformed into an evacuation point for transferring prisoners to extermination camps across Nazi-occupied Europe. It was also out of fear of “inundating” Berlin with “history’s dark side” that Diepgen was so steadfast about a memorial location outside of the capital city (Diepgen 1994). After years of debate that involved Germany’s formal political establishment, civil society interest groups and various leaders of the Sinti & Roma population, the Bundestag, in December 2007, finally confirmed the site between the Brandenburg Gate and the Reichstag as binding for the future location of the Sinti/Roma Memorial (*Drucksache* 905/07, 20 December 2007).

During roughly the same period of time, the founding in 2000 of the *Sinti Allianz* (hereafter: *Allianz*), an independent umbrella organization, equally compromised plans for the Sinti/Roma Memorial. Natasha Winter, the *Allianz* chairperson, emphasized the
need for a new organization in order to destabilize the dominance of the Sinti/Roma Central Council in the country’s ethnic politics (personal interview, 2007). Her primary concern was that the Central Council’s mandate is focused almost exclusively on the German Sinti & Roma population and thus its plans for the memorial largely excluded Roma from other parts of Europe. A respectful commemoration of the Nazi genocide, in her view, would have to involve a dedication to the “Zigeuner” (Gypsies) of Europe. According to Winter, Zigeuner is a more all-encompassing label since it subsumes other Gypsy victim groups (e.g. Jenische, Manush, Lowara and Kale) otherwise not captured by the narrower Sinti & Roma label. “Zigeuner were deported from eleven European countries,” says Winter. “How can we erect a memorial for the [German] Sinti and Roma alone?” (Personal interview 2007).

Winter also opposed historical comparison between the genocide of the Jews and the Gypsies. Disputes centred primarily on the desire of the Sinti/Roma Central Council to include a quote in the memorial structure from former German president Roman Herzog in which he had compared the fate of Jewish and Sinti & Roma victims. This argument was extensively covered in the media and went on for years, ultimately to be resolved in 2007 by the German Federal Commission for Culture and the Media Affairs (Bundesministerium für Kultur und Medien. Hereafter: BKM). Herzog’s quote will not be placed in the centre of the memorial but it will be integrated into the chronology of the Nazi persecution of the Sinti & Roma, to be displayed on a separate series of panels at the memorial site. The official name of the memorial – Memorial to the Sinti and Roma Persecuted under the National Socialist Regime – was decided at the same session of the Bundestag in which the location of the memorial was confirmed (Drucksache 905/07, 20
December 2007). While the word “Zigeuner” was not approved for use in the memorial’s name, it will be incorporated into the chronology text where historically relevant.

It was not until an official state ceremony in December 2008, when ground was broken and the first components of the memorial structure were secured into the soil, that the patch of land alongside the Reichstag could confidently be claimed as the site of the Sinti/Roma Memorial. Since then, however, a number of disagreements over construction materials, safety issues and technical difficulties have unexpectedly delayed completion of the memorial project a number of times. At the time of writing the latest media reports state that the memorial’s architect, Israeli Dani Karavan, is threatening to walk away from the project because of a lack of cooperation from city building and planning officials, which he sees as a challenge to his creative freedom (Spiegel, December 2010).

Both the Foundation for the Jewish Holocaust Memorial (the administrative caretaker of the Sinti/Roma Memorial since July 2009) and the BKM (the branch of government responsible for all memorial projects in the country) refused to disclose the expected inauguration date at the time of writing (April 2011).

**Summary and relevance of debate**

The memorial debates outlined above, and which I flesh out in subsequent chapters are the main concern of this dissertation – the case which allows me to illustrate the entangled and spatial dimensions in which memory – and thus identities – are shaped, enacted and institutionalized. Specifically, I argue that the planning and construction of the Sinti/Roma Memorial reflects an encounter between competing identity projects in a period of profound national and global (European) social transformation, accompanied as
well by the “rapid urban change” that has characterized Berlin in the wake of reunification (Jordan 2006:94).

Foote and Azaryahu (2007) refer to the temporality or chronology of commemorative practices, suggesting that commemoration takes on increased meaning, occurs more quickly and thus more discordantly, in moments of state formation or, as in the case here, in periods of state re-formation (see Marschall, 2006 on post-Apartheid South Africa; Brubaker and Feischmidt, 2002 on postsocialist Hungary; Verdery, 1999 on postsocialist Romania and Yugoslavia). As the German nation has sought to rewrite itself in the wake of reunification and the end of the Cold War, we have also witnessed the emergence of new victim group consciousness and thus, new forms of victim competition and hierarchy. While memory of the Jewish Holocaust has dominated (West) Germany’s historical narrative since about the early 1960s onwards (Alexander 2002; Levy and Sznaider 2002), recent decades have seen two major shifts. First, there have been increasing forms of victim group mobilization from other groups persecuted by the National Socialists as they struggle to attain the symbolic and material benefits of official state apology and recognition. Second, following reunification in 1990, Germany has had to find ways of incorporating memory of the communist dictatorship into its national imaginary and official politics of commemoration (Drucksache 16/9875, 19 June 2008; King and Fahlbush 2004; Jarausch and Geyer 2003). This has required reconciling the ideology of anti-fascism that reigned in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) with the

11 Among other things, these forms of mobilization have resulted in historical and scholarly accounts of the Nazi persecution of non-Jewish victim groups. On the topic of euthanasia victims, see Fuchs et al., 2007 and Götz et al., 1994; on the topic of homosexuals, see Müller, 2009 and Pretzel, 2002; on Jehovah’s Witnesses, see Garbe 2007, Hesse 2001, Milton 2001 and Lautmann 1990. While some of these activities predate reunification – going back to the “memory boom” era of the 1980s – they took on increasing significance in the wake of reunification (Jordan 2006).
dominant ideology of anti-communism in the FRG (Herf 1997). The practice of decentralizing memory, which dates back to the FRG’s memory “boom” in the 1980s, would become pivotal in the reunified state as politicians and citizens alike sought out more democratic approaches to commemoration. These included bringing attention to a broader range of local/regional histories and experiences of victimhood, building memorials on “authentic” sites of persecution/victimization, and redirecting commemorative activities from the jurisdiction of the state alone to civic society (Jordan 2006). These developments underscore the influence of existing memory paradigms and the political culture of the commemorating society in question (Vinitizky-Seroussi 2002; see also Assmann 2007; Bunzl 1996; Young 1993).

The questions guiding this dissertation are two-fold. First, how has the dominant status of the Jewish Holocaust in Germany’s historical narrative influenced the construction of a memory narrative of the genocide of the Sinti & Roma? What, if any, influence have the commemorative practices of the Sinti & Roma had on the way Germany commemorates the Jewish victims? What does this tell us about the ways in which collective memory of different victim groups and the state are related in the public and political field? Second, what spaces are available to marginalized groups seeking to stake a claim and affirm their membership in the national body politic, and how do theories of ethnicity, memory and cultural geography help us understand how these spaces are negotiated, contested and claimed?

I address these research questions specifically vis-à-vis the planning of the Sinti/Roma Memorial, situating them in the context of historiographical debates that have taken place in the postwar period over the comparability of the (Jewish) Holocaust to
other experiences of genocide. These debates are important because they defined the German commemorative environment in which Sinti & Roma activists began their project of ethnic mobilization in the 1970s. This was a struggle rooted largely in a politics of redress and recognition for the Nazi genocide committed three decades prior. In the wake of German reunification, these debates over the Holocaust’s uniqueness and hierarchies of victimhood have only gained currency, resonating loudly in the country’s political culture of commemoration.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Two theoretical frameworks inform this discussion of the Sinti & Roma Memorial project and the ethnic politics undergirding it. First, I outline a model for conceptualizing ethnicity with respect to identity formation, narrating the past and ethnic mobilization. I draw on Joane Nagel’s (1994) constructivist model, which presents ethnicity as a composite process of identity- and cultural- production. This framework focuses on the interplay between the state, ethnic groups and society at large in defining ethnicity. Its underlying mechanisms entail: (1) a process of constructing and positioning boundaries (i.e. defining who we are); and (2) strategic uses and articulations of culture and history (i.e. providing the content and meaning of what we are).

The second framework, entangled memory, overlaps with Nagel’s discussion of memory as a form of cultural production but allows me to further conceptualize the spatial dimensions of the memorial-building process in the geographic and discursive spaces of the nation. Based on Marita Sturken’s (1997) assertion that “memories and histories are often entangled, conflictual, and co-constitutive” (43), the entangled
memory framework consists of two dialectically-related components: (1) it refers to the conflictual interlinking of dominant memory and oppositional forms of memory in the public sphere (Popular Memory Group 1998); (2) it is multidirectional, in that the subjects and spaces of public memory are defined not only by a competition of victimhood but also as a product of influence and exchange (Rothberg 2009).

This dissertation is thus about the relationship between (1) minority group mobilization, and the extent to which minority groups negotiate and articulate identity alongside and against other minority groups and the state (Pero 2008; see also Bodemann and Yurdakul 2008; Kastoryano 2002); and (2) the spatial politics of collective remembering, that is, the processes of defining and constructing historical narratives in the public sphere and transmitting them through physical structures such as memorials (Bell 2003).

Conceptualizing ethnicity and categorizing difference

Ethnic identity and culture emerge out of dynamic and dialectical processes involving a variety of actors (internal and external to the group in question) and the interplay of macro-social forces (e.g. social, economic, political). This constructivist view of ethnicity sheds light on the roots of (inter- and intra-) ethnic conflict, mobilization, resurgence and change (Nagel 1994:153); it departs from classical theories that otherwise posit essentialist and rigid notions of ethnic identity and culture. Joane Nagel’s (1994) model of ethnicity is most instructive in this regard and is based in two overlapping principles which guide my discussion throughout this dissertation about the evolution and objectives of the Sinti/Roma Memorial project: (1) ethnic boundaries determine identity
options, membership composition and size, and forms of ethnic organization. They answer the question who are we? (2) Culture supplies the content and meaning of ethnicity, answering the question what are we? It is what “animates and authenticates ethnic boundaries by providing a history, ideology, symbolic universe, and system of meaning” (Ibid:162). Accordingly, the definition of ethnic identity that I apply comes from Polletta and Jasper’s (2001) broader discussion of collective identity, which focuses on elements of constructionism, relationality, membership (inclusion/exclusion) and agency. They argue:

Collective identity describes imagined as well as concrete communities, involves an act of perception and construction as well as the discovery of preexisting bonds, interests, and boundaries. It is fluid and relational, emerging out of interactions with a number of different audiences (bystanders, allies, opponents, news media, state authorities), rather than fixed. It channels words and actions, enabling some claims and deeds but delegitimating others. It provides categories by which individuals divide up and make sense of the social world (298).

**Boundaries: contraction and expansion**

Frederik Barth (1969) first defined the concept of ethnic boundaries in order to explain how groups demarcate who belongs and who does not based on the perception of difference between them. The phenomenon of ethnic boundaries emphasizes that the content within the group boundary (e.g. culture) is not fixed but changes according to historical and political context, and is dependent on negotiations between various social and political actors.

The [cultural] features that are taken into account are not the sum of ‘objective’ differences, but only those which the actors themselves regard as significant… In other words, ethnic categories provide an organizational vessel that may be given varying amounts and forms of content in different socio-cultural systems (Barth 1969:14).

Ethnicity in this regard is “a matter of social categorization (and identification), rather
than a feature of the cultural world itself” (Wimmer 2007:9) and thus, exists in a constant state of negotiation and redefinition between a variety of actors and their interactions with society at large.

In order to show how the construction of ethnic group identity actually takes place, I refer to Andreas Wimmer’s (2008) typology of boundary shifting, which entails the opposing (but not mutually-exclusive) mechanisms of boundary contraction and boundary expansion. The former explains how actors may reduce the range of a group’s members by “promot[ing] narrower boundaries than those already established in the social landscape” while the latter refers to the process of creating “a more encompassing boundary by grouping existing categories into a new, expanded category” (987).

Boundary expansion has also been conceptualized in the ethnicity literature as a form of “pan-ethnicity,” what Yen-Le Espiritu (1992) describes as the process of subsuming distinctive ethnic or national identities into an all-encompassing group label (e.g. Chinese, Filipino and Korean immigrants in the US identifying as Asian American). Espiritu’s analysis shows how groups can (and do) strategically dismantle and re-align ethnic boundaries in order to maximize access to political and material resources.

Broadly conceived, the boundary shifting typology helps to explain the intimate link between identity construction (or re-construction), and the role of both ethnic leaders and state actors. Absent from much of the ethnicity literature, but equally important, are the ways in which different minority/ethnic groups in the same national context interact with and influence each other, be it in the form of cooperation and/or contest (exceptions are Bodemann and Yurdakul 2008; Kastroyano 2002). Rounding out the picture is the notion of ideological labour, which explains the ways in which minority groups help to
shape and define a state’s political and symbolic identity and in the process, affirm their own membership in the nation (Bodemann 1990).

In sum, a diverse range of social actors (ethnic leaders from within and outside of the group, formal political leaders, members of civil society) participate in shaping ethnic boundaries in relation to and sometimes up against one another; state or local policies and the distribution of resources also factor in to the process of ethnic boundary production.

**Culture: narrating the past and mobilizing along ethnic lines**

As various actors engage in contracting and/or expanding the ethnic boundary, and thus identity, attention must also be paid to the ways in which they construct and then use culture within and across the boundaries of ethnicity. I pre-empt this discussion with a note on my use of the word “construction” (which may also be regarded as a synonym for “invention”), borrowed from Polish sociologist Slawomir Kapralski (1997):

The word ‘construction’ does not mean here the forgery of historical artifacts. Construction means, rather, standardizing the symbolic meanings of events in the group’s history; and the narrative of these events, as representing the particular logic or principle which had formed the group’s past, has an influence on its present, and will determine its future (280).

Culture is here defined according to Ann Swidler (1986) who writes that it “consists of such symbolic vehicles of meaning, including beliefs, ritual practices, art forms, and ceremonies, as well as informal cultural practices such as language, gossip, stories, and rituals of daily life” (273). As the substance of ethnic group identity, culture has three specific purposes: it is used to form shared meaning among group members; cultural forms such as mythology and history engender community solidarity; and redefinitions of historical and other cultural symbols can fuel collective action along ethnic lines (Nagel
1994:152). Clearly, culture and its production have much to do with how groups articulate the past for present purposes of identity formation and mobilization.

The construction of history and culture is a major task facing all ethnic groups, particularly those that are newly forming or resurgent. In constructing culture, the past is a resource used by groups in the collective quest for meaning and community (Ibid:163).

In this regard, ethnic identities belong to that “potent set of social arrangements in which people construct shared stories about who they are, how they are connected, and what has happened to them” (Tilly 2003:608). Margaret Somers (1994) uses the term “narrative identity” in order to describe how social identities are constituted through the process of narrating one’s (collective) identity, and takes place in networks which are both dynamic and relational.

Similar processes take place in the construction of national identity, another key component of my research.12 Homi Bhabha (1990) writes that nations use narratives of the past as a form of story-telling in order to impart to its members who they are and where they come from. The construction of national identity thus inevitably involves fabricating “authenticity” by reshaping or even inventing the past (Smith 1999; Anderson 1991; Connerton 1989; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). The process of creating the illusion of shared roots and thus, national (or even supra-national) unity, does not necessarily have to draw on (or invent) the “glorious” past but can in fact emerge from a “negative founding myth.” This term has been introduced in the growing literature on

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12 The distinction between ethnic and national identity is not always a clear one; there is a vast literature that deals with this relationship, starting most meaningfully with Max Weber (1968[1922]). For the purpose of my research I use the term “ethnic group” to refer to a minority/immigrant populations in majority society, while my discussion of “national identity” corresponds to the political community of majority society that perceives a common historic culture and territory (Smith 1991). Note as well that while the differences between ethnic identity and minority identity are politically as well as theoretically relevant (Kymlika 1995), I use these terms interchangeably. I do elaborate on the significance of minority identity in Chapter Two as it pertains to the political status of the Sinti & Roma in Germany.
European identity to suggest that it is memory of the Jewish Holocaust that serves as Europe’s (and Germany’s) common source of identification (Diner 2003; see also Leggewie 2009; Levy and Sznajder 2002; Assmann 2007).

Narrating the past is as much about forgetting as it is about remembering. Vera Zolberg (1998) explains how nations rely on historical constructionism (e.g. “mythmaking”) in order to support claims to their sovereignty (old and new nationalisms):

For some scholars, nationalism is largely an exercise in mythmaking to legitimate political arrangements that support regimes. They have demonstrated that what seems like contemporary national unity often cloaks a legacy of dissension among peoples making up a nation state (569).

The “cloaking of dissension” that Zolberg refers to – the process of collective forgetting or, more deliberately, ignoring – is central to defining the parameters of national membership and thus, the nation-building project (Renan 1882; see also Dalsheim 2004; Trouillot 1995; Anderson 1983). Certain historical events, pose a threat to national identity and thus, state-sanctioned forms of forgetting are required in order to maintain a particular (e.g. unifying, positive) image of the nation:

The preoccupation with the past is, however, less about a paradise lost than skeletons in the closet. The past threatens to penetrate the contemporary social and political scene, to change the hegemonic narrative, to encourage new voices, to demand justice and recognition (Vinitzky-Seroussi 2002:31).

Remembering and forgetting are thus two sides of the same coin; they are equally necessary in order to delimit the boundaries of national identity and thus, membership to the body politic. “It is not just that we remember as members of groups,” writes Olick (1999), “but that we constitute those groups and their members simultaneously in the act (thus re-membering)” (342). Forgetting implies the opposite: exclusion. This plays itself out most severely when a nation “forgets” its past crimes as this facilitates the persistence
of political and socio-economic deprivation and violence across time (Connerton 2008).

The production of culture also corresponds to processes of ethnic/collective mobilization and thus, places emphasis on the agency exercised by ethnic leaders and activists. Or, as Swidler (1986) affirms, “strategies of action are cultural products” (284). Activists construct and then use cultural symbols, images and icons for various forms of collective action such as redefining or transforming collective identity, and protesting and raising awareness of existing forms of discrimination and injustice. Notably, ethnic movements “often challenge negative hegemonic ethnic images and institutions by redefining the meaning of ethnicity in appealing ways or by using cultural symbols to effectively dramatize grievances and demands” (Nagel 1994:166).

Frame alignment, a concept borrowed from the social movements literature, describes from where these cultural symbols come, and how they are made salient and then put into practice. Authors such as Snow and Benford (1992, 1988) and Gamson (1992) explain how movement leaders participate in acts of cultural appropriation by drawing on highly resonant themes or “collective action frames” and attempt to associate these with their main goals. Similarly, the concept of cultural repertoires refers to the “capacities from which varying strategies of action may be constructed (Swidler 1986:284): it is “not only what people do when they make a claim; it is what they know how to do and what society has come to expect them to choose to do from within a culturally sanctioned and empirically limited set of options” (Tilly cited in Tarrow 1995:91). In this way, the construction of culture and meaning is in fact “a type of joint labor, a social production among and between actors that involves agreement, dissension,
and ambiguity – sometimes minor, but at times considerable – which is always partly anticipatory, ongoing, and contains echoes of past usages” (Steinberg 1999:745).

Collective memories are among the cultural symbols and repertoires that movements might use in order to define boundaries, construct a sense of shared identity and bring attention to experiences of injustice (McAdam 1994). In Western culture, it is collective memory of the (Jewish) Holocaust in particular that has emerged as “a familiar historical template evoking profound emotional associations” and an especially “resonant ‘collective action frame’ for contemporary social movements” (Stein 1998:523; see also MacDonald 2005; Jensen 2002).

Bodemann and Yurdakul (2008) discuss the implications of this in contemporary German society. They employ the concept of cultural repertoire in their discussion of Jewish-Turkish relations, and show how this corresponds to the ideological labour, or function, performed by Jews in Germany. Specifically, they distinguish between Jews – “historically and culturally pivotal” – and Turks – newly arrived immigrants – in order to suggest that the former are “bearers of national memory,” while the latter “are not (yet)” (78). Turks or, as in the case of my research, persistently marginalized minorities such as the Sinti & Roma negotiate their membership in majority society by orienting their strategies of collective action to the model or cultural repertoire defined by more politically established and recognized minorities, such as the Jews (see also Yurdakul 2010; Kastoryano 2002; Peck 1998).

13 Hirsch and Spitzer (2009) suggest as well that the Jewish Holocaust has defined much of the memory literature, describing it as the “touchstone for the study of twentieth century memory and catastrophe (152).

14 My claim that Jews in contemporary Germany enjoy a certain privileged status – much of it based on how their experience of victimization has been iconicized (Alexander 2002) – is not meant to disregard the reality that many Jews continue to experience various forms of discrimination. The dominance of Jewish memory in Germany is regarded by some as one of the causes of that discrimination. As Carrier (2005) writes: “there exists a danger that Holocaust remembrance and its recurrent echoes in contemporary anti-Semitism prevent the construction of a positive German-Jewish tradition or identity in Germany today” (27. See also Gilman 1999).
Ethnic leaders/activists are thus “both consumers of existing cultural meanings and producers of new meanings” (Tarrow 1992:189).

I apply these key concepts from the ethnicity framework – boundary shifting, ethnic categorization, ethnic politics and mobilization, ideological labour, and the construction and use of historical narratives (remembering and forgetting) – first to my discussion of the European Roma ethnogenesis and then to its particular iteration in the German context of Sinti & Roma politics of commemoration. The link between boundary construction and historical narratives also informs my discussion of the German project of nation-building following reunification in 1990. Central to this is the extent to which memory of the Jewish Holocaust dominates the country’s changing culture of commemoration and the space(s) now available for previously ignored victim groups, such as the Sinti & Roma.

**Conceptualizing memory and its spatiality**

The model of ethnicity that I have presented here is a multifaceted one. Nagel’s (1994) framework shows us that in order to understand the processes of identity and cultural production, we must look at a variety of fields, including ethnic politics, the construction and instrumental uses of history, cultural repertoires and collective action frames, and the interactions between different actors and society at large. In order to analyze the coming-into-being of a memorial, itself a cultural product, it is equally necessary to consider the multiple spaces in which actors negotiate its development and struggle to finalize its construction. The concept of collective memory, attributed to French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, and its particular application in sociology and cultural geography, allows me
to do this. Halbwachs wrote about the social – as opposed to individual – basis and manifestation of remembering, emphasizing in particular that “every collective memory unfolds within a spatial framework” (1992[1950]:6). “We recapture the past,” he wrote, “only by understanding how it is, in effect, preserved by our physical surroundings. It is to space - the space we occupy, traverse, have continual access to, or can at any time reconstruct in thought and imagination - that we must turn our attention” (7).

The spaces I am interested in are geographic spaces like a city square displaying a plaque or memorial, or an exhibit in a museum. Memorials, for example, are a particular kind of mnemonic device or icon that can transform “ordinary space” into landscape, what cultural geographers regard as a culturally loaded site (Osborne 2001). Geographic space, however, is not limited to the built environment alone but refers as well to symbolic constructs, such as maps (cartographic space) or street names and addresses, which not only represent a certain geographic reality, but are themselves “potent instruments in shaping that very reality” (Hoelscher 2009:136). Linked to these geographic and symbolic spaces are the rhetorical or dialogical spaces in which memory is produced and transmitted (Carrier 2005; Bruner 2002; Young 1993). The latter category refers to the discursive spaces in which textual and verbal communication – be it through the mass media, in public debates, petitions and government speeches – constitute a form of public memory in their own right. These two categories of memory space – geographic and discursive – are intimately linked and mutually constitutive.

Thus, even when the focus is on monuments and memorial sites – unequivocally physical

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15 I use the term “landscape” interchangeably with “place,” drawing on the poststructuralist definition from cultural geography that conceives of these sites as “storehouses” of as well as “vehicles” for cultural meaning (Hoelscher 2009; Whelan 2001; Cosgrove and Daniels 1988). Space, by contrast, is a more neutral and abstract designation, rendered meaningful depending on the qualifier preceding it (e.g. geographic space, virtual space). For a concise discussion of the distinction between space and place, see Gieryn 2000.
realms – we must also consider how the material existence of a monument or site is preceded by public participation in debates over its construction (Carrier 2005:5). This is what James Young (2003) refers to as the “biography of a monument” approach, which seeks “to make visible the activity of memory in monuments” (14; see also Carrier 2005; Bunzl 1995). In addition to these memory spaces, I will also turn my attention to the significance of virtual space, an in-between realm of physical existence and visual culture, which simulates and thus acts as a kind of proxy of the three-dimensional world (cf. Feldman 2007). Planners of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial chose to expand into virtual space so that they could adhere to the mandate of integrating “other” victim groups into an otherwise physically constrained memorial/exhibition space.

Finally, as mentioned, the memorials and memorial debates under consideration here are situated in one overarching type of space, namely, the urban space of the capital-city Berlin. In order to thoroughly “read” a landscape and the metaphors it produces (Duncan and Duncan 1998; Duncan 1990; Natter and Jonos 1993), it must be recognized that “some urban landscapes are more overtly symbolic than others, depending on the context in which they are shaped” (Whelan 2001:12). MacCannel (1992) maintains that the meaning and symbolism of the Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial in Washington, DC is inseparable from its location in the US capital city, and by extension, nationalist politics. There are many other scholars who have written about the particular relationship between capital cities and memory, mostly in regards to the role of the capital city as a carrier of national(ist) memory and identity (Cochrane 2006; Cochrane and Passmore 2001; A similar approach is taken by Jackie Feldman (2007) who refers to the “career” of memorial sites in order to interpret the palimpsest of historical narratives upon which memorials are built. See also Wagner-Pacifi and Schwartz (1991) who analyze the “monument-making process” of the Vietnam War Veteran’s Memorial in Washington, DC.
Vinitzky-Seroussi 1998; Wagner-Pacifi and Schwartz 1991). “The capital district,” writes White (2006) “is a special kind of place—a place with an aura. If not exactly ‘sacred,’ it is a space defined by its obvious monumentality and historical depth” (50). Capital cities – their memorial landscape(s) in particular – are thus places where we mark the history (and hegemony) of the nation, the repository of a nation’s memory and identity, and the vehicle through which the nation is ultimately narrated and in some cases, potentially destabilized.

The entangled memory framework, which I propose here expands on the ways in which memory is conceptualized in the ethnicity framework by affirming the relational workings of these multiple spaces (geographic, symbolic, cartographic, discursive, virtual, urban, etc…). Entangled memory bridges two orientations in the memory literature: (1) memory as conflict-driven: the competitive relationship between dominant and oppositional forms of memory in the public sphere; and (2) memory as multidirectional: a process of remembering that emerges out of reciprocity and cooperation between different memory narratives. At first glance, these two components of entangled memory appear contradictory as one is conflict-driven and the other emphasizes borrowing and exchange. It is, however, only by considering these two facets in tandem that we can sufficiently understand how memorial projects are negotiated, debated and built in(to) the multiple spaces of the city and the nation. This framework also allows us to explain how marginalized groups may stake a claim in dominant historical narratives and thereby affirm their membership in the nation.

My use of the term “dominant” corresponds to Gramsci’s (2005[1971]) discussion of hegemony, whereby power (of one social group or idea over another) although
perceived to be “natural,” is not in fact a stable entity but a “moving equilibrium.”

Gramsci’s focus on struggle allows me to argue that cultural products – memory narratives, memorials, strategies of collective action – may be used as mechanisms for resistance or counter-hegemony in which positions of power or domination are constantly open to reinterpretation. The *entangled memory* framework explains how such transformation occurs in a dialectical process marked by conflict and reciprocity.

**Dominant versus oppositional forms of memory**

In the social sciences, theorists conceptualize collective memory – its construction, its enactment – as conflictual and competitive. As Olick and Robbins (1998) write, memory is a process (not a thing or object) that operates in specific social institutions and is linked to classic sociological issues such as power, stratification and contestation (122). The way in which various forms of memory come together in the public field emerges out of a “potential struggle and contest over whose conception of the past will prevail” (Alderman and Dwyer 2009:54; see also Whelan 2001). As such, collective remembering is defined as “a process of negotiation in which the narratives of different interest groups collide and interact, giving rise to competing ‘memories’” (Stone 2002:167).

Most commonly, “contests” such as these reflect “the dominance of national memory over other memories [and] thus not only excludes other contestants for control over the national identity but maintains the primacy of national over other kinds of identity for primary allegiance” (Olick and Robbins 1998:127). *Dominant memory* refers to “the power and pervasiveness of historical representations, their connections with dominant institutions and the part they play in winning consent and building alliances in
the processes of formal politics” (Popular Memory Group 1998:76); it is an instrument and product of hegemonic institutions, such as the state. In my research, dominant memory pertains primarily to the value that the German political establishment and mass culture place on memory of the Jewish Holocaust.

In geographic space, dominant memory is usually affirmed by articulating a particular version of the past through monuments, or other symbols such as flags, street names or religious icons (Zubrzycki 2006; Leib et al. 2000). It is not coincidental that the rise of the modern nation-state in nineteenth century Europe coincided with a burgeoning of monuments and statues (Mosse 1975), the nation’s most valuable lieux de mémoire (Nora 1984). Writing about war monuments, Geoffrey White (2006) states that, “activities at national sacred sites are always to some degree about the reproduction of power and the valorization of dominant historical narratives” (54; see also Barseghyan 2003; Vinitzky-Seroussi 2002; Gordon 2001). Similarly, in her analysis of real estate development in nineteenth century New York and Boston, geographer Mona Domosh (1996) shows how the built environment of a city – comprised of buildings, statues, streets and boulevards – is constructed according to deliberate and calculated plans and often, by governing elites who, in the process, reproduce a society’s hegemonic social, economic and political structures. It is through the process of place-making, writes Osborne (2001) that particular sites – such as the capital cities of a nation-state – and the symbolic markers placed upon them come to represent and reinforce the national(ist) narrative and thus, dominant forms of memory and identity. He defines place-making as, the choreography of state-building and identity-making through landscapes and inscapes, myths and memories, bronze and granite, narratives and hero[in]es, and pageants and fireworks. In other words, it is the nurturing of a collective memory
and social cohesion through the representation of national narratives in symbolic places, monumental forms, and performance (40).

But dominant memory is neither fixed nor indomitable and therein lies the potential for (and likelihood of) conflict.

Not all the historical representations that win access to the public field are ‘dominant.’ The field is crossed by competing constructions of the past, often at war with each other. Dominant memory is produced in the course of these struggles and is always open to contestation (Popular Memory Group 1998:76).

We may thus also speak of oppositional forms of memory – “counter-memories” (Foucault 1977) – whereby less powerful groups in society play a part in shaping the ways in which history is represented; counter-memories seek to challenge and resist the “monolith” of dominant memory by “redirect[ing] historical inquiry away from the nation-state as a unit of analysis in favor of groups and perspectives excluded from traditional accounts” (Olick and Robbins 1998:126). Memorial sites, for example, are not only places where the powerful elites of society seek to write (or, re-write) the nation’s history, but also where grassroots activists or traditionally marginalized groups can exert resistance and thereby offer alternative versions of the past (Wüstenberg 2009; Till 2008; Marschall 2006; Lowe 2004; Foote 2003; Paul 2000; Kapralski 1997; Johnson 1995).

The concept of place-making takes on a different meaning here. In contrast to Osborne’s definition above, Karen Till (2004) writes that it is through place-making that people “make contact with loss and desire, contain unwanted presences, even confront lingering injustices” and thus, attempt to resist the normative power of certain cultural landscapes (75). It is this particular definition of place-making that is evident in the struggle of Sinti & Roma leaders to build a memorial in the centre of Berlin and as close to the Jewish Holocaust Memorial as possible. As I will show, however, Osborne’s conception of
place-making – “the choreography of state-building and identity-making” – is equally relevant as the commemoration politics of the Sinti & Roma are inextricably linked to that community’s identity politics. These commemoration/identity politics are then equally embedded in Germany’s post-unification nation building project.

This conflict-driven model of collective memory resonates with the discussion of cultural production in the ethnicity framework outlined above. Specifically, as per Hobsbawm and Ranger’s (1983) “invention of tradition” theory, we see how history and its authenticity are constructed in order to reinforce a national hegemonic narrative, that is, to create the illusion of shared (be it positive or negative) historical roots and thus, national unity. This model also corresponds to the literature I presented on ethnic mobilization: marginalized groups exercise agency by utilizing cultural symbols (in this case, memorials and related narratives) in order to resist or redefine certain social practices (Bodemann and Yurdakul 2002; Steinberg 1999; Nagel 1994). By introducing how the memory literature (from the particular vantage point of sociology and cultural geography) conceptualizes memory, I propose a more spatially-based analysis of how memory is shaped and articulated in this entangled context of competing interests.

**Multidirectional memory**

The production of memory, however, does not necessarily emerge out of conflict and competition. Said otherwise, the story does not end at the point of difference but may in fact begin there. In contrast to the conflict-driven version of memory in the social sciences, literary scholar Michael Rothberg (2009) underscores the ways in which memory “is subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing and borrowing; as
productive and not privative” (3). His model of *multidirectional memory*, while taking into account the power differential that underpins and gives rise to competitive forms of collective remembering, “also locates that competition within a larger spiral of memory discourse in which even hostile invocations of memory can provide vehicles for further, countervailing commemorative acts” (11). Thus, rather than understanding collective memory as a “zero-sum struggle over scarce resources” (3), Rothberg’s main argument is that different historical memories emerge *in dialogue with* one another. Specifically, he demonstrates how this took place in postwar France:

… early Holocaust memory emerged in dialogue with the dynamic transformations and multifaceted struggles that define the era of decolonization. The period between 1945 and 1962 contains both the rise of consciousness of the Holocaust as an unprecedented form of modern genocide and the coming to national consciousness and political independence of many of the subjects of European colonialism (7).

Reciprocity as well as comparisons and analogies are thus at the centre of multidirectional memory.

This shift in focus from *competitive* to *multidirectional* memory is especially relevant in regard to the historiography of the Holocaust; it provides a much-needed vocabulary for discussing experiences and representations of genocide in comparative terms and oriented toward a victim-centred solidarity (Stone 2004; Ordover 1995). Debates over the so-called singularity of the Nazi genocide of the Jews have made it a great challenge for other victim groups seeking redress and recognition for their own experiences of genocide; it has led to a situation in which, “politicians and scholars avoid using the term ‘genocide’… because the events under scrutiny do not conform to the ‘paradigm’ case of the Holocaust” (Stone 2004:134).
As mentioned earlier, collective memory of the Holocaust has dominated Western culture since the early 1960s, at which point it was “transformed into a generalized symbol of human suffering and moral evil” according to which other groups could construct their own narratives of suffering and victimization (Alexander 2002:6). This perspective has split theorists of Holocaust memory into two discernable camps. On the one side, there are those who argue that the very uniqueness of the Holocaust precludes its comparison to any other form of victimization in the history of humankind (Katz 1994; Lipstadt 1993; Bauer 1978). On the other side, there is a universalist conception of the Holocaust that emphasizes, if not insists, on comparing it to other genocides (Bronner 1999; Churchill 1997; Stannard 1996). In recent years, this universalist stance has dovetailed with a growing literature on the globalization or transnationalization of memory (Eckel and Moisel 2008). Authors Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider (2002), the two authors most commonly cited on this topic, argue that Holocaust memory, because of its “iconographic status” (95) has enabled “the formation of transnational memory cultures, which in turn, have the potential to become the cultural foundation for global human rights politics” (88). Holocaust memory, according to them, transcends specific ethnic and cultural boundaries; it offers universal lessons about the dangers of injustice that can (and should) be applied to other historical instances of tyranny and oppression.

While the model of multidirectional memory corresponds to some of the features of the literature on transnational memory, it also detracts from it in ways that are especially relevant to my own research. Both theories are based on the notion of borrowing – one memory narrative is constructed by drawing on the features of another (what the social movement literature would call frame alignment or use of the cultural
repertoires). Like transnational memory, multidirectional memory recognizes the cross-border and global interaction of different memory narratives (see Conrad 2003). But the similarities end there. Multidirectional memory emphasizes that although memory narratives may in fact circulate globally, they are ultimately re-attached according to the particularities of the national/local context of reception and thus modified and adapted to those specific contexts of commemoration. Most significantly, multidirectional memory differs from transnational memory by going beyond the simple idea that one memory (usually dominant memory) functions as a *template* for the creation of other memories; rather, it is about the ways in which memory narratives take shape in continual processes of *communication* and *exchange* with one another. By emphasizing how “other” histories and memories impact the meanings we attribute to dominant memories, the model of multidirectional memory validates the agency of these counter-memories. It is this process of exchange and borrowing *between* memory narratives of the Jewish Holocaust and the genocide of the Sinti & Roma that I analyze throughout this dissertation. The particularities of Germany’s culture and politics of commemoration, especially in light of reunification, inform the ways in which these processes are conjugated in a national as opposed to transnational or globalized context.

As a literary scholar, Rothberg is interested primarily in the *discursive spaces* where memory narratives take shape: literary texts, film, letter correspondence, media reports, survivor testimonies, and biographical accounts of victimhood and suffering. He is thus able to show that memory does not have to obey a logic of scarcity and does not function like real estate development (2). There is enough “space,” he argues in the
public sphere for articulation of more than one historical experience and thus, the ability of marginalized groups to attain recognition and justice.\textsuperscript{17}

The model of multidirectional memory constitutes a major component of my analysis concerning the ways in which public debate and political decision-making over the Jewish Holocaust Memorial and the Sinti/Roma Memorial (and by extension, the memory narratives and identities associated with each) have been mutually related. When speaking about geographic space however, as any discussion of memorial-building is wont to do, notions of reciprocity and exchange become less plausible. The memorial-building process is inevitably delimited by pragmatic considerations of scarcity, be it in regard to the availability of physical space or materials, financial resources or labour power. This takes us back to the first aspect of the entangled memory framework: memory as conflict-driven. The Sinti/Roma Memorial project has been subject to more than two decades worth of dispute; the very genesis of the project – and the disputes that followed – is rooted in Romani Rose’s petition for a shared memorial structure and later, a shared memorial site. Similar processes of victim competition and hierarchy have also taken place between different subgroups and/or ethnic leaders of the greater Roma population of Germany (and at times, Europe), providing much fuel to the ongoing debates. Competition is thus as central to the biography of the Sinti/Roma Memorial as is reciprocity and exchange.

\textsuperscript{17} In a brief, albeit convincing epilogue, Rothberg does concede that there are many instances in which “conflicts of memory converge with contests over territory” (310).
III. FINDINGS AND CONCEPTUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

My dissertation presents findings related to ethnic, national and victim group identity formation and membership, minority mobilization, and collective forms of remembering. It is about the collective act of identity-building and memory-making as articulated and debated in society’s discursive spaces (media-, political- sphere) and then materialized as a cultural product in the form of memorials in the physical (and other) spaces of the capital city. I argue that debates over memorial structures and memorial spaces are in fact debates about how and which histories are represented, in whose name they are articulated, and who has the power to define these. Memorial debates are thus intimately linked to projects of identity construction: they are realms in which minorities negotiate their entry into the public sphere and where membership is contested and defined; debates about the past are concurrently under the jurisdiction of the state and thus, subject to parallel processes of negotiating and demarcating the boundaries of national identity.

The *ethnicity framework* helps us to identify the multiple individuals and institutions within and outside Germany involved in the complex process of memory and identity production (e.g. state actors, members of civil society, victim group representatives). It provides an important, although simplified (i.e. unidirectional), discussion of memory as a cultural product. I refer to processes of frame alignment and the use of cultural repertoires specifically in my overview of the ethnic mobilization of the Sinti & Roma (which includes the population’s efforts at carving out its own memory narrative of genocide) and the ways in which this process borrows from the model of Jewish institutional organization and practices of commemoration in Germany. The concept of ideological labour situates the dominant status of the Jewish minority (and its
historical narrative of suffering) in the centre of Germany’s own political and symbolic identity as a state. As historian Wippermann (2005) writes, the privileged position of the Jewish minority is closely linked to that population’s experience of genocide, and explains why the Sinti/Roma Central Council engages in a “politics of history oriented toward shedding light on the Porrajmos and proving the comparability of the Sinti and Roma genocide with that of the Jews” (81).

The two components of the entangled memory framework – competitive commemoration and cooperative/reciprocal commemoration – allow me to recognize the more complex and interrelated facets of Sinti & Roma and Jewish memory in Germany’s multiple spaces of commemoration. I find that the memory of the genocide of the Sinti & Roma is gradually gaining a foothold in the German national imaginary via the dominant status of Jewish memory in Germany. This is only in part due to concerted efforts on behalf of Sinti & Roma activists to “mimic” and draw from Germany’s master narrative of Jewish suffering and victimization. The long-standing (and often rather vicious) debates that have taken place over plans to build reunified Germany’s first national Holocaust memorial encapsulate as well the multidirectional relationship between Jewish and Sinti & Roma memory, and between Sinti & Roma and the German state. Specifically, the positioning of the memorial dedicated to Jewish victims has been and continues to be influenced by the commemorative activities of the Sinti & Roma, not least by the contentious campaign instigated by Sinti & Roma leaders to share memorial space with the Jewish victims. The multidirectional model also allows me to recognize how the campaign for the Sinti/Roma Memorial is inextricably linked to Germany’s post-unification nation building project. I show how the memorial projects of less dominant
victim group, such as the Sinti & Roma and the homosexuals, reinforce Germany’s policy of decentralization and therewith perform an important ideological function in the country’s political identity.

By analyzing the coming-into-being of the Sinti/Roma Memorial, and the ways this has overlapped with Germany’s other national memorials, I illustrate how collective memory is spatially and politically constituted. I present and analyze the various ways in which the production of memory narratives is an entangled process that intertwines dominant and “other” histories, and emplaces these in the form of memorial networks in the discursive, symbolic, virtual, geographic and cartographic spaces of the nation. Memorial networks is a concept that I develop throughout this dissertation. It refers to a configuration in which the memories of individual victim-group experiences are scattered across a memorial landscape in the form of detached memorial structures, yet brought together through various administrative, pedagogical, research and commemorative activities. The triangle of mixed memory, featured in Figure 1 at the start of this chapter is one of the empirical examples of this concept – the conjoining of disparate national memorials dedicated to three of the victim groups of National Socialism: Jews, Sinti & Roma, and homosexuals.

**IV. ROLE OF RESEARCHER, DATA AND METHODOLOGY**

My argument that collective remembering is a necessarily entangled and mutually constitutive process goes beyond the theoretical frameworks and conceptual contributions of this dissertation. It has also guided my methodology and, in turn, is informed by my
own positionality as a Canadian researcher of Jewish descent who has lived in Germany several times throughout my university and post-graduate education.

I came to the topic of the Gypsy genocide unintentionally but not entirely by chance. In 2000-2001, as an undergraduate exchange student in Heidelberg, Germany, I stumbled one day upon the heavily guarded complex belonging to the Sinti/Roma Central Council and its adjacent Documentation and Cultural Centre. Tucked away in one of the narrow cobble-stoned streets of this baroque university town, the Central Council is fairly easy to miss. What caught my attention on this day was a poster affixed to the front gates advertising an exhibit of the Nazi genocide of the Sinti & Roma. In the centre of the poster was the photograph of an emaciated girl peering through an opening in the slats of a cattle car. This was immediately recognizable to me as a stock image from the Holocaust; one of hundreds of images I had seen ever since my childhood of Jewish prisoners being transported to concentration camps in Eastern Europe. It was here in this backstreet of Heidelberg that I became aware, for the first time perhaps, of one of the “other” victim groups of the Holocaust. I visited the exhibit on that day or maybe soon after and it was then that I started to question why I had never learned or even heard about (or perhaps simply not noticed) this “version” of the Holocaust before, whether at school, in books, movies or plays, or at the Holocaust museums I had visited in Canada, the US, Germany and Israel in the past. Having spent several months in Germany by that point, I was well aware of the concept of Vergangenheitsbewältigung – mastery of or coming to terms with the (Nazi) past – and how central this was to contemporary German identity and culture.¹⁸ I wondered, what this word would mean when talking about the

¹⁸ On this concept of Vergangenheitsbewältigung, see Adorno, 1972 and Habermas, 1989. Auseinandersetzung is a related and commonly used concept in Germany that similarly describes the public
Sinti & Roma victims? What would a literary or cinematic representation of the Sinti & Roma genocide look like? Would it evoke as much familiarity in me as that photograph had of the young Sintezza on the train? The difficulty I had in finding answers to these questions, be it through conversation with friends, in university seminars, the *Feuillton* section of the newspaper, documentary or feature film, or in memoirs and novels about the Holocaust and life afterwards, is what ultimately brought me to this particular subject area for my dissertation several years later.

This dissertation draws on a qualitative research methodology. For a total of three years, from February to August 2007 and from June 2008 to October 2010, I conducted ethnographic fieldwork while based in Berlin, Germany. I employed in-depth semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and interpretive narrative analysis of archival and media sources.

In order to familiarize myself with the demographic make-up, political organization and multiple cleavages within Germany’s Sinti and Roma population, I conducted formal and informal interviews with Sinti/Roma/Gypsy community leaders and activists, and employees at social service agencies, human rights organizations and religious institutions working on behalf of and for the various sub-groups of this population. I attended the commemoration ceremonies, political rallies, policy workshops/ conferences and community gatherings that they organized. I taught English classes to Sinti children in Berlin and to Romanian Roma young adults living in Frankfurt.

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and political process of working through or confronting the Nazi past.
As an “outsider” to the community my greatest difficulty was usually at the initial point of contact when I would have to justify the reasons for wanting a formal interview or to participate in a workshop organized by a local Sinti/Roma association. The imperfections of my German speech, coupled with my Canadian identity (which most people immediately took to assume that I championed progressive, anti-racist values), allowed me to garner trust fairly quickly. My greatest challenge was gaining entry to the Sinti/Roma Central Council although, once I managed, board members and employees were very enthusiastic about my project. They helped me make further contacts and invited me to community events. Frequently, they would also insist that I send them the final version of my dissertation so that they could add it to their library collection. I experienced similar reactions from the other (sometimes rival) Sinti/Roma/Gypsy organizations that I visited (in Hamburg, Cologne, Frankfurt, Berlin, and Mannheim) and quickly came to realize that an invitation to disseminate my work would likely mean a certain loss of authority over the final product (see Weiss-Wendt, forthcoming, for an excellent discussion of the problem between research and activism specifically in the context of the Nazi genocide of the Gypsies).

My research of the German commemorative landscape included interviews with key informants from (Berlin) municipal departments of urban planning, memorial commissions and museums, and relevant German state officials and bureaucrats (those working at the BKM in particular). I conducted participant observation at commemoration ceremonies, public conferences and workshops, inauguration ceremonies of memorials and new documentation centres that pertained in some way to memory of the Holocaust and at times, the SED-communist dictatorship. Although I
concentrated my fieldwork in Germany, I travelled as well to Poland, Hungary and France in order to collect data at relevant memorial institutions (e.g. Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Museum in Oświęcim, Poland; Mémorial de la Shoah in Paris, France).

Because of my focus on the discursive spaces in which memorial projects come into being, a large part of this research has involved interpretive narrative analysis of government documents (speeches, press releases, reports and resolutions, plenary session minutes) and media sources (German dailies, weeklies and magazines spanning the ideological spectrum). I analyzed these documents by taking into account the social and institutional positioning of the speaker/writer or publication wherever possible and have made this explicit throughout my analysis.

One of the overarching arguments of this dissertation is that the history and memory of the genocide of the Gypsies cannot be studied without paying attention to the ways in which memory of Jewish persecution has been addressed in Germany (and beyond). I arrived at this conclusion slowly, initially uninterested in Germany’s “Jewish spaces” of memory because it seemed like a topic that had reached saturation. My own biography, as mentioned, pushed me to stay focused on the “other” histories of the Holocaust on their own terms. Toward the end of my first phase of data collection, however, upon the recommendation of my supervisor, I found myself enrolled in a six-week summer school on “Jewish Life in Germany” at the Humboldt University in Berlin. It was here, in a class of North American, German and Israeli students discussing the implications of the Nazi genocide for Jews living in current-day Germany that I came to appreciate that Jewish and “other” histories of the Nazi genocide are – and should be – entangled in Germany’s commemorative landscape.
The Foundation for the Jewish Holocaust Memorial – as the administrator for all three of Germany’s central memorials to the victims of National Socialism – captures this interrelationship most tangibly. I conducted interviews with employees of the Foundation, participated in their walking tours of the Field of Stela, attended commemoration ceremonies and symposia that they organized and mined their website for its extensive documentation of the memorial debates and the planning phase of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial.

It is these forms of interaction and entanglement that I attempt to elucidate in the following chapters.

V. ORGANIZATION OF DISSERTATION

In the subsequent chapter I provide a demographic overview of the central actors in this study. I begin by analyzing the ethnogenesis of the Roma in Europe and the Sinti & Roma in Germany. I discuss how these various populations are labelled and categorized – internally, by state policies and by society at large. I then introduce the “agents of memory,” that is, the main individuals, organizations and institutions involved in planning the Sinti/Roma Memorial. I show how the complexities of determining the boundaries of ethnic group membership are reproduced in and reinforced by the campaign for a Sinti/Roma Memorial in Berlin.

In Chapter Three I discuss similar conflicts over (victim-) group categorization as I lay out the historical context for the rest of the dissertation. First, I look at how the narrative of the Jewish Holocaust took shape in the early 1960s and ultimately came to dominate Western conceptions of genocide and victimhood. The thesis of singularity
emerged in the process and in effect, suppressed recognition of the Nazi genocide of the Gypsies in the historiography of the Holocaust and in the legal-political and civil spheres of German society. I conclude this chapter by showing how German Sinti & Roma activists are gradually succeeding at institutionalizing memory of their population’s experience of genocide in German social and political life.

Having discussed key actors and the socio-historical parameters of my study in Chapters Two and Three, the second section of this dissertation shifts focus to the memorial campaign(s) and thus, to the various spaces in which identities and memories are negotiated, debated and defined.

In Chapter Four I analyze the discursive spaces of memory – mass media, public petitions, government speeches – in which reunified Germany’s first national Holocaust memorial project(s) were planned and debated. The debates that erupted in the late 1980s rehashed the unresolved legacy of uniqueness and issues connected to German reunification. I conclude this chapter by assessing the resolutions reached in 1999 in a special session of parliament and how, in the years to come, these decisions would pave the way for innovative and more pluralistic forms of commemoration in Germany’s memory politics.

Chapter Five expounds on one of the resolutions reached at the special session of parliament: the integration of “other” victim groups into the physical and administrative infrastructure of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial. I look first at the process of curating the exhibition space located below the Jewish Holocaust Memorial and how organizers resolved physical space constraints by expanding into virtual and non-stony spaces of representation. I then write about the pedagogical, research and other projects related to
the Nazi genocide of the German Sinti & Roma now being administered by the
Foundation for the Jewish Holocaust Memorial.

Chapter Six is about the geographic spaces of remembering in the city. I use the
methodological tools of landscape iconography in order to interpret the visual images and
material objects visible on Berlin’s cartographic surface and in the built environment of
the city. Specifically, I describe the memorial debates as they pertained to disputes over
location in the city-centre and the significance of proximity to the nation’s key historical
icons.

I conclude this dissertation by outlining the empirical as well as theoretical
implications of expanding our understanding of the spaces in which various groups
participate in and help to define national memory politics.
CHAPTER TWO: Defining Germanness through boundary shifting and memory-making: the case of Sinti & Roma in Germany

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I apply Joane Nagel’s (1994) constructivist model of ethnicity to the ethnogenesis of the European Roma and how it has translated into the unique demographic and political make-up of the Sinti & Roma population in Germany. I provide this overview of the population’s ethno-political mobilization as contextual background: questions surrounding the production of ethnic group identity and culture are equally problematic in the historiography of the Nazi genocide of the Sinti & Roma, particularly in regards to how victim group identity has been defined in the legal, political and popular spheres of postwar (German) society.

As I discuss in this chapter, there are various political and epistemological debates pertaining to the classification and labelling of Roma identity. In Germany, the definition of Sinti & Roma wavers between two identity-based ideologies: a transnational European Roma collective and a narrower ethno-cultural German minority. Similar ambiguities over identity categorization are then reproduced in the evolution of the Sinti/Roma Memorial and are especially evident in the clash between the various actors, institutions and organizations involved in the memorial’s planning. I introduce these main individuals and organizations in the final section of this chapter – rival victim group representatives, members of civil society, formal political leaders of the German state and other ethnic group leaders.
My case study of the Sinti/Roma Memorial project highlights Nagel’s constructivist framework for understanding how ethnic (and victim) group identity and culture take shape, and pays attention to the multiplicity of actors and social forces involved in these processes. In this chapter, I show how the processes of boundary- and cultural- production correspond to Roma identity politics in a number of ways: they are at the centre of the European Roma ethnogenesis and fundamental to its particular iteration in Germany, and arguably, they are the very driving force behind the Sinti/Roma Memorial campaign.

In the first section of this chapter, I describe the Roma civil rights movement in Europe, and the demographics and political organization of the Roma population in Germany. I look at how different actors engage in the construction of ethnic boundaries, demarcating who belongs and who does not. I show how the Roma movements in Europe and Germany engage in various forms of collective action by producing new cultural symbols and borrowing pre-existing ones; they articulate historical narratives that concurrently emphasize their groups’ territorial and cultural claims to particular national (or supra-national) contexts and experiences of persecution therein.

In the second section, I shift my focus to the content and meaning of Sinti & Roma ethnic identity in Germany by analyzing the Sinti/Roma Memorial project as an instrument of ethnic mobilization. I will show how the processes underlying the construction of the memorial parallel those of constructing ethnicity: negotiation and conflict between diverse actors; management by and influence of state officials; strategies of frame alignment and use of cultural repertoires; intersection with society at large; complexity of identity categorization and labelling. Specifically, I argue that the conflict
between different memorial actors is based largely in competing efforts to reinvent the past in order to take control of the present. To this, it must also be emphasized that memorial actors are active agents, “skilled users of cultures” (Swidler 1986:277). The memorial project is thus, in addition to being an instrument of the Sinti and Roma’s ethnic mobilization, also an analytical tool reflecting the dynamic and dialectical mechanisms underlying the very construction of ethnic identity and culture.

I. ETHNIC IDENTITY AND MINORITY MOBILIZATION

Categories of Roma classification

The question of Roma identity – how to understand, classify and define it – is a heavily debated and contested issue prevalent across most academic or policy-oriented discussions of this population. Political scientist Peter Vermeersch (2006) has identified four predominant models according to which Roma identity is conceptualized across the academic literature. The first defines the Roma as a historical diaspora, with India regarded as the homeland (e.g. Angus Fraser, Ian Hancock, Donald Kenrick). The second perspective draws on the shared lifestyle and behaviour of this population. It is cultural attributes (and often those of crime and nomadism), rather than ethnic identity, that are thought to link these people together (e.g. Jean-Pierre Liégeois, Andrzej Mirga, Leo Lucassen). A third method of defining the Roma emphasizes the biological kinship of the group, and states that the Roma are an ethnic category based on their shared genetic and phenotypic characteristics (e.g. Ian Hancock). Nazi researchers who were involved in studying and classifying Roma people (Robert Ritter and Eva Justine as the most notorious) were guided by the racial ideology underpinning this approach. Finally, a more
recent and critical approach, and the one that I draw on for my research, is the
categorization perspective. According to this, Roma identity is understood to be a
“product of classification struggles involving both [the] classifiers and those classified as
Roma” (Vermeersch 2006:13; see also Will Guy, Michael Stewart, Judith Okely).
Researchers who adopt this latter framework emphasize the heterogeneity within and
across the ethnic group in question, and pay particular attention to the joint role of ethnic
leaders, the state, other minority groups, and society at large for defining ethnic group
identity (cf. Wimmer 2008, 2007; Kastoryano 2002; Nagel 1994; Barth 1969). Table 1
below summarizes these four conceptualizations of Romani identity across the academic
literature.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODEL</th>
<th>Descent</th>
<th>Lifestyle &amp; behaviour</th>
<th>Biology</th>
<th>Categorization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FEATURES</td>
<td>Common historical roots &amp; migration patterns; Indian homeland</td>
<td>Nomadism; musical traditions; criminal activity</td>
<td>Shared genetic &amp; phenotypic features</td>
<td>Identity as product of classification struggles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Conceptualizations of Romani identity in academic literature

**European Roma ethnogenesis**

The commonly known term “Gypsy” has become increasingly obsolete in academic
circles, in policy debates, and – although somewhat more gradually – in societies at large.
Historically, the word Gypsy emerged as an external label used by “non-Gypsies” to
describe an ethnic group originating in India that began dispersing Westwards sometime
around the tenth century. By contrast, the term “Rom” – meaning man or human being in
the Romanes (also called Romani) language – is a self-designation and was introduced in
1971 at the first World Romani Congress in London, what is regarded as the birth of the
Roma civil rights movement. It was here that new cultural forms were created and introduced, including national symbols such as a Roma flag and national anthem; and construction of a historical narrative of origins in which symbolic alliances were forged with the Indian “motherland.”\(^{19}\) The wheel depicted in the centre of the newly introduced flag was meant as a reference to the Ashok Chakra symbol found on the Indian national flag (Rishi 1996) (Figure 2).

![Figure 2. Roma flag adopted at 1971 Congress](image)

The European Roma ethnogenesis reveals the pan-ethnic process of boundary expansion as it sought to incorporate previously disparate groups into a new collective entity. The emphasis on transforming the ethnic nomenclature further shows how the process of (re-)constructing ethnicity requires a concurrent process of creating and redefining cultural and symbolic forms (Nagel 1994:166; see also Smith 1992; Martin 1991).

Ethnic activists and other involved elites participating at this congress chose to rename the population for two reasons. First, \textit{Roma} was meant to help curb the stigmatization associated with the historically tainted Gypsy label. Second, the act of renaming was a key component of the population’s project of ethnogenesis, that is, an

\(^{19}\) See Fraser (2000) for a discussion of the relevance of the year 1971 to the Roma civil rights movement. The issue of compensation from West Germany was also broached at the congress (Weiss-Wendt, forthcoming).
attempt at creating a shared sense of collective identity, history, culture and (Indian) origins (Gay y Blasco 2008; Vermeersch 2005; Kapralski 1997). Specifically, the objective was to advance a non-territorial ethno-nationalist group identity. Introduction of the label Roma is thus best understood as an attempt to create a sense of shared (trans)national identity between all of the disparate tribal groups previously referred to as Gypsy. A statement made in 1980 by Jan Cibula, president of the International Romani Union (IRU) sums up this objective: “‘if we continue to regard ourselves only as Lovar, Kalderasch, Sinto, or Gitano, we could not appear together… We do not want to operate in a manner that will split our people’” (cited in Margalit 2002a:119).

According to van Baar (2011), European institutions such as the European Parliament, the Council of Europe and the European Commission have, since about the early 1990s, increasingly started to recognize and represent the Roma as a European minority and call for their integration into Europe (3). This is due to the mobilization efforts of Romani groups across Europe (East and West), governmental and non-governmental organizations, scholars, and various media outlets. Part of this mobilization has also involved Romani activists and advocacy groups framing contemporary forms of Romani exclusion in the context of injustices committed by the Nazi regime (Ibid:3-4).

The particular case of Germany: German Sinti & Roma and foreign Roma

In Germany, the Roma ethnogenesis has manifested itself in a somewhat unique way, mainly as a result of the political dominance of the Sinti subgroup who prefers not to be subsumed under the umbrella term Roma. In Germany, the term Gypsy has therefore been replaced with the composite group label “Sinti & Roma” (although there is overlap
between the two since technically, Sinti are a subgroup of the Roma). The state has also played an important role in this regard. As Riva Kastoryano (2002) writes, state governments are likely to manage their minority and ethnic populations by demanding one overarching representative voice, regardless of the internal heterogeneity of (and likely discord between) group members. In doing so, real political and material consequences are produced, such as the funding and institutional representation made available or denied to particular subsets of an ethnic group. These state mechanisms, as I elucidate below, account for the particular situation of Sinti & Roma in Germany.

While accurate numbers are generally hard to come by, there are estimates of approximately 140,000 Sinti & Roma people currently living in Germany. Concealed in this number is the internal heterogeneity of the population in regards to history, tradition, language (or dialects of the same language), and manifests itself most concretely in terms of a split between national minority and immigrant/refugee identity. In turn, this extends to different political status, rights, and patterns of integration. Because of the diversity of Roma groups in Germany – each having entered the country in completely different waves of migrations and often, under different conditions of reception – it is an environment in which we can explore the contradictions and ambiguities of ethnic group labelling and boundary shifting.

Table 2 summarizes the main Sinti & Roma groups currently living in Germany, and the ways in which they are classified according to political status and migration

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20 *Sinti* denotes the plural form, while *Sinto* is the male singular and *Sintezza*, the female singular.
21 Fraser (1992) suggests that there are over 60 Romani/Romanes dialects and that there has in fact never been one unified Romani/Romanes language (301).
history. I explain the differences (and overlaps) between these subgroup categories in further detail below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMMON LABEL</th>
<th>ARRIVAL IN GERMANY</th>
<th>CITIZENSHIP STATUS</th>
<th>NATIONAL MINORITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GERMAN SINTI &amp; ROMA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinti</td>
<td>~ 15th C.</td>
<td>German citizenship</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Roma</td>
<td>~ 19th C.</td>
<td>German citizenship</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOREIGN ROMA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roma labour migrant</td>
<td>1960s-70s</td>
<td>German citizenship or temporary resident permit</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roma refugee/asylum seeker</td>
<td>1980s onwards</td>
<td><em>Duldung</em> status mostly</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Classification of Sinti & Roma population in Germany (Design: Nadine Blumer)

Of the roughly 140,000 current Sinti & Roma population living in Germany today, about half is made up of those commonly referred to as the “German Sinti & Roma,” while the other half is regarded as the “foreign Roma.” This first group – the “German Sinti & Roma” – can be further subdivided into: (1) the *Sinti* – whose presence in Germany dates back to the fifteenth century;\(^ {22} \) and (2) the *Roma* – who arrived later, towards the end of the nineteenth century (mainly from Eastern Europe). This latter subgroup, the Roma, when discussed separately from the Sinti, is usually referred to as the “German Roma” in order to distinguish them from the “foreign Roma.”

The “German Sinti & Roma” have different traditional practices and speak distinct dialects of Romanes from one another and in fact, have historically been divided socially as well as politically. The German state, however, defines them as one group. For example, both share political status as German citizens and together, have been

\(^ {22} \) While the Sinti population has been in Germany since about the fifteenth century, the name “Sinti” has only recently come into use. Up until the eighteenth century, Sinti living in Germany called themselves either Manush or Cale. Starting only in the nineteenth century was there a gradual shift from these names to the more currently used Sinti appellation. In other parts of Europe, there are groups who to this day still self-identify as Manush (France) and Cale (Spain) (Margalit 2002:xiv).
recognized as one of Germany’s four national minority groups as of 1995. This translates primarily into a protection of cultural heritage and language, according to the convention of the European Council and includes protection in the European Charter of regional and minority languages. They are also – officially at least – jointly represented by the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma (hereafter: Sinti/Roma Central Council), the population’s main political and state-sponsored representative.

The German Roma, numbering far less than the Sinti, are however almost entirely unrepresented in the work of the Sinti/Roma Central Council since the majority of employees and board members are Sinti. The original name of the Sinti/Roma Central Council – *Deutscher Sinti Verband* (Association of German Sinti) – is telling in this regard. It was only in response to German state support and recognition extended in 1982 that the organization agreed to expand its representation to include the German Roma.

Other than the name-change and consistent use of the label “Sinti & Roma,” the Sinti/Roma Central Council does not in fact represent the German Roma in any meaningful way (Margalit and Matras 2007; Matras 1998).

The main organization of the German Roma is the Rom and Cinti Union (RCU), established in Hamburg in 1980. Although a much smaller player in the German political landscape as compared to the Sinti/Roma Central Council, the RCU is integrated (and at the forefront) of European Romani politics. The founder of the RCU, Rudko

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23 See Margalit (2002a) for discussion of Sinti & Roma citizenship pre- and post- World War Two.  
24 In an interview with Marko Knudson, head of the Rom and Cinti Union, he emphatically stated that relations between his organization and the Sinti/Roma Central Council are cordial. However, several times during our interview he expressed anger at the fact that the Sinti/Roma Central Council is run almost entirely by non-Roma Germans and a handful of Sinti members but with no (German) Roma representation at all. “It’s racism yet again!” exclaimed Knudson. “There are no Roma in their organization… they’re all Sinti even though they call themselves ‘Sinti & Roma’” (personal interview, 3 April 2007).
Kawczynski, is currently the president of the European Roma and Traveller Forum (ERTF), which has a partnership agreement with the Council of Europe.  

The other half of the 140,000 Sinti & Roma population in Germany is made up of “foreign Roma.” This group is comprised of: (1) labour migrants or guest workers who came to Germany starting in the 1960s from Turkey and the former Yugoslavia; and (2) asylum seekers who migrated throughout the 1980s from Poland, following the end of the Cold War, primarily from Romania, and in the aftermath of the ethnic conflicts in the Balkan states throughout the 1990s. While some of the labour migrants have secured a German passport in the meantime, others continue to hold but a temporary resident permit (unbefristete Aufenthaltserlaubnis). The situation is markedly better for the tens of thousands of second and third generation offspring of Roma guest workers living in Germany today as they are considerably more integrated into the political, economic and cultural spheres of German society (Jonuz 2007).

For those arriving as asylum seekers, a status of tolerance (Duldungsstatus) is the most common, and indicates denial of work permits, no obligatory schooling for children, no child allowance, need for frequent reviews at the immigration office and the constant threat of deportation; at best, some Roma who first entered the country as asylum seekers, now have a temporary resident permit as well. On the whole, the population of asylum

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25 The ERTF describes itself as “Europe’s largest and most inclusive Roma and Traveler organization. It brings together Europe’s main international Roma-NGOs and more than 1,500 national Roma and Traveler organizations from most of the Council of Europe member states” (More information about the ERTF is available at http://ertf.org).

26 Note however that many of the Roma labour migrants who entered Germany in the 1960s-70s hid that they were Roma, claiming nation-of-origin identity (e.g. Turkey, Yugoslavia, Italy) in order to help curb discrimination (Jonuz 2007). As such, it is very difficult to know the accurate size of this population today. There are similar ambiguities regarding the number of refugees/asylum seekers because of the (assumed) high number of undocumented and illegal Roma residing in Germany.
seekers is very heterogeneous, due to different countries-of-origin (Serbia, Croatia, Kosovo, Romania), languages spoken, cultural traditions, and religious affiliations (Christian, Christian Orthodox, Muslim) (Mihok 2001). For the most part, however, these significant differences are rarely taken into account by state officials in regards to how these various refugee populations are received into (and possibly deported in later years from) Germany (Mihok 2001).27

A more significant oversight, however, concerns the extent to which the diversity amongst the entirety of the Sinti & Roma population in Germany is commonly glossed over by state officials and in mainstream public discourse. This has much to do with the institutionalization of the “Sinti & Roma” label at the level of official (political and media) discourse. In the last two decades or so, it has become standard to use this binary label “Sinti & Roma,” regardless if the reference is to only part or all of Germany’s Roma (and/or Sinti) population or Roma groups in other parts of Europe or the world. This also has implications in terms of how the population is politically represented. The German state funds and recognizes the Sinti/Roma Central Council (along with its nine provincial-level associations) as its official liaison, although it in fact represents less than half of the entire Roma population in Germany.28

27 The instability with which the asylum-seeking population lives came to a head in July 2009, when a readmission agreement was made between the German federal government (under the direction of Chancellor Angela Merkel) and the Kosovan government that initiated a mass deportation of approximately 10,000 Kosovo Roma (of a total population of about 23,000 currently residing in Germany) who entered the country as refugees in the late 1990s. These deportation agreements, despite mass protest from multiple human rights organizations due to the deplorable conditions in Kosovo and a climate of anti-Roma sentiment, also include the children of the original asylum seekers, the majority of whom were born in Germany. Some of the most vocal opponents to the readmission agreement have included members of the European parliament, the UN High Commissioner for refugees, ProAsyl, the International League of Human Rights, and the European Association for the Defense of Human Rights. For an overview of Merkel’s deportation policies, see press release jointly issued by the VVN-BdA and the Refugee Council of Lower Saxony, October 2009; See also Jakob in TAZ 2009.

28 The dominance of the Sinti/Roma Central Council was made especially clear to me during an interview I conducted with a social worker at an organization in Southern Germany concerned primarily with Roma
This pattern can be explained, in part, by Riva Kastoryano’s (2002) conceptualization of the state’s role in the negotiation of immigrant/ethnic identity. According to her, the state influences “the organization of groups of immigrants and… forms of their collective expression” through public policies and the ways in which it distributes resources (12). However, the unequal representation of the Sinti & Roma population described here also reflects the successful lobby work and partisan politics of the Sinti/Roma Central Council.

My focus in this dissertation is primarily with the first group, the “German Sinti & Roma,” and because of the dominance of the Sinti/Roma Central Council in the memorial project, much of the discussion is in fact limited to the activities of the Sinti population in subsequent chapters. Throughout this dissertation I will, however, refer primarily to the “Sinti & Roma” in order to reflect popular and political discourse, unless there is reason to refer specifically to either the Sinti or the Roma. When speaking about the era of Nazi persecution, I will at times revert to the “Gypsy” terminology in order to reflect the language used at the time.

Articulating “Germanness” and the (dominance of the) Sinti leadership

The categorization of German Sinti & Roma versus foreign Roma, discussed above, is based on fairly stable criteria of political status and/or migration history. From the point of view of ethnic leaders, however, the lines dividing the two (or more) categories are

refugees and temporary residents from Romania. The respondent, in explaining a recent case of discrimination experienced by a Roma applicant at the welfare office, told me that, due to the severity of the situation, he decided to call “the higher powers” at the Sinti/Roma Central Council. “Nobody ignores Romani Rose,” he said. “The Central Council is a major institution… had we filed a complaint from our office, nothing would have happened. But Romani Rose always gets a response” (Personal Interview, 2007).
more flexible. As discussed, the processes of boundary shifting, that is, boundary contraction and boundary expansion, explain how these different group labels and thus, identities emerge out of a “process of constituting and re-configuring groups by defining the boundaries between them (Wimmer 2008:4; emphasis in original).

In Germany, ethnic activists involved in demarcating the boundary between German Sinti & Roma and foreign Roma (and at times, between Sinti and German Roma) do so predominantly by distinguishing between a transnational ethnic minority (German Roma, foreign Roma) and a national minority with claims to German territory and culture (Sinti) (see Margalit and Matras 2007; see Table 3). The latter claim, articulated predominantly by the Sinti/Roma Central Council, is best understood as “a strategy based on the ethnic-cultural concept of German self-understanding” (Margalit 2002a:117) and is rooted in a “struggle to gain recognition as a minority which formed an integral part of the German nation” (Matras 1998:62). In writing about the European Roma ethnogenesis, Kapralski (1997) refers to the process of boundary-drawing taking place in Germany and how this differs from Romani activity in the rest of Europe:

One also has to mention a tendency among some groups of Roma to escape from any distinctive Romani identity. The German Sinti, for instance, are trying to obtain recognition as a German nationality group (deutsche Volksgruppe), which would provide them the status of an inherent part of German society. On the other hand, in Slovakia, only 6% of Roma students would like to be seen as having a different ethnic background than the dominant population (274).

Matras and Margalit (2007) have similarly discussed various examples throughout the Sinti’s history in Germany of striving to negotiate their “legitimacy” and “respectability”

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29 In a 1981 publication, for example, Romani Rose explained that national minority status is significant because it would mean that Sinti & Roma “are no longer simply tolerated as guests in this nation as [they] have been up until now, but that [they] are instead accepted as citizens with a right of residence” (Gesellschaft 1981:17).
as co-citizens of “Christian Europe” (109). This has included assertions of their Christian respectability in order to make various claims to German soil and culture.

This emphasis on Germanness (only sometimes to be mediated by claims of Europeanness) by Sinti leaders in the name of the “German Sinti & Roma” is of course a response to the symbolic as well as material privileges that come with this status. As a recognized national minority group since 1995, the German Sinti & Roma are involved in direct dialogue with the German parliament (Bundestag), and have been incorporated into German constitutional law (Grundgesetz); this means that their language, culture and history are protected according to the national minority convention of the Council of Europe (BMI 2006). Politically and culturally then, the German Sinti & Roma are – to a degree at least – managed by the state as Germans. Alternatively, Roma immigrants and refugees from Eastern Europe and the Balkans are administered and monitored by the department of immigration, aliens registration authorities (Ausländerbehörde) and refugee boards, and are thus circumscribed as foreigners by the state. This is a very important political distinction that has not gone unnoticed by German Sinti & Roma ethnic leaders.

Regarding the Roma civil rights movement, however, in which the German Sinti & Roma are certainly active (albeit sporadically), a contradiction develops between two competing identity-based ideologies. Although they primarily express a nationally delimited notion of “Sinti & Roma” as a German Volksgruppe, at times they also evoke a pan-Roma identity politics that seeks to incorporate all national, cultural and ethnic differences into an overarching transnational Roma nation. The former denotes the process of boundary contraction, while the latter is an example of boundary expansion,
that is, a marker of the nation-building process that moves outwards and becomes more inclusive of various Roma/former “Gypsy” groups.\textsuperscript{30} As shown in Table 3 below, there are in fact two additional “axes” of boundary-making that we can specify in the context of Romani identity politics in Germany: identity-based ideology and political status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMMON LABEL</th>
<th>IDENTITY-BASED IDEOLOGY (self definition)</th>
<th>POLITICAL STATUS (state definition)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GERMAN SINTI &amp; ROMA</td>
<td>Sinti</td>
<td>German \textit{Volk} identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>German Roma</td>
<td>Transnational European Roma Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOREIGN ROMA</td>
<td>Roma labour migrant</td>
<td>Transnational European Roma Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roma refugee/asylum seeker</td>
<td>Transnational European Roma Identity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Self- versus state- classifications of collective identity (Design: Nadine Blumer)

In one of my visits to the Sinti/Roma Central Council, located in the south German town of Heidelberg, I spoke with Sandra, an employee of the Council, and a German-born Sintezza.\textsuperscript{31} She distinguishes between German Sinti & Roma and East European Roma by drawing on their different cultural practices, language, history and political status – mainly as it relates to migration history. It is evident in her rhetoric that these different characteristics then point to each sub-groups’ distinct claims – or lack thereof – to “Germanness”:

‘While you can speak of the Roma as a European minority – there are 8-12 million in the EU – they can’t be regarded as one group. For example, in

\textsuperscript{30} It should be noted that the foreign Roma group also engages in boundary shifting in particular moments of heightened political tension, usually by identifying around the “Sinti & Roma” label as a way of aligning with their more influential counterparts in the country. A September 2009 press release, for example, calls for a stop to the deportation of Kosovo Roma by evoking the Holocaust trope and inaccurately drawing on the “Sinti & Roma” label. This is evident in the title of the press release: “Historical Responsibility for and recognition of the persecution and extermination of the Roma: no deportation of Roma refugees – unconditional protection for Sinti and Roma” (VVN-BdA 2009).

\textsuperscript{31} Sandra is a pseudonym used upon the request of my informant.
Yugoslavia, Roma are Yugoslavian; in Germany, Roma are German… I mean this ethnically… but always, they are a minority!

If you want to further distinguish between these groups, you have to look at history. While the German Sinti and Roma have been in Germany for 600 years, the East European Roma came as guest workers only in the 1960s and 70s. The work of the Central Council does not include this population though. Our priority is to represent the civil rights [Bürgerrecht] of the 70,000 German Sinti and Roma national minority group and fight discrimination… this means supporting them from a political as well as cultural perspective; to lobby for their rights of language, tradition and trade. This also includes international work…

the Central Council and its provincial associations cooperate with Roma organizations on an international level in order to demand human rights everywhere… It is thus not the task of the Central Council to protect the rights of asylum for East European Roma. This is instead the task of individual provinces, of governmental ministries and of lawyers. If there are breaches of the law, then of course, the Central Council will step in. However in regards to other asylum procedures, it is not and should not be the responsibility of the Central Council.’

By focusing on the distinct political status of each group in Germany, Sandra emphasizes the heterogeneity across the entirety of the Roma ethnic group; while the German-born Sinti & Roma – as a recognized national minority with a long history in Germany – have a concrete claim to Germanness, the Roma immigrants and refugees of the late twentieth century do not. In this case, she is contracting the ethnic boundary inward; by dissociating from the foreign Roma she is attempting to reinforce that Sinti & Roma are integral members of German society. Interestingly though, Sandra also makes reference to the European Roma civil rights movement and emphasizes the involvement of the Sinti/Roma Central Council therein. In the context of human rights, it makes (strategic political) sense to expand the group boundary outward in order to frame the German Sinti & Roma as constituting part of the sizeable European minority.

This inconsistency of identity-based ideologies is perhaps most evident (and complicated) when comparing the official stance of the Sinti/Roma Central Council on the foreign Roma population versus its discourse on the Nazi genocide. On the one hand,
the Sinti/Roma Central Council tends to look inward, classifying its population as an ethno-cultural German minority. This often involves overt acts of dissociation from the foreign Roma, and making “[claims] that growing numbers of foreign Roma who ‘abused their guest status in our country’ might harm the image of German Sinti and Roma and thus wreck many of the organization’s achievements” (Margalit and Matras 2007:114; see also Tyrnauer 1998:102). On the other hand, in its official rhetoric regarding the Nazi genocide, the Sinti/Roma Central Council refers consistently to the 500,000 Sinti & Roma victims from across occupied Europe rather than focusing solely on the 15,000 German Sinti victims. In doing so, the Central Council is in fact expressing the shared history and destiny of the entirety of Europe’s Roma population and thus expanding not only the group boundary outward but increasing the number of victims and the severity of persecution sustained (Margalit and Matras 2007:114). This strategy reflects the process of cultural construction whereby groups “invent” the past (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) or engage in deliberate forms of historical narration in order to define and give substance (e.g. credibility) to projects of collective identity formation (Tilly 2003; Somers 1994). Clearly, part of this discursive strategy is also meant to emphasize the group’s experience of suffering and persecution, and is aimed at reaching some form of parity with the dominant narrative of “six million Jewish victims.” This is made clear in a 2008 Deutsche Welle interview in which Romani Rose links together history of the Holocaust, a unified European Sinti & Roma identity, and parallels to the Jewish experience of persecution:

What holds us together is a shared experience of persecution and assassination during the Holocaust. Sinti and Roma were methodically found, carried away and murdered in all 11 of the countries occupied by the Nazis. And it was solely because of their ethnicity – just like with the Jews (Samson 2008).
II. AGENTS OF MEMORY

Central Council of German Sinti and Roma

Many of the above-mentioned ambiguities and inconsistencies in the classification and labelling of group identity – generated through processes of boundary shifting – have reproduced themselves in the evolution of the memorial’s planning. As mentioned, the Sinti/Roma Central Council dominates the German political landscape in all matters Roma-related. This is no different in the context of the memorial project, where the Sinti/Roma Central Council has acted as the official mouthpiece of the project since its inception (Romani Rose was in fact the project’s initiator). The analysis presented throughout this dissertation thus focuses primarily on the interaction between German authorities and the Sinti/Roma Central Council, the organization that they have clearly chosen as the representative voice of all Roma in Germany. Romani Rose has undoubtedly been the leader of this campaign and is thus at the centre of much of my analysis.

Nevertheless, group narratives of the past are rarely articulated in one coherent voice (Foote 2003; Vinitzky-Seroussi 2002, 1998; Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz 1991), and so it is necessary to trace the other actors who have been involved in and have had varying degrees of influence on the development of the Sinti/Roma Memorial project. These include German state officials, intra-ethnic voices such as Natasha Winter of the Sinti Allianz and Timo Wagner of the Jenischer Bund, members of German civil-society as represented by the International League of Human Rights, and affiliates of Germany’s official Jewish community (the “inter-ethnic” voice). Virtually absent in the planning
stages of the memorial, however, have been organizations representing the foreign Roma population, although the number of Roma victims from East and Southeast Europe is much higher than that of the Central European Sinti population (Zimmermann 2007:10; see also Margalit 2002:43). Again, this reflects the dominance of the Sinti/Roma Central Council and its inward looking ethno-nationalist stance in the country’s minority and memorial politics.

A comment made by Silvio Peritore, head curator of the Documentation and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma (branch of the Sinti/Roma Central Council), emphasizes that the planned Sinti/Roma Memorial is, among other things, meant to solidify the long-standing history of the German Sinti & Roma in the national narrative:

And everyone who survived the Sinti and Roma Holocaust also naturally wanted this memorial because they said: it expresses responsibility. It shows that we were also the victims of a systematic genocide, which was suppressed from public consciousness for a long time. And it is also important for the political status and for the future of the minority altogether… And what we want is a public place of commemoration that can sharpen people’s awareness and awaken their interest to become more familiar with the history of the Sinti and Roma persecution and genocide. But it also has to go beyond that. I mean, it has to also be said that our minority has 600 years of history behind it in this country (personal interview, 2009).

Statements such as these, as will become evident in later chapters, also serve to create an intragroup hierarchy of victims, wherein Sinti/Roma/Gypsy individuals or organizations not affiliated with the Sinti/Roma Central Council find themselves excluded from or silenced from the emergent memory narrative of the Nazi genocide of the Gypsies.

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32 Note however that parallel processes of commemorating the Nazi genocide of the Gypsies have been increasingly taking place across Eastern Europe and the Balkans. Historian Weiss-Wendt (forthcoming) refers especially to the erection of memorials in Slovakia, the establishment of commemoration days in Hungary, Ukraine (August 2), Serbia (December 16), and in many other countries, International Holocaust Memorial Day (January 27) now also includes commemoration of the Romani victims. Notable as well is the tabor pamieci (memory caravan) commemoration ceremony that takes place yearly in the south Polish town Tarnow (Kapralski 2004).
German state as memorial arbitrator: BKM

As part of the government restructuring that took place following German reunification in 1990 and the start of Gerhard Schröder’s SPD/Green Party coalition government, all state-related issues of memory and commemoration were transferred in 1998 from the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Interior (Bundesministerium des Inneren. Hereafter: BMI) to the newly established German Federal Commission for Culture and Media Affairs (Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien. Hereafter: BKM). The formation of a separate ministry dedicated to cultural-related issues reflects an important change in the state’s understanding and definition of culture and in particular, attitudes toward historical preservation and official memory. By integrating heritage and historical preservation into state policy, the federal government is reinforcing the responsibility of the state to preserve, as well as manage national memory culture (Carrier 2005:180).

The BKM’s responsibilities are divided according to four main categories, which together, represent the state’s definition of “culture.” This includes the category of Art and Cultural Promotion (e.g. music and performance arts, literature, language and orthography [Rechtschreibung]), Media and Film, International (e.g. film and radio, international media cooperation, media rights, new media and data protection, and the cultural promotion of immigrants), and History and Memory. This latter category is then divided into five separate departments, focussing on the following specific areas:

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33 This shift in responsibility from the BMI to the BKM is relevant here because discussion of both the Sinti/Roma as well as Jewish Holocaust memorials began around 1988 and thus, were initially under the jurisdiction of the BMI for approximately ten years. In 1999 when the Bundestag officially resolved to build a Holocaust Memorial dedicated exclusively to the Jews, memorial-related issues were already under the jurisdiction of the BKM. The BKM, however, has sought to establish a “continuity of tradition” first defined by the BMI (Dr. Smitt-Hüttebräuker, BKM, personal interview, 2008).
• K 41: historical museums, NS- memorial sites; memorial sites commemorating political personalities
• K 42: Protection, preservation and repatriation of cultural artefacts
• K 43: Confrontation (Aufarbeitung) with history of SED-dictatorship; administration of Stasi files, federal archive, German national library
• K 44: Academic and cultural institutions related to the history of Germans in Eastern Europe
• K 45: Museums, archives, culture and history of Germans in Eastern Europe.

The BKM is responsible for drafting and implementing the country’s official memorial policy (Gedenkstättenkonzeption, see Chapter Four) and determining what is worthy of commemoration, and how and where events should be commemorated.

As a federally sponsored project, the BKM is responsible for mediating between the main ethnic-group leaders involved in the Sinti/Roma Memorial (Romani Rose, Natasha Winter, Timo Wagner) and implementing final decisions in the planning of the memorial. Because of ongoing and escalating tensions between the victim group representatives, the BKM has been forced to meet with each of the parties individually (personal interview, 2008). As mentioned, however, the Sinti/Roma Central Council and its spokesperson Romani Rose have priority over the other ethnic leaders/associations in the decision-making process related to the memorial.

Finally, the BKM is the memorial’s direct line to government sponsorship and representation, which in turn lends the project political legitimacy. Information about the memorial – in its incomplete state – has already been embedded into the BKM’s official

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website (linked through the website of the German federal government); and major public ceremonies connected to the memorial (e.g. groundbreaking ceremony, eventual inauguration), ensure that high level state officials make speeches and are generally present (Figure 3).

![Figure 3. Federal Minister of Culture, Bernd Neumann, speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony of the Sinti/Roma Memorial, 19 December 2008 (Photo: Robbie Grunwald)](image)

Four Ministers of Culture have been involved in the planning of the Sinti/Roma Memorial since the BKM has taken on responsibility of the country’s memorial politics: Michael Naumann (SPD), 1998-2001; Julian Nida-Rümelin (SPD), 2001-2002; Christina Weiss (independent), 2002-2005; and since 2005, Bernd Neumann (CDU).

**Intra-ethnic voices: Sinti Allianz (Natasha Winter)**

In 2000, a mere months following the Bundestag resolution to build a central memorial to

35 Additional information about the Sinti Allianz is available on its website (in German): http://www.sintiallianz-deutschland.de/
Jewish victims of the Holocaust along with memorials to all “other victim groups,”

Natasha Winter, a Cologne-based Sintezza, founded the independent umbrella organization Sinti Allianz e.V. (hereafter: Allianz). In an interview with Winter, she explained to me that her decision to establish the Allianz was so that she could offset the dominance of the Sinti/Roma Central Council in Germany and “because we needed a louder political voice” (personal interview, 2007). Although Winter lists a number of social services offered by the Allianz to Sinti & Roma living in the Cologne region, the organization’s activities have been dedicated almost exclusively to the planning (and disputing) of the Sinti/Roma Memorial.

Aided by the historian Eberhard Jäckel (who, with Lea Rosh was one of the founding members of Perspective Berlin and thus, involved in the genesis and subsequent development of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial), Winter used the German press as a platform from which to voice her disapproval of three main issues in the draft design of the Sinti/Roma Memorial proposed by the Sinti/Roma Central Council: the historical comparison between the National Socialist persecution of the Jews and the Sinti & Roma; use of the terminology “Sinti & Roma” rather than Zigeuner (“Gypsy”); the memorial’s location in the Berlin city-centre versus the suburb of Marzahn.

For the most part, Winter’s campaign has been based in historical interpretations and representations of the Nazi genocide that differ from those articulated by the Sinti/Roma Central Council. Having aligned herself with historian Jäckel, one of the main proponents of the singularity thesis, which posits that no act of persecution is comparable to that of the Nazi genocide of the Jews, Winter wanted to ensure that the memorial would in no way propagate a direct comparison of experience between the two
victim groups. This played itself out most dramatically in regards to the intended inscription on the memorial. The Sinti/Roma Central Council originally proposed inscribing into the memorial structure a segment of the speech made by Bundestag President Roman Herzog at the opening of the Documentation and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma in 1997, reprinted below:

The genocide against the Roma and Sinti was carried out with the same motive of racial madness, the same intention and the same will of deliberate and final destruction, as that against the Jews. Throughout the entire area under National Socialist influence they were systematically murdered, family-by-family, from small children to the elderly (Herzog 1997).

Winter was not only opposed to Herzog’s direct comparison between the genocide of the Jews and the Sinti & Roma, but was also insistent on the use of the term Zigeuner as opposed to the “Roma & Sinti” label articulated by Herzog. Winter maintains that Zigeuner is in fact more historically accurate, inclusive and thus, more respectful of the victims being commemorated. She explained that,

Zigeuner is the collective term for many different nations [Völker] of Indian origin. Zigeuner also refers to various social groups who were classified as such by the authorities or mainstream population. This included carneys [Schausteller], travellers/nomads, Jenisch people. These were social groups who had no ethnic ties to the Zigeuner but were compared to them and then persecuted by the Nazis for this reason. Historical documentation proves that Sinti and Roma were not the only targets... And of course, the term “Sinti and Roma” is an arbitrary construction invented by the Central Council. It excludes recognition of other ethnic Gypsies as well as social groups who were labelled as Gypsy and then murdered by the Nazis. This is yet another form of genocide! (Personal interview, 2007).

Ongoing conflict between the Sinti/Roma Central Council and the Allianz over the inscription, covered extensively in the German media, has been one of the major hurdles in the successful completion of the memorial and delayed construction for years. The BKM ultimately resolved the conflict in 2007 (Drucksache 905/07, 20 December 2007).
The Herzog quote will not be included in the memorial’s main structure but will be integrated into one of the side panels chronicling the Nazi persecution of the Sinti & Roma 1933-45, to be located at the memorial site. The word *Zigeuner* will also appear throughout the historical chronology in order to refer to those groups (who are then also named individually) persecuted “as Gypsies” but who are not in fact ethnically Gypsy/Roma (e.g. Jenisch). The text that will introduce the chronology was drafted by the BKM in cooperation with Rose, Winter and Timo Wagner, as well as expert historians from the Museum of the History of National Socialism in Cologne and Munich’s Institute of Contemporary History (IfZ). It reads as follows:

> Under the regime of National Socialism, hundreds of thousands of people in Germany and other European countries were persecuted as “Gypsies” between 1933 and 1945. The majority self-designated themselves according to their respective affiliation [Zugehörigkeit] to different groups, for example, as Sinti, Roma, Lalleri, Lowara or Manusch. The biggest groups in Europe were the Sinti and Roma. The goal of the national socialist states and their racial ideology was extermination of this minority: children, women and men were deported and murdered either in their hometowns or in ghettos, concentration- or extermination- camps. Members of the independent [eigenständig] victim group of Jenisch and other travellers were also affected by the measures of persecution (memorial text as of January 2008).

Although Winter’s *Allianz* has never gained authority comparable to the Sinti/Roma Central Council in the planning of the memorial, her persistent and aggressive media campaign has certainly had a significant impact on the content and design of the memorial; her campaign has also accounted for a number of the lengthier delays in the memorial’s completion and has contributed to and altered the discursive foundations of the memorial. The BKM continues to consult her in some – but not all – memorial-related negotiations.36

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36 At the 2008 groundbreaking ceremony for the Sinti/Roma Memorial, Romani Rose was the only ethnic leader officially invited to give a speech. Natasha Winter, who was invited as a guest but not a speaker, ran
The battle over the memorial inscription reflects disagreement between ethnic leaders in regards to historical representation and cultural forms such as nomenclature; it also highlights the role of the state as a mediator in matters related to the expression of ethnic identity and culture.  

up to the podium following Rose’s speech. No one stopped her spontaneous address. I would venture to say that this episode is rather emblematic of Winter’s positioning vis-à-vis the memorial and in the German ethno-political landscape – peripheral yet tolerated (Figure 4).  

The impact that Winter has had on the evolution of the memorial is noteworthy for another reason, which I prefer to limit to a side-note, considering how small and virtually unknown her organization was prior to the launch of her media campaign in 2000. Members of the Sinti/Roma Central Council have repeatedly made the claim that the media and political attention given to Winter reflects an underlying sentiment of anti-Gypsyism in German society. Silvio Peritore (2010) of the Central Council/Documentation Centre has referred to the conflict as a “sham-debate” [Scheindebatte] orchestrated by German politicians who were looking for a reason to delay, or altogether halt construction of a central memorial to the Sinti & Roma victims (public speech, ASF). In an essay about the Sinti/Roma Memorial, scholar Yvonne Robel (2009) substantiates this position. She writes that although earlier party political controversies played a decisive role in the planning – and setbacks – of the memorial, the media and formal political establishment have overwhelmingly focused on the discord between Roma leaders, thereby blaming the conflict over terminology, inscription and location of the planned memorial on their inability to resolve internal controversies (123).
Intra-ethnic voices: Jenischer Bund (Timo Wagner)38

In 2005 Timo Wagner founded the *Jenischer Bund e.V.* (Jenisch Association) – Germany’s first and only registered association of the Jenisch people. It is located in the Southwest of the country and has ties to larger contingents of the population in neighbouring Switzerland. Wagner immediately became involved in the Sinti/Roma Memorial project by lobbying to have the name of his people included in the memorial’s official title. He argued that although the Jenisch are ethnically distinct from the Sinti & Roma, they were subsumed into the “Gypsy” category by the National Socialists and thus, persecuted according to the same racial ideology. A year later, in 2006, Wagner made an official request at the BMI to have the Jenisch population of Germany recognized as a national minority group (separate from the German Sinti & Roma) based on claims of their long-standing history on German soil.39

The Jenisch people are not ethnically Roma/Gypsy but were persecuted “as Gypsies” and categorized as “asocials” by the National Socialists based on their itinerant lifestyle (Widmann 2001). The Jenisch are oftentimes also referred to as “White Gypsies,” which suggests their ethnic/racial distance from other Sinti & Roma groups. On the *Jenischer Bund* website community leaders reinforce this distinction from the Sinti & Roma but draw on many of the same rhetorical strategies used by Sinti & Roma

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38 Note that information included here about the Jenisch population does not include data gathered from direct communication with Jenisch leaders. After months of unsuccessful efforts at trying to contact the *Jenischer Bund* via phone, email and standard postal mail, I decided to focus instead on content available on their website, from secondary sources (mainly Widmann 2001; Margalit and Matras 2007), and from discussions with individuals at the BMI, the BKM and employees of the Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe who have been involved with the *Jenischer Bund* in the context of the Sinti/Roma Memorial and other related research projects (see Chapter 5).

39 The BMI is the branch of the German government responsible for all national minority related affairs.
leaders in order to gain recognition as an independent minority group. This includes placing their history of victimization at the centre of Jenisch identity and making repeated (albeit inconsistent) reference to the group’s claims to German as well as European territory and culture.

The website text begins with the title “The independent Jenisch victim group … a persecuted victim group labelled as Gypsy,” which is then defined according to an overriding rhetoric of Europeanness (as opposed to the claims of Germanness they make when lobbying the BMI for national minority status):

We Jenische are however not Roma and we are not represented by the Central Council of Sinti and Roma,’ emphasized Timo A. Wagner, ‘we Jenische are an autochtonous ethnic group [Volksgruppe] with our own language and culture, and which distinguishes itself considerably from the culture of the Sinti and Roma, and we Jenisch are a European cultural group [Kulturvolk] have always been resident [ansässig] here in the European region (Jenisch website – info).

The BMI has rejected the group’s appeal for national minority status because, as explained by Dr. Detlev Rein of the BMI, the Jenisch do not fulfil the necessary criteria for gaining national minority status. These criteria comprise: “an ethnic group [Volksgruppe] with a distinct culture that it wishes to preserve; residents of Germany for centuries; German citizens” (personal interview, 2009).

In the meantime, the BKM (with pressure from the Sinti/Roma Central Council) has also rejected the bid to include the Jenisch into the official title of the Sinti/Roma Memorial. The ongoing activism of the Jenischer Bund has however resulted in some forms of institutionalized commemoration pertaining to this group’s history of persecution. For example, the Jenisch are individually named in the introductory text accompanying the historical chronology at the site of the Sinti/Roma Memorial (see above); since 2007, the Jenisch receive a special mention at the Bundesrat’s final session
of the year when members of parliament hold an official commemoration ceremony for the Sinti & Roma victims of National Socialism. The BKM, as with Natasha Winter, consults with Timo Wagner in some – but not all – memorial-related negotiations.40

Similar to the conflicts taking place between the Sinti/Roma Central Council and the Allianz, the Jenischer Bund struggles to put forth a historical narrative of persecution that differs from the one propagated by the other ethnic leaders. Its own project of ethnogenesis, while based on some of the same cultural forms utilized by the Sinti/Roma Central Council is motivated by a divergent set of ethnic politics. Like the other ethnic leaders though, Wagner uses the memorial as a platform upon which to articulate and realize his group’s mobilization campaign.

Figure 5. Timo Wagner seated on the right. Also visible are Winter (centre) and, hidden under the umbrella, architect Dani Karavan and Rose at the groundbreaking ceremony of the Sinti/Roma Memorial, 19 December 2008 (Photo: Robbie Grunwald)

40 It is worth mentioning that up until Timo Wagner established the Jenischer Bund and began his own lobby for inclusion in the Sinti/Roma Memorial, Natasha Winter rallied on behalf of the Jenisch population. She insisted on the Zigeuner label so that non-Sinti and non-Roma groups, such as the Jenisch, could also gain recognition in the memorial. Once the Jenischer Bund formed, however, Winter dropped all mention of the Jenisch from her campaign and now refuses any direct communication with them (BKM, personal interview 2008).
Civil society’s spatial politics: International League of Human Rights

The German chapter of the International League of Human Rights (hereafter: League) briefly participated in the campaign for the construction of the Sinti/Roma Memorial in Berlin. The League’s involvement with the memorial project dates back to 1994 when president Fanny-Michaela Reisin established the Sinti and Roma Committee – the timing of which coincided with the Bundestag’s (initial) approval in 1994 of the memorial site next to the Reichstag in the Berlin city-centre. The Sinti and Roma Committee was headed by Jane Schuh, who explained to me that the impetus for founding the committee and taking an active interest in the memorial project was because, “we thought it was scandalous that victim groups had to represent themselves… the memorial should be a matter of the majority society, especially when it comes to political negotiations” (personal interview, 2010). The committee nonetheless sought the backing of the Sinti/Roma Central Council, inviting and encouraging representatives to participate in its activities. While relations between the two organizations remained cordial and the Sinti/Roma Central Council did offer some support, it remained predominantly disengaged from the League’s activities. According to Schuh, the League’s Sinti and Roma Committee was not politically prominent enough to attract any major attention from the Sinti/Roma Central Council even though they shared a fairly similar vision of the memorial. The League did work closely with the State Association of Sinti and Roma in Berlin-Brandenburg (a regional branch of the Sinti/Roma Central Council) and the Romani Union (which has since dissolved). Schuh emphasized the necessity of “cooperation between Gadje [Romanes word to denote a non-Roma individual] and Sinti

41 The International League of Human Rights is a non-governmental organization based in Paris, France and is accredited by the United Nations, the European Council and Unesco.
The League’s activities were primarily connected to the long-standing conflicts pertaining to the memorial’s location; involvement with the memorial was in fact overwhelmingly dedicated to space-related actions, namely, ritualized takeover of the desired grounds for the memorial site. From 1996 to 1999 the League organized four large-scale commemoration ceremonies called *Steine des Anstoßes* (Stumbling Blocks) during which participants were invited to place a stone next to a placard in the centre of the site. This collective act was meant to symbolize erection of the memorial (Figure 6), as described by Reisin in a 1998 press release:

In terms of the sustainable development of our current fate and future history, we will be responsible for symbolically erecting this memorial until the Bundesregierung actually realizes its construction (cited in *Liga* 2000:43).

The text inscribed on the placard outlines the objectives of the ceremony and calls
attention to the spatial politics of the memorial campaign; it also emphasizes that human
rights are indebted to the European Sinti & Roma today as a result of injustices
committed against them in the past (Figure 7). The emphasis, as in Reisin’s statement
above, thus rests on majority German society – to remember, to atone, to rectify:

Stumbling Blocks: for a memorial in commemoration of the persecution, murder
and discrimination of the Sinti and Roma of Europe during National Socialism.
Symbol for a memorial that is planned for the centre of the capital city. Symbol
also for a new attitude toward the Sinti and Roma of Europe, who are calling for
equality in place of discrimination (Liga 2000:23).

The League’s discourse pertaining to contemporary human rights deviates from that of
the Sinti/Roma Central Council in that it speaks on behalf of a wider range of Roma
groups – both in regards to the Nazi atrocities committed against Roma across all of
Nazi-occupied Europe and contemporary forms of injustice being committed against
foreign Roma in Germany and other parts of Europe. During the 1996 ceremony, speaker
Reimar Gilsenbach, a writer/journalist and long-standing advocate of Sinti & Roma human rights evoked a direct link between memorial politics and Germany’s deportation policies pertaining to its foreign Roma population.

‘I am ashamed that today, those Roma who fled to Germany before the war in Bosnia, are now scheduled to be deported back there because they cannot acquire a right of residence in our country. They, who twice – in the Second World War and in the Bosnian Civil War – suffered more strongly than every other ethnic group although they never belonged to the war-making parties. Grant them peace, let them stay!’ (Liga 2000:18).

All four of the League’s ceremonies took place within the framework of the annual “Day of Remembrance, Warning and Encounter” [Tag der Erinnerung, Mahnung und Begegnung] – also known as “Anti-Fascism Day” – one of Germany’s longest-standing commemoration and demonstration events held in the name of all victims of Fascism and organized by the Union of the Persecuted of the Nazi Regime–Federation of Anti-Fascists [Vereinigung der Verfolgten des NS Regimes–Bund der AntifaschistInnen. Hereafter: VVN-BdA]. Participants thus included activists from the German far-left (e.g. Antifa, Antideutsche), Sinti & Roma community representatives and survivors, regional- and state- level politicians, and other members of civil society.

By linking up the ceremonies to the activities of the VVN-BdA, the League was not just guaranteeing a large turnout – in 1998, for example, more than 10,000 people participated in Berlin’s “Anti-Fascism Day” (Kögel, TSP, 1998) – but was also making an ideological statement: it is the responsibility of mainstream German society, not that of victim groups, to commemorate Nazi injustices and thus, uphold human rights and

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42 In the immediate postwar years, the majority of Sinti & Roma survivors who returned to Germany relied on the VVN, established as an aid agency by former political prisoners in 1945, for financial aid, medical treatment and help with claims to stolen property. They were the first organization to recognize the Gypsies as victims of Nazism based on their origins (Margalit 2002:89-90). For more information on the ideological origins and evolution of the VVN, and later, its amalgamation with the BdA, see the official website of the Berlin chapter at: http://berlin.vvn-bda.org/
equality. This mirrors the rationale behind the Jewish Holocaust Memorial project initiated by the non-Jewish German citizens’ initiative, *Perspektive Berlin* and headed by the non-Jewish German journalist Lea Rosh.

The League’s Sinti and Roma Committee dissolved in 2002 and along with it, its participation in the further planning and negotiation of the Sinti/Roma Memorial.\(^{43}\) During its years of involvement, the League’s activities were widely reported in the Berlin press (mainly in the *TAZ* and *TSP* but also in several other German publications outside of Berlin), and succeeded at raising awareness across civil society and in political spheres as to the importance of securing a central location in the capital city for the construction of the Sinti/Roma Memorial (in Chapter Six I discuss the spatial politics of the memorial in more detail).

The political work and activities undertaken by the League, specifically in regards to the four *Stumbling Stones* ceremonies reflect the intimate link between cultural production and ethnic mobilization. By rallying against the formal political apparatus, a mix of ethnic and civil-society activists engaged in a spatial politics of commemoration in order to protest contemporary forms of discrimination against the Sinti & Roma population. By drawing on resonant cultural symbols and practices (take-over of the grounds of the memorial site; stone-placing ritual; symbolic erection of memorial), activists sought to bridge a pivotal moment of Romani history (genocide) with current forms of injustice requiring political attention (deportation). This marks an important point of divergence between the politics espoused by the League and the Sinti/Roma

\(^{43}\) There have been recent efforts (as of summer 2010) to re-establish the committee, mainly in order to address the ongoing human rights abuses of Sinti & Roma living in Germany and in reaction to increasing forms of violence and discrimination against the population across the whole of Europe (east and west). There are however no plans to participate in the final stages of the Sinti/Roma Memorial’s planning (Schuh, personal interview, 2010).
Central Council. Although both used a similar strategy of drawing on the past to secure recognition in the present, the content is different. Another discrepancy between the two organizations worth noting is that, unlike the Central Council, the League’s Sinti and Roma Committee did not actively seek out alliance with Jewish community leaders and organizations (League president Reisin is herself Jewish but unaffiliated to the official Jewish community). The League’s relationship to Germany’s mainstream Jewish leaders is in fact somewhat strained because of its critical stance vis-à-vis Israeli politics. The League, namely its multiple international chapters, is known for its political engagement and support of the Palestinian cause (Schuh, personal interview, 2010).

**Inter-ethnic voices: Germany’s official Jewish community**

Jewish organizations in Germany have been especially active and implicated in the development of the Sinti/Roma Memorial as well. In the first stage of memorial debates (1989-1999; see Chapter Four), the Central Council of Jews in Germany (hereafter: Jewish Central Council) played a key role especially in terms of the influence it exerted vis-à-vis the decision-making apparatus of Germany’s formal political leadership. Since the start of the campaign for the Sinti/Roma Memorial, the Jewish Central Council has had four chairpersons: Heinz Galinski (1988-1992); Ignatz Bubis (1992-1999); Paul Spiegel (2000-2006); Charlotte Knobloch (2006-2010); and since 2010, Dieter Graumann. From among these community leaders, Galinski and Bubis have been the most actively involved in the evolution of the Sinti/Roma Memorial. This is mainly due to the fact that their years of incumbency overlapped with the initial planning phase of
both memorials, when foundational decisions were being deliberated (e.g. a shared memorial or individual memorials to the separate victim groups; location).

Figure 8. Romani Rose (R) greeting Ignatz Bubis (L) at inauguration of Documentation and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma, 16 March 1997 (Photo: www.sintiundroma.de)

As a topic in its own right, I bracket off the involvement of Jewish actors (or, Jewish-interest actors) for now but return to it in subsequent chapters.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have applied Nagel’s constructivist framework of ethnicity in order to analyze the ethnogenesis of the European Roma and the German Sinti & Roma, and how these processes of identity and cultural construction correspond to the planning of the Sinti/Roma Memorial, and thus practices of commemoration more broadly conceived.

I have shown how the European project of Roma ethnogenesis, promoted as a transnational non-territorial civil rights movement, differs from the nationally delimited
conception of the Sinti & Roma as a German Volksgruppe. The typology of boundary-shifting provides a framework for explaining how ethnic leaders strategically alternate between boundary expansion and contraction for political and social advantage. Despite the differences between the European and the German case, both forms of ethnogenesis exemplify processes of mobilization and how ethnic leaders are active agents (and at times, rivals) in the making and re-making of the boundaries and meanings of their group’s ethnic identity. In the specific case of the German Sinti & Roma, I emphasized as well the impact of policies determined by state and local governments, the distribution of resources (e.g. citizenship, residence permits, reparations of war), and actions taken by other minority/ethnic groups, such as the Jews in Germany. The (re-)creation of particular cultural attributes – history, language, customs, nomenclature – is how these various actors give meaning and content to the ethnic boundaries they are continuously in the process of constructing. Finally, the process of frame alignment, that is, the use of pre-existing and resonant cultural forms is most evident in the ways that Sinti & Roma leaders draw on Jewish narratives of commemoration in order to legitimize their own claims and objectives. I have only briefly touched on this point in this chapter, but elaborate on it in greater detail throughout the rest of the dissertation. Specifically, I show how Sinti & Roma leaders use the Holocaust as a “collective action frame” by placing memory of the Holocaust – their own experience of it as much as their shared experience with Jewish victims – at the centre of their memorial project and thus, ethnogenesis.

My discussion of boundary shifting and cultural production has allowed me to also set the stage for related conflicts that arise in later years in the context of the memorial debates. As I have shown, these conflicts have to do with the different ways
that memorial activists define the parameters of group membership and draw on historical narratives for contemporary political action and mobilization. That the Sinti/Roma Central Council dominates the memorial-making process highlights as well the role played by the state in acknowledging the voice of certain ethnic leaders while silencing others. With its overriding rhetoric of Germanness, the activities of the Sinti/Roma Central Council, in turn, also root the memorial project in an ideology of German nationalism and the nation-building project. This is exemplified perhaps most clearly in the various ways, as shown, that membership to the national body politic is in a constant state of flux: it is contested, sought after, denied or affirmed but always, a function of remembering (and forgetting).
CHAPTER THREE: Historiographical hierarchies: constructing memory narratives in and beyond Germany’s national culture of commemoration

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I lay out the historical context for the rest of the dissertation by focusing on two forms of commemorative “entanglements”: (1) the particularities of the German commemorative environment in the immediate postwar decades, influenced in part by transnational forms of memory; (2) the context of a hegemonic memory narrative of the Jewish Holocaust that initially hindered but later proved to be pivotal in the formation of a separate memory narrative of the Nazi genocide of the Sinti & Roma.

The first section of this chapter begins by charting the emergence in Western culture of a discourse on the Nazi genocide. What we know today as the Holocaust is rooted in the construction of a specifically Jewish narrative of collective trauma and suffering. This dovetailed with widespread debates regarding the uniqueness of the (Jewish) Holocaust and the so-called limits of its comparability to other genocidal acts. In Germany these debates were most publically broadcast in the context of the Historikerstreit (Historians’ Dispute), which engaged with the question of perpetration and whether Nazism could be compared to other state-led acts of genocide throughout history.

In the second section of this chapter, I show how this paradigm of uniqueness has hindered the recognition of other victim groups’ experience of genocide. Specifically, I discuss the various spheres from which the genocide of the Gypsies was omitted for the majority of the postwar period: historiographical, legal-political, and civil society. I then
discuss the postwar mobilization of Sinti & Roma in Germany, showing how the political organization of this population was concerned primarily with raising awareness of and seeking official recognition for the Nazi genocide. These processes also mirrored and borrowed from the earlier work of Jewish lobby groups seeking recognition and restitution for Nazi crimes. Finally, I discuss a series of advances made as a result of these acts of mobilization, showing an increasing institutionalization of the memory of German Sinti & Roma victims of genocide in the German national narrative.

I. CONSTRUCTING (JEWISH) HOLOCAUST MEMORY AND DISCOURSES OF VICTIMHOOD

Transnational entanglements: US, Israel and Germany

The history of National Socialist crimes as a subject of focus separate from World War II was relatively slow to enter public consciousness and political discourse in Germany, Israel and the US, the three countries most closely associated with the legacy of the National Socialist past: Germany as the country of perpetrators, Israel as the country to take in the majority of survivors following the war, and the US as “saviour” of and “witness” to World War Two (Levy and Sznaider 2002:94-5). While the specific geopolitical context of each country played a decisive role in the production of a postwar narrative of (Jewish) victim/survivor and the ways in which memory of the Holocaust came to be institutionalized, the narratives in each of the three countries nonetheless took shape in dialogue with one another. The trial of SS officer Adolf Eichmann held in Jerusalem in 1961 is perhaps the most evident example of the transnational scope of commemorative forms – in the ways that things are broadcast and otherwise made known globally but are then re-attached in unique ways to the specificities of the national/local
context and culture of commemoration in which it is received (Rothberg 2009; Huyssen 2000).

In the immediate postwar years, the Nazi persecution of the Jews (let alone other victim groups) was a virtual non-topic in all three countries; there reigned a “period of virtual silence about the Shoah” (Friedlander 2000:5). This was due in part to the stigma at the time attached to victimhood in general and to Jewish victims and survivors of the Holocaust in particular (Levy and Sznaider 2002; Buruma 1999; Novick 1999; Bodemann 1996; Segev 1993). Chaumont (2000) refers to the predominance of a “double stigmatization,” wherein Jewish victims as well as survivors were initially stigmatized in Jewish circles. The former were perceived as having been passive, thereby “allowing” themselves to be victimized. By contrast, the latter were seen as having resorted to undignified means in order to assure their own survival. Peter Novick (1999), referring to the American context, describes the extent to which American Jewish community leaders actively evaded identification with a status of victimhood in the immediate postwar years due to “fear that parading atrocities might spark anti-Semitic incidents” (131). The American ideology of assimilation played a defining role in these early years, as the East European Jewish refugees of war were concerned primarily with their successful integration into American life rather than dwelling on the past.

When a proposal for a Holocaust memorial in New York City came before representatives of the leading Jewish organizations in the late 1940s, they unanimously rejected the idea: it would, they said, give currency to the image of Jews as ‘helpless victims,’ an idea they wished to repudiate (Novick 1999:160).

By the 1960s however the situation started to change and the emergence of public discourse on the Nazi genocide dovetailed with the rise of a discourse of victimhood and
oriented specifically to the *Jewish* experience of persecution under the National Socialists.

In the US, a Holocaust discourse took shape in response to a number of factors. First, the televised broadcast of the Eichmann trials introduced to the American public “what we now call the Holocaust… as an entity in its own right, distinct from Nazi barbarism in general” (Novick 1999:133); this also included “a shift in focus to Jewish victims rather than German perpetrators that made its discussion more palatable in the continuing cold war climate” (Ibid:144). Second, the emergence of ethnic identity politics and the American civil rights movement legitimated for the first time a discourse of otherness and victimization (Ibid:199). Third, Joel Best (1997) charts the rise of “an American ideology of victimhood,” that is, a new sensitization to and awareness of “the plights of victims and victimization” (10). This included the rise of the mental health profession, which fostered medicalization and thus, increased recognition of various kinds of victim experiences; legal reforms that facilitated litigation of cases of alleged harms and risks; and the development of victimology as a new academic sub-discipline. Beginning in the 1960s this combination of societal transformations generally contributed to more positive and accepting attitudes toward claims of victimization. Victim group advocates were so successful that they ultimately created an industry of victimhood, a “set of social arrangements that now support the identification of large numbers of victims” which in turn has generated an ideology, a “set of widely accepted propositions about the nature of victimization’ that supports industry goals” (Best cited in Dunn
Jewish lobby groups and élites who started to raise public awareness of Jewish suffering and persecution in the 1960s were thus functioning in a climate increasingly attuned to the vocabulary of victimization – especially its role in helping to solidify collective group consciousness, but also as a means of legitimizing specific Israeli policies vis-à-vis the Palestinian conflict (Novick 1999:145).

Describing the situation in Israel, Brog (2003) similarly attributes the rise of a Holocaust discourse to a profound transformation across Israeli society regarding popular perceptions of victimhood, as related to and separate from the role of the Eichmann trial. In the immediate postwar years, Israel – as a young and relatively vulnerable state – valorized military victims, ghetto fighters and partisans. Hilberg (1996) expounds on the prevalence – and necessity – of a “heroic discourse” as central to the Zionist project and the formation of national identity, particularly in the early years of Israeli statehood (cited in Bodemann and Korn 2006). The dominant national narrative of the time perceived the Holocaust victim as weak and passive, “like a lamb taken to the slaughter.” This narrative, however, changed dramatically in the aftermath of two significant events: first, as a result of the 1961 Eichmann trials in Jerusalem in which the Israeli public tried a Nazi criminal in its own institution thereby becoming the “accuser” rather than the “muted victim”; and, second the military victory linked to the Six Day War in 1967. It was through these two turning points that the Jewish-Israeli “victim” was transformed.

The rise of multiculturalism in the 1990s would reinforce these trends in subsequent decades, providing an arena for ethnic/minority groups in which to claim contemporary rights based on past injustices. “In this atmosphere of victimization,” writes Rosenfeld (1999), “a genocidal past is an obvious political asset” (46).

However, even with the emergence of a discourse on victimhood in later decades, the image of the (military) hero persisted as a central element of the Israeli national narrative (Bodemann, personal communication 2010).
into the “hero” and became the foundational object of Israeli national identity (Brog 2003; see also Segev 1993).

Postwar German historiography has been laden with debates over claiming victim status and experiences of suffering going back to the immediate postwar period when the dominant national discourse framed the German nation as the sole victim of the Nazi regime, Soviet terror but also Allied occupation (Levy and Sznaider 2002:94; see also Marcuse 2001; Niven 1996). In her essay, “The Aftermath of Nazi Rule: Report from Germany,” Hannah Arendt (1950) writes that this time period was characterized by a “conspiracy of silence” regarding Jewish victimization. While the West-German government officially acknowledged the Nazi persecution of the Jews (the program of reparations to the State of Israel [Shilumim in Hebrew] launched by Konrad Adenauer in 1952, was among the most notable initiatives), it had less to do with the victims but with Adenauer’s political will to refashion West Germany into a “reliable nation, one no longer to be associated with its predecessor regime” (Olick 1998:551). It was not until the 1960s really that the “myth of German victimization” was re-negotiated and for the most part, abandoned and replaced with talk of victimization of the Jews. This shift is attributed to a number of factors linked to initiatives and interests coming from the state,

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46 Giesen (2004) has described this time period with the term “coalition of silence,” and draws on theories of cultural trauma to explain how the country needed a latent period of repression before it could begin actively dealing with the trauma. This perspective has been heavily criticized though, especially on the grounds that collective trauma cannot be explained with the same language as individual-level psychological trauma. See for example Kansteiner (2002) who argues that the period of latency in postwar German had in fact more to do with “political interests or opportunities” rather than social-psychological ones (187).

47 Discourses of German victimization continue to resurface periodically, however. A most recent example took place in July 2010 when the CDU proposed construction of a memorial for the women of Berlin raped by the occupying army starting in the spring of 1945. Members of the centre-left Social-democratic Party of Germany (SPD) expressed harsh critique against the proposed memorial, claiming that it glosses over the fact that German soldiers were also guilty of committing rape. They argued as well that the CDU is attempting to instrumentalize the suffering of rape victims in order to recast Germany as a victim of WWII (Sona, TAZ, 2010). For analysis of the German victimhood discourse, see Niven, 2006 and Dubiel, 1999.
civil society and victim group associations, and again, the Eichmann trials in Jerusalem. Notable was the rise of the German New Left throughout the 1960s and the student movement, which sought to challenge the older generation and thus, the extant national narrative of German identity (Levy and Sznaider 2002). In contrast to the US and Israel, in Germany it was (for rather obvious reasons) mainly the non-Jewish population who spearheaded the formation of a narrative of Jewish victimhood (Novick 2003:31). As I discuss throughout this dissertation, the role of non-Jewish Germans as guardians and groundbreakers of memory of Jewish persecution culminated in 1988 with the German citizens’ initiative to build a central memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe.

**Narrative of uniqueness/singularity**

The cultural transformation of victim identity in all three countries (and beyond) was also closely linked to the emergence of a new narrative that framed the Nazi genocide – and specifically the mass murder of Jews – as a unique, incomparable and unprecedented event in the history of persecution and mass death (Chaumont 1997). Holocaust scholars as well as popular observers overwhelmingly attribute this (western) worldwide transformation to the Eichmann trials which, in the words of then Israeli prime minister David Ben-Gurion, were consciously designed in order to expose “[t]he Holocaust that the Nazis wreaked on the Jewish people [as] a unique episode that has no equal [and] as the only crime that has no parallel in human history” (cited in Rothberg 2004:1231). Jewish lobby groups at this time (located primarily in Israel and the United States) were increasingly encouraged by the cultural and political weight of the emergent uniqueness

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48 See Chapter One of Arendt’s *Eichmann in Jerusalem* – “House of Justice” – where she draws consistently on metaphors of theatre and design in order to emphasize just how deliberately the Israeli state staged these trials.
narrative and began asserting the unprecedented and incomparable nature of their persecution in order to procure restitution from the West-German government.

Uniqueness continued to gather momentum into the late 1970s and 1980s, especially in US academic circles at which point it became the subject of a polarized (and rather polemical) scholarly debate directed especially against the growing trend to historicize and politicize the Holocaust. Historicization describes the attempt to make sense of the Holocaust with generalizing theories and concepts, such as totalitarianism, functionalism, fascism and modernity. Politicization of the Holocaust refers to the appropriation and distortion of the event in order to serve a particular political agenda and ultimately, lessen the Jewish character of the Holocaust. Common forms of this are: dejudaizing, americanizing, stealing, denying or normalizing the Holocaust (Rosenfeld 1999). Rosenfeld (1999) explains how the perspective of uniqueness came about as a reaction to these trends, which proponents perceived as “diminishing the [Holocaust] for apologetic or revisionist purposes” (30). It is for this reason that claims against uniqueness would prove so divisive in subsequent years.

On the uniqueness side of this debate were those scholars who asserted a particularist stance, that is, the Jewish character of the Nazi genocide and its fundamental singularity (E.g. Katz 1996; Lipstadt 1993; Bauer 1978; Jäckel 1986). Defenders of this

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49 See Chaumont’s (1997) analysis of the debates that took place in the journal Midstream from 1980 to 1984 between Papazian, Alexander, Bauer, A. L. Eckardt and R. A. Eckardt. The latter two authors coined the phrase “unique uniqueness” in order to describe the (Jewish) Holocaust and set it apart from other unique historical events. See also Chaouat (2005).

50 Note that Yehuda Bauer has changed his stance somewhat in recent years. In a 2007 foreword to the edited volume The Roma: a Minority in Europe, he unequivocally acknowledges that the Nazi persecution of the Roma was an act of genocide. He goes so far as to condemn other historians who deny that it was in fact genocide. He writes that, “if one takes seriously the definition of genocide in the 1948 Convention on the Crime of Genocide [that is, an intent to destroy an ethnic, national or racial group as such, in part or completely], there should be little doubt on that point” (ix). Bauer maintains, however, that unlike the case of the Jews, the Nazis did not target the entirety of the Gypsy population as some “settled” (as opposed to
position assert a variety of different criteria in order to disclaim comparison of the
genocide of the Jews to any other genocidal act (or, to any other group persecuted by the
Nazis). These criteria range (rather inconsistently) from the intent of perpetrators, number
of victims, use of technology, unprecedented quality of the event, and to the role of the
state. Steven Katz (1996), one of the most vocal advocates of the uniqueness perspective,
draws on the following rationale:

The Holocaust is phenomenologically unique by virtue of the fact that never
before has a state set out, as a matter of intentional principle and actualized
policy, to annihilate physically every man, woman, and child belonging to a
specific people. A close study of the relevant comparative historical data will
show that only in the case of Jewry under the Third Reich was such all-inclusive,
uncompromising, unmitigated murder intended (19).

Philip Lopate (1989) defines the Holocaust as a uniquely Jewish experience according to
fairly similar criteria, but adding in the role of technology as well.

(1) scale – the largest number of deaths extracted from one single group; (2)
technology – the mechanization of death factories; (3) bureaucracy – the
involvement of the state apparatus at previously unheard-of levels; (4) intent – the
express purpose being to annihilate every last member of the Jewish people (cited
in Hancock 2009:78).

By contrast, proponents of a universalized understanding of the Holocaust argue that the
event also entailed the murder of millions of non-Jews and is also comparable to other
genocides throughout history, such as the Armenian and Rwanda genocides, and African
slavery in the US (Heinsohn 2000; Bronner 1999; Churchill 1997; Rosenbaum 1996;
Stannard 1996; Hancock 1987).51 Claims of the Holocaust’s uniqueness, they argue, are

51 “vagrant”) Gypsies were spared from annihilation (he overlooks the fact, however, that many of these
“spared” Gypsy groups were then coerced into sterilization, see Margalit 2002).
51 Note that although Heinsohn and Bronner both maintain a position of uniqueness vis-à-vis the Holocaust
(i.e. Nazi genocide is not comparable to any other genocide), their arguments include victim groups other
than the Jews (see Stone 2004:131-2).
tantamount to the denial of other genocides. David Stannard (1996), one of the harshest critics, regards uniqueness as an act of political instrumentalization and writes that,

Proponents of the uniqueness of the Holocaust not only do damage to historical truth, but in their determination to belittle all genocides other than the Holocaust, they are, in fact, accomplices in the efforts of numerous governments to conceal and deny their own pasts or to obscure current campaigns of mass violence… (B2).

The debate between particularists and universalists simply entrenched the uniqueness paradigm further into public discourse, and transformed the (Jewish) Holocaust into what Jeffrey Alexander (2002) calls a moral universal. He argues that in the process of reinforcing the historical singularity of the Jewish Holocaust, its moral implications have in turn become generalized, departicularized and globalized; it has become a “bridging-metaphor that social groups of uneven power and legitimacy [apply] to parse ongoing events as good and evil in real historical time” (51; see also Diner 2003; Levy and Sznaider 2002; Huyssen 2000).  

The origins of the term *genocide*, coined in 1944 by Raphael Lemkin in order to describe specifically the Nazi persecution of the Jews, reflects the extent to which the Holocaust is now regarded as the “prototypical genocide” (Moshman 2001:432). In turn, it also reinforced how it has come “increasingly to serve as a metaphor and measure of victimhood” (Torpey 2001 cited in Woolford and Wolejszo 2006:895).  

Paradoxically then, as the Jewish Holocaust gained this normative status, it

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52 Bodemann and Korn (2006) question the extent to which the Holocaust in fact has “global” reach. The authors’ study of Holocaust Education Week in Toronto reveals the extent to which discourses of Holocaust memory vary according to specific national contexts of reception and interpretation.

53 Although Lemkin coined the term in specific reference to the Nazi atrocities against the Jews, the definition he offers of “genocide” can in fact be abstracted to other groups persecuted by the Nazis or to other historical facts of mass murder. For Lemkin, genocide is “a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves.” Fowler (2009) has written of Lemkin that he “sought to transform the particular aspects of the Holocaust into a standard of universal application… to abstract the unique event to a level at which it could provide a basis for responding to similar (though not necessarily identical) events” (218).

In fact, Lemkin explicitly made mention of the Nazi genocide of the Gypsies, alongside Jews and...
precluded comparison to past or future genocidal events (Margalit and Motzkin 1996) – or, at the very least, made comparison to other events extremely contentious. As Rothberg (2009) contends, this tendency has serious political consequences: “undue stress on the singularity of the Holocaust at the expense of its similarities with other events can block recognition of past as well as present genocides” (10).

**Historikerstreit**

In Germany, the so-called Historikerstreit (Historians’ Dispute) was the most publicized episode related to the ongoing debate about the singularity versus comparability of the Holocaust (Wippermann 2005; Giesen 2004). It erupted in academic but also the German civic and political arena in 1986, and latched on to the universalized reading of the Nazi-past but articulated it for different ideological objectives (Kansteiner 1998; Maier 1988; Augstein et al. 1987). The Historikerstreit focused on the (West) German state’s accountability for the legacy of Nazi criminality; rather than comparing experiences of victimization as in earlier debates, conservative Right-leaning historians broached the topic of perpetration. The disputes were launched with the publication of a newspaper article by historian Ernst Nolte (1986 in FAZ) in which he sought to establish a language for comparing the crimes of National Socialism to Stalinism, suggesting for example that the Nazis had modelled Auschwitz after the Soviet gulag and thereby challenging the particularist stance that Nazi policies had no precedent. Such arguments were immediately regarded as an attempt to historicize and dispute the historical singularity of Nazi perpetration by “embedd[ing] the Third Reich in the larger stream of history, as a

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Slavs in a speech he delivered in January 1951 to the American Jewish Congress. And again in a radio broadcast in October 1955, Lemkin stated that “almost all the Gypsies in Europe were destroyed by the Nazis” (cited in Weiss-Wendt, forthcoming:9).
product of the ‘age of fascism,’ the industrial revolution, and other macrolevel processes rather than as a consequence of uniquely German political and cultural pathologies” (Langenbacher 2003:56). The Liberal Left – philosopher Jürgen Habermas most vehemently – also criticized Nolte for relativizing, and in fact politicizing Nazi crimes in order to “free Germany from its particular stain, thus facilitating the resurgence of a sense of national pride” (Levy and Sznaider 2002:99). The legacy of the Historikerstreit has rendered the universalist/comparative stance on the Nazi genocide rather taboo and definitively complicated in contemporary German society.

Within the context of the Historikerstreit (and perpetrator-related discussions), a sub-debate took place regarding an intentionalist versus functionalist interpretation of the Holocaust, and was guided by and contributed to a reinforcement of the particularist/universalist dichotomy. An intentionalist reading of the Holocaust maintains that the very core of Nazi ideology rested on a premeditated and systematic plan of complete annihilation of European Jewry that was based on two thousand years of anti-Semitism in Europe and orchestrated almost entirely by Hitler and his SS-Followers. Understood in this way, the Nazi policy of persecution applies exclusively to the Jewish population and is incomparable to the experience of any other group targeted by the National Socialists (see Maier 1988). By contrast, functionalist interpretations, taking off from a universalist reading of the Holocaust, assert that the Nazi genocide was only able to transpire as the result of diffuse and differentiated organizational characteristics (e.g. differentiated tasks; complex field of internal rivalries and tensions between different offices and Nazi organizations); not even the highest-ranking officials knew about the full extent of genocide taking place: “Hence, events were determined by the working of
mechanisms which, although created by the Nazis, took on lives of their own” and were not in fact guided by any concrete ideology, such as anti-Semitism (Laqueur 2001:185; see also Browning 1992; Mommsen 1991; Broszat 1990). Blame could thus be placed as much on “ordinary” German citizens as on Hitler and the SS. Iconic in this regard are Hannah Arendt’s “banality of evil” thesis and her 1963 publication Eichmann in Jerusalem, in which she characterizes Adolf Eichmann as a dismal character caught up in the Nazi bureaucratic and repressive state apparatus, and guided by rather prosaic factors such as career ambition and group pressures. Arendt argues that the heinous acts of the Nazis were thus a violation in universalist terms that could not be reduced to the Jewish victims alone, but were in fact an offense against the whole of humanity. These conclusions elicited far-reaching outcry from Jewish intellectuals, politicians and the mainstream media, earning Arendt the label of “self-hating Jew” in many circles. This response to Arendt’s work reveals the privileged and authoritative status that “the Jewish victim” of Nazi crimes had already reached by the early 1960s.

II. POSTWAR EXCLUSIONS AND MOBILIZATION OF GERMAN SINTI & ROMA

I have discussed the social and political clout (that came to be) associated with the uniqueness narrative in order to set the stage for the entry of the Sinti & Roma into German Holocaust discourse, that is, to illustrate the context of reception for the nascent memory narrative of this population’s experience of victimization under National Socialism. The narratives (and debates) of singularity/uniqueness as well as

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54 For further discussion of the reaction to Arendt’s thesis, see Dwight Macdonald’s 1964 essay “Hannah Arendt and the Jewish Establishment.”
intentionalism are largely responsible for the near omission the Sinti & Roma from the
historiography of the Holocaust, as well for the objectionable delays across the legal,
political and civil spheres of German society in recognizing and redressing Nazi acts of
genocide. As historian Sybil Milton (1991) writes, “the current preoccupation with
antisemitism and the ‘uniqueness’ of the Jewish Holocaust in historical literature has
limited our ability to recognize the connections between Nazi ideology, German social
policy, and genocide” (382).

Sinti & Roma ethnic leaders in Germany with the support of NGOs and
influenced by the European Roma rights movement have not remained passive, however.
Throughout the postwar era, they have established multiple forms of community
organization in order to demand recognition and restitution for the atrocities committed
against them. They have done so by borrowing heavily from previously established forms
of Jewish collective organization and commemorative practices. This is an example of
how the (Jewish) Holocaust is used as “the paradigm or template through which other
genocides and historical traumas are very often perceived and presented… [and provides]
a language for their articulation” (Assmann 2007:14).

55 In order to avoid overstating the impact of the uniqueness narrative, it is important to briefly mention
other factors that account for the veritable invisibility of the Sinti and Roma in the various realms of
Holocaust discourse. These include their social marginalization across Europe and lack of social, political
and cultural power and influence (Zimmermann 2001); lack of social cohesion amongst the survivor
population (although the civil rights movement in early 1970s amended that somewhat) (Kapralski 2008);
lack of a written tradition through which to proliferate memory of events (e.g. memoires, letters) (Stewart
Historiographical omissions and the thesis of singularity

In Article II of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, adopted in 1948 as per international law, genocide is defined as an act “committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such” (U.N.T.S. 1951:277). Many of the defenders of uniqueness (and intentionalism), however, have not adhered to this formal definition of genocide. Instead, they have justified the historical exclusion of Gypsies from the literature based on ad hoc criteria for defining uniqueness (see Stone 2004:130) and according to these, alleging that the persecution of the Gypsies is incomparable to the genocide of the Jews; and in some cases, could therefore not even be considered an act of genocide. In essence, they confound claims of uniqueness with the admissibility of genocide.

Some of the most common arguments in this regard have included: the absence of a Nazi policy that was directed specifically against the Gypsies and commensurate with the “Final Solution” against the Jewish question (e.g. Katz 1988); persecution was not racially motivated as in the Jewish case (e.g. Jäckel 1986) but enacted as a mechanism for crime control (e.g. Döring 1964) or public health concerns (e.g. Streck 1981); the entirety of the Gypsy population was not targeted for annihilation as was the entirety of the Jewish population (e.g. Bauer 1978); the number of victims is not comparable to the number of Jewish victims (cited in Milton 1992:1).

More so than verifiable historical fact, however, what these so-called justifications reflect is that, “as far as the Nazi persecution of the Gypsies is concerned, the issue of genocide has been treated as a matter of comparison between Jewish and Gypsy victimization” (Weiss-Wendt, forthcoming: 9; see also Zimmermann 2001).
Specifically, Milton (1991) attributes the disregard for the Nazi genocide of the Gypsies to the logic of intentionalism. She argues that, as a category of historical analysis, intentionalism has proven more appealing to German society because it facilitates the process of deflecting blame away from “ordinary” citizens (functionalist perspective) and to Hitler and his SS followers instead. As such, historical onus has settled on the persecution of the Jews.

… the Germans encouraged this emphasis on Jewish victimization, since the excesses of antisemitism could be blamed on the pathology of Hitler and his SS followers; whereas, the murder of German nationals in the so-called euthanasia killings and the destruction of the Romani and Sinti, both carried out by ‘ordinary’ German bureaucrats, scientists and policemen, implicated a far larger segment of the German population. Moreover, the focus on Nazi antisemitism also prevented discussion of how deeply the German scientific community was involved in the killing operations against Jews as well as against Gypsies and the handicapped (377).

A similar logic – especially in regards to this slippery definition of genocide – underpins the failure of the legal, political and civil spheres of German society to acknowledge and redress these crimes for the majority of the postwar period.

**Legal-political omissions and racial versus social victim categories**

A 1956 ruling of the West-German Supreme Court concluded that the Nazi mass deportations and executions of the Gypsies were carried out as a part of a “legitimate struggle against criminals” (Margalit 1999:222). Specifically, the court ruled that persecution was racially motivated starting only in December 1942 when Heinrich Himmler, chief of the SS and Gestapo, issued the so-called Auschwitz-Decree [*Auschwitz-Erlass*], which led to the deportation of 23,000 Gypsies from eleven countries across occupied Europe to the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp. All other edicts
promulgated between 1936 and 1942 were interpreted and defined by the court as “preventive security measures of the police” (Ibid; see also Margalit 2002; Zimmermann 1991). There is however ample evidence pointing to racial motives in official Nazi policy from as early as 1936 (Margalit 2002), and even as far back as the Second Empire and the Weimar Republic (USHMM n.d.; Tyrnauer 1998; Milton 1992, 1991). Milton (1992) refers, for example, to the dehumanizing 1935 Nuremberg racial laws, which “classified Gypsies, along with Jews and blacks, as racially distinctive minorities with ‘alien blood’ (artfremdes Blut)” (2).

The 1956 ruling reflects one of the most contentious questions addressed by the German judiciary regarding Nazi policies against the Gypsies and the question of genocide: were Gypsies targeted as a social or a racial group? The Nazi regime in fact categorized the Gypsies in a number of different ways – policies wavered and often blurred the lines between social and racial categorizations of Gypsy identity (Zimmermann 2001; 1996; Milton 1992, 1991). While Gypsies were variously labelled as “habitual criminals,” “social misfits,” “vagabonds,” and “asocials,” (Milton 1992; Zimmermann 1991), they were also categorized and managed by the Nazi state apparatus according to an overriding racial ideology. As historian Henry Friedlander (1996) so compellingly asserts, “any system that categorizes all members of a group as anti-social is obviously establishing a racial definition based on heredity” (51).

As such, the dichotomizing logic of social versus racial categorization is inadequate both as a form of historical analysis and as an instrument for legally defining genocide. Specifically, it has obscured the devastating outcomes of Nazi policies against the Gypsies: deprivation of civil rights and humanity; relocation to and incarceration in
ghettos; systematic deportation to concentration camps in the East; slave labour; death by exposure, malnutrition, medical experimentation and disease; involuntary sterilization; systematic extermination in mobile gas vans, by shooting, by gassing... (Rosenhaft 2008; Zimmermann 2007, 1996; Kenrick 2006; USHMM n.d.; Margalit 2002; 1999; Milton 1992, 1991). 56

There are numerous examples of this muddled distinction between social-racial categorization dating back to 1933 when the Nazis first assumed power and well until the war’s end in 1945. 57 A case in point is the genealogical and genetic research conducted by psychiatrist Dr. Robert Ritter on the link between heredity and the Gypsies’ so-called biological proclivity for crime. This took place from 1936 and until Ritter’s suicide in 1950. The results of his research, although administered by the Ministry of Health and the Central Office for Reich Security – and thus, framed as a health issue and preventative crime measure – were used as evidence by Himmler in his 1938 decree “Combatting the Gypsy Nuisance” to justify treating the “Gypsy problem” as a “matter of race” (cited in Burleigh and Wipperman 1991:120). The Himmler-Decree led to increased

56 Policies of “voluntary” sterilization must also be considered as an act commensurate with racial categorization and the end-goal of wiping out the Gypsy population. The German courts did not take this fact into consideration. Although historical research suggests that some Gypsy subgroups – “racially pure’ itinerant Sinti and Lalleri, as well as ‘good Mischlinge’ and a small number of ‘socially adjusted’ individuals” – were in fact exempt from deportation, the majority of these individuals were then coerced into signing over their willingness to being sterilized (Weiss-Wendt forthcoming:11; Margalit 2002:50; Zimmermann 2001). As Weiss-Wendt (forthcoming) makes clear, “the actual number of victims who had been subjected to sterilization – approximately 2,500 – does not change the conclusion, namely that the Nazis intended to destroy the Gypsies as a group” (11).

57 I offer but a brief summary of the Nazi racial policies against the Gypsies based on secondary sources. For extensive historical overview of these policies, see Weiss-Wendt’s (forthcoming) edited volume The Nazi Genocide of the Gypsies, which covers the entirety of Nazi-occupied Europe; Margalit’s (2002) Germany and its Gypsies; Zimmermann’s (1996) Rassengenozid und Utopie; articles by Milton 1991, 1992; Grattan and Puxon’s (1972) The Destiny of Europe’s Gypsies. Another important historical account, albeit one that downplays (and in certain regards, outright denies) the genocidal aspect of Nazi policies against the Gypsies is Günter Lewy’s (2000) The Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies. See the introduction written by Anton Weiss-Wendt (forthcoming) in the edited volume for a thorough account of the historiographical debates about the Nazi policies against the Gypsies.
criminalization of the “Gypsy lifestyle” (e.g. forced registration of Gypsies with local police authorities), further classification of all Gypsies above the age of six into three racial groups (Gypsies, Gypsy Mischlinge, and nomadic person behaving as Gypsies) and ultimately, deportations of tens of thousands of Gypsies from across occupied Europe to extermination camps in the East (Milton 1992:4-6).

The judiciary of the German state thus not only failed to recognize the full extent of the genocide and ethnic cleansing of the Gypsies, but actually framed Nazi anti-Gypsy policies as “punishment” and “retribution” for their imputed criminality. In practical terms, this meant that Sinti & Roma survivors, especially those persecuted prior to the enactment of the “Auschwitz-Decree” in 1942, were categorized as “criminal” or “asocial” victims and thus, excluded from state policies of restitution (Wiedergutmachung) for most of the postwar period. Not coincidentally, it was in the same year as the Supreme Court ruling, 1956, that the German Federal Compensation Law had been revised such that only those categorized as racial, religious or political victims could make claims to restitution (Woolford and Wolejszo 2006:879) thereby, excluding Sinti & Roma survivors since they allegedly did not fall into any of those categories.

It was not just in the realm of the courts and in the writing of history, however, that the Nazi persecution of the Gypsies went unrecognized (or disputed), but also across all levels of German (and European) society. Activists and scholars alike have documented numerous examples of persistent Nazi-like policies directed against the Sinti & Roma in the postwar years, including the so-called Zigeunergesetze (Gypsy Laws) enacted by the Allied administration restricting movement and employment (Margalit
2002). And even though citizenship was restored to Sinti & Roma survivors returning to Germany following the war, many individuals then had their citizenship once again revoked in the 1950s by the interior ministries of the German states on the premise that they had obtained citizenship illegally (Margalit 2002a:110). The title of the first German-language publications on the Nazi genocide of the Gypsies, *In Auschwitz vergast, bis heute verfolgt* (*Gassed at Auschwitz, Persecuted Until Today*), aptly captures this climate of ongoing persecution in the postwar era (Zülch 1979).

**Ethnic mobilizers and the model of Jewish community organization**

The group of Sinti & Roma present in Germany immediately following the war was relatively small. Estimates suggest that there were about 5000 Sinti & Roma out of a pre-war population of approximately 20,000 who returned to Germany, 2000 of whom were survivors of concentration camps (Zimmermann 1996). In addition to low numbers, this was not a well-organized, cohesive or homogenous group; additionally, they “lacked both status and public influence on German society and on the Allies’ military governments” (Margalit 2002:91).

 Nonetheless efforts from within the German Sinti (and to a degree, Roma) population to seek restitution and recognition for the Nazi genocide can be traced back to the immediate post-war years. There is evidence of political organization going back as early as 1945 when Sinti in Lower Saxony aligned themselves with the allied forces. This

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58 Prior to the war, Gypsies had full rights of citizenship under Article 109 of the Weimar Constitution (although they were subject to a number of state-specific discriminatory laws that restricted movement and employment, and/or required systematic registration with the police (USHMM n.d.:2).

59 It was in 1972 first though that British linguist Donald Kenrick and Roma activist Grattan Puxon – both actively involved with International Romani Union and the start of the Roma Civil Rights Movement – published *The Destiny of Europe’s Gypsies*, marking the first historical work to comprehensively deal with the issue of Nazi policies against Gypsies in all of Nazi-occupied Europe (see Matras 2009).
was however a “noninstitutionalized pattern of collective action” (Margalit 2002:112) that was limited to family-oriented activism. Significant Sinti self-organization in Germany began in the mid-1950s, at which point the population gradually rejected traditional (i.e. family-oriented) forms of community organization in favour of more institutionalized practices that would help them attain compensation for the war. This required communication with lawyers outside of the community in order to lobby the German (or respective provincial) government for recognition of crimes committed against them and thus, its responsibility to compensate (Matras 2009). Throughout this process, some of these activities became formalized as registered Sinti organizations. For the first time, Sinti began negotiating with authorities of majority society as an ethnic community as opposed to an individual or family- based constituency. On the whole, these early years of formalized community representation and later, public protest geared at recognition from the German state for the Nazi atrocities marked a complete turnaround in community organization.

These first organizations were often modelled after Jewish and other victim group organizations (Matras 2009; Woolford and Wolejszo 2006; Margalit 2002a). Most notable was the establishment of the first Sinti association in the FRG in 1956 – not coincidently, the same year as the West-German Supreme Court ruling discussed above. Its primary objective was to lobby for compensation for war crimes sustained by the Sinti & Roma and to bring Nazi perpetrators to trial (Margalit 2002a:112). The name of this organization – *Verband und Interessengemeinschaft rassisch Verfolgter nichtjüdischen Glaubens deutscher Staatsbürger e.V.* (Association and Interest Community of German

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60 It was founded by Sinto brothers Oskar and Vincenz, the father and uncle respectively of Romani Rose, the current president of the Sinti/Roma Central Council of German Sinti and Roma.
Citizens of Non-Jewish Faith who have been Racially Persecuted) – is noteworthy in that it emphasizes the link between community organization and identity politics based on a status of victimhood; it also makes a direct reference to Jewish victims (Wippermann 2005:76). Margalit and Matras (2007) suggest that this choice of names was a deliberate attempt at creating a distance from the stigmatized Zigeuner label, a clear indication of the Sinti’s efforts at staking a claim to German identity and territory, and was oriented toward the prewar Jewish organization Zentralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens (Central Association of German Citizens of Jewish Faith) which, at the time, also reflected the Jewish striving for recognition as German co-nationals (110). It was during this time period – when Sinti leaders were transforming the whole concept of their community organization – that the first seeds of political activism became visible amongst the German Sinti & Roma population (Matras 2009).

It was not, however, until the rise of the international Roma civil rights movement and its emergent project of Romani nationalism in 1971 that the population’s politics of recognition experienced any significant form of public attention and success. At this time Sinti & Roma activists in Germany increasingly joined local as well as Europe-wide NGOs in order to promote their claims to restitution, recognition, and an end to ongoing persecution. The year 1979 was the real turning point as the discourse on persecution

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61 Following World War Two, the formalized Jewish community in Germany prefers to emphasize its Jewish ethno-religious identity as opposed to making any claims to Germanness. The official organization of the Jewish population in Germany today is called the Central Council of Jews in Germany [Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland], thereby rejecting any reference to German national-identity.

62 To a lesser degree, the Roma Rights Movement could in fact be traced back to the mid-1960s (Matras 2009). Zimmermann (2007) talks about the Comité International Tsigane, formed in 1965 in Paris by Gypsies from across Europe and of different religious backgrounds. It was this Comité that organized the 1971 First World Romani Congress in London, which also saw the establishment of the International Romani Union (IRU) that was later admitted to membership of the Economic and Social Council of the UN as an NGO in 1979.
moved from courtrooms to protests in the streets, sit-ins at former concentration camps, press statements, and eventually into the sphere of public memory.

Much of the activity initiated in this year has to also be considered in the context of events taking place well beyond the German Sinti & Roma community. In many ways 1979 was a watershed year, if not a turning point, in regards to Holocaust discourse in West Germany (as well as the US) and due largely to the broadcast of the Holocaust mini-series (Markovits and Hayden 1980; Zielinski 1980; Spiegel 5/1979; Broszat 1979). Stephanie Endlich (1999) refers to the subsequent rise of a memory or monument “boom,” that is, how commemorative practices into the 1980s became increasingly decentralized and democratized, as they moved from the directives of the state to grassroots activism (Wüstenberg 2009); more emphasis was placed on local/regional history (Jordan 2006); and most notably, dovetailed with the onset of a public and political discourse in the FRG concerning the Holocaust’s “forgotten victims”: homosexuals, Sinti & Roma, asocials, victims of euthanasia and forced sterilization, and forced labourers (Robel 2009; Uhl 2005; Margalit 2002; Endlich 1999). This sudden interest in the Holocaust’s “forgotten victims” dislodged the paradigms of uniqueness and intentionalism somewhat. 63

These trends of decentralizing and democratizing memory are especially apparent in the early years of Sinti & Roma mobilization. Public activity as of 1979 was mainly due to the support of a German human rights organization, Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker (Society for Endangered Peoples; hereafter: Society). Building upon the precedent established by Jewish lobby groups in previous decades president of the Society, Tillman

63 By contrast, in East Germany, while the 1960s-70s saw the emergence of more memorial projects, the victim category was usually not mentioned. The focus was instead on resisters to fascism or victims of fascism and maintained a very “one-dimensional victim definition” (Reichel 1999 cited in Jordan 2006:41).
Zülch, worked with Sinti activists to organize protests, hunger strikes, and commemoration ceremonies in former sites of persecution (Matras 2009; Woolford and Wolejszo 2006; Margalit 2002). This is one example of how the Sinti & Roma leadership drew on an existing repertoire of commemoration, established in the first instance vis-à-vis the Jewish experience victimization.

The commemoration ceremony at the former Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in 1979, which drew an impressive number of international dignitaries, was the first public event of its kind to honour the plight of Sinti & Roma victims and survivors, as well as to advocate for the recognition of Sinti & Roma as an integral part of contemporary German and European society. It was jointly organized by the Society, the Verband deutscher Sinti (Union of German Sinti, the precursor to the Sinti/Roma Central Council) and the Weltverband der Zigeuner (World Union of Gypsies). Among the 2,500 guests were Sinti & Roma activists and community leaders from Germany and thirteen other European countries; survivors and their descendants; German parliamentarians; Jewish community leaders from Germany and other parts of Europe; and perhaps most significantly, president of the European Parliament and a Jewish Holocaust survivor, Simone Veil (Figure 9). At the ceremony, Veil spoke compassionately about the shared fate of Jewish and Gypsy victims, emphasizing the required solidarity between the two groups.

‘Everyone, mainly Jews and Gypsies, was subject to the same fate… We were together amongst the dying, we are here today together as survivors. I was asked why I came here to Bergen-Belsen today. How can one even imagine that I would not come, that I would not be here among you, when you asked me to add my voice to yours, when it is known that we suffered together, that together we mourned our dead who burned in the crematoria; when we know that the ashes of our parents are all combined [vereint]… My presence here today is testimony of
my solidarity to the Gypsies, shows my loyalty to all of the victims of the Nazi horrors’ (cited in *Gesellschaft* 1981:49-54)

Veil’s speech is also significant in that it marks the first official *European* acknowledgment of non-Jewish victims of Nazism (before the German state had even officially acknowledged the genocide of the Gypsies).

![Figure 9. Romani Rose (L) and Simone Veil (R) at Bergen-Belsen commemoration ceremony, October 1979 (Photo: Gesellschaft für Bedrohte Völker 1981, title page)](image)

The Bergen-Belsen commemoration was followed in April 1980 by another large-scale and highly publicized event, this time an eight-day hunger strike – again organized by Zülch and the Society, as well as the Union of German Sinti – held by thirteen Sinto men on the grounds of the former Dachau concentration camp in South Germany. The protesters demanded recognition of the Nazi genocide, reparation payments and an end to ongoing institutionalized discrimination (Herold 2009; Woolford and Wolejszo 2006). As a direct response, the centre-left SPD committed itself to combating on the federal level
discriminatory policies such as the laws designed to “protect” the population from “Gypsy vagrants” upheld by the conservative CSU party in the states of Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg (Margalit 1999:223). The hunger strike also led to the establishment of a culture centre for the Sinti & Roma in the city of Dachau (Gesellschaft 1981:18). In 1981, Zülch organized the Third World Romani Congress, in Göttingen, Germany, devoting it exclusively to Holocaust-related issues such as the struggle to attain German state recognition and reparation payments for the genocide (Zülch, personal interview, 2008).

The abovementioned efforts culminated in the establishment in February 1982 of the Zentralrat deutscher Sinti und Roma (Central Council of German Sinti and Roma), a federally- and provincially- financed system of political representation. When visiting the newly opened offices of the Sinti/Roma Central Council in Heidelberg the following month, West-German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt was the first German head of state to officially recognize the racially-motivated genocide of 500,000 European Sinti & Roma by the Nazi regime with the following statement: “The Sinti and Roma were inflicted with severe injustice by the National Socialist dictatorship. They were persecuted on racial grounds. These crimes are to be considered an act of genocide” (cited in Reemtsma 1996). With this acknowledgment, Chancellor Schmidt indirectly endorsed a distinction which is integral to the political work of many Sinti & Roma leaders to the present day, namely that the Sinti & Roma people were victims of Nazi genocide, not criminals who

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64 According to Gabrielle Tyrnauer (1998), “the city of Dachau vigorously opposed the establishment of the cultural center, expressing the fear that the ‘unjust’ prejudices against the Sinti would be transferred to the city of Dachau, adding to the burden Dachau already carries through its past association with the concentration camp” (101).

65 It was also at this time that the Society ended its involvement with the German Sinti population due to irreconcilable differences between Zülch and Romani Rose. The organization continues to lobby on behalf of the foreign Roma population in Germany as well as human rights abuses against Roma in Southeast Europe and the Balkans (Zülch, personal interview, 2008).
allegedly posed a threat to the Third Reich. This statement, however, did not just redefine the Sinti & Roma from criminal to victim but, for the first time, also included in the category “racially persecuted” a group other than the Jews.

**Institutionalization of (German) Sinti & Roma memory**

It is not a coincidence I would like to argue, that the Sinti/Roma Central Council was established almost concurrently with the state acknowledgement of genocide. Modelled after the Israeli *Shilumim*, the Sinti/Roma Central Council was effectively founded in order to channel federal and states funds as compensation to (the few remaining) Sinti & Roma survivors of Nazi persecution (Matras 2009; Margalit 2002). Thus, we can trace the origins of the Sinti/Roma Central Council to a mobilization campaign around a discourse of victimization that drew predominantly on pre-existing forms of institutionalized memory of Jewish persecution as well as Jewish organizational structures in Germany (Stauber and Vago 2007; Klimovà-Alexander 2006; Margalit 2002, 2002a; Kapralski 1997). Notably the amended restitution policy that came to include Sinti & Roma survivors of persecution extended primarily to German Sinti & Roma and only in limited format to foreign Roma – although the vast majority of those persecuted in fact came from the Balkan and former Soviet countries (Momper cited in *Das War für uns das Aus*, 2007; Zimmermann 2007). As Woolford and Wolejszo (2006) explain:

… only those who lived within the German borders as of December 1, 1937, or who moved to the Federal Republic within certain time limits, were permitted to apply, thus restricting reparations largely to those ‘who currently were German nationals or who had been German nationals at the time of their persecution by the Nazis’ (Goschler 2004:391). Finally, it was only available to claimants living
in countries that held diplomatic relations with West Germany, thus excluding those victim from or who had fled to Eastern European nations (879).

So, although the early stages of Sinti & Roma mobilization in Germany were in part influenced by broader trends taking place in the realm of European-wide Romani politics and while recognition was made in the name of the European Roma victims, the following years saw a host of positive developments (predominantly) for the German Sinti & Roma. These advances have no doubt to do with the ethnic leadership in Germany who, more often than not, exercise a very inward nationalist-based and Sinti-oriented agenda in regards to memory (and other) politics (see Chapter Two). 66 Below, I present key examples of the gradual integration of the genocide of the Gypsies, primarily in the name of the German Sinti & Roma, into the country’s historical narrative:

The interlinking of Germanness and past persecution is perhaps most evident in May 1995 when the Federal government, via the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI) granted the German Sinti & Roma status as a national minority group. 67 This status not only guarantees their unique cultural and linguistic freedom, but also acknowledges their inherent position in German society as a Deutsche Volksgruppe, a long-standing objective of the Sinti/Roma Central Council. National minority status carries with it significant social and political weight in the definition of German Sinti & Roma identity. As

66 These advances for the German Sinti & Roma must therefore be considered alongside the plight of the country’s foreign Roma population. The period since German reunification to the present continues to be marred by overt state- and individual-level discrimination, volatile and mostly unfavourable asylum laws for Roma refugees from Eastern Europe and the Balkan region, and marginalization of this population from key areas of social, political and economic life, mainly in terms of education and labour market access (Unicef 2007; Mihok 2001).

67 Germany’s three other national minority groups include the Friesen, the Danes and the Sorbs. The Jewish population of Germany was also offered this status but refused it, clearly as a form of rejecting any association as a German co-national (Dr. Rein, BMI, personal interview, 2009). Jews in Germany are officially recognized as a chartered religious group but are nonetheless referred to most commonly as either a minority or ethnic group. I follow similar convention throughout this dissertation, using the word minority as a way of distinguishing them from majority society.
described, activists consistently asserted that the legacy of the Nazi genocide obliges the German state to extend such institutionalized forms of protection in order to thwart continued discrimination.\textsuperscript{68} A publication from the BMI on German national minorities makes this linkage clear as well. Because of the Nazi resettlement and extermination policies of the Gypsies, the state admits its responsibility to preserving what remains of their culture. It does so by placing particular emphasis on the preservation of the Romanes language:

The small number of speakers of the Romanes language in some regions and the situation of the linguistic community in view of the consequences of the national socialist racial policies cannot, according to the Central Council, lead to an impairment of the objective options for protection of the language. This is because this dispersal is based on earlier actions taken by the [Nazi] state. Herein the state has a particular obligation to contribute, in regards to the existence of the language, to minimizing accrued problems and to restoring the possibilities for the further development of the language and culture of the Sinti and Roma (BMI 2006:16).

In the same year, 1995, the federal government institutionalized a yearly commemoration ceremony for the Sinti & Roma victims to be held in the final December session of the Bundesrat.\textsuperscript{69} The date of this commemoration refers to the Auschwitz-Decree, signed by Himmler on 16 December 1942 (see above). Sinti & Roma leaders as well as German politicians now commonly attach other symbolic occasions to the Bundesrat’s final December session. For example, it is customary for the Sinti/Roma Central Council to hold a ceremony in the afternoon following the parliamentary commemoration at former

\textsuperscript{68} This link between recognition of Holocaust memory and minority rights of the Sinti/Roma continues to be evoked to this day, as indicated in a May 2009 press release from the Sinti/Roma Central Council on the occasions of the 60\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the German constitution: “The first official recognition of the genocide of the Sinti and Roma by the Federal state in 1982 and the law recognising the Sinti and Roma as a national minority in 1995 represent fundamental advances for the societal acceptance and reputation of this minority in Germany” (Central Council website).

\textsuperscript{69} Note that no official name has been given to this annual commemoration, thereby suggesting a degree of non-recognition. I am indebted to Yvonne Robel (2010) for bringing this to my attention. In Chapter Six I take up this theme of naming, that is, the absence of names, titles and addresses in Berlin’s topography as it relates to the Sinti/Roma (and Homosexual) Memorial(s).
concentration camps near Berlin, such as Sachsenhausen and Buchenwald or the memorial site at Marzahn. German politicians, Jewish community leaders as well as Sinti & Roma leaders/activists as well as survivors participate yearly, using the occasion to reaffirm the importance of honouring memory of Sinti & Roma victims of the Nazi regime, the centrality of this memory for the German state, and the creation of alliances between Germany’s Sinti & Roma and Jewish communities (see Figures 10-12).

At the 2009 Sachsenhausen commemoration, Martin Gorholt, Brandenburg’s state secretary of culture, emphasized the first two of these messages in his speech:

‘We all have the shared task to keep alive the memory of crimes committed and to honour the persecuted and the victims. It is in this way that the Foundation of Brandenburg Memorial Sites engages in its work against suppression and forgetting’ (18 December).

Figure 10. Romani Rose (R) and Brandenburg’s state secretary of culture, Martin Gorholt (L) laying wreaths at Sachsenhausen commemoration, 18 December 2009 (Photo: Nadine Blumer)
Figure 11. Feliks Byelyenkov, president of the Brandenburg Provincial Association of the Jewish Community speaking at Sachsenhausen commemoration, 18 December 2009 (Photo: Nadine Blumer)

Figure 12. Procession across the Sachsenhausen camp, following commemoration ceremony, 18 December 2009 (Photo: Nadine Blumer)
Notably, it was in the final December session of 2007 that the Bundesrat passed a formal resolution approving construction of the “Memorial to the Sinti and Roma Persecuted under the National Socialist Regime.”\textsuperscript{70} One year later, the groundbreaking ceremony of the Sinti/Roma Memorial was held on this day, following the parliamentary session (figures 13-14).

\textbf{Figure 13.} Groundbreaking ceremony of Sinti/Roma Memorial, German Reichstag in background, 17 December 2008 (photo: Robbie Grunwald)

\footnote{\textsuperscript{70} Specifically, this resolution affirmed the 1992 Bundesregierung decision to build and fund the memorial; it also approved Dani Karavan’s design with the accompanying panels outlining the chronology of persecution and put an end to the conflict between the Sinti/Roma Central Council and the \textit{Sinti Allianz} over the use of Herzog’s quote in the memorial’s inscription (\textit{Drucksache 905/07}, 20 December 2007).}
The next major turning point in Sinti & Roma memory politics took place in 1997. With funding and support of the German federal government as well as the government of the state of Baden-Württemberg, the Documentation and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma was opened adjacent to, and under the auspices of the Sinti/Roma Central Council in Heidelberg (Figure 15).
Among other things, this building houses the first permanent exhibit of the genocide of the Gypsies. In addition to charting the decimation of the everyday lives of the European Roma population, the exhibit’s overarching narrative emphasizes the German ethnoculture of the Sinti & Roma prior to the war. The photographs on display are, as described in the brochure of the Documentation Centre, “a striking testimony to the full societal integration of the Sinti and Roma in Germany prior to their systematic exclusion by the Nazi regime” (Armbrüster et al. 2007:22). The exhibit was accompanied two years later by a book publication of the exhibit, edited by Romani Rose, ‘Den Rauch hatten wir täglich vor Augen.’ Der nationalsozialistische Völkermord an den Sinti und Roma (1999). The Documentation and Cultural Centre also promotes the cultural history of the Sinti & Roma in Germany through temporary exhibitions, conferences and various cultural events open to the public. Thus, the Centre brings together memory of the
persecution as well as culture and scholarship of the Sinti & Roma under one roof. As stated by Rose in his opening speech at the Centre’s inauguration ceremony:

‘The Documentation and Cultural Centre of the German Sinti and Roma understands itself as a site of historical memory, that wishes to preserve the legacy of the victims and at the same time, to forge a link to the present… However, our Centre does not only want to show the history of persecution but also the diverse contributions that the German Sinti and Roma have surely made to the culture of [German] majority society, for example, in the fields of literature, music and art’ (Rose, Sinti/Roma Documentation Centre, 1997).

Notably, it was at the inauguration ceremony that then federal president Roma Herzog delivered the speech in which he equated the Nazi genocide of the Jews with the Sinti & Roma, and excerpts of which will be integrated into the Sinti/Roma Memorial (see Chapter Two). More than 700 guests attended the inauguration ceremony, including German Bundestag and Bundesrat presidents, state ministers, ambassadors from Israel, the US, Holland, Sweden, Poland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Pakistan and Azerbaijan, religious leaders, heads of industry, representatives of international associations of persecuted groups and concentration camp memorial sites, and Jewish community leaders and survivors (Figure 16).
The year 1997 also saw the establishment of a yearly commemoration ceremony at the Birkenau extermination camp on August 2\textsuperscript{nd}, with funds coming in part from German state and regional government offices, to commemorate the infamous “Liquidation of the Gypsy-Camp.” On the night of the second to the third of August 1944, Nazis gassed the remaining 2,900 Sinti & Roma prisoners at Birkenau (from a total of 23,000 Sinti & Roma prisoners from around Nazi-occupied Europe, the majority of whom had already been killed). Leaders of the German Sinti & Roma population, survivors, Jewish dignitaries and high-ranking German, Polish and other European officials attend the yearly commemoration ceremony (Figures 17-19).
Figure 17. Youth choir of the Roma People Association in Poland, standing by the Memorial to the Sinti and Roma, grounds of the former Gypsy-Family Camp, Birkenau, 2 August 2009 (Photo: Nadine Blumer)

Figure 18. Polish soldiers parading in front of the Memorial to the Sinti and Roma, grounds of the former Gypsy-Family Camp, Birkenau, 2 August 2009 (Photo: Nadine Blumer)
Stauber and Vago (2007) explain the significance of this yearly pilgrimage to Auschwitz by arguing that “it implies, as in the Jewish case, that the event was part of a ‘final solution,’ of which the gassing in Auschwitz became a symbol” (127). In 2009, for example, a delegation of approximately 200 people from Germany attended the ceremony in Auschwitz-Birkenau. In the speech he delivered at the ceremony, Dr. Christoph Bergner, the German Parliamentary State Secretary, emphasized that the genocide of the Sinti & Roma is part of Germany’s collective memory and how this should motivate contemporary forms of human rights protection across Europe:

The genocide of the Sinti and Roma is part of the collective memory of the German people. Remembering the victims is an obligation and a prerequisite for a peaceful coexistence. Today we pay homage to the innumerable victims among the Sinti and Roma who suffered under the Nazi regime and lost their lives, not just here in Auschwitz, but all over Europe. I think we can all agree that this day urges us to learn from our history and to loudly affirm: Never again! All over the world, this place is a symbol in the minds and hearts of people, a symbol of unthinkable crimes against humanity. It is all the more disconcerting, then, to see that even today, members of minorities, often Sinti and Roma, are the targets of hostility and violence in many countries, in Europe and elsewhere.  

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71 Travel and other costs associated with this annual ceremony are covered by the BKM, the Federal Foreign Office, the German government and industry-funded Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future (EVZ), and the Alliance for Democracy and Tolerance (BfDT), founded by the BMI and Federal Ministry of Justice (Sinti/Roma Central Council Press Release, 31 July 2009). Polish funding sources come from the Polish Ministry of Equal Treatment, which is supported by the Krakow Pedagogical University, the Jewish Cultural Centre and the Jewish Association Czulent (OSCE Press Release, August 2010).

Notably, the International Romani Union and the Hamburg-based Roma and Cinti Union – representative of a transnational European Roma identity politics – are excluded from this event but have attempted to establish their own version of the August 2nd commemoration. See: http://020809.ning.com/forum/topics/english-texts
In 2001, the Documentation and Cultural Centre helped to open an exhibit on the genocide of the Gypsies at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. Notably, a third of the exhibit is devoted to narrating the exclusion and disenfranchisement of German Sinti & Roma under the National Socialist regime. This exhibit on the Gypsies, along with the earlier exhibit on the Jews, is now the only one at the Auschwitz-Birkenau museum dedicated to specific victim groups (van Baar 2010). Already in 1993, the Sinti/Roma Central Council together with the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum co-wrote a four-volume publication titled *Memorial Book: The Gypsies at Auschwitz-Birkenau*. Referring specifically to these developments at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, scholar

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72 The Documentation and Cultural Centre collaborated with the following institutions in the establishment and curatorship of the exhibit: the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, Roma People Association in Poland, national Roma (and Sinti) organizations from Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Serbia, Ukraine, and the Netherlands. The *Atelier für Gestaltung*, under the supervision of Wieland Schmid, was responsible for designing the exhibit (van Baar 2010:12).

73 A virtual tour of the exhibit is available on the website of the Documentation and Cultural Centre: http://www.sintiundroma.de/content/index.php?navID=46&aID=24
Huub van Baar (2010) has written that, “that the Roma are not in the periphery of holocaust memory anymore” (11).

In January 2006, the Documentation Centre launched an English-language travelling exhibit called “The Holocaust against the Roma and Sinti and present day racism in Europe.” As its name suggests, the exhibit also included documentation about current forms of anti-Roma discrimination across Europe. This exhibit has received much international exposure, including most notably a display at the European Parliament in January 2006 and later at the UN headquarters in New York City in 2007 (Weiss-Wendt, forthcoming:7).

Most recently, on 27 January 2011, the German Bundestag invited for the first time a Sinto survivor, Zoni Weisz from Holland, to give the introductory address of International Holocaust Memorial Day.74 At the ceremony, Bundestag president Dr. Norbert Lammert (CDU/CSU) devoted the majority of his speech to the genocide of the Sinti & Roma, and emphasized the responsibility of the German state in acknowledging and responding to past and contemporary persecution against this population.

‘With you, dear Mr. Weisz, a representative of the Sinti and Roma is speaking for the first time in the German Bundestag on the memorial day for the victims of National Socialism. In such horrible dimensions were members of your people also victims of the persecution by the Nazi regime, but remained for so long outside of public consciousness.’

Newspaper articles from Germany to France, Israel, New Zealand, the UK and North America reported on this commemoration day. In addition to the standard description of the Nazi genocide of the Jews, all made specific reference to Zoni Weisz’s address and subsequently discussed the “forgotten Holocaust” of the Gypsies. The title of a Deutsche

74 This commemoration day, marking the liberation of Auschwitz in 1945, has been observed in Germany since 1996. The UN declaration then designated this an international day of Holocaust commemoration in 2005.
Welle online article captures the significance of this event: “Roma take center stage in Berlin on Holocaust Memorial Day” (Impey 2011).75

At a concurrent memorial service, taking place directly at Auschwitz-Birkenau, Romani Rose was invited to speak alongside German Federal president Christian Wulff and Polish president Bronislaw Komorowski (Figure 20). Rose addressed the audience by stating that, “it is the first time that the fate of the Sinti and Roma of Europe has been placed at the center of the commemorations – finally” (cited in Deutsche Welle 2011).

Figure 20. The German delegation walks in procession alongside the so-called death wall at Auschwitz. Rose (L) walks with Federal president Wulff (centre) and Dieter Graumann (R), head of the Central Council of Jews in Germany. Visible in the forefront on the right is a wreath displaying the colours of the German national flag, 27 January 2011 (Photo: printed in SZ 2011)

Taken together, the examples presented here point to the gradual institutionalization of the genocide of the Sinti & Roma into Germany’s national narrative. Whereas prior to 1982, the state had not yet acknowledged the act of genocide against this population, today it is unquestionably a part of (most) official discourse on the subject.

While the title (rather uncharacteristically) fails to make mention of the Sinti, the article consistently refers to “Sinti and Roma victims.” Notably, the article refers to Zoni Weisz as a Roma although he is in fact a Sinto (a distinction made by the other media reports that I read). This confusion underscores the complexity of Sinti/Roma/Gypsy nomenclature to begin with (see Chapter Two).
CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have discussed the historical and intellectual roots of a Western Holocaust discourse, its emphasis on Jewish suffering and how this manifested itself in the specific (West) German context – an environment that quickly grew sensitive to relativization and competing claims of victimization and suffering. I then looked at the role of ethnic leaders and activists struggling to gain recognition for the Nazi genocide of the Sinti & Roma. Specifically, I argued that the Jews, as the first group to be recognized and compensated by the (West) German state as victims of Nazism, came to define the discursive landscape of commemoration. Outside of Germany as well, an influential precedent had been set vis-à-vis persecution of the Jews. This included a master-narrative for defining victimhood (as unique and incomparable) as well as a functioning model of how to institutionalize the symbolic meanings of victimhood. The model of “Jewish remembrance,” which itself took shape starting only in the early 1960s, has played a central role from the very start of Sinti & Roma commemoration politics in Germany.

As I have shown, the gradual entry in the late 1970s of the Nazi genocide of the Sinti & Roma into Germany’s historical narrative can be attributed to the international Roma civil rights movement, launched in 1971, and its specific iteration at the hands of the (predominantly) Sinti leadership in Germany. It was not until the need arose to lobby the German government for the reinstatement of citizenship and reparation payments of war, that we see the emergence of collective and institutionalized forms of community organization among the Sinti & Roma population. The development of Sinti & Roma activism was thus directly related to past persecution. “A Gypsy civil rights movement,” writes Gabrielle Tynanuer (1982) of the period starting in 1979, “has sprung, phoenix-like
out of the ashes of the Holocaust to demand an accounting for the past and to call attention to continued discrimination against Gypsies in Germany” (97).

Finally, this overview has also emphasized how the postwar discourse on the Nazi genocide of the Gypsies has more or less been the exclusive domain of the German Sinti population as managed by the leadership of the Sinti/Roma Central Council. While some of the advances made by the Sinti/Roma Central Council have certainly brought necessary attention to the Nazi genocide of Europe’s Gypsy population, this captures only part of the picture. The model of entangled memory allows us to recognize that intragroup forms of victim hierarchy (and exclusion) are, in some cases, as relevant in the construction of memory as are intergroup encounters in the public and political spheres of society. These forms of intragroup discord reaffirm the salience of the ethnic boundary – in this instance, the leadership of the German Sinti & Roma manipulate (i.e. contract) the boundary in order to establish claims of Germanness. So, while the successes of the German Sinti & Roma indicate a partial opening up of national membership for their group, they equally signal forms of exclusion for other Sinti/Roma/Gypsy groups (and their histories).

It would hardly be an exaggeration to claim that the Central Council and its Documentation and Culture Centre have in fact written the history of the Nazi genocide of the Sinti & Roma with the intention of inserting their experience of genocide into Germany’s dominant historical narrative and therewith making claims to national membership. Nowhere is this more evident than in their activities designing and curating the exhibits at the Documentation and Cultural Centre in Heidelberg, the Auschwitz-
Birkenau State Museum, and the international travelling exhibit, as well as the long list of book publications they have put out on the topic of the Nazi genocide.76

76 Some relevant publications from the Documentation and Culture Centre’s series on the genocide of the Sinti & Roma include: Bamberger (ed) Der Völkermord an den Sinti und Roma in der Gedenkstättenarbeit, 1994; Bamberger and Ehmann (eds) Kinder und Jugendliche als Opfer des Holocaust, 1995; Awosusi and Pflock, Sinti und Roma im KZ Natzweiler-Struthof. Anregungen für einen Gedenkstättenbesuch, 2006. For a list of further publications (multimedia included), see www.sintiundroma.de
CHAPTER FOUR: Disentangling the hierarchy of victimhood: Sinti & Roma and Jews in Germany’s discursive spaces of commemoration

INTRODUCTION
In order to show how memory narratives are shaped (and re-shaped) in an entangled process of competition and exchange between multiple actors and the institutions available to them, and according to particular historical time periods, political cultures of commemoration and ideological positions, this chapter looks at the first stage of memorial debates and its parliamentary resolution eleven years later. This first stage begins in 1988 when a non-Jewish German citizens’ initiative proposed construction in Berlin of a central Holocaust memorial for the Jewish victims of National Socialism. The proposal immediately sparked heated debates across the popular and political spheres of society over the rank ordering of victimhood, and representations of the Holocaust in the reunified Federal Republic. This first phase of debates concluded with the 1999 plenary session of the German Bundestag at which point a resolution was reached in favour of building a “Central Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe” along with separate memorials to “…all of the other victims of the National Socialist crimes against humanity” (Plenarprotokoll 14/48, 1999:4128).

These public and political negotiations over the memorial-building process, what Peter Carrier (2005) refers to as “the rhetorical construction of memorial site[s]” (67), are treated here as a vehicle for the production of symbolic meaning and collective action. Caroline Gay (2003) writes of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial that, “the debate has been as monumental as the project itself… It has been conducted at all levels of society,
becoming in itself a kind of public monument to the German discourse on *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (‘mastering the past’)” (154). Accordingly, my focus in this chapter is on the discursive spaces in which reunified Germany’s first central Holocaust memorial project(s) took shape. These spaces include media such as newspaper articles, petitions, open letters, public forums, speeches, and parliamentary deliberations.

In this first planning stage of Germany’s central Holocaust memorial, the competing interests of various memory actors collided as each sought to stake a claim in the country’s dominant national narrative – itself in a phase of redefinition following reunification in 1990. What started as a German citizens’ initiative soon embroiled the Sinti & Roma leadership and the Jewish political establishment in Germany, as well as various formal political actors representing different and sometimes competing levels of government (e.g. members of the Bundestag and Land-Berlin municipal officials).

Sinti & Roma leaders fought to include mention of their victim group into the central Holocaust memorial by proving parity between their experience of victimization and that of the Jews. In order to do this, leaders expanded the thesis of singularity so as to include their group alongside the Jews at the “top” of the so-called victim hierarchy. They did so by imposing their own version of exclusionary memory politics by protesting mention of “other” victim groups into the central memorial. I thus show how, more than anything else, Sinti & Roma memorial activists have emulated the process of constructing victimhood that Jewish lobbyists had carried out in decades prior.

Concurrent with these attempts at drawing on Jewish forms of commemoration, Sinti & Roma leaders have also influenced the shape of Jewish memory politics in Germany. The much-publicized memorial debate – described by many as a “national
event” and a “form of commemoration in its own right” (Carrier 2005:67; see also Gay 2003; Young 1993) – can largely be attributed to the campaign work of Sinti & Roma leaders (e.g. resistance to an exclusive Jewish dedication, petition for a shared memorial). That we can discern instances where Jewish memory has been influenced and shaped by the efforts of Sinti & Roma leaders to carve out their own memory narrative, suggests the ways in which memory politics are reciprocal and multidirectional. In sum, we see how the commemorative process is dictated by the intersection of and exchange between different groups and their competing projects of representing history. Memory, I show, springs forth from an entangled dialectic of competition and exchange.

The geopolitics of the New Berlin dictated the context in which all of this evolved. Reinstated in 1991 as capital city of a reunified Germany, Berlin was expected to accommodate an ever-increasing number of national memorials dedicated both to the National Socialist as well as the communist past. Many of these new memorials thus came to symbolize the merger of East and West German histories as well as their respective ideologies of commemoration (King and Fahlbusch 2004; Azaryahu 2003, 1997; Herf 1997); these developments dovetailed with a new set of sensitivities regarding the competition of victimhood and the question of the Holocaust’s singularity – this time, in comparison to the atrocities committed by the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED). The issue of building an exclusive memorial to Jewish victims versus a shared memorial to all victims thus not only reignited the debates of singularity from the 1970s-1980s but also gave them new substance in the geopolitics of reunification.

The memorial debates under discussion here reveal the intersection of divergent identity projects in the moment where Germany is being re-established as a unified state.
At stake was the ability to be inscribed into or to have the power to define the parameters of this *New Germany* (Jordan 2006:57; Till 2005). The notion of ideological labour, that is, the function(s) that minority groups perform in the definition of a state’s political and symbolic identity, is central to my argument in this chapter. Writing specifically about the relationship between Jews and the German state, Bodemann (1990) explains how, following the war and until reunification, a Jewish presence in Germany satisfied “the needs of the hegemonic forces in society” (41): Jews are not only the guardians of German national memory but their very presence in Germany serves as moral affirmation of the state’s renewed commitment to democratic values (because “where Jews live, Nazis cannot be a force”) (Bodemann 2008:13). With reunification however, the political role of the Jew changed somewhat, arguably creating an “opening” in state-minority relations. Bodemann (1990) has suggested that Germans may now rely less on Jews “as monitors of German democracy and against neo-Nazism” because reunification itself is “seen by Germans as a form of redemption from guilt” (46). As I show, Sinti & Roma activists were motivated by this “opening” in state-minority relations, seeking out especially a form of parity with the privileged and dominant position that the Jewish victim has held for much of the German postwar period. The debates thus highlight how the processes of (re-)shaping memory and (re-)shaping identity are indeed entangled in one another.

This chapter is divided into three sections: (1) national and capital-city context of commemoration; (2) the debate and; (3) the resolution. In the first part, I provide a brief outline of the national and capital-city contexts of commemoration relevant to this discussion. This includes an overview of Germany’s official memorial policies
[Gedenkstättenkonzeption] since reunification and the significance of Berlin as the construction site for the country’s central memorials to the victims of National Socialism. In the second part, I look at the negotiations which took place between key formal political and ethnic leaders/activists regarding construction of a shared Jewish and Sinti/Roma Memorial versus individual memorials to each of the victim groups. I then analyze the ways in which these debates were presented in the German media, and how these reflect longstanding sensitivities regarding the narrative of uniqueness, the legacy of the Historikerstreit and issues connected to reunification and Berlin’s reinstatement as capital city. In the chapter’s final section I present the resolutions reached at the June 1999 plenary session of the Bundestag regarding construction of Germany’s first national memorial(s) to the victims of National Socialism. Although parliamentarians openly condemned the rank ordering of victims, they nonetheless voted in favour of the Central Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe and therewith reinforced the dominant position of the Jewish victim in the national narrative.

The Bundestag Resolution is, however, just the beginning of the story. Parliamentarians outlined a model of commemoration that would in fact create meaningful openings for “other victim groups.” It is here that I introduce my concept of memorial networks, a configuration that allows the histories of different victim groups to be interlinked without (necessarily) compromising individual memories and experiences of persecution.
I. NATIONAL AND CAPITAL CITY CONTEXTS OF COMMEMORATION

The FRG’s official memorial policy: memorial networks and decentralization

According to the official memorial policy of the reunified German state – drafted in 1993 for the first time and amended several times later (in 1999, 2005, 2007 and 2008) – German memory politics rest on two pillars: (1) accounting for/confronting the past [Aufarbeitung]; and (2) commemoration [Gedenken]. Specifically, Aufarbeitung is oriented toward an analysis of the causes and effects of the National Socialist and SED dictatorships, while Gedenken seeks to keep alive memory of the injustices they committed. This is to be achieved through the work of museums, memorial sites, archives and research centres, and educational institutions (Gedenkstättenkonzeption 2007).

The major themes covered by the federal memorial policy, and reflecting the state’s understanding and definition of memorial culture are summarized most succinctly in the June 2008 iteration of the policy: 1) the Jewish Holocaust has singular meaning in German, European and international political cultures of memory; 2) it is necessary to find ways of integrating the communist past into Germany’s official memory narrative and, in the process, establish an “all-German history” [“gesamtdeutsche Geschichte”]; 3) state policies of commemoration must be careful to neither relativize National Socialist history nor to trivialize communist history; 4) there is an increased emphasis on linking up memorial institutions and their activities (but NS- and SED- memorial institutions are to remain separate from one another) (Drucksache 16/9875, 19 June 2008). Point 4, the trend toward establishing memorial networks, is a strategy taken up by the state in its attempt to negotiate the complexities of historical singularity and victim hierarchy
I will also argue that memorial networks are the government’s strongest tool for upholding the principles of decentralized commemoration. I focus on this strategy by providing two examples of memorial network being implemented by the state.

In 2005, Minister of Culture Christina Weiss (independent, 2002-05) introduced the idea of linking up National Socialist memorial sites, and their respective activities (e.g. commemoration, research, pedagogy, public outreach), in an administrative network called the Permanent Conference for Directors of National Socialist Memorial Sites in the Berlin Area (Ständige Konferenz der Leiter der NS-Gedenkorte im Berliner Raum. Hereafter: NS Permanent Conference). It was formally launched in 2009 and includes five institutions in and around Berlin dedicated to the historical documentation, research and representation of National Socialism: House of the Wannsee Conference Memorial and Education Centre; Sachsenhausen Memorial and Museum; Jewish Holocaust Memorial; German Resistance Memorial Centre; Foundation Topography of Terror Museum. The official website of the NS Permanent Conference explains that its purpose is to “intensify the collaboration between the National Socialist memorial sites, to improve public relations and to carry out projects together” by assembling the directors of each institution for regular meetings. In explaining his understanding of this federally sponsored initiative, Dr. Uwe Neumärker, the current director of the Foundation for the Jewish Holocaust Memorial, spoke of a much-needed “synergy-effect” between the different memorial institutions and their respective activities (personal interview, 2010).

77 For more information about the implementation of various “memorial network” projects across Germany, see Rürup’s (ed) Netzwerk der Erinnerung (2003).
78 See the official website of the NS Permanent Conference for additional information about its mandate and ongoing activities: http://www.orte-der-erinnerung.de/staendige_konferenz/
Members of smaller memorial sites, documentation centres and museums in the Berlin area participate as well, albeit to a lesser degree.\footnote{The Sinti/Roma Memorial and the Homosexual Memorial are also part of the NS Permanent Conference, through their connection to the Foundation of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial.}

The NS Permanent Conference is a federal foundation under public law, which means that, since its establishment, the individual institutions have received a considerable increase of state funds toward their operations. Weiss has emphasized that the “state wants to emerge as a stronger “partner” by taking part in the structure of commemorative work” (cited in \textit{faz} 2005). Bernd Neumann (CDU, 2005-present), Weiss’ successor as Minister of Culture, reaffirmed this point by stating that, “above all else,” the NS Permanent Conference “will contribute to the intensification with which we work through and remember our past and … [it will help us to] account for the nation-state’s responsibility toward the victims of National Socialist crimes’” (Bundesregierung press release 2010).

Parallel to the NS Permanent Conference, and in order to maintain its pledge to honour memory of Germany’s two dictatorships, the federal government has been discussing plans to establish a Historical network “for confronting the communist dictatorship in Germany” (\textit{Geschichtsverbund “zur Aufarbeitung der kommunistischen Diktatur in Deutschland”}). Plans include linking up a series of institutions devoted to the preservation of the memory of the SED-dictatorship such as memorial sites and monuments (e.g. the Stasi prison memorial at Hohenschönhausen, the Berlin Wall memorial and museum in the Bernauer Strasse), archives containing Stasi-files and other research centres (Gedenkstättenkonzeption 2007).
This brief summary of the government’s strategy of creating distinct NS- and SED- memorial networks is relevant to my study in three particular ways. First, the federal government is attempting to increase its involvement in commemorative activities and, as demonstrated in Neumann’s statement above, is therewith reinforcing its commitment to preserving (and managing) the less than glorious parts of the nation’s history. Second, at the centre of its memorial policy, the federal government is seeking out ways of “partitioning” the country’s memorial landscape so that there is adequate “space” for the representation of both National Socialist and communist history; however, priority is given to the former. Third, the strategy of networking memorial institutions reflects the importance of decentralization in Germany’s culture of commemoration.

Decentralization of memory refers to an approach that prioritizes local/regional history as well as more heterogeneous representations of victimhood (e.g. bringing attention to the Holocaust’s “forgotten victims”). It implies the absence of an overarching concept for memorial planning by deflecting autonomy away from the federal government and toward municipal and state governments instead, and dates back to practices started in the 1970s in West Germany (Jordan 2006; Carrier 2005; Till 2005). By contrast, the East German mode of commemoration tended toward lumping all victim groups together under the category “victims of Fascism” in central national sites (Azaryahu 2003). Following German reunification, the preferred mode of commemoration in the country’s memorial policy has favoured decentralization due to its espousal of democratic and anti-nationalistic ideologies. The memorial policy outlined

80 In 2008-2009, for example, federal budget funding for memorial institutions was increased by 50%, to €35 million. This included increased funding to NS- as well as SED- memorial institutions (Regierung Online 2008).
here – drafted by the federal government, proposing an overarching concept for memorial
planning, committing state funds – reflects a certain ambivalence regarding these
principles of decentralization. It is my contention that the onus on memorial networks is
the government’s strongest attempt at negotiating this ambivalence.

As I elucidate in this and subsequent chapters, the debates surrounding Germany’s
first memorial(s) to the victims of National Socialism – as well as the resolutions reached
– rehashed unresolved issues of the singularity debates and, in the context of
reunification, were then further circumscribed by these state-defined policies of
networking and decentralizing commemoration.

**Berlin’s assemblage of memorials**

The memorial debates (and the memorials themselves) must also be situated in the
particular urban spatial context in which they have taken place (and in which they
are/will be placed): Berlin as reinstated capital city of the reunified German state.
Writing about the controversies surrounding Chancellor Kohl’s (CDU) 1993 rededication
of the *Neue Wache* as a national memorial to all victims of war and tyranny, Karen Till
(1999) brings attention to the inherent tension between large-scale commemoration
projects and the space of the capital city. Specifically, the placement of national
memorials (or other national institutions) in Berlin, particularly in the wake of
reunification, created “a sense of social unease about the historical uses and functions of
the capital city as a symbol of the nation” and is immediately associated with “the
centralized National Socialist state (most dramatically expressed in Berlin’s landscape)”
(268).
There is a long standing tradition of commemoration in the capital city, however, that precedes the post-war/post-wall time period, reinforcing the extent to which Berlin is in fact a palimpsest of multiple historical events: “World historical events and their legacies lie particularly close to one another in Berlin. Or in fact, below and above one another” (Loy, TSP, 2010). Nikolaus Bernau, in a 2006 Berliner Zeitung article, expresses this most clearly by comparing the contemporary versus classical “ensemble” of memorials on display throughout the city:

Holocaust Memorial, Homosexual Memorial, Sinti, Roma- and Gypsy Memorial, the statue “Der Rufer,” crosses to the victims of the wall, the inconspicuous plaque next to the philharmonic in memory of the victims of euthanasia – the surroundings of the Brandenburg Gate will once again become the centre of German memory. It was once already like that in the Imperial Era with its Victory Tower and Hohenzollern Princes: Bismark, Moltke and the Victory Column in front of the Reichstag, with Kaiser Friedrich III and his wife Victoria in front of the Brandenburg Gate, with Goethe and Lessing as Germany’s intellectual giants.

As a site of “heterogeneous memories” (Till 2004:75; see also Ladd 1997 and Huyssen 1997) – where different ideologies from various points in German history are now commemorated (e.g. the monarchy, Weimar, National Socialism, Communism, the Bonn republic) – Berlin is a contested and symbolically charged environment that requires us to read its palimpsest of histories as it is manifested into the city’s topography and linked to its reinstatement in 1999 as the capital of the reunified Federal Republic.  

The campaign for a Sinti/Roma Memorial included plans to build the memorial squarely in the centre of Berlin’s (and thus Germany’s) most politically, culturally and symbolically important areas: in Berlin’s Regierungsviertel (government district) and in

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81 Rosenfeld and Jaskot’s (2008) edited volume Beyond Berlin: Twelve German Cities Confront the Nazi Past provides a necessary counter-perspective to the huge literature on Berlin as THE site of Holocaust memory politics. The articles in this collection focus instead on the role of local memory politics in cities and towns outside of Berlin and how these have also contributed to the overall national narrative of National Socialism.
proximity to key icons of the German nation and major cultural state institutions such as, the Brandenburg Gate (marks victory of Prussian army in 1788), the Victory Tower (marks defeat of France by Prussians in 1871), the Neue Wache, the Soviet War Memorial (a burial ground for fallen soldiers of the Red Army in the Battle of Berlin), remnants of the former Berlin Wall, the German History Museum, the cluster of museums on Museum Island, the State Opera and the philharmonic hall.

II. THE DEBATE
In the summer of 1988, German media personality Lea Rosh and historian Eberhard Jäckel proposed construction of a central Holocaust memorial in Berlin – “to set a visible sign in the country of the perpetrators” – following a visit to Yad Vashem, Israel’s official State Holocaust Memorial (Bürgerinitiative 1995:14). A memorial of similar scope and grandeur, according to Jäckel, was missing in Germany; it was unacceptable that “in the ‘land of the perpetrators’ there was no central memorial dedicated to all of the European Jewish victims of the Holocaust, to this unparalleled act of genocide” (personal interview, 2009). By January 1989, Rosh founded the citizens’ initiative Perspektive Berlin, and with signatures of support from many of Germany’s foremost politicians and intellectuals (e.g. Willy Brandt, Otto Schilly, Günter Grass, Christa Wolf), published a series of newspaper petitions outlining its objective: “…[T]o finally build a visible memorial in Berlin to the millions of murdered Jews” (FR, January 1989). Rosh also made it clear from the start that “the construction of this memorial should in no way be a matter of the Jews, that is, the victims. Rather this is a matter for the descendents of the perpetrators” (cited in Heimrod et al. 1999:271). Rosh in fact declared to Heinz Galinski, then president of the Jewish Central Council to, “keep out of it, the descendents of the
perpetrators are building the monument, not the Jews. But it would be good if you could
nod approval” (cited in Rensmann 2000:142).

While the project of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial was, from the start, presented
as a citizens’ initiative, ensuing discussion, debates and decisions reached in regards to
the memorial’s design, construction and ultimate operation and administration have of
course also taken place in the German formal political sphere (and with major allocations
from state- and regional- government funds). The political deliberation over the Jewish
Holocaust Memorial crossed party lines at the regional and federal levels. In the Berlin
Senate, members of the CDU were mostly opposed to the construction of a central
Holocaust memorial while the SPD/FDP coalition was predominantly in favour of the
project. On the federal level however, the situation was more or less reversed as the
CDU/CSU/FDP coalition government, led by Chancellor Kohl (1982-1998), supported
the project while the SPD was mostly opposed to it. Ongoing debates over the Holocaust
memorial project ended up being one of the major issues in the 1998 federal election, at
which point the CDU was replaced by Schröder’s SPD government.82 The latter was
ultimately responsible for the completion and inauguration of the Jewish Holocaust
Memorial in 2005.

Dispute over the memorial project also took place outside of the formal political
establishment. For example, opposition to Perspektive Berlin was quick to come from
individuals and groups concerned about the exclusion of non-Jewish victims from the
proposed Holocaust memorial. Among the dissenting voices, the Sinti/Roma Central

82 Knischewski and Spittler (2005) have pointed out that by June 1999, once the debate was finally taken to
a session of Parliament, it had become a major political issue, having moved from the arts & culture pages
[Feuilleton] to the politics section of the newspaper. “An outright rejection of the project,” they write
“would have caused a political scandal” (34).
Council, headed by Romani Rose, proved most vocal. Rose responded to the founding of Perspektive Berlin, and its successor, the Förderkreis zur Errichtung eines Denkmals für die ermordeten Juden Europas (Association Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe; hereafter: Association), with a series of articles, open letters, and petitions in major German newspapers and magazines. In an article titled “A Memorial for All Victims,” Rose demanded the construction of a shared memorial to the Jewish and Sinti & Roma victims of genocide: “[a memorial] that refers exclusively to the Jewish people,” argued Rose, “implies a hierarchization of victims. This is hurtful and insulting to the victims of genocide and for the survivors from the Sinti and Roma minority” (Zeit, April 1989). In the years to come, accusations of a “victim hierarchy” turned the German press into a battleground over questions of “appropriate forms” of historical representation, and influenced the political decision-making process regarding the reunified state’s first national Holocaust memorial. This is one of the ways in which Sinti and Roma leaders have played a decisive role in the shape of Jewish memory in Germany: they not only triggered the memorial debates but were also heavily responsible for its escalation over time.83

As mentioned, the timing of specific political events and social upheavals were also pivotal in the evolution of the debate and in the Bundestag’s resolution in 1999. The Association, for example, was established on 7 November 1989, two days prior to the fall

83 Another notable voice of dissent against the central Holocaust memorial was the Berlin citizens’ initiative, the Active Museum Fascism and Resistance (Aktives Museum Faschismus und Widerstand). Knischewski and Spittler (2005) describe the Active Museum campaign as follows: The Active Museum contested plans for a Jewish memorial because it had alternative plans for the chosen site, dating back to the late 1970s and early 1980, on which excavations in 1985 revealed remains of buildings of central NS institutions which were subsequently integrated into an improvised exhibition called Topography of Terror… The Active Museum wanted to turn the ‘authentic site’ into a ‘place for thinking’ (Denk-Ort) with a permanent exhibition to remind of the crimes which had been planned and executed from here (26).
of the Berlin Wall, an event that then transformed the political environment in which the memorial debates had, up to that point, been taking place. Specifically, this meant that all discussions of Holocaust memory and commemoration would now have to deal with the different ways in which memory of World War Two had previously been articulated in the GDR (ideology of anti-fascism) as opposed to the FRG (ideology of anti-Communism) (Herf 1997); the prospect of creating a hierarchy out of the victims of National Socialism and the victims of the SED regime (Jarausch and Geyer 2003); and pragmatically, this also meant that new space was now available for the proposed memorial (most notably, in the area bordering the former Wall in the centre of the city).

In the following sections, I look first at the negotiations and debates which took place between the political leaders and activists most directly involved with the planning of the memorial; I then look at how these deliberations were articulated in the media. In both realms, we can see the various forms of mutual entanglement and reciprocity constituting the production of Jewish as well as Sinti & Roma memory narratives in the German environment.

**If not a shared memorial then at least a shared memorial site: formal political leaders and ethnic leaders**

In February 1994, five years after Rose’s initial petition, parties involved reached a compromise favouring an exclusive dedication of the central Holocaust memorial to Jewish victims. Almost simultaneously, the Federal Government committed €2 million toward the construction of a separate Sinti/Roma Memorial on a parcel of land between
the Brandenburg Gate and the Reichstag (Figure 21). The site, which was donated by the city of Berlin, would be situated some 650 meters from the Jewish Holocaust Memorial.

![Figure 21](image.png)

*Figure 21.* Arrow points to designated site for future Sinti/Roma Memorial. The Reichstag is visible at the top of the image, the Brandenburg Gate in the bottom-right corner. The future site of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial, to the south of the Brandenburg Gate, lies beyond the borders of image (Photo: reprinted in *Liga* 2000:6).

The Land-Berlin would also be responsible for supervising and seeing through the construction of the memorial (*Stiftung* website – Aktuelles). In agreement with Cultural Senator Roloff-Momin (independent) and then representative to the Berlin mayor Christine Bergmann (SPD), Senator for Construction and Housing Wolfgang Nagel (SPD), proposed this particular site in a Bundesrat session; he did not fail to emphasize its proximity to the Jewish Holocaust Memorial, describing it as a “dignified and
appropriate site that is also associated with the grounds for the Jewish memorial” (cited in Lautenschläger, TAZ 1994). Rose, conceding, ultimately expressed satisfaction with the site, as did Ignatz Bubis, head of the Jewish Central Council, and then Bundestag president Rita Süssmuth (Ibid.).

The lead-up to this decision, discussed below, reveals a complex, if not hostile, exchange between a constellation of social and political actors: the Sinti & Roma political establishment communicated directly with Jewish community leaders in efforts to form a common front; Jewish leaders responded while simultaneously engaging in negotiations with German state and Land-Berlin officials regarding a memorial they claimed they had no interest in (e.g. Bubis 1998; Broder 1995; Seligmann 1995; Wolffsohn 1994); decisions taken by the government deferred primarily to the wishes of the Jewish establishment; the non-Jewish citizens’ Association, which had initially proposed the memorial, remained involved in all stages of negotiation. Earlier historiographical debates over Nazi crimes and issues related to German reunification rendered these exchanges especially contentious, and situated them squarely in the realm of Germany’s reassessment of its national identity.

It was in March of 1991 that the Sinti/Roma Central Council submitted an official request to the Berlin Senate to build a central memorial dedicated to the murdered Sinti & Roma, ideally as part of the same memorial structure under development for the Jewish victims. In September of the same year, Berlin mayor Walter Momper (SPD) assured representatives of the Sinti/Roma Central Council that they would receive equal consideration with the Jews when it came to the decision concerning a Holocaust
memorial (Heimrod et al. 1999:28). In March 1992, Berlin Cultural Senator Ulrich Roloff-Momin (independent) and federal minister Rudolf Seiters (CDU), with approval from the Federal Government, allocated a plot of land close to Hitler’s former Reich Chancellery and so-called Death Strip that ran alongside the Eastern side of the Berlin Wall and in close proximity to the Brandenburg Gate as the future site of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial. No mention was made of the Sinti & Roma at this time.

This decision over location turned the ongoing political debate into a vicious public conflict between Romani Rose and Heinz Galinski, head of the Jewish Central Council, and later his successor, Ignatz Bubis. Such exchanges between the Jewish and the Sinti/Roma Central Councils reveal several entangled instances of memory work. For example, despite persistent claims from the Association, German politicians as well as Jewish community leaders and intellectuals that it was to be a “non-Jewish project,” Germany’s Jewish establishment indeed became involved with plans for a central Holocaust memorial in the years to come. Notably, it was in reaction to a newspaper article written by Rose in 1992 that the Jewish Central Council made one of its first public statement(s) regarding the memorial. In the article, Rose accused the Jewish Central Council of “distorting historical fact” by refusing to include the Sinti/Roma in the memorial project. Galinski replied to Rose by emphasizing his longstanding commitment to the commemoration initiatives of non-Jews, specifically those of the Sinti & Roma. Then, however, he described “particular reasons,” that is, specific actions taken by the Nazis against “Jewish but not other groups,” which thus legitimized construction of “a site of remembrance for the six million murdered Jews of Europe.” Galinski concluded by writing that,
‘… it should not be inferred that I in any way intend to belittle the fate and suffering of the Sinti and Roma. However I cannot and will not tolerate that the uniqueness of the crimes against the Jewish population are called into question’ (cited in Heimrod et al. 1999:93).

Several months later (July 1992) the Ministry of the Interior (BMI) reached a compromise with the Senate Department for Cultural Affairs to erect two separate memorials: one for the Jewish victims and another for the Sinti and Roma victims. The Sinti/Roma Central Council did not abandon its campaign but simply changed its demands, shifting its efforts from a shared memorial to a shared memorial site.

Specifically, Rose lobbied for a memorial that would stand in “geographic proximity” to and “share the artistic design” of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial. According to him, it was Bubis who, as a compromise, originally suggested that the memorials stand in geographic proximity to one another and share artistic design (TSP, 16 December 1993).

In a full-page ad published simultaneously in Der Tagesspiegel and Der Frankfurter Rundschau, Rose emphasized that Nazi policies of annihilation had been directed in equal measure against Jews and Sinti & Roma, and asserted the historical uniqueness of the Nazi persecution of both groups. To strengthen his argument, Rose cited a speech given by Galinski a decade earlier at the newly opened Sinti/Roma Central Council in which Galinski not only spoke with compassion regarding the persecution of the Sinti & Roma, but in fact drew comparisons between them and the Jews:

‘Sinti and Roma, like Jews, are linked by an existential similarity. They have a similar past given that, for centuries, they were persecuted, expelled and ultimately, systematically annihilated by a self-proclaimed master race for having worthless lives. Every second Roma or Sinti in Europe did not survive the Nazi death machinery. It is shocking that more than thirty years following the end of Nazi rule were needed before representatives of the Bundesregierung, the churches, parties and associations acknowledged the Nazi Holocaust of the Sinti and Roma people and publically apologized for the injustice inflicted upon them’ (Rose citing Galinski, in Heimrod et al. 1999:107).
Rose’s campaign was in vain, however. Bubis, in his capacity as the new head of the Jewish Central Council (appointed in the wake of Galinski’s death), rejected Rose’s demand, arguing that geographic proximity and shared artistic design between the two memorials would be impossible. Since the central Holocaust memorial would symbolize, among other things, a graveyard for the victims, Bubis referred to Jewish religious law, which prohibits the sharing of cemetery space with non-Jews (Wippermann 2005:110). In an interview with the Israeli newspaper *Ha’aretz*, Bubis justified this stance by explaining that, “if we were to share the memorial with the Gypsies, then no Rabbi would be able to say *Kaddish* [prayer for the dead] there. And what will we do when the homosexuals also show up and want to join in?” (cited in Spiegel 26/1995). At most, he was willing to accept that the two memorials share an “analogous horticultural design” with “possibly the same variety of trees,” but insofar as they were separated by at least 200 meters and thus were obviously disconnected (Bubis cited in Kugler, TAZ, 1993). Bubis’ reasoning was deemed legitimate by the Berlin Senate which, in October 1992, once again indicated its preference for the construction of two separate memorials that would in fact sit on two separate sites: “As stated, the Senate has committed itself to building a memorial of equal worth for the murdered Sinti and Roma of Europe. Although this memorial will stand on a separate site, the murder of the European Sinti

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84 There was in fact little consensus regarding designation of the memorial site as a symbolic cemetery. For example, Paul Spiegel, president of the Jewish Central Council from 2000-2006, has openly stated that the memorial site is in no way a cemetery for the Jewish victims of the Holocaust (*Spiegel*-Online 2005). Although it could be argued that the memorial, in its completed form, does indeed resemble a graveyard, architect Peter Eisenmann has repeatedly denied that this was in any way his intention (see for example, interview in Maak, *FAZ* 2003). Notable however is that Bubis’ statement was nonetheless taken seriously by German politicians. For a more theoretical discussion about German Holocaust memorials as symbolic graveyards, see Karen Remmler (1998:45).
and Roma will be commemorated in an appropriate manner” (Roloff-Momsin cited in Heimrod et al. 1999:109).

The decisive moment came however in the lead-up to Chancellor Helmut Kohl’s plan to rededicate the Neue Wache (Käthe Kollwitz’s bronze pietà of a mother mourning her dead son) as “the Federal Republic of Germany’s central site of commemoration for all victims of war and tyranny” (Figure 22).\(^{85}\)

Figure 22. Neue Wache sculpture. Inscription reads: “To the victims of war and tyranny” (Photo: Robbie Grunwald, 2007)

Aside from the problem of Christian iconography embodied by the sculpture, the rededication of the Neue Wache was heavily criticized for its universalist concept according to which “‘death has erased all differences’ … and which allows it to commemorate and honor German soldiers next to Holocaust victims” (Koselleck cited in Knischewski and Spittler 2005:28). The symbolism of universal suffering carried by the Neue Wache was also seen as a “whitewashing [of] Nazi crimes” in that the sculpture

\(^{85}\) For the history and controversy of the Neue Wache, see Till (1999) and Stölzl (1993).
would “fuse Third Reich and GDR history into one so as to suggest common victimhood and solidarity rather than guilt” (Gay 2003:157). The rededication thus reawakened unease not just about the notion of comparability and relativization, which had underpinned the Historikerstreit and the earlier singularity debates, but also more recent fears developed in the wake of reunification about conflating memory of the Nazi and communist dictatorships in Germany (Jarausch and Geyer 2003:335). In an attempt to rebut these accusations, and “as a gesture of reconciliation,” Chancellor Kohl promised Bubis – who had threatened to skip the inauguration ceremony of the Neue Wache – that the Holocaust memorial would be dedicated exclusively to the Jewish victims (Reichel cited in Knischewski and Spittler 2005:28). In late 1993, Chancellor Kohl indeed spoke out officially against the idea of a shared memorial, insisting instead on “distinct sites of remembrance.” Not only did this sanction an earlier decision by Berlin politicians to situate the Jewish Holocaust Memorial in the previously designated location south of the Brandenburg Gate, but it also affirmed the dominance of Jewish memory in state politics.

**Proving comparability, but without relativizing**

Rose immediately protested Kohl’s decision, publishing two consecutively dated full-page advertisements in the press and using strategic language meant to appeal to German memory culture: “The uniqueness of the Holocaust pertains to Jews and Sinti and Roma in Europe [and] is not a form of relativization!” (TSP, 16 December 1993). In both ads Rose emphasized the shared and unique experience of Jewish and Sinti & Roma victimhood in order to dispute that comparison of the two groups would in any way relativize the history of the Holocaust. For example, Rose wrote that,
Fifty years after the end of [the Nazi crimes] there is still no centrally located national Holocaust memorial in the capital city of Berlin that commemorates the historically singular genocide of 500,000 Sinti and Roma and six million Jews. The Berlin Senate’s resolution to erect a national Holocaust Memorial in memory of the murdered Jews of Europe… south of the Brandenburg Gate on government property near the future American embassy is for this reason unacceptable… The singularity of the Holocaust means that both memorials must be built concurrently on this site... [T]he design of both memorials must guarantee that state gestures [staatliche Gesten] of national or international mourning and remembrance, and that ceremonies and wreath-laying for the murdered Sinti and Roma are conducted in the same way as they are for the murdered Jews (Zeit, 17 December 1993; emphasis added).

Throughout the memorial debates, the strategy used by Rose and his Central Council to incorporate the memory of Sinti & Roma victimization into Germany’s spaces of commemoration was by claiming parity with the more established memory discourses of Jewish victimhood. The two groups, according to Rose, needed to be allied in the present commemoration of past suffering. Embedded in this rhetoric was an expanded version of the thesis of singularity, that is, an attempt at redefining the hierarchy so as to include Sinti & Roma alongside Jewish victims.

As evident from the above-mentioned examples, Rose was not so much trying to forge a memory niche for his own people (which could potentially make him susceptible to accusations of relativizing history) as he was trying to find a way of sharing the central position of Jewish memory in the symbolic spaces of German memory, in the German national narrative. In addition to the fact that many Sinti & Roma survivors and their families perceive the fate of their people as having paralleled the fate of the Jews under the Third Reich, there also exists a more politically strategic reason for engaging in such discourses of comparative suffering with Jewish victims: “The history of how people have dealt historically and politically with the National Socialist persecution of the Jews may appear to be an attractive role model, well worthy of imitation, precisely for
advocates who articulate the cause of socially marginalized groups of the persecuted” (Zimmermann 2007:23). Such acts of frame alignment or, “commemorative emulation” engaged in by Sinti & Roma activists date back to the first acts of community organization and mobilization following the war (see Chapter Three). These included taking over former concentration camps for public protests and sit-ins or hunger strikes (see Herbold 2009) – acts that Jewish activists first made salient starting in the 1960s. Typical as well are the overt references that Sinti & Roma leaders make to Jews and Jewish experiences in public speeches, media statements and press releases. In the context of my research, I have grown accustomed to hearing statements from Sinti & Roma activists with the words “just like the Jews” or “imagine if what was said about/done to the Sinti & Roma was said about/done to the Jews.”

This attempt at gaining distinctive recognition on par with Jewish victims is most pronounced in the Central Council’s frequent reference to Bundestag president Herzog’s 1997 statement equating the Nazi genocide of the Jews and the Sinti & Roma. Already a momentous statement at the time, in the years to come, these words took on ever-increasing importance in the ongoing memorial politics of the Sinti & Roma leadership (see Chapter Two).

In addition to drawing on the “Jewish model” of community organization and commemoration, Sinti & Roma leaders have also actively attempted to build alliances

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86 This discourse of comparison has been especially prevalent in regards to French president Nicolas Sarkozy’s July 2010 plans to expel from the country all non-French Roma (most of whom are nationals of Romania and Bulgaria). E.g. In a TAZ interview about Sarkozy’s policy, Rose stated that, “just imagine that somewhere in Western Europe someone would try to stir up hatred with such a tone against the Jewish minority: justifiably that country would be isolated!” (August 2010); On the same topic, the president of France’s League of International Human Rights asserted in a Tagesschau article that, “it’s a question of ethnically-based collective punishment. If you were to now just replace the word ‘Roma’ with ‘Jew,’ you would immediately see where this is leading” (Wöß, July 2010). For more information about Sarkozy’s expulsion policies, see Kushen in The Guardian (3 August 2010); Balmer in TAZ (5 September 2010).
and solidarity with Jewish leaders by inviting them to commemoration or other community events. Examples range from the first ever public Roma commemoration at Bergen-Belsen in 1979 to, more recently, on 27 January 2009 when the Sinti/Roma Central Council issued a press release entitled “Solidarity with Jewish Communities in protest against the Pope’s rehabilitation of Holocaust denier Williamson” (see also Margalit 2002:201; 2002a:113-4; Kapralski 1997:282). The photograph below, of Romani Rose signing his name in the guest book at the underground exhibit of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial, is a more symbolic showing of solidarity from the Sinti & Roma community to the Jewish community.

Figure 23. Romani Rose signs the guest book at the Jewish Holocaust Memorial, March 2006 (Source: http://www.holocaust-mahnmal.de/aktuelles/fotos/2006/?zoom=1&image=18)

In the numerous commemoration ceremonies I attended (or transcripts of speeches from ceremonies that I read), I also frequently heard greeting by Sinti & Roma leaders specifically to our “Jewish brothers,” “Jewish friends” or “Jewish fellows in misery”
[Leidensgenossen]. In 2009, at the August 2\textsuperscript{nd} yearly Auschwitz-Birkenau commemoration, for example, Romani Rose ended his speech with the following words:

‘In conclusion it is my wish to emphasize once more that I am very moved and very happy that the president of the Polish Central Council of Jews is here today. \textit{With our Jewish brothers}, we experienced this history together in this place [Birkenau]. And our mutual solidarity is an obligation for both of our minorities, who for hundreds of years have experienced marginalization and persecution in Europe, culminating in genocide in this very place. A heartfelt thank you’ (Rose, 2009; emphasis added).

There are instances as well where Jewish leaders respond to the language and sentiment of comparability and solidarity extended by Sinti & Roma leaders, indicating the potential for alliance between the two communities. At the same August 2\textsuperscript{nd} ceremony mentioned above, Piotr Kadlcik, chairperson of the Union of the Jewish Religions Communities in Poland voiced solidarity with the Sinti & Roma people with the following statement:

‘Both our nations, the Jews and Romanies \textit{[sic]}, make their home in Poland. Our history here was not without difficulties. In the places where we arrived and settled, we were frequently faced with rejection and oppression… we had to experience the attempted extermination of our peoples, the Shoah or, as the Romanies call it, Porrajmos – the Devouring. This, too, was an experience that our people shared. Together we hid from the Germans. A handful of Jews found refuge in the Romany caravans. It is not a coincidence that many scholars of the Shoah also take up the theme of the Romany genocide. The world frequently treated us with indifference or even enmity. Our lives were saved by a very few, and to them we owe our everlasting gratitude. Prosecution of the Romanies, as of the Jews, had already begun before the war. In a commentary to the Nuremberg laws dating back to 1936, there is a statement that ‘alien blood in Europe is the Jewish and Gypsy blood.’ \textit{Just like the Jews}, the Romanies were condemned to extermination solely on racial grounds. I find it significant that standing here – next to the plaque commemorating the martyrdom of the Romany – we can see the ruins of the Birkenau ovens in which hundreds of thousands of Jews were burned’ (Kadlcik 2009; emphasis added).\textsuperscript{87}

\textsuperscript{87} The official Jewish community of Poland showed an especially notable degree of solidarity in 2009 by contributing necessary funds to prevent cancelation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau ceremony. In the weeks leading up to the event, the Polish government, as part of general austerity measures, reduced state support money for the ceremony from €14,000 to €5,500. The Jewish community paid the difference (Novoselsky online source, 2009).
Expanding singularity

In the context of the memorial debates, this discourse of comparability between the genocide of the Jews and the Sinti & Roma has also been accompanied by a discourse of singularity in which Sinti/ Roma leaders impose a hierarchy of suffering vis-à-vis other victim groups. Journalist Igal Avidan has written that, “Rose, who on the one hand speaks out against the classification of victims into first and second class, claims on the other hand that persecution against the ‘Gypsies’ was more methodically enacted than against the Jehovah’s Witnesses” (cited in Heimrod et al. 1999:80). In Die Zeit newspaper, Rudolph Kraft (1992) has also pointed out that representatives of the Sinti/Roma Central Council refused to share a memorial with the homosexual and communist victims according to the claim that unlike Jews and Sinti & Roma, neither of these groups was persecuted according to racial ideology.

This expanded version of singularity is also discernable in more recent debates regarding how to commemorate victims of Germany’s SED communist dictatorship versus victims of National Socialism. For example, on 27 January 2010, International Holocaust Memorial Day, Romani Rose emphasized the limits of comparison between the Nazi- and the SED- dictatorships in a speech he delivered to the legislative assembly of Saxony-Anhalt:

‘The necessary discussion [Auseinandersetzung] of Stalinist crimes or the SED dictatorship cannot lead to a relativisation of the historical uniqueness of the Holocaust of the Sinti and Roma and the Jews. Formulations such as ‘both German dictatorships’ blur the fundamental differences between the war of extermination in National Socialist occupied Europe, committed in the name of Germany as millions of innocent men, women and children falls victim, and whose injustices carried on following 1945 as well (Zentralrat press release 2010; emphasis added).
By reiterating the “historical uniqueness of the Holocaust,” Rose condemns comparison with any other form of persecution, and emphasizes the state’s responsibility to institutionalize memory of each event in an appropriate manner. Specifically, the Central Council demanded that the Saxony Memorial Foundation “elevate the memory of National Socialist crimes” by establishing “an independent advisory council composed of representatives of Nazi victim groups that can work separately from and independently of other organizations involved with post-1945 issues” (Ibid.).

“Whom does the Holocaust belong to?”: media debates

Parallel to government decision making and political jockeying between the heads of the Jewish and Sinti/Roma Central Councils, a heated media debate took place among intellectuals, politicians, and the general public, as well as the key players directly involved in the memorials’ planning. Media reporting on the issue was polarized between those championing an exclusive memorial to Jewish victims and those in support of a shared memorial to Jewish and Sinti & Roma (and perhaps other) victim groups. Letters to the editor frequently emphasized how this first phase of debates was a “religious war” (Glaubenskrieg) over the “right way to remember Nazi victims” (anon, Spiegel 1991). Rhetoric was often couched in an ontological discussion of the fundamental premise of Nazi ideology and consequently prescribed what form Germany’s first national Holocaust memorial should take and whom it should commemorate. The memorial debates, especially as represented in the media, thus became mainly a vehicle for rehashing the

88 Debates were in fact split between three main positions: (1) defenders of an exclusive Jewish memorial, who also supported individual memorials to other victim groups; (2) defenders of a shared Jewish and Sinti & Roma memorial, who also supported individual memorials for all other victim groups; (3) defenders of one shared memorial to all victim groups. I focus on the first two variants only.
unresolved thesis of singularity and its core question: who can claim ownership of the Holocaust?

**Defenders of an exclusive Jewish memorial**

Historian Jäckel of the Association instantly ruled out the possibility of a shared memorial based on the premise of intentionalism: anti-Semitism was the core of Nazi ideology and therefore persecution of the Jews overshadowed all other Nazi crimes. Jäckel argued that any attempt to compare the persecution of the Jews with that of any other group would amount to relativizing history (Zeit 1989). Another member of the Association, philosopher Margherita von Brentano, echoed Jäckel when she wrote that anti-Semitism was “not only an element of National Socialism, but its centre” (cited in Heimrod et al. 1999:57). For this reason, she concluded, Germany’s central Holocaust memorial must be dedicated exclusively to the Jewish victims.

The Association and its supporters were especially opposed to the idea of a joint memorial and defended their position in newspaper articles by drawing on a rhetoric of historical precision, rooted clearly rooted in the thesis of singularity: “Because every victim group has a distinct history, it would be disastrous to blend them together” (Rosh cited in Sabath, Der Freitag 1992). Such “generalizations of memory” (Pauschalisierung der Erinnerung), they argued, risked belittling both the specificity of the victim experience and the criminal intent of the perpetrators. Jäckel explained that, “if we are to include Sinti and Roma in this memorial, then we will have to also mention the Slavs and the mentally handicapped who were murdered in accordance with the same racial theories. We will then end up with a general memorial that is no longer specific enough
to really help us remember anything.” In an overtly cynical tone Lea Rosh has been quoted as saying that, “we would then also be expected to commemorate the soldiers or the German housewife who was killed by bombs” (cited in Sabath, Der Freitag 1992). The first director of the Association, Jakob Schulze-Rohr, made a similar statement that his intentions were to “simply prevent an over-simplification of past events by throwing all victims into the same pot. If you were to commemorate just everyone, you may as well include in the memorial the SS soldier who threw away his weapons and surrendered” (cited in TAZ 1989).

As an addendum, these newspaper articles made sure to emphasize that a Jewish-only dedication would in no way devalue the suffering of other groups; to counter claims that the central Holocaust memorial would unwittingly introduce or reinforce a hierarchy of victims, defenders maintained that each of the victim groups should indeed have a memorial space of its own (e.g. Brentano cited in Schulz, TSP, 1990). In Rosh’s (1999) words: “The memorial for the Jews does not represent any form of hierarchization and does not exclude any other victim group. Above all, the Sinti and Roma have a claim to their own memorial based on their own history of persecution. The location must be granted separately” (30; emphasis added).

What this line of reasoning obscures is that the real point of contention was not so much “historical precision,” that is, the particularity of the actual history of Jewish persecution, as it was about the ways in which this history has been and should be represented. As Ian Buruma writes, “memory is not the same as history, and memorializing is different from writing history” (1999:2). This is evident in the fact that opponents of a shared memorial were not only concerned about accurately documenting
the past but also about symbolically representing the future of a newly reunified Germany and the central place of Jewish memory in it. Evidently, the issue of (geographic) space was also of central concern, as highlighted in Rosh’s assertion that memorials for other victim groups require a separate location.

Director of the Topography of Terror Museum Reinhard Rürup, for example, championed plans to dedicate the central Holocaust memorial exclusively to Jewish victims based on the premise that, “fundamentally, it is about showing that the new Germany, still in a process of formation, is ready to seriously grapple with the National Socialist past” (cited in Schulz, TSP, 1990). The memorial debates engendered a public discourse that overwhelmingly defined the Jewish-only dedication as “moral redemption for the [German] nation” (Carrier 2005:201). By placing memory of Jewish victimization at the centre of Germany’s self-understanding as a nation – and literally, in the geographic centre of the new federal capital – supporters of an exclusive central Holocaust memorial were reinforcing the dominant position of Jewish victims over “other” victim groups in Germany’s symbolic and geographic spaces of commemoration. By extension this also reinforced the privileged status of the Jewish minority in the broader context of German national identity.
Promoters of a shared Jewish and Sinti/Roma memorial

Newspapers also printed numerous articles advocating for a shared memorial to both Jewish and Sinti/Roma victims. Not dissimilar to the motivation of those arguing in favour of an exclusive Jewish memorial, the individuals promoting a shared memorial were primarily interested in the political implications of commemoration; the consequences of a victim hierarchy; and again, these concerns dovetailed with the restructuring of Berlin’s political identity and topography.

Romani Rose’s allegation of a victim hierarchy was frequently quoted in the press along with phrases claiming that an exclusive Jewish memorial would result in “a classification of the dead into first and second class [citizens]” (cited in Spiegel 1991), “a reenactment of the Nazi selection process” (Freudenberg in Spiegel 1991), and “a subsequent triumph of the National Socialists for today victim groups are being divided and counted up against one another [as they once were in the past]” (Wolfsohn in Plewina, Focus, 1994). Accordingly, historian Reinhart Koselleck posed the rhetorical question “whom are we allowed to forget?” (Zeit 1998). Philosopher Günter Freudenberg referred to plans for an exclusive Jewish Holocaust Memorial as an “outrage” and asked “with what right can we determine that only one segment of the greater victim population is worthy of remembrance?” (Cited in Heimrod et al. 1999:73). Gerhard Schoenbner, founding director of the museum House of the Wannsee Conference, criticized the idea of an exclusive Jewish memorial, arguing that it would not only be a sign of utter disrespect vis-à-vis the dead but would also have the effect of narrowing the very dimensions of the Holocaust. He then added that, “it is horrible to think that the dead have been posthumously ranked” (cited in Kugler, TAZ, 1992). With the pithy question “Whom
does the Holocaust belong to?” journalist Igal Avidan (1991) captured the essential point of contention in the debate. He wrote that the conflict over a singular memorial to six million Jewish victims versus a joint memorial dedicated also to the 500,000 murdered Sinti & Roma was in fact,

a theoretical battle that certainly impedes practical steps forward. Disputed is the term ‘Holocaust.’ Both sides agree that the Holocaust represents a unique crime in history. The question is, however, whether Holocaust indicates the genocide of the Jews alone or also the genocide of Sinti and Roma (TAZ).

In response to the suggestion put forth by the Association that each victim group is entitled to its own memorial space, opponents inundated the press with expressions suggestive of a “deluge of new memorials” or “memorial fever” (Spiegel 45/2007). In their view, if each victim group would indeed get its own memorial, the New Berlin would be transformed into an “ensemble of memorials,” “buffoonery of remembrance,” “federal memorial park for the victims of National-Socialism,” “Berlin memory avenue,” and a “macabre Disneyland” (Focus 15 August 1994; TSP 26 March 1998; Zeit 24 July 1992). These phrases were intended to point out the absurdity entailed in the construction of separate memorials for each of the victim groups as well as to suggest that the most appropriate form of honouring all victims of genocide would be to build one memorial dedicated to them all. Opponents to the Association thus regarded the idea of building separate memorials as affirmation – in visual and concrete form no less – of a victim hierarchy. Condemningly, and with marked symbolic import, Reinhart Koselleck (1997) wrote that, “the variously colored triangles worn by concentration camp inmates are returning after fifty years, recreated in memorials” (Spiegel).
The role of Berlin’s topography

The extent to which Berlin’s topography mattered in both sides of the memorial debates must be understood in the context of German reunification – what many saw as a key moment in which to write German identity anew. According to Allan Cochrane (2006), “as capital city, Berlin is the (and often literally the building) site on which a new Germany is being constructed” (20). Similarly, Jennifer Jordan (2006) asserts that the “public, material, official collective memory of the Nazi era occupies an important place in the project of transforming Berlin into the unified capital of a unified Germany” (93).

The issue of the memorial’s location was, for example, one of essence to city planners seeking to re-design and promote Berlin as a world-class, cosmopolitan city of the new millennium (Till 2005:193). It was also a major concern for politicians – particularly those of Land-Berlin’s right-of-centre – fearing that the row of memorials would leave the city overrun by memories of past atrocities and national guilt (cf. Gay 2003:154). Lord Mayor of Berlin Diepgen (CDU) used polemical terms such as Denkmaleritis (loosely translated as “Memorialitis”) in order to condemn plans for building a series of memorials in and around Berlin. At a legislative meeting of the Berlin House of Representatives, he stated the following:

We must beware that the German hinterland does not come to embody pride while the capital city embodies remorse. We must avoid burdening Berlin alone with the dark side of history and thus hinder this city’s future. The city cannot live only as a “Memorial Mile” or a “Museum of the Wall”…We must be careful not to dispose of Berlin at the expense of German history (Diepgen 1994).

Diepgen was, however, also opposed to the idea of a shared memorial, and proposed instead that the Sinti & Roma Memorial be built in Marzahn, an outer neighborhood of Berlin (see Chapter Six). Robel (2009:123) has suggested that the discourse espoused by Diepgen and others expressing disapproval of the “Memorial Mile,” was in fact a masked form of discrimination against the Sinti & Roma people, a means of further maligning their history of persecution from the dominant national narrative. Silvio Peritore of the Sinti/Roma Documentation and Culture Centre also maintains that Diepgen has expressed his prejudice...
For Diepgen, “the ‘new’ Berlin was not only to be the home of the German government, but also… the ‘workshop of German unity.’ Berlin was presented as a key element in the process of creating a united Germany, of rediscovering a wider German nationhood” (Cochrane 2006:6). As Caroline Gay (2003) explains, the memorial debate “goes one step further than other debates that have raised hackles but have soon been forgotten, for it suggests a (literally) concrete and permanent manifestation of post-unification German identity” (156).

It is for this reason that Rose and the Sinti/Roma Central Council were so invested in the memorial project (and its location in the capital city specifically). For Rose, reunification suggested an opening in the country’s symbolic and political spaces of commemoration, spaces that had for a long time been reserved exclusively for Jewish victims. This had to do with an understanding of the Jewish victim as constituting a fundamental element of German national identity and consciousness, and performing the kind of “ideological labour” (Bodemann 1990) that would affirm the German state’s complete disengagement from Nazi racial politics. Rose addressed this head-on in a letter written in March 1991 to Joachim Braun, chairperson of the Association:

We are requesting that you support this initiative for the [joint] Holocaust Memorial, which in this moment of Germany’s unification, as recognized by international law, will be able to give a clear sign of Germany’s avowal to historical guilt and commitment to its particular responsibility toward Jews as well as Sinti and Roma (reprinted in Heimrod et al. 1999:73).

By invoking national reunification, Rose elevates the symbolism of the central Holocaust memorial to the realm of the country’s confrontation with the past, its post-unification project of nation (re-)building, and its professed commitment to minority rights. This is against the population by trying to undercut plans for a Sinti/Roma Memorial (personal interview, January 2009).
one of the reasons why physical proximity – be it in a shared memorial or on a shared memorial site – was so important in the evolution of the campaign of the Sinti/Roma Central Council.\textsuperscript{90}

It is thus clear that all sides of the memorial debate were effectively fighting not only for an “appropriate” form for representing history, but also for a suitable representation of the \textit{New Germany} and the chance to either be inscribed in it or to have the power to define it. The debates highlight the very inextricability of these two processes: (re-) shaping memory and (re-)defining identity. As Jennifer Jordan (2006) writes, these processes are temporally entangled in a constant pull between the backward- and the forward- looking functions of commemoration and its attendant politics. Moreover, “memorials and monument… are also mirrors of more contemporary events, issues, and tensions” (Alderman and Dwyer 2009:52). As I have shown, the debates that developed in the wake of Rose’s 1989 petition over the country’s national memorial project(s) make evident that all sides were primarily interested in the symbolic and political significance of memory and its representation – as circumscribed by the legacy of earlier singularity debates and the more contemporary politics of reunification.

\section*{III. THE RESOLUTION}
\textbf{Bundestag Plenary Session: “I am… against a victim hierarchy”}

On 25 June 1999, debates regarding shared versus individual memorials in Berlin were carried over into a Bundestag plenary session (led at the time by an SPD-Green coalition)

\textsuperscript{90} I return to this topic of capital city space in Chapter Six, where I discuss in detail the years of conflict over securing a spot in the Berlin city-centre for the Sinti/Roma Memorial.
and titled *Parliamentary Resolution for the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe*. The language of “victim hierarchy” was at the centre of the session as parliamentarians sought a way of sifting through a decade’s-worth of disputes over the form, content, and meaning of the reunified state’s first national memorial dedicated to the victims of National Socialism. Bundestag president Wolfgang Thierse (SPD), who opened the session, immediately broached the issue by reminding his colleagues that whatever decision they reached would inevitably reflect Germany’s moral commitment to all victim groups of National Socialism.

[T]oday we must decide: do we want to dedicate this memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe or to all of victims persecuted and murdered by the National Socialists? This decision is not easy for me. Significant is Reinhard Kosellek’s [sic] urgent plea that we, as perpetrators, have no right to arrogate a hierarchy of victims. More keenly [schärfer noch], he adds: ‘doing so would serve to reinforce those categories defined by the SS and then used to annihilate their victims…’ Against this backdrop we must ensure that our decision today does not in any way represent disrespect to the other victim groups—the Sinti and Roma, the politically persecuted, the homosexuals and the mentally handicapped. We remain committed to providing an honourable remembrance of their respective fates (*Plenarprotokoll* 14/48, 1999:4086).

This declaration of support for all victim groups set the tone for the rest of the plenary session as Bundestag members from all sides of the political spectrum deliberated on how to most honourably commemorate Jewish as well as non-Jewish victims of National Socialism. In the process, the possibility of a shared memorial faded away, with parliamentarians expressing only vague commitment to the other victim groups.\(^9\) The majority of speakers, however, made specific reference to the complexity of the situation

\(^9\) “Other victim groups” who had already started lobbying for their own memorials in the years leading up to the Bundestag resolution include: Sinti & Roma, homosexuals, euthanasia victims, forced labourers, “asocials,” Blacks and forcibly sterilized people, Jehovah’s Witnesses, conscientious objectors, deserters as well as the 3.5 million Soviet prisoners of war – the second largest victim group after the Jews (Bernau, *Berliner Zeitung*, 8 May 2006).
and reassured that whatever the decision of the Bundestag, it would be counter to a victim hierarchy.

In the context of discussing “other victim groups” in this session, parliamentarians made more frequent reference to the Sinti & Roma as a distinct victim group as compared to any other non-Jewish victim group. This was likely a reflection of and reaction to the decade’s-long effort of the Sinti/Roma Central Council – arguably more persistent and resolute than the activism of any other victim group – to challenge the obscurity of their suffering in official memory politics. Delegate and former Bundestag president Rita Süßmuth (CDU/CSU), for example, stated that:

‘Even if we are not able to agree today to this group’s [the Sinti and Roma] request – which is what the course of debates up to now suggests will happen – I would like to say: we have the responsibility to uphold our promise to treat them justly. I am… against a victim-hierarchy. Today’s decision will not be evidence of a hierarchy. This is what we have to think about’ (Ibid:4106).

The plenary session ended with a series of votes that addressed the three main issues that had marked the many years of debate and negotiation surrounding plans for the first national Holocaust memorial. Gisela Schröter (SPD) summarized these for the other delegates: “First, do we want a central memorial? Second, to whom do we want to dedicate it? Third, how should this memorial look?” (Ibid:4114).

As was to be expected, a majority vote approved construction of a central Holocaust memorial (439 in favour; 115 against). This was followed by the motion to expand the dedication of the memorial so that it would include, in addition to Jewish victims, mention of “…all of the other victims of the National Socialist crimes against humanity” (Ibid:4128). The motion did not pass, as 325 members of parliament voted
against and 218 in favour of a shared memorial to “all victims.” Subsequently however, the Bundestag committed itself to funding construction of separate memorials in the capital city to the other victims of National Socialism. The third question under consideration – *how should this memorial look?* – went well beyond the structure’s aesthetic form. It was in the context of this question that non-Jewish victim groups were most earnestly taken into consideration.

The design of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial had previously been addressed in two divisive and irresolute stages of public competition, first in 1994-5 and again in 1997-8. The issue was finally placed on the agenda of the Bundestag plenary session, at which point a majority vote went to the “Eisenmann II plus” design. This particular proposal, designed by American architect Peter Eisenmann, consisted of an aboveground field of 2,711 concrete stelae – commonly referred to as the *Stelenfeld* (Field of Stelae; Figure 24) – along with an underground Place of Information (*Ort der Information*; hereafter: PI).¹⁴

¹² Note that Thierse voted against the motion, while Süßmuth voted in favour of it.
¹³ For detailed information about the design competition of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial, see Senatsverwaltung für Bau und Wohnungswesen (1995) and Heimrod et al. (1999). For analysis of the competitions and related conflicts, see especially Benz (2006), Knischewski and Spittler (2005) and Young (2002).
¹⁴ The first version of this design included the collaboration of sculptor Richard Serra. In March 1998, however, he withdrew from the project after Chancellor Kohl insisted on some changes to the original design so as to make it less abstract. The updated and final version – “Eisenmann II plus” – refers mainly to the addition of the PI and a decrease in the height and number of stelae (from 4000 to 2711).
Three (somewhat overlapping) functions were designated to the PI: first, it would supplement the abstract aboveground memorial structure with detailed historical and archival information about the European dimension of Jewish persecution belowground; second, the PI would perform a “portal” function by linking together other memorials and memorial sites (e.g. former concentration camps) in Germany and across Europe, including those dedicated to or encompassing the history of non-Jewish victims of National Socialism; third, the PI was to incorporate mention of non-Jewish victim groups into its exhibition space.

Following consensus on design, Bundestag delegates concluded the session by ruling for the establishment of the Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe [Stiftung Denkmal für die Ermordeten Juden Europas; hereafter: Foundation], an
independent entity under public law whose charter committed it to realizing the
collection of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial, overseeing the maintenance and
administration of the complex upon completion (i.e. Field of Stelae and PI), and finally,
“ensuring the dignified commemoration of all victims of National Socialism in an
appropriate form” (Drucksache 14/1238, 25 June 1999, §3). As a public institution, the
Foundation would be financed one hundred per cent by the Federal Government, with
funds coming specifically from the budget of the BKM (Tätigkeitsbericht 2006-08:10).

In sum, the Bundestag reached four important decisions on 25 June 1999: (1) the
state would support construction of a central Holocaust memorial; (2) the memorial
would be dedicated exclusively to the Jewish victims of National Socialism; (3) the
design of the memorial would comprise an aboveground Field of Stelae and a
belowground Place of Information (Peter Eisenmann II design); (4) a Foundation for the
Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe would oversee the planning and construction
phase of the memorial and would then administer the memorial upon completion. The
latter two decisions were, in several ways, oriented toward the commemoration of non-
Jewish victims. Most significantly, by voting to institutionalize the memory of “other
victim groups” in the PI and directing responsibility to the Foundation, the Bundestag
partially resolved the conflict over establishing a “memorial mile” (consisting of the
towering Jewish Holocaust Memorial flanked on all sides by smaller memorials to the
other victim groups) versus building one memorial dedicated to all victim groups equally.
More significantly, this decision reveals a stab at the state’s so-called commitment to
decentralization, to ensuring that the history of the Nazi genocide is not limited to the
Jewish Holocaust Memorial alone. The Bundestag resolution, and in fact the
parliamentary deliberation altogether, ultimately show how state decisions regarding memory of Jewish persecution were in fact bounded by consideration of “other victim groups,” the Sinti & Roma in particular.

The Bundestag Resolution of 25 June 1999 thus signalled the end of one phase of debate regarding the fate of Germany’s first central Holocaust memorial, its official dedication, design and administrative structure, while simultaneously ushering in a new set of deliberations and debates in the years of planning and construction that would follow. At the core of this subsequent phase is the emergence of a memorial network, a concept that highlights the intermingling of “dominant” and “non-dominant” forms of memory in a country’s commemorative practices and in its most important geographic and symbolic of spaces – the centre of the capital city.

CONCLUSION
In this chapter, I have discussed the main themes that emerged in the first stage of debate regarding plans to build a central Holocaust memorial in the newly reunified German state: the relationship – often imbalanced – between memory of the persecution of Jews and Sinti & Roma in Germany’s culture of commemoration; “appropriate” definitions of victimhood and the implications of these; the role played by the German state in the process of interpreting and institutionalizing memory of its own past; and negotiation between memory of Nazi perpetration and memory of SED persecution in Germany’s historical narrative. Specifically, I have shown how issues debated and decisions reached always took place at a point of collision and exchange between differing political interests, interpretations of the past and visions of the future. First, I argued that dominant
memory is used as a model for bringing attention to otherwise forgotten or ignored memories. Second, these “other” forms of memory provide a context in which to further articulate and negotiate the meanings of a nation’s dominant memory. Taken together, these points of intersection remind us that it is as important to disentangle the sociological processes by which memory narratives are shaped and imbued with symbolic meaning as it is to accurately document the historical events represented. By tracing the evolution or biography of a memorial we can thus begin to recognize the social relations and identities that were mobilized in the process.
CHAPTER FIVE: Networking memory: exhibition, non-stony, and virtual spaces of memory

INTRODUCTION
At the 25 June 1999 plenary session of the German Bundestag, one of the resolutions reached involved the state’s commitment to building individual memorials in the capital city to “…all of the other victims of the National Socialist crimes against humanity” (Plenarprotokoll 14/48, 1999:4128). This included an agreement to incorporate memory of non-Jewish victim groups into the exhibition space of the underground Place of Information (PI); the establishment of the Foundation for the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (hereafter: Foundation) would oversee its realization. Although articulated in vague terms the 1999 Bundestag Resolution ultimately set in motion more concrete measures for commemorating other victim groups, to be taken at a later date and in alternative forms. In this chapter, I consider what these measures were, how they have been implemented in the meantime, and what this means for the ongoing memorial project of the Sinti & Roma.

In the first section, I look at how the Bundestag Resolution promoted the country’s policy of decentralization through the structure of the Foundation and the designation of the PI as a “portal” or “referral system.” In order to buffer the otherwise commanding – “centralized” – presence of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial in Berlin’s memorial landscape, the PI acts as a liaison with sites of commemoration and historical research facilities devoted to non-Jewish victim groups as well as to those institutions located on “authentic” historical grounds (e.g. concentration camps). I then analyze the planning and curatorship of the PI exhibit as it pertained to the incorporation of “other”
victim groups. Organizers (a mix of historians and other scholars, victim group representatives, and politicians) addressed the limited exhibition space available and looked for ways of fulfilling its mandate to honourably represent Jewish as well as non-Jewish victim groups. The “concrete measures” they decided on have in fact included an increased emphasis on intangible – “non-stony” and virtual – forms of commemoration that would open up both the material and symbolic spaces of collective remembering of non-Jewish victim groups. The use of computer databases is one important example of how spaces of memory have been reconceptualized into more flexible and less physical terms.

In the second section, I show how, following state legislation in 2009, the Foundation now has increased responsibility over Germany’s two other Holocaust memorials. It is here that we see the emergence of Germany’s triangle of mixed memory: a configuration in which the memory of Jewish, Sinti & Roma, and Homosexual experiences of persecution are scattered across Berlin in the form of detached memorial structures, yet brought together through various administrative, pedagogical, research and commemorative activities. This triangle is an evolving example of the memorial network concept that I develop throughout this dissertation. For previously “forgotten victims,” the memorial network promises increased visibility, while for the state, memorial networks function as an important political strategy for countering decentralization, as exemplified by the FRG’s memorial policy (see Chapter Four).

On the surface, the 1999 Bundestag Resolution to dedicate the central memorial exclusively to Jewish victims of National Socialism indicates a re-inscription of the victim hierarchy. Its ramifications, however, have in fact set the groundwork for a more
complex – ultimately, more collaborative and integrative – infrastructure of commemoration in the Federal Republic than first suggested. The language of “victim hierarchy” carried over from the first stage of memorial planning to the Bundestag Resolution and afterwards, into a subsequent phase in which the Foundation has had to curate the PI exhibit and then define its exact role vis-à-vis the Sinti/Roma and Homosexual Memorials. As I show, politicians’ fears of forsaking the democratic principles of decentralization generated ongoing negotiation regarding how to “appropriately” commemorate non-Jewish victim groups and bring attention to memorial sites and institutions separate from the Jewish Holocaust Memorial.

In both the context of the PI exhibit and the Foundation’s mandate, I consider the extent to which actors had to navigate both the physical and immaterial realms of commemorative space in order to implement a variety of memory-related projects. For the most part, the actors involved in this undertaking were formal political leaders from the federal- and regional/municipal- levels, victim group representatives, academics and, civil society members (as represented by the ubiquitous presence of Lea Rosh and her Association Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe). In this chapter I show how this process of moving between memory spaces has ultimately given way to innovative forms of commemoration and concerted efforts at networking Jewish and non-Jewish histories of persecution. As I see it, the triangle of mixed memory is an especially important manifestation of the memorial network as it creates space for the histories of non-dominant victim groups in centrally visible and highly symbolic areas of the nation. While issues of uniqueness, relativization and victim rivalry continue to be writ large in German discourse and policy, efforts are underway to create additional spaces –
symbolic, virtual as well as physical – in mainstream channels of commemoration for “other” narratives of victimhood. There are of course limitations to the triangle of mixed memory, not least in the way it reinforces the dominant position of the German Sinti & Roma leadership in the community’s ethnic and commemorative politics. I elaborate on this in the chapter’s conclusion.

**Decentralizing memorial spaces: the structure of the Foundation**

One of the reasons the proposal for the Jewish Holocaust Memorial was so controversial was because most everything about it ran counter to the practice of decentralization (barring, of course, that the project was orchestrated primarily by members of civil society): commemoration of Nazi genocide through one all-embracing symbol, construction on an inauthentic historical site, designation as a central/national memorial in the capital city (Carrier 2005:104).

In the lead-up to the final vote at the Bundestag plenary session in June 1999, parliament member Gisela Schröter (SPD) responded to this common line of critique by emphasizing the ways in which the central Holocaust memorial – despite its exclusive dedication to Jewish victims and despite its designation as a central/national memorial – would not stand in the way of the country’s decentralized culture of memory. She explained how the suggested add-ons to the Jewish Holocaust Memorial – the PI and the Foundation – would ensure that it does not pose a threat to existing memorials (historically authentic sites in particular); it would be “organically integrated” into Germany’s “already established landscape of [diverse] memorial sites.” Specifically, she explained that this form of integration is,
guaranteed through the Place of Information, which produces a direct link and reference to the authentic sites of terror. Integration is also guaranteed due to the fact that the other memorial sites will themselves be represented by the proposed Foundation (Plenarprotokoll 14/48, 1999:4114).

The Foundation website explains what this means in practical terms: decentralization is achieved by networking memorial institutions to one another. The use of computer databases is a key component of these efforts.

Down to the opening of the [Jewish Holocaust] Memorial, the Foundation assembled data on 400 institutions. The Foundation Topography of Terror took part in a portion of research on the information presented. 450 additional data texts are now being prepared. Close cooperative relations have developed and are now maintained with a large number of memorial sites. The Foundation receives requests on a daily basis from institutions in Europe that would like to be included in the listing. The Foundation regards maintenance of the database and expansion of the portal as an important task, and welcomes suggestions and financial support (Foundation website – sites of memory).

This practice of memorial networking is also evident in the Foundation’s institutional structure and legal framework in that it joins together formal political actors and members of civil society, including representatives from a range of political and memorial institutions, and minority/victim group associations from around Germany (Figure 25).

![INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE OF FOUNDATION](image)

**Figure 25.** Institutional Structure of Foundation of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial (Design: Nadine Blumer; Source: *Tätigkeitsbericht* 2003-05:25-6)
The Foundation is comprised of a **Board of Trustees (Kuratorium)** with 23 members, including the president of the German Bundestag as well as representatives from the federal government, the senate of the Land-Berlin, the Association Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (led by Lea Rosh), the Central Council of Jews in Germany, the Jewish Community of Berlin, the Jewish Museum in Berlin, the Foundation Topography of Terror Museum (hereafter: Topography of Terror) and the Working Group of Concentration Camp Memorials in Germany. Similarly, the 15 members of the **Advisory Board (Beirat)** – who, among other tasks, were responsible primarily for developing and curating the PI exhibit – come from a variety of political and historical research institutions and museums in Germany and from across Europe, and also includes representatives from non-Jewish victim associations. There are however no Sinti or Roma representatives on the Advisory Board but this was a decision reached by the Sinti/Roma Central Council. The Foundation offered them a seat on the Advisory Board when it first formed in 2000 (Neumärker, Personal Interview, 2010). Neither are there any Jewish members on the Advisory Board although there are non-Jewish representatives of institutions devoted to Jewish-related issues (e.g. Professor Wolfgang Benz of Berlin’s Centre for Anti-Semitism Research). Victim groups represented on the Advisory Board include the Federal Association of Victims of NS- Military Justice, the Lesbian and Gay Federation in Germany (LSVD), and the Association of “Euthanasia” Victims and Forced Sterilization. Also represented are interest groups from outside of Germany, such as the International Auschwitz Committee and the International Museum Council of Auschwitz. In this way, the heterogeneous makeup of the Advisory Board reflects the Bundestag’s aim of neutralizing the exclusive dedication of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial by
honouring, as well as giving voice to, other victim groups and a variety of other memorial institutions (Knischewski and Spittler 2005:34).

**Access points and virtual spaces: PI as portal**

The New Oxford American Dictionary defines the word “portal” as both a physical and a virtual form of entrance, opening or access point:

1. a doorway, gate, or other entrance, esp. a large and elaborate one.

2. *Computing* an Internet site providing access or links to other sites.

The designation of the PI as a “portal,” or “referral system” [*Verweissystem*] as it is also known, embodies both the physical and virtual dimensions of this word. It is intended to uphold the country’s policy of decentralization by ensuring that the Jewish Holocaust Memorial draws attention to other memorial institutions (*Tätigkeitsbericht* 2003-05). This portal function operates mainly through the use of computer databases, which allows visitors to conduct independent research on memorial sites, memorials, research institutions and museum across Europe dedicated to the documentation and commemoration of National Socialist persecution (*Tätigkeitsbericht* 2006-08:23). The PI’s portal function is also meant to offset the hierarchy of victims which is generally associated with the Jewish Holocaust Memorial:

The Foundation’s Advisory Board was helping develop a concept for the integration of the other groups persecuted by the Nazis into the presentation at the Information Centre [PI]. At the heart of its considerations was the attempt to avoid creating a hierarchy of victims, while enabling a fitting presentation and developing *new forms of remembrance that are not necessarily bound to specific locations* (Foundation website – portal; emphasis added).

In the following section, I analyze transcripts from the 17 meetings from June 2000 until February 2005 held by the Advisory Board as it negotiated its mandate of developing
“appropriate forms of honouring other victim groups” in the 778 square meters available for the PI exhibit. The two most recurrent themes to emerge during this five-year process had to do first, with the perceived physical constraints of representing other victim groups in the exhibition space; and second, the Advisory Board’s attempt at solidifying the Jewish Holocaust Memorial’s function as a referral system for the Berlin, German and even European memorial landscape. In many ways, as I discuss below, the portal function – in both its physical and virtual manifestation – proved to be one of the key strategies used by the Advisory Board to achieves these objectives.

By looking at the planning phase of the PI exhibit and the evolving role of the Foundation in its capacity to incorporate mention of other victim groups, I consider the extent to which pragmatic concerns over physical space dominated the memorial politics guiding these processes. Attempts at counteracting a victim hierarchy through the PI exhibit were ultimately reduced to disputes over material constraints, primarily having to do with the amount of (perceived) limited physical space available below the Field of Stelae. In the process of curating the PI exhibit we see how organizers indeed developed “new forms of remembrance that are not necessarily bound to specific locations.”

I. EXHIBITION SPACE

The PI working group and its mandate

From its establishment in April 2000 and until the groundbreaking ceremony of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial in May 2005, the Foundation concentrated primarily on the planning and implementation of the Field of Stelae and the PI exhibition space. From among the members of the Advisory Board a working group was set up in order to
concentrate specifically on this latter task. Commissioned for the design of the PI was Berlin-based architect Dagmar von Wilcken. 2.3 Million Euros of federal budget funds were spent on the construction of the PI exhibit and the general facilities of the space (Presseinformation Denkmal für die Ermordeten Juden Europas, May 2009:28). The PI was to be located on the Southeast corner of the Field of Stelae and accessible via a staircase or elevator. Entry would be free but visitors would have to clear security prior to being admitted (Figures 26 and 27).

Figure 26. Entrance to the PI from SE corner of the Field of Stelae (Source: Uhl 2008)

Figure 27. Staircase leading from the Field of Stelae to the PI (Source: WeltOnline 2008)
While it was clear from the outset that the PI exhibit would cover mainly the Nazi persecution of Jews from 1933-1945, members of the Advisory Board dedicated a substantial amount of time in the five-year planning phase to implementing the Foundation’s mandate of “ensuring the dignified commemoration of all victims of National-Socialism in an appropriate form” (Drucksache 14/1238, 25 June 1999, §3). In the Advisory Board’s first meeting (21 June 2000), fundamental questions were brought to the table regarding who should be considered for inclusion in the historical narrative on display in the PI exhibit. Bundestag president Wolfgang Thierse (SPD), a member of the Advisory Board (and head of the Board of Trustees until 2006), emphasized the need to take inventory of all victim groups – those with and without self-representation. Thus, in addition to the 15 permanent members who sat on the Advisory Board, it was agreed that representatives of non-Jewish victim group associations would be invited to subsequent meetings in order to present some background information on their group’s history of persecution, the current status of their history in the memorial landscape (i.e. did they already have a memorial? Where was it located? Did they want another one?), and the form of support they requested from the Foundation. Representatives from non-Jewish victim group associations who attended the Advisory Board’s meetings in the five-year period included the following: Otto Rosenberg (Regional Association of Sinti und Roma Berlin-Brandenburg); Günter Dworek (LSVD); Norbert Kampe and Elvira Manthey (Association of victims of “Euthanasia” and forced sterilization); Manfred Messerschmidt (Federal Association of Victims of NS-Military Justice); Peter Jahn (Soviet and East European prisoners of war, forced labourers and civilian casualties); Rolf Winau and Thomas Beddies (Victims of medical experiments); Johannes Wrobel
Although some of these associations/representatives were already members of the Advisory Board (see above), they were given time to present the particular needs of their respective victim group separate from their capacity on the Board. All victim-group representatives speaking on behalf of their association would, however, be limited to 10-minutes of speech as the Advisory Board was already dealing with a restricted amount of time available for curating the exhibit.

Such pragmatic concerns related to the availability of time but also money and especially physical space, surfaced as the major obstacles to the Advisory Board’s mandate of commemorating other victim groups; these dominated and guided the bulk of decision-making regarding the content and form of the exhibit. Earlier conflicts over victim hierarchies and singularity, so polemical in the years leading up to the Bundestag resolution of 1999, were thus sublimated into practical concerns regarding the layout and dimensions of the underground exhibition space. In Chapters Three and Four I discussed how one of the main markers of the Sinti & Roma’s memory project was the struggle to integrate into, that is, find “space” for their own history of persecution in a commemorative environment otherwise dominated by a narrative of Jewish suffering. When looking at the planning of the PI exhibit, this question of “space” shifts from the symbolic, political and discursive to the material realm.

**Space constraints: the foyer and beyond**

The PI is divided into three main areas: the exhibition rooms cover 778 square metres; the seminar rooms cover 106 square metres; and the bookshop (which carries primarily
covers 46 square metres (Figure 28). These numbers were often cited during Advisory Board meetings – members problematized dimensions in the context of where and how to integrate non-Jewish victim groups into the exhibit’s narrative. The question of space was most manifest in regard to the display in the foyer’s hallway (Figure 28: “0. Introduction”).

In the third meeting Reinhard Rürup, director of the Foundation Topography of Terror Museum, gave a presentation to fellow board members in which he thoroughly outlined how the various rooms of the exhibit should look, but not before indicating the dimensions they would have to work with: “The PI, as specified in the resolution of the
Board of Trustees, should be as modest as possible (1,500 m$^2$ total space available, of which 800m$^2$ is for the exhibit) and will be constructed as a supplement to the Field of Stelae…” (Beiratsprotokoll 7 Nov 2000:5). The ensuing discussion concentrated in particular on the set-up of the foyer, which architect Max Bächer described as “fragmented, relatively small, like a small narrow tube” (Ibid:5) (Figure 29).

These elements of the foyer’s architectural layout, insisted Bächer, would prevent the “honourable commemoration” of other victim groups in the chronology from 1933-1945 that was to constitute the introductory section of the PI and provide historical context for the rest of the exhibit (Ibid:3). Later on in the meeting he also underscored the importance of not “overloading” [überfrachten] the rooms with visual or written content (Ibid:5). A number of Advisory Board members expressed similar sentiments, using words such as “constriction”/ “confinement” [Beengtheit] and “congestion” [Überlastung] to describe the foyer and how an attempt to include mention of too many groups would inevitably highlight these components of the space (Ibid:5).

Advisory Board member Horst Möller, director of Munich’s Institute for Contemporary History, on the other hand, warned of the problematic message that the PI would convey should the Advisory Board opt not to include mention of other victim
groups in the introductory display: “In fact it is necessary to avoid pushing the other victim groups to the periphery of the exhibit as well as the hierarchization that goes along with that. It will be difficult to avoid this fatal optical impression and to do justice to the complexity of this subject” (Ibid:3). Bächer thus suggested building an additional room out of the foyer wherein they would be able to present the full extent of the murderous NS-ideology and its consequences in regards to other victim groups (Ibid.). This suggestion, however, did not win favour with the other board members. Norbert Kampe, director of the museum House of the Wannsee Conference and Manfred Messerschmidt, of the Federal Association of Victims of NS-Military Justice, both agreed that this additional room would not be an appropriate solution and that the meaning of the memorial – exclusive dedication to Jewish victims – would easily get lost as a result. Instead, they emphasized that “honourable commemoration of all other victims” must take place beyond, that is, outside of, the physical boundaries of the PI and the grounds of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial altogether (Ibid:3-4).

Wolfgang Benz, director of Berlin’s Centre for Anti-Semitism Research and the Advisory Board’s spokesperson, concluded the discussion about the foyer by drawing on the suggestions made by the other members, stating first that “consensus rules in favour of the Memorial’s and the PI’s dedication to the murdered Jews of Europe.” He then explained that “honourable commemoration of all other victims would not be possible in the foyer; honourable mention of the other victim groups should however be made possible” (Ibid:6; emphasis added). To this end, he reminded his colleagues that they would need to work together in order to develop alternative forms of commemoration and
to define the Advisory Board’s supportive capacity for representing the history of other victim groups.

Benz resolved the question of the foyer’s content with an introductory statement about the *Jewish* dedication of the Holocaust Memorial; by then listing off the subsidiary tasks of the PI, he reinforced the extent to which the exhibit’s emergent narrative was one ultimately rooted in and guided by the so-called singular experience of Jewish suffering. Notable is how “honourable commemoration” of all victim groups was redefined to “an honourable mention” before the end of the third meeting, thereby marginalizing the inclusion of non-Jewish memory from the exhibit. Deliberations did not end there, however. Benz’s final point about “alternative forms of commemoration” – linked to Kampe and Messerschmidt’s proposal to look “beyond” the physical space of the PI – would prove to be a major theme in subsequent meetings and the language taken up for finding a solution to the PI space constraints and its mandate of integrating a range of persecuted groups.

**Making room by redefining space**

The most accurate way of describing the PI, according to Benz, is to refer to it in its capacity as an “advertisement” [*Werbung*] for other memorial sites, such as those dedicated to non-Jewish victims as well as authentic sites of persecution located on the periphery of Berlin’s city centre or in other parts of the country and across Europe (Ibid. 7 Nov 2000:2). In similar spirit, Bernd Faulenbach, president of the SPD Historical Commission, reiterated the tenets of decentralization: he stated that the PI exhibit would ideally help to dismantle the perception that the Jewish Holocaust Memorial was seeking
to gain a “leading function” [Leitfunktion] amongst memorial sites; the PI exhibit should instead help to re-frame the position of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial as an integral – but not central – component of the German and European memorial landscape (Ibid. 20 Sept 2001:4). In order to do this, the Advisory Board concluded that it would “make it a point not to limit the representation of the victim groups and the authentic [memorial] sites to the immediate area of the [Jewish Holocaust] Memorial” (Ibid. 17 July 2001:7).

The portal function of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial was crucial in this regard. At the sixth Advisory Board meeting, Rürup explained that,

> by making reference to other sites of persecution and memory – which incorporate the sites of all victim groups – the [Jewish] Holocaust Memorial will, as if on its own, open up [eröffne sich] the possibility to also relate to the respective victim groups there (Ibid. 7 Nov 2000:4).

Such statements, which link up the commemoration of other victim groups and the PI’s portal function reflects one of the Advisory Board’s most pressing concerns during the five years it spent conceiving the exhibit. Members often referred to the PI’s portal function as the most realistic and satisfactory means of “finding space” for non-Jewish victim groups. In this way, members negotiated space constraints by devising forms of commemoration that would reach beyond the physical boundaries of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial and inevitably, push beyond the city limits of Berlin. At an Advisory Board meeting in April 2001, Messerschmidt, Rosh and Benz all agreed on the following:

> One of the criteria we could work on for developing a more meaningful site for the particular displays is to agree that they don’t have to necessarily be situated in Berlin. Besides pragmatic reasons such as the city’s difficult financial situation and the state’s preference for federalism [i.e. decentralization], it could also satisfy the interest of the individual [victim] groups for them to have their ‘own’ site, which could receive undivided attention and benefit from the eager support of their respective municipalities (Ibid. 5 April 2001:8).
In the process of trying to solve the various physical limitations in the PI exhibition space, Advisory Board members also reached consensus that they would need to conceive of “new forms of remembering” as part of the PI’s portal function. As stated in the Jewish Holocaust Memorial’s 2002 Activity Report:

With regards to a publically effective [öffentlichkeitswirksam] referral system to other victim groups and other memorial sites, the Advisory Board has suggested that we conceive of the most diverse, the newest and the most active forms of remembrance possible (Tätigkeitsbericht 2000-02:36).

Indeed, discussions at subsequent Advisory Board meetings reveal that, “the most diverse, the newest and the most active forms of remembrance” would prove to be absolutely central for the effective functioning of the PI and its portal mandate. Benz in particular was committed to this notion and often reminded his colleagues of “the diversity of prospective ‘non-stony’ ["nicht-steinerne"] forms of memory work (film presentations, discussion forums, publication series, etc)” (Beiratsprotokoll 5 April 2001:8).95

Sonja Lahnstein-Kandel of the Advisory Board and president of STEP 21: The Youth Initiative for Tolerance and Responsibility championed the idea of “non-stony, non-material forms of commemoration” as these would provide the chance to begin work “quickly and with little cost” (Ibid. 20 Sept 2001:5). Members put forth a series of suggestions for such “non-stony, non-material” forms of commemoration including a Holocaust survivor speaker series at local schools, which could then be accompanied by audio- and video- interviews with the survivors. Irmgard Konrad of the Association of

95 Aleida Assmann (1998) has used similar language in her critique of building the Jewish Holocaust Memorial as a purely “stony” structure. She champions plans for integrating a multimedia and interactive component into the memorial because “the silent rhetoric of the stones cannot suffice” (cited in interview with Assheuer and Lau 1998).
People Persecuted by the Nazi Regime – Federation of Anti-Fascists (VVN-BdA) described these “tried and tested forms of media-based memory work” as “even better than stony memorials” because they “keep memories alive, preserve them and [are] passed on to the youth” (Ibid.).

In discussing the set-up for the “Room of Places” (Figure 28: “4. Room of Places”), for example, Andrea Nachama of the Topography of Terror, suggested that, due to space limitations, this would be a perfect opportunity to accentuate the PI’s portal or “referral system” function, and thus, alternative forms of commemoration in the process. For Nachama, the referral system to the other memorial sites planned for display in the foyer [of the PI] would only meagerly and fleetingly succeed at integrating the [Jewish Holocaust] Memorial into the Berlin-Brandenburg memorial landscape; instead the referral system could include references to opportunities for consolidation [Vertiefungsmöglichkeiten], technical libraries and visitor programs. Because there is a space limitation, it is legitimate to consider a selection of the sites to be mentioned and it makes sense to prioritize in favour of regional space (Beiratsprotokoll 7 July 2000:3).

As made clear by Nachama, and the many examples provided in this section, the design and curatorship of the PI was predominantly delimited by questions regarding the partitioning of physical space for the different victim groups under consideration. The most viable solution, as agreed upon by members of the Advisory Board, was to develop alternative forms of remembrance that are “not necessarily bound to specific locations.” Exhibition space has thus been supplemented by non-stony and virtual spaces of commemoration.
The PI exhibit realized

Today, visitors to the PI will notice scattered mention of non-Jewish victims, Sinti & Roma in particular, primarily in the historical chronology 1933-45 on display in the foyer, in the “Room of Places” that documents the Nazi sites of terror across Europe and finally, in the computer databases available for individual use at the end of the exhibit (Figure 28: “5. The Holocaust memorials.database”). The PI’s portal function manifests itself perhaps most directly in these computer databases whereby physical space constraints have been partially resolved by expanding into virtual space. Here, visitors can look up information about other memorial sites (e.g. location, visiting hours, bus and train connections), and research institutions and museums in Germany and across Europe that are thematically related to the Nazi crimes against Jews and other victim groups.

There is an additional computer database available in the lobby of the exhibit where visitors can learn about the debates that constituted the planning and construction phases of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial, with access to over 500 press reports and articles from 1988 until its completion in 2005, models from the two design competitions as well as documentation of the 25 June 1999 parliamentary debates and resolution. As stated in the Tätigkeitsbericht 2003-05: “Through the data bases… the visitor also receives the impression of the seriousness and variety of problems that had to be worked out in order to implement this project” (39). There is considerable reference to the Sinti & Roma in these documents in regard to the first stage of memorial debates. That the PI exhibit includes a meta-discussion of its coming-into-being underscores a rather new format of commemoration by placing as much attention on the process of shaping the memorial (i.e. its discursive foundations) and the memory agents who participated as it does on the
memory it is responsible for representing in the first place (Dekel 2009; Carrier 2005).

This meta-discussion also reveals one of the key aspects of multidirectional memory: the ways in which dominant memory narratives not only influence but are also influenced by “other” memory narratives. Specifically, debates over singularity and victim competition – of which the Sinti & Roma have clearly played a major role – are now embedded into the memorial’s narrative and the symbolic meanings it conveys to the millions of people who visit it every year. This emphasis is also evident in the list of FAQ’s on the Foundation website and in the official flyer of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial. The first question addresses head-on the conflict over singularity in the planning stages of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial:

1. Why is the memorial dedicated only to the murdered Jews? After a long debate, the German Bundestag decided in 1999 to dedicate the memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe. This underlines that acknowledging the uniqueness of this crime and historic responsibility is central to the Federal Republic of Germany’s self-understanding. The Foundation has the task of ensuring that all victims of National Socialism are remembered and honoured appropriately. This also involves building memorials to the Sinti and Roma and to homosexual victims, which has already been decided upon by the Federal Government.96

As the very first question on the list of FAQ’s, we see again how central the debates continue to be in the biography of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial. This also reveals the considerable influence that the Sinti & Roma leadership has had in defining the narrative that now constitutes the Jewish Holocaust Memorial which, in turn, affirms Germany’s “mastery of its past.” All of these memory narratives – of Jewish victimization, of Sinti & Roma victimization, of German perpetration – are discursively entangled and embedded in the final structure of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial.

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96 The flyer, published by the Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, is accessible at http://stiftung-denkmal.de. The list of FAQs is also readily available for viewing directly on the Foundation’s website: http://www.holocaust-mahnmal.de/en/faqs

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The transcripts of the Advisory Board’s meetings, and the final result of the PI exhibit and related activities reveal that the process of shaping memory narratives involves an encounter between different victim group narratives vying, quite literally, for commemorative space. It is a process that is clearly delimited by an availability of resources. Innovative and alternative forms – and spaces – of commemoration are thus necessary. In the next section, I show how available “space” for the commemoration of Sinti & Roma (and other) victims has increasingly opened up in recent years via the work of the Foundation of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial.

II. NON-STONY AND VIRTUAL SPACES OF MEMORY

The changing role of the Foundation and an emergent triangle of mixed memory

Although the Foundation’s engagement with the memory of non-Jewish victim groups factored so centrally in the planning phase of the PI, it has up until recently been rather limited and lacking a comprehensive strategy. This situation has changed considerably as of May/July 2009, when the Bundestag granted to the Foundation full administrative control over the Sinti/Roma Memorial (in its unfinished state) and the Homosexual Memorial (inaugurated one year prior),97 with funds coming from the German Federal Commission for Culture and Media Affairs (BKM) and earmarked specifically for these

97 The Homosexual Memorial is comprised of a small information plaque, with text written in English and German, and then a 4 metre high cubic sculpture that can be likened to one of the grey concrete stela from the Jewish Holocaust Memorial. Embedded into the sculpture is a video featuring two young men in a continual embrace (available for viewing at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_ZHQGZTUSk). Original plans for the memorial stipulate that the video changes every two years so that lesbian women are also represented in the narrative.
two memorials.\textsuperscript{98} The Bundestag \textit{Recommendation for a Resolution Report} describes the motion as follows:

The goal of the Foundation is, for one thing, to commemorate the National Socialist genocide of the Jews of Europe. For another thing, the Foundation should add to the honourable commemoration of all victim groups of National Socialism. Against this backdrop, the Foundation has the task of maintaining and running the Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe and the Place of Information as well as to administer [betreuen] the memorials for the Sinti and Roma murdered in National Socialism and the persecuted Homosexuals (\textit{Drucksache} 16/12976, 12 May 2009, § II).

Uwe Neumärker, current director of the Foundation commented on the difference between the 1999 parliamentary resolution, at which point the Foundation was called into existence, and the law passed in July 2009:

The parliamentary resolution [in 1999] implied that the FRG would be responsible for commemorating all victims. And the Foundation’s charter states that it guarantees to contribute to the honourable memory of all victims. But when all of this was first decided in 1999-2000, it was not really clear that we would be responsible for future memorials, such as the Memorial for the Persecuted Homosexuals or eventually, also for the Memorial to the Murdered Sinti and Roma. This is what the legal amendment of July 2009 finally made clear (personal interview, 2010).

Neumärker further explained that while the Foundation now has administrative control over the other two memorials, decisions are reached in conjunction with respective victim group associations (in the case of the Sinti/Roma Memorial, this includes primarily the Sinti/Roma Central Council and to a lesser degree, the \textit{Sinti Allianz} as well as the \textit{Jenischer Bund}) under the auspices of the BKM.

It is here, I argue, that we can begin speaking of meaningful networking activities between Germany’s three national memorials to the victims of National Socialism and specifically, the emergence of a \textit{triangle of mixed memory}. At an April 2010 public

\textsuperscript{98} Although only legislated in July 2009, there was already mention in the June 2007 Updated Federal Memorial Policy that the Foundation would eventually take over administration of the Sinti/Roma and Homosexual Memorials (\textit{Gedenkstättenkonzeption} 2007:6).
conference in Berlin, Silvio Peritore, head curator of the Sinti/Roma Documentation and Cultural Centre ran a workshop entitled “The Long Way to the Memorial.”

He expressed first that the Foundation and the Sinti/Roma Central Council have a very positive working relationship with one another and that he is hopeful of the Foundation’s ability to integrate the Sinti/Roma Memorial into Berlin and Germany’s memorial landscape. He then outlined the specific ways in which he understands the networking between the two. These include support in the realm of pedagogy, media, politics, education, culture, and research. He expressed the hope that following the memorial’s completion, the Foundation might help to organize podium discussions with which to educate the public about the memorial, the population’s history of persecution and its current situation in Germany and across Europe. Peritore spoke about the importance of establishing two yearly memorial ceremonies to be held on the grounds of the Sinti/Roma memorial site on one of the population’s days of commemoration (e.g. August 2nd which marks the “Liquidation of the Gypsy-Camp” at Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1944; December 16th, the date of the so-called “Auschwitz-Decree” which initiated the deportation of some 23,000 Sinti & Roma from across Europe to Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1942). These ritualized ceremonies, according to Peritore, would ideally also pave the way for establishing joint commemoration ceremonies between the Jewish and the Sinti & Roma communities. Finally, Peritore emphasized how mere affiliation with the Foundation

99 The conference was sponsored by the Evangelical charity organization Aktion Sühnezeichen (ASF) and entitled “Sinti and Roma in Europe – self- and external- representations. It took place on 23-24 April 2010 in Berlin. A program of the conference is available at the following link: http://www.asf-ev.de/index.php?id=3005.
should bring the massive number of visitors to the Jewish Holocaust Memorial in direct contact with the history of persecution of the Sinti & Roma and their memorial.\footnote{Since its opening in 2005, the Holocaust Memorial has had approximately eight million visitors; the underground PI is currently one of Berlin’s most frequented tourist sites (Kapustina, TAZ, 5 May 2010; See also Weltonline, 2 March 2010). The title of a Tagesschau article – “Holocaust Memorial is a Visitor Magnet” – published one year after the Memorial’s inauguration, is another case in point (8 May 2006).}

The Foundation’s administrative control of the other two national memorials has already generated several pedagogical and research initiatives, among other logistic and administrative responsibilities. Significantly, the Foundation’s involvement also provides the Sinti/Roma Memorial with a local “representative” in Berlin – an important function seeing that the Central Council offices are located in Heidelberg, in the Southwest region of Germany, and thus, relatively far-removed from the capital city. The Foundation’s duties vis-à-vis the Sinti/Roma Memorial, which will become clearer following the memorial’s official opening, can for the time being be divided according to infrastructure and content, as outlined below.

The Foundation’s responsibilities regarding the Sinti/Roma Memorial’s \textit{infrastructure} encompass three specific areas of support: (1) \textbf{Water}: responsibility for the reflective pool which constitutes the main component of the memorial structure; (2) \textbf{Sanitation}: in the event of graffiti or other forms of vandalism; and (3) \textbf{Security}: Neumärker explained that there are currently two security guards on 24-hour duty at the Jewish Holocaust Memorial who also oversee the Homosexual Memorial, located across the street. Since the Sinti/Roma Memorial is approximately 650 meters away, a similar security arrangement is not feasible. Once the memorial opens, an alternative arrangement will be made (personal interview, 2010).
It is in regards to content-related forms of support from the Foundation that we can most clearly see the portal function of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial, and thus, how it aids in the opening up of commemorative spaces – symbolically, virtually – for the genocide of the German Sinti & Roma as well as other victim groups.\(^\text{101}\) My discussion of these content-related forms of support are based on interviews that I conducted with Neumärker as well as other research associates working at the Foundation. Although a series of delays continue to prevent the official opening of the Sinti/Roma Memorial, the Foundation has already begun implementing numerous projects oriented toward the history of the Nazi genocide of the Sinti & Roma.

To begin, the Foundation provides the newer memorials with access to its extensive infrastructure (e.g. personnel, research tools, library and archival materials, advertising capacity, office space, political and social networks). The Foundation’s offices, located in the prominent district of Berlin-Mitte (a stone’s throw from the Government district and the city’s tourist core), houses a library open to research.

\(^{101}\) Similar pedagogical and research projects related to the Nazi persecution of homosexuals are also being promoted by the Foundation. For more information on this memorial, see: http://www.holocaustmahnmal.de/en/homosexualmemorial. At a 2005 Berlin colloquium, “Prelude to the artistic design competition,” of the Homosexual Memorial, Lea Rosh explained in her opening speech the role of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial in its ongoing support of the Homosexual Memorial:

The story of the homosexuals’ suffering will be told at the memorial. If it is true that we want to learn from history, then this memorial will also be a place of learning. In the course of our work, we, the Association of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, will draw peoples’ attention to your memorial, for example, by referring to it during tours of our memorial” (Colloquium 7-8 April 2005:22).

In addition to the Sinti/Roma and Homosexual Memorials, the Foundation has also supported a number of different commemorative activities (e.g. podium discussions, temporary exhibits) linked to the victims of euthanasia and has promoted the “T4 Memorial to Victims of ‘Euthanasia’ and Forced Sterilization,” located next to the Berlin philharmonic (inaugurated in 2008). In 2008, the Foundation published a catalogue of the exhibit and has been involved with other associations (e.g. Foundation of the Topography of Terror) to build a documentation centre next to the T4 memorial plaque. The Foundation of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial was also responsible in 2007-8 for organizing the traveling exhibit “What was deemed fully legal at the time ... – Soldiers and civilians tried before the courts of the German military.” Representatives from the Federal Association of Victims of NS- Military Justice, as well as Margret Hamm, director of the Association of “Euthanasia” Victims and Forced Sterilization, have sat on the Advisory Board since its inception in 2000 (Tätigkeitsbericht 2006-8).
associates employed there as well as to external researchers upon request (I easily gained access to these materials by making one phone call to the librarian in charge).

The library’s holdings include a total of approximately 4900 books, newspapers and magazines, and audio-visual materials related to the history of National Socialism and the Holocaust as well as scholarly titles on German memory politics. The library was set up in cooperation with the Topography of Terror, the House of the Wannsee Conference Museum and the Moses-Mendelsohn-Centre in Potsdam (Tätigkeitsbericht 2000-02:46). While the bulk of the library’s holdings focus on Jewish-related themes of persecution, three sections are devoted to literature concerning “other victim groups” which are then further subdivided according to specific group categories.102 Materials from this section of the library, for example, are used by research associates engaged in the Foundation’s several projects devoted to the history of persecution of non-Jewish victim groups.

A recent example of a research project initiated by the Foundation deals with the Nazi persecution of the Jenisch population, their postwar situation, and their general history. The historian and head-researcher of this project, Jana Mechelhoff-Herezi, explained that the motivation for preparing a Jenisch-themed commemoration book [Erinnerungsbuch] arose after representatives of Germany’s Jenischer Bund applied to the BKM for funds in order to organize a travelling exhibition about the Nazi genocide of their population. The BKM, however, could only fund this project through an

102 The subdivisions of the “other victim group” sections of the library are rather comprehensive and detailed (but not without overlap as is inevitable when talking about victim group categories), and go beyond the National Socialist regime as well. Included are the following: “general representation,” “Sinti and Roma,” “Euthanasia victims,” “victims of medical experiments/ victims of forced sterilisation,” “homosexuals,” “victims of military justice,” “forced labourers,” “political dissidents,” “ideological opponents,” “asocials and criminalised people,” “prisoners of war,” civilians in occupied territories/ resisters/ partisans,” “military resisters,” “saviours,” “victims of Stalinism,” “Armenia.”
institutional liaison such as the Foundation and with extensive research documentation (of the history of persecution), thereby necessitating the commemorative book project and the Foundation’s leading role in it. The *Jenischer Bund* is acting as a consultant throughout the development of the memorial book project (the exact capacity of which is currently undefined) (Mechelhoff-Herezi, personal interview, 2010).

In an earlier interview with Patricia Pientka, a research associate from the Foundation as well as a member of the Sinti/Roma Central Council, I was given a slightly different account of the Jenisch commemorative book project. Pientka explained that the motivation behind the project was to fill a gap in historical data regarding knowledge of the NS-persecution of the Jenisch. This additional research, she implied, was in fact necessary as a way of “proving” that the persecution of the Jenisch did not constitute a form of genocide and thus, is not in fact comparable to the persecution of the Sinti & Roma. The Jenisch, explained Pientka, were targeted as an “asocial” rather than a racial/ethnic group. This historical interpretation delegitimizes the inclusion of the Jenisch population in the Sinti/Roma Memorial, which for the time being is already rather peripheral. As discussed in Chapter Two, inclusion of the Jenisch has been a point of longstanding contention between the main ethnic leaders/activists involved with the memorial (*Sinti/Roma Central Council, Sinti Allianz, Jenischer Bund*).

There are no similar research projects underway concerning the Nazi persecution of the Sinti & Roma because, according to Neumärker, the Sinti/Roma Documentation and Cultural Centre has already published various texts on this topic (see Chapter Four), most of which are available in the PI’s library collection and some of which are available
for purchase in the PI bookshop, albeit sporadically. Neumärker explained that he foresees future involvement of the Foundation in disseminating the Documentation Centre’s materials. As argued by Weiss-Wendt (forthcoming), however, the quality of academic research emerging from the Documentation Centre and the Central Council is often compromised by its own activist and political agenda. In this regard, it is worth questioning the ability of the Foundation in taking such a leading position in the management of the Sinti/Roma Memorial (and affiliated pedagogical and research activities).

In the realm of pedagogy, Ruth Oelze, a research associate at the Foundation, is currently organizing an educational workshop on the Nazi persecution of the Sinti & Roma to be offered to high school students. These workshops will be held in the PI seminar rooms (Figure 28: “10. Seminar Rooms”) and will make use of the Foundation’s video archive collection of Sinti survivor testimonies. Students will familiarize themselves with the life story of one particular survivor and will then present findings to the rest of the group. They will also be given additional materials with information about the historical dimensions of the genocide of the Sinti & Roma (e.g. a copy of the Nuremberg racial laws or the 1942 Auschwitz Decree). Test-runs of the workshop were held in autumn 2010 and will be incorporated into the Foundation’s official pedagogical program once finalized. Oelze explained that the idea for a Sinti & Roma workshop

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103 The PI bookshop’s holdings of titles on the genocide of the Sinti & Roma fluctuate according mainly to customer interest, which is usually low to non-existent, according to a bookshop employee (personal communication, 2010). The bookshop usually carries anywhere from three to eight titles on the genocide but at the time of writing (late September 2010), there was only one title (a survivor memoir) in stock.

104 To date, the Foundation offers a wide range of workshops, intended mainly for primary and secondary school students, as well as to general audiences, that deal primarily with the Nazi persecution of the Jews. Since spring 2010 the Foundation has also started running workshops on the homosexual persecution, and intended for senior high school classes (grades 11-12). The concept for this workshop was introduced by historian Jens Dobler of Berlin’s Gay Museum. The content of the workshop focuses specifically on the
emerged soon after the Foundation was granted administrative control over the memorial. At that point, she explained, it became clear that more pedagogical programs related to the history of the Sinti & Roma genocide were necessary (personal interview, 2010).

The video archive collection, upon which the workshop is based, is an important area of the Foundation’s pedagogy and research activities in its own right, and another example of virtual memory space. The Foundation’s “Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies” (from Yale University) includes a collection of 850 videos, the majority of which feature Jewish survivor testimonies as well as sixteen Sinti survivor testimonies. The Foundation also received a donation of four additional video testimonies of Sinti survivors, which were conducted and produced by the Sinti/Roma Documentation and Culture Centre. Oelze explained that the original sixteen interviews, conducted in the early 1980s by anthropologist Gabrielle Tyrnauer at a Sinti campsite in the South of Germany, are rather problematic and it was for this reason that they added a selection of survivor testimonies from the Documentation Centre to their video archive collection.

Daniel Baranowski, the researcher in charge of the video archive project, elaborated on the tension between these two different video sources. He explained that

For the full range of workshops and pedagogical offerings available, see the Foundation website at: http://stiftung-denkmal.de/en/visitor_service/program

105 The Fortunoff video archive is available to the general public for use in the PI during opening hours (Figure 28: “5. The Holocaust memorials.database”). Upon request, researchers can easily access the database in the Foundation’s main offices. For more information about the archive, see http://www.holocaust-mahnmal.de/en/projects/interviews/
depicted of the population in the video footage (e.g. the campsite location, many children running around and interrupting the interviews, general chaos and visible poverty). Said otherwise, these images highlight the “non-Germanness” and peripheral identity of Sinti & Roma survivors; they undermine the painstaking efforts taken by the German Sinti/Roma leadership to present its community as a German Volksgruppe comprised of “good German citizens.” In response, Peritore offered to donate survivor testimony videos from the Documentation Centre’s own archive collection (all of which were filmed one-on-one and directly at the Documentation Centre). It is worth noting the priority that the Foundation now gives to these four videos as compared to the original sixteen from the Fortunoff archive: the Sinti video testimonies donated by the Documentation Centre will be used in the high school workshop and have also been comprehensively integrated into the Foundation’s video testimony database. Specifically, this means that researchers have meticulously entered additional biographical data about the survivors and have transcribed the audio into searchable text. While the sixteen videos from the Fortunoff archive are also available in the database, they remain in their original “unworked” format and are not as easily searchable (Oelze, personal interview, 2010).

Since April 2009, the Foundation has also started to conduct its own film interviews with survivors. So far, it has conducted twenty interviews with Jewish survivors, one interview with a homosexual survivor (from Germany)\(^{106}\) and has made contact with a Sinto survivor interested in participating in the project. Baranowski explained that the Foundation intends to expand its video collection of non-Jewish

\(^{106}\) This will likely be the only new video testimony of a homosexual survivor as there are no living homosexual survivors left in Germany.
survivor testimonies but the emphasis remains on Jewish survivors, as this is the
Foundation’s primary mandate. He confirmed that the priority of video testimonies can
be ranked as: (1) Jewish victims; (2) Sinti & Roma and homosexual victims; and (3)
other victim groups (personal interview, 2010).

Other ways in which the Foundation may support the Sinti/Roma Memorial all
reflect the Jewish Holocaust Memorial’s function as a portal or “referral system,” but
depend first on the completion of the Sinti/Roma Memorial. An internet link to the
Sinti/Roma Memorial – another example of virtual space – will eventually be included on
the homepage of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial (next to the existing link to the
Homosexual Memorial); the Foundation will be in charge of administering the website
and updating information. The foundation will prepare a printed leaflet about the
Sinti/Roma Memorial, a hardcopy of which will then be available in the PI lobby and a
downloadable version on the Foundation’s website as well. It will contain information
about the Memorial’s design and location, its architect (Israeli Dani Karavan), and the
chronology of the Nazi persecution of the Sinti & Roma. According to Neumärker,
however, there have been some problems in the preparation of the flyer as representatives
from the Sinti/Roma Central Council, the Sinti Allianz as well as the Jenischer Bund are
disagreeing over the text and photographs to be included in it (personal communication,
2010). The Foundation is also in the process of preparing a new flyer outlining its
“Educational Offerings” [Bildungsangebote], which will contain updated information
about workshops available for students, including a new workshop on the history of
homosexual persecution as well as the above-mentioned workshop on Sinti & Roma
persecution (*Besucherservice*, personal communication, 2010). These flyers are generally distributed at German and international tourism and educational fairs (e.g. Berlin Tourism Marketing), in pedagogical newspapers oriented toward teachers, and at cultural institutions around Berlin and across Germany.

The Foundation will also help to promote the Sinti/Roma Memorial in the city’s tourist infrastructure (a topic I elaborate on in Chapter Six). For example, upon completion of the memorial, the Foundation is responsible for applying to the Berlin district office for “blue sign markers” (Figure 30).

![Figure 30. Berlin's blue sign markers (Photo: Robbie Grunwald, 2010)](image)

These signs, typical across the Berlin city-centre, indicate the direction and distance to specific tourist and memorial sites.\(^\text{107}\)

Also in the realm of tourism (and pedagogy) is the Foundation’s operation of guided tours. While most guided tours organized by the Foundation take visitors to the aboveground Field of Stelae at the Jewish Holocaust Memorial, at least one tour –

\(^{107}\) In his article about Roma Holocaust commemoration in the Czech Republic, van Baar (2008) writes that signposting can indicate forms of inclusion or exclusion/marginalization, in that it is an instrument with the ability to inscribe history/memory into the physical landscape.
“Berlin as Landscape of Memory” – covers a range of Berlin memorials dedicated to other victim groups. Following its completion, the Sinti/Roma Memorial will be incorporated into this specific tour as well, which begins at the Jewish Holocaust Memorial and then moves on to the different memorials in its vicinity. The tour aims to bring attention to the “very different aspects and events of German history. Participants will experience Berlin as a landscape of memory and as a place where different memories overlap, complement each other and stand in mutual tension [Spannungsverhältnissen] with one another” (*Tätigkeitsbericht* 2006-08:39).108

The Foundation is also responsible for the organization of all commemoration and other types of ceremonies to take place at the memorial sites. This includes the much-awaited inauguration ceremony of the Sinti/Roma Memorial (and has, to date, included the inauguration of the Homosexual Memorial as well as its yearly anniversary ceremonies; Figure 31).

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108 See Irit Dekel’s (2009), “Ways of Looking: Observation and transformation at the Holocaust Memorial, Berlin” for a fascinating study of how guided tours at the Jewish Holocaust Memorial function as a platform for social and individual transformation.
The Foundation plans to contact speakers for the inauguration ceremony of the
Sinti/Roma Memorial, which will include political leaders from Germany (e.g.
Chancellor Angela Merkel) and across Europe, Sinti & Roma leaders (possibly from
outside Germany as well), Sinti & Roma survivors and Jewish community leaders. The
Foundation will have to exercise its proscribed “neutrality” as it organizes the roster of
speakers, an onerous task due to the manifold fissures between the Sinti & Roma (and
Jenisch) leaders (Pientka, personal interview, 2010).

CONCLUSION

Speaking at a May 2010 conference in the European Parliament – “Roma and Travellers:
Victims of the Holocaust” – Ágnes Daróczki (2010), founder of the Romedia Foundation
in Budapest, describes how the Romani genocide has been persistently ignored in the European public, political and academic spheres.109

We [the Roma] do not have our own institutions and the mainstream consistently fails to elevate Roma into their [sic.] research focus… In Hungary, we are aware of several, still undisclosed, mass graves into which innocent fellow citizens were shot by the special forces of the fascist Hungarian state on account of their Roma origins. The names of Roma deported and killed in Nazi death camps still go unrecorded in Europe’s historical consciousness. We are lacking the institutions whose role would include researching this past and obtaining [sic.] that society finally comes face to face with the consequences for all Europeans of ideologies promoting theories of racial superiority targeting Roma.

In this chapter I have shown how increased affiliation with state-run institutions, what Daróczi insists is necessary for the advancement of Romani memory politics, has indeed been essential in the commemorative activities specifically of the German Sinti & Roma.

However vague in regards to “other victim groups,” the resolutions passed by the Bundestag in 1999 have in the meantime “materialized” into meaningful initiatives; these decisions have provided a base upon which more specific action could be taken in years to come and reveals one of the ways in which memorial networks function: the Jewish Holocaust Memorial has linked up sites of memory (authentic or otherwise) devoted to Jewish victims as well as a range of other victim groups. As I have shown in this chapter, the Bundestag Resolution indicated the start of a new phase of deliberations regarding forms of representation and inclusion of non-Jewish victim groups in Germany’s official memory narrative. Most notable has been the evolution of the triangle of mixed memory, introduced in vague terms in 1999, partially implemented in the final version of the PI exhibit (inaugurated in 2005), and solidified finally in a Bundestag ruling ten years later in July 2009. At this point, the Foundation for the Jewish Holocaust Memorial was assigned the additional task of administering the Homosexual Memorial and the

109 For more information about the NGO Romedia Foundation, see http://www.mundiromani.com/
unfinished Sinti/Roma Memorial. Now, Germany’s three national memorials to the victims of National Socialism are linked together under one (particularly effective, well-funded and prominent) administrative roof; they are implicated in one another in regards to pedagogical, research and other initiatives. Through innovative and collaborative forms of interlinking disparate (and often, competing) memory narratives, the histories of different victim groups are networked and made visible in the public sphere. The Foundation has thus responded to the broader project of decentralizing memory away from the dominating Jewish Holocaust memorial. Understood in this way, we thus see how these three memorials (and not just the Jewish Holocaust Memorial alone) perform a particularly important ideological function for the German state.

The situation is of course not without its problems and imbalances. While I have pointed out the manifold ways in which the Jewish Holocaust Memorial has functioned as a catalyst for additional commemorative spaces, there are perhaps just as many examples of its dominant position (and at times overshadowing effects) within Germany’s memorial landscape. In her ethnography of how visitors experience and perceive the Jewish Holocaust Memorial, Irit Dekel (2009) argues that although other victim groups’ narratives are now incorporated into the PI exhibit and are cursorily mentioned in the organized tours of the Field of Stelae, the Jews maintain their status as archetypical victims and the Jewish Holocaust remains the focus of the Foundation’s activities (80). From a purely visual standpoint, it can also not be denied that the Jewish Holocaust Memorial’s 2,711 concrete stelae – spread out across more than 19,000 m² – literally hover above the single-stela comprising the Homosexual Memorial and the still unfinished (and also much smaller) Sinti/Roma Memorial. Other ongoing frictions and
fears of victim competition continue to complicate the picture as well, namely in regards to the ever-increasing number of memory projects underway in the post-Holocaust, post-Wall German environment. In these ways, it is obvious that the triangle of mixed memory cannot entirely quell earlier fears that an exclusive Jewish Holocaust Memorial could generate (or reinforce) a hierarchy of victims.

Also problematic is the seemingly uncritical positioning of the Foundation vis-à-vis internal Sinti & Roma (and Jenisch) community politics and pre-existing intragroup contests over historical representation of the Nazi genocide. As demonstrated, the Foundation prioritizes the authority of the Sinti/Roma Documentation Centre (and by affiliation, the Sinti/Roma Central Council) in its research and pedagogical activities. The Jenisch commemorative book project, the video testimonies of Sinti & Roma survivors produced by the Documentation Centre and its dissemination of publications on the Nazi genocide are all examples that reinforce the already dominant position of the Sinti/Roma Central Council in the population’s ethnic (and commemorative) politics. This similarly reinforces the fact that, as discussed in Chapter Three, the writing of the genocide of the Gypsies is almost exclusively at the hands of the official leadership of the German Sinti

110 The most controversial of the current memorial projects is the memorial for German expellees, administered by the state-funded Foundation for Flight, Expulsion, and Conciliation in conjunction with the Centre Against Expulsion (Langenbacher 2005). For more information see http://www.dhm.de/sfvv. Another contentious memorial project is the proposed Memorial for Freedom and Unity, which would commemorate the 1989 revolution and the 1990 re-unification of Germany and thus, signal a transformation in the country’s commemorative discourse from “negative” to “positive” memories (see Menninger 2008). Notable in the context of this particular debate is the extent to which supporters of the memorial are split between building the national memorial in Berlin versus Leipzig (where the peaceful demonstrations began). Some have suggested building memorials in each city as a compromise. The question of location, particularly as it pertains to the significance of placing memorials in the capital city, is a theme I take up in Chapter Six.

Romani Rose made reference to the expellee memorial project in a press release criticizing further delays in the construction of the Sinti/Roma Memorial: “It is unacceptable that there is currently a heated discussion taking place about new memorials for the expellees and for Germany’s reunification, while the last survivors of the National Socialist genocide of our minority will no longer have the chance to experience recognition and commemoration of their fates” (Central Council press release, 9 October 2007).
& Roma, which aims to reaffirm the identity of the Sinti & Roma as a central component of German history and culture, as a German *Volksgruppe*. 
CHAPTER SIX: Singular memory as access route: widening Berlin’s geographic spaces of memory

INTRODUCTION

At a public conference held in Berlin in April 2010, Silvio Peritore of the Sinti/Roma Documentation and Cultural Centre, expressed frustration at the endless delays preventing completion of the Sinti/Roma Memorial. There was, however, a hint of optimism in his speech as he went on to emphasize how the work of the Foundation for the Jewish Holocaust Memorial and the various forms of proximity to the Jewish Holocaust Memorial will inevitably increase the “value” of the Sinti/Roma Memorial.

‘Now people will come from all over the world to see, in the middle of the capital city, between Brandenburg Gate and Reichstag… what I think has become the most frequented spot in Europe… So, visitors will see the Sinti/Roma Memorial and it can have its effect… maybe we [the Sinti and Roma] will be taken more seriously as a result. People will then see the memorial for the Jews, then they can go back and forth, and then they go to the Place of Information [PI]… and perhaps they will ask about the Sinti and Roma history… that would be my wish anyhow. And then people can reflect on the situation and ultimately come to the conclusion that there are in fact many similarities between the histories [of the Jews and the Sinti and Roma]… I think that the mention of our history in the Place of Information’s exhibit will also push people into taking the Sinti and Roma more seriously. The work of the Foundation will increase the value [Wertigkeit] of our memorial and of the history of the Sinti and Roma genocide more generally. In this way, I think that our politics will also be taken more seriously.’

Peritore’s emphasis on memory and location, visibility, centrality, recognition and, most importantly, memorial networks brings me back to where I began: the map of Berlin, in the area surrounding the Brandenburg Gate. Rather than depicting a detached triangle of memory as I did in Chapter One (Figure 1), I now widen the parameters and look at the interrelationship between two distinct – yet adjacent – triangles of memory: the triangle of mixed memory and, what I here label, the triangle of singular memory (Figure 32). The
latter is a cluster of three memorial institutions all of which represent the victimization, persecution and/or culture of the Jews. Caroline Gay (2003) has in fact used the term “triangle of memory” to refer to this exact constellation of memory-related institutions (154). I add the descriptor “singular” in order to emphasize that, in contrast to the triangle of mixed memory, this formation reflects the status of uniqueness that is commonly attributed to Jewish memory in Germany.

In this chapter, I chart the interrelated development of these distinct yet adjacent memory triangles and the ways in which point A – the Jewish Holocaust Memorial – functions as an access route between them. Central to this analysis are the particularities – the overt symbolic features – characterizing Berlin as capital city and its role in Germany’s post-Wall politics of memory and national identity.
Drawing on a methodology of landscape iconography, I present a thick description of Berlin’s memorial landscape and consider in particular the ways in which the Sinti/Roma Memorial shapes and is shaped by this location. To do so I oscillate between a three-dimensional view of Berlin’s built environment and a two-dimensional view of the city’s cartographic surface. I examine the socio-historical-political context that gave rise to the current assemblage of and interrelationship between the memorials clustered across the cityscape. As historical geographer J.B. Harley (2001) explains, maps and the social world are inextricably linked as maps are, social constructions that should be interrogated for both their intrinsic meanings and their ability to create knowledges designed to serve particular interests. Cartography… belongs to the terrain of the social world in which it is produced and should be approached iconographically (cited in Hoelscher 2009:136).

My objective then is to describe and interpret the two dimensional symbols and images as depicted on the map’s surface in relation to real geographic space; what we see on a map is thus neither objective nor apolitical but rather, circumscribed by complex social tensions, cultural meanings, politics and relations of power (Mitchell 1994). A cartographical analysis of Berlin’s memory triangles thus allows me to consider the location of the individual memorials in real geographic space – across the city’s built environment. Once again, space – here, geographic and cartographic – proves to be a key component of the Sinti & Roma’s memory politics and the state’s ongoing attempts at decentralizing its national landscape of commemoration.

The first section of this chapter begins in the built environment of the New Berlin. I look at how the three points constituting the triangle of singular memory on the map of Berlin have come to function as a physical memory district in the city-centre (and constitutes another example of a memorial network). Characterized by visibility,
centrality, and some element of wider appeal and recognition, this memory district has been the cause of much critique from those fearing the centralization of Berlin’s memorial landscape (i.e. memory of Jewish persecution clustered in the centre of the capital city) and the undermining of authentic historical sites of persecution. Formal political decision-making and the politics of reunification have been a key part of the process.

In the second section I show how the above-mentioned criteria of visibility and centrality have in turn incited activists affiliated with the Sinti/Roma and Homosexual Memorials to seek out proximity to the district of singular memory (and the Jewish Holocaust Memorial in particular). Here, I present the polemical discussion that took place regarding allocation of a site in the Berlin city-centre for the Sinti/Roma Memorial and how these debates were often framed according to a politicized dichotomy of “authentic” versus “inauthentic” and “central” versus “peripheral” spaces of memory. I draw on a constructivist reading of authenticity in order to highlight how activists engaged in the planning of the Sinti/Roma Memorial, as well as those fighting for a Homosexual Memorial, redefined the parameters of this concept in order to secure a location in the city centre. In the process, an adjacent memory district has taken shape: the district of mixed memory, which has important implications for victim groups as well as national politics in Germany. The establishment of a mixed memory district in the centre of the capital city performs an important ideological function: it helps to balance out the dominance of the singular memory district in Germany’s national narrative and thus, upholds the country’s democratic principles of decentralization.
I conclude this chapter by analyzing the significance of signposting (e.g. street names, addresses) and inclusion of memorial structures onto the city’s (paper and virtual) maps, and how these correspond to real geographic space. By reading these various components of the city’s administrative and tourist infrastructure, we see how the dominance of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial is overwhelmingly affirmed in Berlin’s urban landscape. My concept of memorial networks, however, confirms that spatial proximity (variously defined) to the Jewish Holocaust Memorial has important implications for the “standing” of the Sinti/Roma (and Homosexual) Memorial(s) and vice versa.

In this chapter I shift focus from exhibition, non-stony, and virtual spaces of memory (Chapter Five) to the geographic and cartographic city spaces of memory. I describe how the debates, negotiations and points of contention undergirding the foundations of the memorial-building process (discursive space) are manifested in regards to the emplacement of memorials into Berlin’s built environment and onto the capital city’s cartographic surface. I look at how the site of the Sinti/Roma Memorial is entangled with and relates to its topographical surroundings, and what meanings it gathers from and impresses onto the geographic environment in which it will be located. This is what James Young (1993) refers to as the “reciprocal exchange between a monument and its space” (7).
I. FORMING THE DISTRICT OF SINGULAR MEMORY

The focal point of the map featured in Figure 32 is the Jewish Holocaust Memorial – the point that connects the two triangles and thus, the conduit between otherwise separate spaces of memory. The triangle of singular memory on the right reflects the dominant subject of Berlin and Germany’s memorial landscapes (i.e. Jewish memory), whereas the triangle of mixed memory on the left entails a broader expanse of victim group categories.\footnote{Some caution should be exercised in drawing too many parallels between these triangles. While the three points on the Triangle of Mixed Memory all refer specifically to victim groups, the points on the Triangle of Singular Memory are somewhat more varied in that they represent the history of both victims and perpetrators (but always in relation to Jewish victimhood or persecution of the Jews). This reflects broader debates in Germany’s memory politics, namely, the question of representing and commemorating victims versus perpetrators (e.g. Neue Wache controversy) as well as the frequent overlap between these categories (see Benz 2005).} That the Jewish Holocaust Memorial bridges these two triangles to one another suggests that whilst occupying a commanding position in national memory politics, the space occupied by institutions of Jewish memory – via the Jewish Holocaust Memorial – can in fact open up into additional space for other victim group narratives of suffering and persecution. This notion is not however restricted to the two-dimensional surface of the city map, but is also applicable to real geographic space. The two memory triangles depicted on Figure 32 function equally as distinct yet adjoining memory districts. In this section I chart the formation of a singular memory district and how it would eventually set the stage for the formation of an adjacent mixed memory district.

Memorial activists and pragmatic concerns

In her ethnography of memorial spaces and the politics of place-making in post-Wall Berlin, geographer Karen Till (2005) discusses three centrally located places of memory that together constitute an emergent “memory district” in the New Berlin (200).
According to Till, the memory district has, rather indirectly, developed into a “coherent tourism concept” that is composed of three sites pertaining to the history of (predominantly) Jewish persecution, victimization and/or culture: the Jewish Holocaust Memorial; Liebeskind’s Jewish Museum (exhibits the history of German-Jewish cultural life as well as history of the Holocaust; opened in 2001); and the Topography of Terror (a documentation centre that chronicles the history of NS-perpetration; temporary exhibit opened in 1987, permanent exhibit opened in May 2010).\(^{112}\) As seen in Figures 32 and 33, the three institutions constituting Till’s memory district, like those constituting the triangle of mixed memory, denote a contained area of memory in the shape of a triangle on the city map.

\(^{112}\) Although the Topography of Terror cannot be classified exclusively as an institution of “Jewish memory” since its focus is on Nazi perpetration, the dominant narrative in the exhibit does in fact refer to Nazi policies of Jewish victimization and persecution (the new exhibit now also includes several small and separated sections representing non-Jewish victim groups, such as the Sinti & Roma, homosexuals, victims of euthanasia, political prisoners, etc). The extent to which the Topography includes non-Jewish victim groups remains contentious, however. For example, a recent press release from the Sinti/Roma Central Council condemned the Topography for not inviting any of its representatives to the official opening ceremony of the new exhibit/building in May 2010:

> It cannot be justified that the genocide of the Sinti and Roma could be so conspicuously excluded from the opening ceremony [of the Topography of Terror], where Bundes President Köhler and Minister of State Neumann were in attendance and where Charlotte Knobloch, the president of the Central Council of Jews also spoke… For the Sinti and Roma this location [of the Topography of Terror] on the historical site of the Reich main security office has the same importance as it does for the Holocaust of the Jews because it was also from here that the genocide of our minority, guided by the same intention of total annihilation, was planned, systematically organized and implemented (Central Council press release, 4 May 2010).
Till (2005) describes how the urban space occupied by these three institutions in turn give rise to national, cosmopolitan as well as symbolic spaces of commemoration – particularly relevant in the context of German national identity.

This new dramaturgic space of national commemoration will stage a hypervisible cosmopolitan Holocaust memory for citizens, politicians, foreigners, and a Western moral community of democratic nations... Berlin’s spectacular public acts of atonement, mourning, and healing – of publicly demonstrating how ‘we the descendants of the perpetrators show shame and mourning’ – will be given material form through internationally respected architecture and symbolic spaces... The memory district’s location, access to the public, and visibility will also communicate an understanding of the nation: that the new Germany is open and has nothing to hide. In this symbolic space, nothing will appear to be hidden from view (202-3).

This “hypervisibility” has manifested itself most concretely in the huge number of visitors who pass through these three sites yearly. The Jewish Holocaust Memorial has had approximately eight million visitors since opening in 2005; the underground Place of Information (PI) is currently one of Berlin’s most frequented tourist sites (Weltonline,
2010; *Stiftung*, Press Information, 2005). Liebeskind’s Jewish Museum had 600,000 visitors between 1999 and 2001, before the exhibition was even completed; people came simply to marvel at the architecture of the empty building (Figure 34). Since its official opening in 2001, approximately 750,000 visitors have passed through its corridors on a yearly basis (Kugelmann, personal communication 2010).

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113 A dispute between the British airline Easyjet and the Foundation illustrates the extent to which the Jewish Holocaust Memorial is perceived and marketed as a component of Berlin’s tourist circuit. In November 2009, Easyjet came under attack for publishing in its onboard magazine photographs of a fashion shoot staged at various locations around Berlin, including the Field of Stelae. The magazine publishes a similar photo shoot in each issue “in order to represent one of the airline’s destination cities and to inform readers about the place.” In defence of having published these unauthorized photographs, the magazine’s publisher stated that, “we had no intention of degrading the memorial with these photographs; on the contrary, we wanted to motivate passengers to visit the site” (*WeltOnline* 23 November 2009).

114 Early discussions over a Jewish history museum in Berlin, started in 1988, were themselves contentious in regards to its proposed location next door to the History of Berlin Museum in Kreuzberg. The district of Kreuzberg, although suddenly situated in the centre of the city once the Berlin Wall came down, was in the early years still regarded as a peripheral location and museum planners feared that no one would venture out there in order to visit the museum. I thank Irit Dekel for this observation (personal communication, 2010). See Young 2000 for discussion of the Jewish Museum in Berlin.
The Topography of Terror, in its temporary open-air configuration from 1987 until the opening of the permanent building in May 2010 welcomed more than 250,000 visitors per year (Rürup 2003; Ladd 1997) and is listed as one of Berlin’s top tourist attractions on Berlin’s official tourist website (Figures 35 and 36).115

115 The Berlin city website also includes the Jewish Holocaust Museum and Liebeskind’s Jewish Museum in a list entitled “most visited museums” (http://www.berlin.de/orte/museum/). These two sights, but not the Topography, are also included in a list of the twenty “most famous tourist sights in the city” (http://www.berlin.de/orte/sehenswuerdigkeiten/). Cilly Kugelmann, program director and vice director of the Jewish Museum, has pointed out however that visitor numbers to these institutions tend to fluctuate according to Berlin’s overall tourism rates and as such, do not reflect that much about visitors’ enthusiasm for the actual site or content of the exhibit itself (personal communication, 2010).
That these memorial institutions function so coherently as a tourist district has also roused much critique, especially in regards to how they undermine the decentralized ideology of commemoration that has otherwise been given priority in the reunified federal state. Decentralization in this context refers specifically to a pluralistic memorial landscape that incorporates multiple memorial sites that ideally are located in the “Orte des Geschehens” – the rather idiomatic term in German to express a location where events transpired (Rürup 2003). The fear then is that by “representing memory through large, architectonic, centrally located places,” the memorial landscape is not only increasingly devoid of historical precision, but also suggests that a finite cluster of memorials or museums can somehow capture the gamut of meanings, memories and symbolisms of Holocaust representation (Till 2005:203-4; see also Carrier 2005:142). In Chapters Four and Five I described how discussions at the Bundestag plenary session on 25 June 1999 were particularly sensitive to how the Jewish Holocaust Memorial might
threaten the country’s policy of decentralized commemoration. This was one of the reasons behind the decision to add the PI into the Memorial’s design; and why it was so important to then designate the PI a “portal” that would make reference to and create linkages with Germany’s “authentic” sites of commemoration and sites dedicated to non-Jewish victim groups.

This criticism against centralization has thus frequently merged with the rather politicized question of authenticity, that is, whether or not it is suitable to commemorate victims of the Holocaust outside of the actual places where they were persecuted. In the early years of planning, some of the most vocal opponents to the Jewish Holocaust Memorial project had in fact been directors and other staff members working at these so-called Orte des Geschehens mainly around Berlin (e.g. Sachsenhausen, Ravensbrück, House of the Wannsee Conference), and concerned about a loss of resources, such as regional and state funds, and visitors (Gay 2003). The title of a 1995 faz article captures this sentiment: “Less Money for Concentration Camp Memorial Sites. Director: Closings are Possible. Critique of Berlin’s Holocaust Memorial.” Reinhard Rürup, academic director of the Foundation Topography of Terror and one of the most vocal advocates of decentralization, elevates the value of Orte des Geschehens by explaining that it is through these sites in particular that German society can demonstrate a mastery of its past (Vergangenheitsbewältigung) to the international community.

International observers now approvingly realize that the public discussion in Germany over the history of National Socialism has gained in intensity in the last decades. The view of the National Socialist crimes has become more exact… The formation of a memorial landscape that is widely spread out, oriented toward historical sites and hence decentralized, has provided an essential contribution because it has opened up for people a new and very direct gateway to history, which usually also generates a strong emotional engagement (Rürup 2003:np).
In a brief essay entitled “the particular features of the German memorial landscape,”
Rürup along with colleagues from various memorial sites around Germany (e.g. Volkhard Knigge, director of the Buchenwald and Mittelbau-Dora Memorials Foundation; Günter Morsch, director of the Brandenburg Memorial Site Foundation; Angela Genger, director of the Mahn- und Gedenkstätte Düsseldorf) specify decentralization and authenticity as the primary features which distinguish commemoration in Germany from practices in the US, Israel, the UK and even Poland.

Whereas large national Holocaust museums have been erected in other countries... or are in the process of being built (e.g. in Poland), the memorial landscape in Germany consists of a multitude of independent institutions which are not only related to the Holocaust. Here, victims are commemorated primarily in the Orten des Geschehens, that is, there where the concentration camps, the POW camps, the bunkers for the forced labourers stood or there where the invalids were murdered, those whose right to life was denied (Rürup 2003:np).

Similarly, Knut Nevermann, Deputy Minister of the BKM, has stated that,

the planned Holocaust memorial in Berlin, with its ‘Place of Information,’ is the state’s response to the call for a central site of commemoration for the victims of National-Socialism. A central Holocaust museum is absurd for Germany. Most important are the authentic places (cited in Rürup 2003:np).

Interestingly though, it was Rürup who, in order to secure national status and financial support, introduced the idea of what I refer to as the district of singular memory and the necessary inclusion of the Topography of Terror in it (Till 2005:201). Directors of the Topography of Terror were especially keen on establishing an official memory district composed of the Jewish Museum, the Jewish Holocaust Memorial and the Topography because they saw it as a way of dealing with the city’s financial troubles following reunification. Members of the Topography of Terror were in fact latching on to the hype

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116 For a detailed history of the Topography of Terror Museum, from its inception as a temporary open-air exhibit in 1987, see Till 2005 and Ladd 1997. See also my note about the Active Museum Campaign in Chapter Four, n84.
associated with the Jewish museum and the Jewish Holocaust Memorial in order to secure their own central spot in Berlin’s memorial landscape. This included plans for a permanent building in which to house the otherwise temporary open-air Topography exhibit as well as securing a leading role in the city’s memorial (and tourist) network (Till 2005:201).

Although it was never explicitly designed as such, and although Rürup and associates frequently claimed opposition to the idea, this memory district has indeed “signalled the emergence of a new centralized public culture of commemoration” (Till 2005:202; emphasis added). To buffer such claims it was crucial for the Topography’s directors to bring attention to its location on “authentic grounds of perpetration” (Täterort), namely the former headquarters of the Gestapo. The site was discovered in an excavation in 1985 and, on the occasion of Berlin’s 750th anniversary in 1987, was turned into a “temporary” open-air museum based on the rationale that, “the former site of the perpetrator must be transformed into a site-of-thinking [Denkort]” (Heimrod et al. 1999:191). In the politics of memory, memorial activists frequently have to call attention to (or construct) authenticity in order to legitimize their position (White 2006; Mosse 1975). Regarding the development of the district of singular memory part of this has involved placing pragmatic concerns relating to funds and quantity of visitors above philosophical considerations.
Heads of state and reunification politics

The geographic formation of the *district of singular memory* and the critiques associated with it have much to do with Berlin’s reinstatement as the capital city and reunified Germany’s ongoing attempt at *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. Central in this regard were the memory politics exercised by Chancellor Gerhard Schröder as well as Chancellor Helmut Kohl before him. Although motivated by different ideological orientations, Kohl and Schröder’s politics were both embedded in a discourse that would ultimately reaffirm the dominant position of Jewish memory in the German narrative.

Chancellor Schröder’s SPD/Green coalition government (1998 – 2005) exercised a cultural political agenda set on normalizing the country’s problematic past by “representing Germany as a cosmopolitan, moral, and open society” that could stand alongside other Western nations, such as the US, Great Britain and France, who had also publicly atoned for national crimes perpetrated by the state (Till 2005:203).[^117^] Schröder’s government did this by engaging in a series of public and official acts of apology, as well as increasing financial state-led support of memorial projects such as the Jewish Holocaust Museum, Liebeskind’s Jewish Museum and the Topography of Terror.[^118^]

Also relevant to the formation of the *district of singular memory* was Schröder’s predecessor, Chancellor Kohl (CDU) and his heavily criticized “nostalgic geopolitics of normalizing the past” (Till 2005:204). Kohl’s incumbency (1982 – 1998) has been described as a “flight into history” in that he “harnessed the historical boom [of the

[^117^]: This form of commemoration, where states publicly and officially express repentance for past crimes they have committed marks a new direction in memorial culture that dates back only to the mid-twentieth century (Carrier 2005; Foote 2003; Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz 1991). In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, by contrast, it was standard state-practice to commemorate war heroes and other acts of national glory and victory. To this, see my discussion in Chapter Three on the emergence of victimhood politics.

[^118^]: Note that the International Documentation Center Topography of Terror (i.e. permanent building and exhibit) was only completed in May 2010, under Angela Merkel’s CDU government.
1980s] to help further his own political agenda, which involved recasting German identity in a more positive light” (Gay 2003:157). On the one hand, this translated into increased state allocation of funds for museum, monument and historical research projects, such as the construction of the German History Museum in Berlin, the House of the History of the Federal Republic of Germany in Bonn as well as backing for the Jewish Holocaust Memorial in its early stages of development. On the other hand, Kohl’s neo-conservative memory politics were likewise the source of several major controversies. These included most notably: an official state visit in 1985 with US President Reagan to the graves of SS soldiers at the Bitburg military cemetery on the fortieth anniversary of the war’s end; the start of the Historikerstreit in the same year; and re-inauguration of the Neue Wache as the “Central Memorial Site of the Federal Republic of Germany for the Victims of War and Tyranny.” Mainly as a result of the fallout from the Neue Wache – which, like the Bitburg visit and the Historikerstreit, all but effaced (or at least tried to efface) the distinction between victim and perpetrator – Kohl was forced into making several concessions pertaining to Jewish interests in the realm of memory politics.119 As mentioned, in late 1993 Kohl agreed in a private meeting with Ignatz Bubis, then head of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, that the state would support construction of a Central Holocaust Memorial dedicated exclusively to Jewish victims. While this was met with much disapproval from victim group representatives as yet another acknowledgment that the persecution of Jews prevails in

119 The state visit to Bitburg is now iconic in German political and public discourse of muddling the distinction between victims and perpetrators and thus, the relativization of the Holocaust. In a 1992 TAZ interview, Jakob Schulz-Rohr of the Association Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe explained that rejection of Romani Rose’s campaign for a shared memorial “has to do with the ‘Bitburg-Effect.’ In the 1980s the Bundesregierung also wanted to build exactly such a trivial [belanglos] memorial for all victims of fascism [i.e. Neue Wache]. But that is historically inaccurate and dangerous.”
German memory politics, it is also what ultimately gave them momentum to begin lobbying for inclusion of their own histories of persecution in Berlin’s memorial landscape.

II. WIDENING THE DISTRICT OF MEMORY

Journalist Nikolaus Bernau (2006) reflects on Berlin’s contemporary memorial landscape, explaining in a *Berliner Zeitung* article how its development is a by-product of the political decision-making apparatus, notably the 1999 Bundestag Resolution and thus, inextricable from the planning of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial.

The present assemblage of memorial sites is not a form of belated resistance [*nachgeholter Widerstand*] against yesterday’s jingoism. Rather it is a logical result of the 1999 [Bundestag] decision to build a memorial that would only be dedicated to the murdered Jews of Europe. All the other victims of the German war against other nations between 1933 and 1945 likewise have a claim to be commemorated in the proximity of National Memorial Nr. 1, the Brandenburg Gate.

From the start of their campaigns, representatives of both the Sinti/Roma and homosexual memorial projects were especially keen on maintaining a close distance to the Jewish Holocaust Memorial because symbolically and politically, it would indicate a shared fate of victimization and acknowledgment thereof. That the Jewish Holocaust Memorial is part of a *district of singular memory*, what Till (2005) likens to other Western national “theatres of memory” in that it is centrally located, highly visible and integrated into tourism guidebooks (202), has rendered proximity to this site even more appealing.

In the following section I look first at the specifically location-related conflicts that came up during the planning phase of the Sinti/Roma Memorial. I then also briefly outline the efforts of activists promoting construction of the Homosexual Memorial. Both
campaigns were guided by similar motivations (proximity to the Jewish Holocaust Memorial; a central and visible location in the capital city) and strategies (flexible understanding of authentic sites of commemoration; emphasis on the networking of individual memorial institutions). In the process, a separate – but adjacent – memory district would eventually take shape.

**Emplacing the Sinti/Roma Memorial**

The title of an article published in *Neues Deutschland* soon after the 1999 Bundestag Resolution signals the focus of this section: “Round Two of the Memorial Debate: where to commemorate the murdered Sinti and Roma?” (Amendt 1999). As discussed in Chapter Four, when Rose’s petition for a shared memorial to Jewish and Sinti & Roma victims fell through, he changed his demands to separate memorials that would nevertheless have “geographic proximity” to one another and “shared artistic design” (*TSP* 1993; *FR* 1993). In a 1993 press release published in *Die Zeit* newspaper, Rose emphasized that geographic proximity between the two memorials would signal recognition from the state that, only like the Jews, the Sinti & Roma were subject to racially motivated acts of genocide. As a result both acts of genocide should be placed on equal ground – literally and in the historiography of the Holocaust.

The singularity of the Holocaust means that both memorials must be built concurrently on this site... Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl and the Berlin Senate must now instigate a resolution from the federal government so that the national Holocaust memorial for the Sinti and Roma murdered in Europe could be planned and built on the 20,000 square metre or appropriately enlarged site [where the Jewish Holocaust Memorial will stand]. Nobody has the right to disparage [*herabsetzen*] our dead or to exclude the memory of them (17 December 1993).
Visibility has been one of the key objectives in the commemoration politics of the Sinti/Roma Central Council, as activists continue to raise awareness of and gain recognition for the otherwise “forgotten” or “ignored” genocide of the Sinti & Roma people. This has included the struggle for symbolic forms of recognition (e.g. official apologies, memorials, memorial ceremonies) as well as material forms of recognition (e.g. restitution payments to survivors, national minority status). The kind of visibility associated with the success of the three institutions comprising the district of singular memory marks another – and more pragmatic – form of recognition that Sinti & Roma (and homosexual) memorial activists are seeking. Namely, centrality and integration into the city’s memorial landscape (and tourist infrastructure of which it is unquestionably a part) and of course, into the national imaginary as well. Proximity between the memorials would ideally also allow for some of the heavy traffic at the Jewish Holocaust Memorial (and other sites in the singular memory district) and funds promised to the Foundation to spread out to the Sinti/Roma Memorial. This reading of a memorial’s function – centrality in geographic and symbolic space – provides another avenue for understanding Rose and the Central Council’s insistence that the Sinti/Roma Memorial should stand as close to the Jewish Holocaust Memorial as possible.

Notably, it was not just victim group representatives who took the Jewish Holocaust Memorial as a point of (geographic) reference but the entire political decision-making apparatus oriented itself toward the Jewish Holocaust Memorial in its deliberations over the country’s central Holocaust memorial(s). For example, at an October 1993 meeting of the Senate Department for Construction and Housing. Senator Hassemer stated that,
only after the conclusion of the design competition for the Jewish Holocaust Memorial will it be possible to contemplate if it is in fact possible to find space for the Sinti/Roma Memorial on the same plot of land but without having to make any internal concessions to the Jewish memorial site, and without the risk of ‘crowding’ [‘Gedränge’]. Principally though, we will honour our obligation to also find a location for the Sinti and Roma Memorial (cited in Heimrod 1999:113).

Such statements confirm that decisions regarding if, where and how to build memorials are delimited by pragmatic “real estate” considerations such as availability and harmony of space. Senator Hassemer’s words also suggest that memorials do not stand alone, but take shape and exist as one component of a larger network of other memorial structures in the topographic environment (and are thus part of a broader network of other discourses of memory in the public and political sphere too).

In 1994, when the Federal Government (with pressure from the Jewish Central Council following the Neue Wache controversy) rejected the request for a shared site and instead, proposed a 6,500 m² plot of land for the Sinti/Roma Memorial 650 meters down the road from the Jewish Holocaust Memorial and alongside the country’s most politically and symbolically significant sites, the Reichstag and Brandenburg gate respectively, Rose had no choice but to accept this concession (Figure 37).
Thereafter, Rose commissioned Jewish-Israeli architect Dani Karavan to design the Sinti/Roma Memorial and thus, ensured that the memorial site – even if detached from and farther away than hoped from the Jewish Holocaust Memorial – would nonetheless be physically imbued with a “Jewish” element. This is again an example of how representatives of the Sinti/Roma Memorial project have consistently sought various forms of “proximity” (be it spatial, symbolic or otherwise) to the Jewish Holocaust Memorial and Jewish memory more broadly conceived.120

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120 Romani Rose commissioned architect Dani Karavan to design the Sinti/Roma Memorial in a private meeting in 1994. The Federal Government formally accepted this decision soon after. While it is extremely irregular for the design of large-scale government funded projects of this kind to be decided without a public competition, Rose’s choice to hire Karavan is perhaps one of the only features in the memorial’s biography that did not lead to conflict with other ethnic or formal political leaders, or the general public. Natasha Winter of the Sinti Allianz expressed dissatisfaction with the decision but this never amounted to
Karavan’s design (Figure 38) will also make architectural reference to the Jewish Holocaust Memorial’s Field of Stelae by including one moveable concrete stela in the centre of a circular reflective pool, the main structure of the Sinti/Roma Memorial. The stela will be in the shape of a triangle, symbolizing the triangle that prisoners had to wear on their sleeves under Nazi rule. Surrounding the reflective pool will be approximately 300 broken stones each engraved with the name of a concentration camp. Located on the 6,500m$^2$ site will also be two placards that chronicle the Nazi persecution of the Gypsies, from 1933 until 1945 (see Chapter Two).

![Figure 38. Model of Dani Karavan’s design for the Sinti/Roma Memorial (Source: Spiegel 2/2004)](image)

any public dispute. In a personal interview, she complained to me that she “didn’t want the government and Romani Rose to decide who the artist would be. They have already decided though and it will be Dani Karavan and while I’m sure he understands the emotion of the Holocaust because he is Jewish, I would have liked to have a Gypsy architect involved. But again, decisions are only made by Romani Rose and the government” (personal interview, 2007).

The Homosexual Memorial also incorporates the concrete stela design.
This spatial interrelationship – apropos conception, planning, design, and eventual construction of the individual memorials – has also given way to clashes over the physical space available for each memorial. Hassemer’s statement above makes evident how space constraints – or, to be more exact, how inflexibility regarding concessions of physical space – factored into the political decision-making process for a central site of Holocaust commemoration (to this, see my discussion of the planning of the PI exhibit in Chapter Five). And in fact, although the Berlin Senate and the Federal Government approved the site between the Brandenburg Gate and the Reichstag in 1994 for the Sinti/Roma Memorial, and then in May 1995 received written confirmation from Bundestag president Rita Süssmuth (Bundestag Plenarprotokoll 12/227), this pledge was ultimately called into question and subject to a new series of disputes following the 1999 Bundestag Resolution. As I show in the following section, this row over physical space was oftentimes expressed in a language expressing fear of encroachment or invasion of physical and symbolic space, and couched in a rhetoric of authenticity and decentralization, two interconnected themes which are constitutive of Germany’s contemporary memorial culture (see Gedenkstättenkonzeption 1999-2008 and my discussion in Chapter Four).

Memorial mile critique: Marzahn versus Berlin location

The discourse linking together decentralization and authenticity, which dictated a large part of the planning of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial, was also at the core of the “memorial mile critique.” At its height mainly from 1993-1995 and then again following the Bundestag Resolution of 1999, the memorial mile critique was directed against the proposal for a Jewish Holocaust Memorial flanked on all sides by separate memorials to
other victim groups. This line of critique is most closely associated with former Berlin Mayor Eberhard Diepgen (CDU) who was originally opposed to the construction of a central Jewish Holocaust Memorial and later, spoke out even more virulently against plans to build separate memorials to other victims groups.¹²² In Chapter Four, I discussed how Berlin’s memorial landscape was used for negotiating and debating the politics of reunification, questions of German national identity and the extent to which memory of Jewish persecution would dominate these spheres. As many people saw reunification as a moment in which to write German identity anew, the prospect of inundating the new capital city with a deluge of Holocaust memorials, that is, with the “negative memory” of crimes committed by the state, quickly led to heated dispute with regional-level CDU party members who most vocally contested the construction of myriad memorials – what Diepgen disparagingly labelled the “memorial mile” at a meeting in the House of Representatives in January 1994.

In its original formulation, Diepgen’s reference to a “memorial mile” was not directed specifically against the Sinti/Roma Memorial. He was speaking out more generally against an overflow of Holocaust memorials in the new capital city, and made statements such as, “that Berlin will have the ‘Topography of Terror’ while North Rhine-Westphalia receives state-funded scholarships or film-subsidies is no solution, and we will not accept this” (Abgeordnetenhaus 1994). On other occasions Diepgen did in fact openly oppose the Sinti/Roma Memorial, by emphasizing that there is “not enough room in the city centre for additional memorials” (cited in Lautenschläger, TAZ, 1999) and that “two central memorial sites – the Neue Wache and the [Jewish] Holocaust Memorial –

¹²² Diepgen was acting mayor of Berlin from 1984-1989 and again from 1991-2001 and thus, straddled the time periods prior to and following reunification and the reinstatement of Berlin as capital city.
are enough” (cited in Richter, BZ 1999). He also used polemical descriptors such as “memorialitis” [Denkmaleritis], “memorial inflation” and “conglomeration of memorials” in order to express what he envisioned to be the fallout of building memorials to “other” victim groups (Diepgen 1994).

CDU Member of Parliament Dieter Hapel likewise expressed that, “we don’t want to overrun the whole city with memorials… when we have one on every corner then [all the memorials] will really degenerate into arbitrariness (cited in Spiegel 26/1995). And with similar animus, CDU chairman Klaus-Rüdiger Landowsky warned that by allowing for the construction of individual memorials, all persecuted groups – “from communists up to homosexuals” – would eventually desire their own memorials; this will then develop into a memorial mile in Berlin’s centrally-located Tiergarten district and result in “indifference and backlash” (cited in Plewina, Focus, 1995). Landowsky also stated that he is “dead set against another memorial in the city-centre” because “one cannot turn the centre of Berlin into an ‘outright memorial’ [komplettes Denkmal]… we must be able to continue walking through the city with our heads held up high” (cited in Richter, Berliner Zeitung, 1999). Such statements unquestionably show how Germany – the political right in any case – continues to hold a deeply unsettled relationship to its past and minority rights in the present. The memorial disputes consistently brought these attitudes out into the open. This is what Vinitizky-Seroussi (2002) refers to as a nation’s “skeletons in the closet” – those moments of the past that threaten to bring attention to contemptible actions and overdue accountabilities. Notably, chancellors Kohl (CDU) and Schröder (SPD) both perceived the political gain to be had by revealing these very “skeletons” in their respective memory politics.
Diepgen and supporters advanced the memorial mile critique by expounding on a discourse of authenticity and historical precision. They claimed that “appropriate” memorial sites were those where historical atrocities in fact took place – regardless if (or perhaps, because) these were located on the periphery and thus, almost entirely out of sight. In reaction to the Federal Government’s 1994 proposal to build the Sinti/Roma Memorial in between the Reichstag and the Brandenburg Gate, Diepgen proposed another site: Berlin’s outer suburb of Marzahn. The location of a former internment camp for Gypsies, Diepgen insisted on building the memorial here as it was a “site with historical reference” (cited in Plewina, Focus, 1995).

The significance of Marzahn in the history of the Nazi genocide of the Gypsies dates back to June 1936, just prior to the start of the Olympic Games in Berlin. It was then that Wilhelm Frick, the Reich Interior Minister issued the decree “Combating the Gypsy Nuisance” which forced all Gypsies living in Berlin at the time into an internment camp built on a former sewage farm outside of the suburb of Marzahn (Figure 39). The aim of the decree was to keep the streets “safe” from criminality and begging. In July of that year, Berlin police arrested and forcibly moved 600 Gypsies to the Marzahn “Gypsy Camp” [“Zigeunerlager”], as it came to be known. After 1939 and the start of World War Two, the camp was then used as an evacuation point from which to transport Gypsies to concentration camps, ghettos and killing centres. Between 1936 and 1945, approximately 1200 Gypsies were interned in the Marzahn “Gypsy Camp” (Milton 2000, 1995; Burleigh and Wippermann 1991; Zimmermann 1990).
Prior to Diepgen’s Marzahn proposal, Eberhard Jäckel and Lea Rosh of the Association had drawn on exactly the same discourse of authenticity in order to ensure that that no other victim group would be included in plans for the central Holocaust memorial. Throughout the early 1990s – prior to Kohl’s promise of an exclusive dedication to Jewish victims – Jäckel and Rosh repeatedly proposed that the Sinti/Roma Memorial would best be located clear across the country, in Hohenasperg, an ancient fortress and prison outside of Stuttgart (Southwest Germany) as this was, in 1940, the first spot from where deportation of Gypsies took place (Sabath, *Freitag*, 1992). In what I can only interpret as an act of pure hypocrisy and political self-interest, while still promoting Hohenasperg as the most “appropriate” – that is, authentic – location for the Sinti/Roma Memorial, Jäckel and Rosh had been adamant about securing a central location in Berlin for the Jewish Holocaust Memorial. In the process, they dismissed appeals from those
working at authentic historical sites (e.g. House of the Wannsee Conference, Sachsenhausen) who saw it as more fitting to build the Jewish Holocaust Memorial in one of their institutions, that is, in one of the Orte des Geschehens. ¹²³

Maintaining her contradictory stance to the Sinti/Roma Central Council, Natasha Winter of the Sinti Allianz, similarly spoke out against a Berlin location and, like Diepgen, promoted construction of the memorial in Marzahn because of the authenticity and also because of the non-centrality of this location. Winter seemed especially concerned with marked visual “proof” of competitive victimhood.

‘We are not in agreement regarding the location for building this memorial… we originally wanted a site closer to the actual events… where it happened. A place where the persecution had more or less taken place… That would be, for example, Marzahn. That’s where the Gypsies [Zigeuner] were, that’s where there was a camp [Lager]... But that’s just an example. There were also other locations mentioned in our discussions. In no way did we want to be so close to the Jewish memorial simply in order to prevent comparisons… because the Jewish memorial is so monumentally big, even in its design already. And the Gypsy… well… would be infinitesimally small by contrast’ (personal interview, 2007).

Following the Bundestag Resolution in 1999, at which point the Federal Government officially pledged to build memorials for other victim groups in the Berlin city-centre, Diepgen reiterated his Marzahn proposal but this time more forcefully by officially overriding earlier pledges made by the Berlin Senate and Federal Government, and in fact claiming that there had never been a formal legally binding resolution from the senate allocating the plot of land by the Reichstag for the Sinti/Roma Memorial (Gessler, TAZ, 1999). Since the site belonged to the Land-Berlin, as the incumbent mayor of the city, Diepgen’s decision was in fact difficult to overturn even by federal-level politicians.

¹²³ Note however that although Jäckel and Rosh were drawing on a discourse of authenticity much like Diepgen, they were not in fact concerned as he was with the prospect of a “memorial mile” taking form in the city-centre. In fact, once the Bundestag Resolution guaranteed that the Jewish Holocaust Memorial would stand alone, Rosh – and other members of the Association – publically endorsed a central Berlin location for other victim group memorials.
**Constructing authenticity and centrality**

The Marzahn proposal cut across party lines, escalating into yet another series of high-profile media and political debates in the weeks immediately following the 1999 Bundestag Resolution. While Diepgen and other Land-Berlin CDU representatives balked at the idea of a “memorial mile,” members of Schröder’s left-of-centre Bündnis 90/ Green Party coalition in the House of Representatives and the Federal Government, including State Minister of Culture Michael Naumann (SPD), were all in favour of a central Berlin location for the Sinti/Roma Memorial. They defended this original proposal by emphasizing centrality and visibility, that is, the importance of building memorials in locations that are prominent and accessible to the public.

In a *TAZ* article from July 1999, one month following the Bundestag Resolution, Green Party spokesperson, Marie-Luise Beck, spoke out “against a peripheral memorial site”:

‘We [the Green Party] have always defended the idea that all victim groups are to be commemorated.’ It is clear that the Sinti and Roma should obtain a site that is ‘appropriate’ for their commemoration in the centre of the city next to the Reichstag… And Marzahn is not a central site’ (cited in Lautenschläger, *TAZ*, 1999).

SPD Member of Parliament Gert Weisskirchen similarly criticized Diepgen’s proposal, stating that, “a memorial site should be in the middle of Berlin and not on its periphery” (*TAZ* 30 July 1999). Calling attention to contemporary prejudices against the Sinti & Roma population, Cultural Senator Roloff-Momin (independent) explained that “in Marzahn, [the memorial] will disappear from the municipal area and the city’s consciousness [*Bewusstsein*].” Even the chairperson of the Berlin Jewish Community,
Andreas Nachama, spoke out in favour of a central location for the Sinti/Roma Memorial, based on the reasoning that, “the [Sinti/Roma] Memorial must have a national character” (cited in Amendt, _Neues Deutschland_ 1999).

For these above-mentioned individuals – the notion of a “central” as opposed to “authentic” location proved to be far more valuable and relevant in the context of (national) memorial politics. These are two subjective concepts, however, that in fact, overlap with one another and should thus push us to dismantle the dichotomy of authentic/inauthentic that so expressly dominated Berlin’s various memorial debates. Authenticity, it is argued, is “an ambiguous term that resists definition” (Trilling cited in Kelner 2001:2). As explained by Nin Wang (1999), “there is no absolute and static original or origin on which the authenticity of originals relies”; authenticity is dynamic and flexible such that what is deemed inauthentic at one point in time can be redefined in a later moment as authentic (and vice versa) (355). Walter Benjamin’s (1936[1969]) famous essay “The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction” makes a similar point regarding the volatility of societal definitions of authenticity.

Such constructivist readings of authenticity become especially evident when analyzing the discourse articulated by victim group representatives in the context of the Marzahn versus Berlin dispute. Having already lost in the campaign to first, share a memorial with Jewish victims and second, share the same memorial site, it then became a question of utmost necessity for Sinti/Roma Memorial activists (barring Natasha Winter) to secure a location in the Berlin city-centre and, as discussed above, as close to the Jewish Holocaust Memorial as possible. Characteristically, “authentic” sites of atrocity – such as Marzahn, such as Hohenasperg – are out of the way and hard to reach and thus,
unappealing to memorial activists concerned about recognition and visibility (at least in
the context of a central or national memorial).\textsuperscript{124} When formal political leaders such as
Diepgen propose out of the way places such as Marzahn – regardless of the site’s
historical “authenticity” – they are not only excluding that group’s historical experience
from the physical spaces of the city centre, but are ultimately relegating its importance in
the symbolic and political spaces of the nation’s identity.

It was with this in mind that actors lobbying on behalf of the Sinti/Roma
Memorial forcefully disputed Diepgen’s Marzahn proposal. Advocates fought for a
location in the centre of Berlin by drawing on two discursive strategies which
interweaved flexible definitions of authenticity and centrality: first, they discredited
Marzahn’s peripheral location \textit{by virtue of} its authenticity; and second, they \textit{(re)defined}
the Berlin city-centre as an authentic \textit{Ort des Geschehens}.

\textbf{Peripheral by virtue of authenticity}

In an interview with the \textit{Berliner Zeitung}, Rose referred to Diepgen’s Marzahn proposal
as “unserious and cynical,” explaining that,

‘This is the place where the Nazis brought Berlin’s Sinti and Roma so that the city
could be “Gypsy-free” on the occasion of the 1936 Olympics. Now there is this
suggestion to also hide away the memorial. For me, this is a derogatory discussion
that will also be rebutted by representatives of the Jewish community, the

\textsuperscript{124} Although Sinti & Roma representatives were uninterested in Hohenaspberg as the location for the
national memorial, they indeed recognize the importance of the fortress in the history of genocide against
their people. In July 2010, the \textit{Haus der Geschichte Baden-Württemberg} (HGDBW) opened a permanent
exhibit at the fortress on the history of the population’s persecution, entitled “A German Prison” (“\textit{Ein
Deutsches Gefängnis}”). This exhibit marks the sixth “decentralized permanent exhibit” of the province’s
regional history and was curated by the \textit{Haus der Geschichte BW}. Accompanying the exhibit is a
publication, \textit{Hohenasberg: eine deutsche Geschichte}. Additional information is available on the website
of the Sinti/Roma Documentation Centre (www.sintiundroma.de/index) or the HGDBW website
(http://www.hdgbw.de/ausstellungen/dezentrale-ausstellungen/hohenasberg/).
Bundesregierung and the Berlin SPD-party. Dipegen should demonstrate democratic grandeur and keep his promises’ (cited in Fras 1999).

Opponents to the Marzahn proposal rejected the location by emphasizing the various ways it represents segregation. In terms of its use as a commemoration site, it is hidden and out of the way since it is not in the city-centre and altogether removed from the capital city; and in regards to the historical events that took place there, Marzahn in fact epitomizes the ways in which Nazi policies sought to exclude Gypsies from German society. This latter point is summarized in a Berliner Zeitung article:

The predetermined position of the [Marzahn] site was already one of victimization: situated approximately 15 kilometres from the city (it was then five kilometres until the village of Marzahn), with hardly any available sanitary facilities or access to water, round-the-clock surveillance, and a ban on leaving the site except for work-related purposes led to major deprivation and almost complete isolation of the hundreds of Sinti and Roma living there from the rest of the population (Raabe 1996).

Rose stated that the first nationally sanctioned memorial for Sinti & Roma victims must be built in the Berlin city-centre for fear, he wrote, of being “pushed off to the side. That would be a mockery of the victims”’ (cited in Kugler, TAZ, 1993). Rose also claimed that “segregation from the centrality of the [Jewish] Holocaust Memorial” and exclusion from the city-centre is an expression of racism against his population (cited in Schulz-Rohr 1992). Philosopher Günter Freudenberg, a long-standing supporter of the campaign for the Sinti/Roma Memorial, described the suggestion to place the memorial outside of Berlin as a “scandal” and wrote that those responsible for this “exclusion of victims” are in fact replicating the Nazi’s racial selection criteria (Spiegel 1991). Similarly, Fanny-Michaela Reisin, president of the International League of Human Rights stated that the Sinti/Roma Memorial “belongs in Germany’s old and new political centre – the dreaded ‘marginalization’ associated with Marzahn would simply renew the traditional exclusion
of the Sinti and Roma. A memorial for the ‘perpetrator society’ [Tätergesellschaft] must be in a central location” (cited in Gessler, TAZ 1999). A slew of article titles reiterated this discourse in Berlin’s Tageszeitung: “Marzahn is not Mitte” (Lautenschläger 1999); “Gypsies on the periphery [am Stadtrand]?” (Gessler 1999); “Sinti Memorial in a holding pattern” (n.a. 1999).

Patricia Pientka, a researcher at the Foundation for the Jewish Holocaust Memorial and a member of the Sinti/Roma Central Council, explains that the site of the memorial is almost as important as the memorial itself. By site, she refers specifically to the significance of Berlin as the country’s capital city and how, by building a memorial there, the history of Sinti & Roma persecution would be “permanently anchored” into and recognized as part of Germany’s memorial culture (personal interview 2010). Pientka, however, also highlights the importance of both “authentic” and “central” sites of commemoration, pointing out that these are not mutually exclusive categories; both contribute to the memorial landscape individually and in tandem with one another.

‘I also think that memorials on authentic sites are very very appropriate. I would never undervalue the effect of authentic sites. I am myself open to the idea of a memorial in Marzahn, an additional memorial... one that would mark the historical location so to say. But that doesn’t mean, for example, that just because we have the Field of Stelae we shouldn’t have the concentration camp Buchenwald too. I mean, we can separate the two from one another... they are both part of the landscape of Berlin’s memory culture and Marzahn is an extremely important place but naturally, it is also very isolated... And that’s why I think that it’s very good to anchor [verankern] a central memorial in the city-centre and also in the very immediate vicinity of the Holocaust Field of Stelae... But to have placed a central memorial in Marzahn... that would have been nonsense! It would have then lost so much of this centrality and also so much of the symbolism present in the vicinity and in this political heart of Berlin’ (Ibid.).

With this statement, Pientka chips away at the dichotomy between “authentic” and “inauthentic,” “centre” and “periphery,” but also insists that both poles must be honoured
She does this by highlighting how “centrality” plays double-duty in memorial politics: centrality in regards to the spatial-geographic positioning of memorial sites; and symbolic centrality, that is, integration of memory into national consciousness.

(Re-)defining Berlin’s city-centre as authentic space

Another discursive strategy used by advocates determined to secure the capital city for the Sinti/Roma Memorial was to redefine the parameters of authenticity, of the Orte des Geschehens. For the most part, this involved redirecting attention away from sites where victimization occurred (e.g. Marzahn) to sites where acts of perpetration were planned (e.g. Berlin Reich government district). A notable instance of this is the activism

125 Günter Saathoff, of the state-run foundation “Remembrance, Responsibility and Future,” articulated a very similar discourse at the 2010 yearly commemoration ceremony for the victims of the “hereditary health” laws (Erbgesundheitsgesetz) of National Socialism. The ceremony took place at the T4 memorial in Berlin’s Tiergarten, which honours victims of “euthanasia” and forced sterilization. Saathoff stated that in the same way that the Field of Stelae has not replaced Auschwitz, so too is there space for both the T4 memorial in the Berlin city-centre and authentic memorial sites such as Hadamar (4 September 2010). “T4” is a reference to the address, Tiergartenstrasse 4, where the Reich’s Department of the Interior organized killings of individuals deemed “socially alien” according to the euphemism “euthanasia.” Hadamar was one of six gas-chamber institutions across the German occupied territories where these inmates were transported to and then killed. While the politics surrounding the T4 memorial are beyond the scope of my research, there is nonetheless overlap between Sinti & Roma victims, and victims of “euthanasia” and forced sterilization. The latter group included those categorized by Nazis as “asocials” or “work-shy,” categories into which the Sinti & Roma were also commonly placed. For more information, see the official website of the Hadamar Memorial site: http://www.gedenkstaette-hadamar.de/webcom/show_article.php/_c-914/_nr-1/_p-1/i.html

126 Historian Brian Ladd (1997), commenting on the then undecided location of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial, suggests that debates over authentic versus inauthentic places actually had more to do with a distinction between a Täterort (place of perpetration) and an Ort der Vernichtung (place of extermination) (38):

Germany could honor its victims at dozens of concentration camps, including Sachsenhausen and Ravensbrück, both just outside Berlin and sadly neglected. These were authentic places of victims, in other words, while [Hitler’s former] chancellery [the location in the centre of Berlin suggested by Rosh] was an authentic place of perpetrators, where attention should be devoted to the causes of mass murder, not its effects (170).

Similarly, Benz (2005) argues that today’s presence of multiple victim group memorials in Berlin/Germany is a result of initial decisions reached in the early stages of deliberating whether the country’s central Holocaust memorial was to be a memorial for victims or a memorial representing the perpetrators. He argues that the final decision was for a memorial dedicated to the victims, and it is for this reason that we now see a burgeoning of individual victim group memorials. To this, he adds that, “identification with the victims prevented confrontation with the perpetrators” (31).
carried out by the German chapter of the International League of Human Rights (hereafter: League). From 1996-1999 the League, specifically its Sinti and Roma Committee organized a yearly ceremony on the desired site alongside the Reichstag in order to place pressure on government authorities to officially approve the location and begin construction of the memorial (see Chapter Two). At the 1996 ceremony, speaker Reimar Gilsenbach, a writer/journalist and human rights advocate for the Sinti & Roma, described how the various stages of persecution against this group stemmed from Berlin; by doing so, he portrayed the capital city as both a central site and an Ort des Geschehens. In order to emphasize that Berlin is an especially relevant and “dignified” location for the Sinti/Roma Memorial, he also mentioned that it would be historically significant to place it in the proximity of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial.

‘As important as the Marzahn Camp might be for the honourable commemoration of the [Sinti and Roma] victims, it nonetheless lies on the periphery of events [am Rande des Geschehens]. The crime of genocide sprang from the highest levels of the Nazi State, from the Reich Chancellery, from the Reich Interior Ministry, from the Reich Main Security Office, and not least from the officious researchers of the ‘Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institute for Anthropology, Human Genetics and Eugenics,’ the ‘Racial Hygiene Research Office,’ the Reich Public Health Department, the Reich office of Genealogy which, with its academic racial expert reports, delivered the ‘Zigeuner’ and ‘Zigeunermischlinge’ to the knife. All of these Reich agencies and institutes had their base in Berlin. Only here, in the former government district of the Reich Capital City, only here, in the heart of Berlin, could a memorial site for the 500,000 Sinti and Roma who lost their lives in the Holocaust find a dignified place. It should lie close to the memorial site of the murdered Jews of Europe: Jews and Roma are inextricably conjoined in the ashes of Auschwitz’ (cited in Liga 2000:19; emphasis added).

By explaining that a substantial component of the Nazi-state apparatus was located in the centre of Berlin and thus, the site where acts of persecution against the Sinti & Roma were devised, implemented and carried out, Gilsenbach contends that Berlin is in fact as, if not more, historically “authentic” than Marzahn.
In 1999 the League issued a press release condemning the Marzahn location by juxtaposing Berlin as the capital of the Third Reich with the New Berlin as capital of the reunified Federal Republic. The press release, signed by Jane Schuh (head of the League’s Sinti and Roma Committee) and League president Fanny-Michaela Reisen, situates memory of genocide – and the necessity of rendering it visible – in the context of Germany’s reputation in the European community.

The genocide of the Jews as well as the Sinti and Roma stemmed from the political centre of the German Reich. Berlin will only enjoy the trust and goodwill [Wohlwollen] of Europe as the new political centre of the Federal Republic of Germany once it makes it obvious that it is neither suppressing the legacy of its own history nor forgetting its victims (Liga 2000:48).

While the desired memorial site has by now been officially secured (confirmed first in a December 2007 parliamentary resolution; and made irrevocable at the December 2008 groundbreaking ceremony), Sinti & Roma leaders continue to emphasize the significance of a Berlin location in their memory politics. As recently as 27 January 2010 – International Holocaust Memorial Day – Rose described the capital city as an authentic site of perpetration in a speech he gave at the legislative assembly of Saxony-Anhalt:

‘Situated in the heart of the German capital city, from where the Holocaust was once planned and prepared, the symbolic power of [the Sinti/Roma] Memorial reaches out far beyond the borders of Germany. It is a conspicuous [unübersehbares] signal that this state and this society confess to their historical responsibility vis-à-vis the Sinti and Roma’ (Rose, Gedenkrede 2010:5).

Gilsenbach and Rose’s speeches along with the League’s press release are all examples of what Karen Till (2004) refers to as “place-making” – the means by which people “[make] places of memory to work emotionally, socially, culturally, and politically for their needs and in the process, search for meaning about themselves, their worlds and times” (79). As I have shown, this process of place-making – by victim group
representatives and other memorial activists – is based on an understanding of authenticity that is slippery. In the literature on memory and place, this is best captured by what Marc Nuttall (1992) has coined “memoryscape,” a concept commensurate with Till’s “place-making,” but more oriented toward the agency of place itself rather than the way human actors use and define it. A memoryscape implies transforming a location into a commemorative space based on the perception that “the location itself, as the scene of past events, together with any available physical remains, can be used to create a sense of authenticity” (cited in Foote and Azaryahu 2007:129). Said otherwise, by defining and redefining that which is central space and that which is authentic space, memorial activists indicate that all places, sites, and locations are potentially symbolic, recognizable for their so-called intrinsic historical value, and thus, definable as an Ort des Geschehens.

At the 1996 League commemoration ceremony, Gilsenbach continued to oppose the Marzahn site by articulating this very concept of memoryscape – he claimed that every place is ultimately an Ort des Geschehens:

‘Was the Marzahn-camp the central site of Gypsy persecution? I will be brief and answer: NO! Just like the Jews, the Roma and Sinti were persecuted everywhere in the Greater German Nazi Reich. There were also internment camps in other German cities for ‘Zigeuner’ and ‘Zigeunermischlinge,’ to use the Nazi terminology. I mention Magdeburg, Frankfurt am Main, Cologne, Düsseldorf, Königsburg...’ (cited in Liga 2000:17).

Interestingly, Schulz-Rohr of the Association Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe made a similar statement in a TAZ interview four years prior, at which point debates were taking place over the legitimacy of building a Jewish Holocaust Memorial in the centre of Berlin rather than increasing funding of “authentic” memorial sites around Germany. In defence of the proposed Berlin location, Schulz-Rohr explained that, “it is impossible to
find one such [authentic] place [of commemoration] for the European Jews because they were persecuted on all of the places in each country” (cited in Heimrod et al. 1999:109-10). By stating that authenticity is in fact embedded in everyplace, both Schulz-Rohr and Gilsenbach are in effect dissolving distinction between that which we typically understand as authentic and inauthentic.

Plans to build a central memorial in Marzahn were eventually dropped. There is a small memorial site dedicated to the Sinti & Roma in Marzahn that predates Diepgen’s proposal and the ensuing debates; it is used yearly for commemoration ceremonies (Figure 40).127

![Memorial to the Sinti at Marzahn, inaugurated 1986 (Photo: Diego Maronese, 2009)](image)

**Figure 40.** Memorial to the Sinti at Marzahn, inaugurated 1986 (Photo: Diego Maronese, 2009)

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127 The memorial site consists of an engraved stone designed by Jürgen Raue, which was dedicated specifically to the Sinti by the GDR government in 1986. The inscription on the stone reads: “From May 1936 until the liberation of our people [Volk] by the glorious Soviet Army, hundreds of members of the Sinti people suffered in an internment camp [Zwangslager] not far from this site. Honour the victims.” In 1991 an information plaque was added to the memorial site and dedicated to the “hundreds of Sinti and Roma” who were forced to live in the Marzahn “Gypsy Camp” (See Jordan 2006:76-81; Benz 1994; Gilsenbach 1986).
Emplacing the Homosexual Memorial

Much like the lobbyists for the Sinti/Roma Memorial, those campaigning for a memorial dedicated to the homosexual victims of National Socialism prioritized a central location with symbolic appeal and pragmatic value (e.g. visibility, high tourist traffic) as opposed to concentrating exclusively on the face value recognition of a site as an Ort des Geschehens. Specifically, activists engaged in the construction of the Homosexual Memorial took the Jewish Holocaust Memorial as their point of reference and often times, emphasized the importance of establishing memorial networks across the Berlin landscape.

The “Gay Memorial Initiative” [Initiative Schwulenmahnmal] was established in June 1993 in Berlin by a group of four men and one woman (although her participation was intermittent) with the objective of building a memorial for the gay and lesbian victims of National Socialism. The official flyer of the Homosexual Memorial states that these “first demands and actions in favour of a national memorial site… [arose] in the context of discussions surrounding the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe.” In 1995, the group then officially launched its campaign by publishing a memorandum and holding a symposium, both of which were entitled “Remember the Homosexual Victims of National Socialism” [Initiative der homosexuellen NS-Opfer gedenken. Hereafter:

128 It is estimated that 10,000 to 15,000 homosexuals were transported to concentration camps and, additionally, 50,000 homosexual men were persecuted under the infamous Paragraph 175 during the reign of the Third Reich (Plenarprotokoll 15/83, 12 December 2003). Paragraph 175 was officially repealed in 1969 in West Germany, which had in effect decriminalized homosexual acts for men over the age of twenty-one. See Der Spiegel cover story on the reform, 12 May 1969. This publication largely impacted the start of the homosexual civil right’s movement in West Germany. In East Germany, Paragraph 175 was repealed as early as the 1950s but because of the authoritative regime, it did not lead to any active homosexual movement at the time (Jensen 2002).
It was not until May 2001, however, almost two years following the Bundestag resolution committing the Federal Government to building memorials to all victim groups of National Socialism that the Initiative Remember along with the Lesbian and Gay Federation of Germany (hereafter: LSVD) jointly released a public petition calling for the construction of a central site of commemoration for homosexual victims. The wording of the petition included multiple references to the Jewish Holocaust Memorial and the federal capital as a prominent location.

With the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, a monument will stand in Berlin that reminds [mahnen] of German responsibility and that shall motivate engagement with every form of anti-Semitism. It is in this sense that memorial sites for further victim groups of National Socialism are necessary. Distinct memorials shall not signal dissociation of the individual groups but shall instead stimulate interest in each of the particular histories of persecution. With a site for the homosexuals, their commemoration will finally find an honourable form in the federal capital (Initiative Remember 2001; emphasis added).

Embedded in the petition’s discourse is also a reference to networking memory. By emphasizing that “distinct memorials shall not signal dissociation of the individual groups but shall instead stimulate interest in each of the particular histories of

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129 *Initiative Schwulenmahnmal* – whose name in part excludes lesbians – was renamed in 1996 to the more inclusive *Initiative HomoMonument* following discussion at the symposium over the extent to which lesbian women were persecuted under the National Socialist regime. Participants of the symposium concluded that although lesbian homosexuality was not criminalized by the Nazi state as was male homosexuality (under the infamous Paragraph 175), the regime likewise destroyed the infrastructure sustaining their communities, publically stigmatized their lifestyle, subject them to multiple repressive measures and generally placed pressure on gay women to suppress their sexuality. The question “which homosexuals should be commemorated?” (Cowell, *NYTimes* 1996) was however never fully resolved and remains divisive amongst gay activists and historians to this day.

“Don’t force together what doesn’t belong together,” was the concluding remark made by Joachim Müller, a staff member of the Gay Museum Berlin and the most vocal opponent to the inclusion of lesbian women in the memorial, in an open letter addressed to the *Initiative HomoMonument* in response to its change of name from *Initiative Schwulenmahnmal* (cited in Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung 1999:np). This debate re-surfaced most virulently in spring 2010 when an official competition was launched to replace the memorial’s video installation of two men kissing to a scene depicting gay women. This has led to a series of intragroup victim hierarchy disputes between various activists/representatives of Germany’s gay and lesbian communities that is based on a division of gender (Götz Aly in *Berliner Zeitung*; Stephan Speicher in *SZ*; See also Jenson, 2002).
persecution,” the message is clearly oriented toward a decentralized – but interconnected – culture of memory. This is another example of my concept of memorial networks: each victim group should be afforded a symbolically and politically valuable space of its own whilst individual memorials maintain some sort of association with one another.

In December 2003 the German Bundestag approved the desired location for the Homosexual Memorial – “in the middle of Berlin on the south-east edge of the greater Tiergarten” – and committed 500,000 Euros in funds for seeing the project through (Drucksache 15/2101, 27 November 2003). Nonetheless, memorial activists continued to focus on location as well as the networking of memory in the lead-up to the memorial’s completion. For example, at a 2005 colloquium on the artistic design competition of the Homosexual Memorial,130 Albert Eckert of the Initiative Remember stated that while locally authentic historical sites such as Nollendorfplatz or the former site of the Magnus-Hirschfeld-Institute for Sexual Research would be fitting for the Homosexual Memorial, it was in fact more meaningful that the chosen site was central and spatially connected to other memorial projects.131 Eckert was referring specifically to the site of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial as it undisputedly “focuses remembrance on the victims of National

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130 This colloquium was organized by the Berlin Senate Administration for Science, Research and Culture. It took place in the Berlin House of Representatives from 7-8 April 2005. The colloquium was held as a precursor to the memorial’s official artistic design competition. Participants included a wide range of German and international guests, from federal- and municipal politicians, academics, architects, artists, journalists, to victim group leaders (from homosexual, Jewish, and Sinti & Roma organizations).

131 Nollendorfplatz, in Berlin’s traditionally gay neighbourhood of Schönefeld, is relevant in the history of the Nazi persecution of homosexuals because, starting in January 1933, many of the bars and cafés in the area were shut down or raided, and used in order to generate “pink lists” (files on homosexuals). A memorial plaque commemorating the injustice was inaugurated in the Nollendorfplatz metro station in 1989 under the auspices of the Homosexual Working Group (AHA) and “Homosexuals and Church” (huk Berl) (Colloquium 2005:126). The Magnus-Hirschfeld Institute for Sexual Research was founded by Magnus Hirschfeld, a German-Jewish physician, sexologist and gay-rights advocate. In 1933, Nazi storm troopers raided the institute, confiscated its books and brought them to Bebelplatz by the Berlin State opera where they were publically burned. Historians and activists regard this as one of the first stages of the Nazi persecution of homosexuals. The Homosexual Memorial was in fact inaugurated on the day marking the seventy-five year anniversary of this raid, which took place on 27 May 1933 (Uni, Ha’aretz, 2008).
Socialism” (Colloquium 2005:122). At the same colloquium Günter Dworek, spokesperson for the LSVD, made the following overt link between the location of the Homosexual Memorial and its environs, which among other key sites, also includes the Jewish Holocaust Memorial:

The site on the edge of the Tiergarten brings with it the opportunity to create a memorial that can be effective in Germany and well beyond its borders too. Located between Potsdamer Platz and the Brandenburg Gate, directly opposite the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, the memorial is sure to attract the attention of people from all over the world. And that’s a good thing (Colloquium 2005:26).

In both of these statements, speakers make it clear that proximity to the Jewish Holocaust Memorial as well as other sites of (symbolic) import – more so than “authentic” historical sites – would in turn increase attendance to the Homosexual Memorial. It was also hoped that this would, in turn, promote knowledge of the population’s history of genocide and put an end to contemporary forms of discrimination.

The planning and construction of the Homosexual Memorial have in fact led to some important amendments in Germany’s contemporary politics of homosexual rights. Most notably, in May 2002 the German Bundestag “resolve[d] to rehabilitate all those who fell victim to Section 175 of the German Criminal Code during the reign of National Socialism in Germany” (Homosexual Memorial Flyer; see also Plenarprotokoll 15/83, 12 December 2003). This discourse linking up past and present injustice against homosexuality has been the core focus of the Homosexual Memorial project and thus, resembles the minority politics surrounding the Sinti/Roma Memorial but differs from those of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial (framed from the beginning as a project of German majority society and a symbol of the country’s ongoing attempt at working through its past).
The Homosexual Memorial was inaugurated on 27 May 2008 in front of an audience of more than 400 guests, including Germany’s Cultural Minister Bernd Neumann, Berlin mayor Klaus Wowereit and representatives from Germany’s Jewish and Sinti & Roma communities.

In the geographic politics of commemoration, activists, historians, politicians and other invested actors must deliberately define specific locations as places of “worth.” It is then that these places are perceived as having the ability to heighten the symbolic and political meanings and thus, “effectiveness” of particular commemoration sites. The prominence of Berlin – as a symbol of both the Old and the New Germany, as a space denoted by centrality and visibility – has in this regard played as much of a role in the identity politics of victim group representatives as it did for Diepgen and others trying to keep the Sinti/Roma Memorial (and others) out of the capital city. As I have shown, all actors latched on to the appeal of “authenticity” – defining and redefining it to correspond to the political objectives at hand.

III. MAPPING THE MEMORY DISTRICT

Below, in Figure 41, is a cartographic summary of the main ideas presented in this chapter so far: the formation of one memory district has given way to the formation of another and in turn, created important connections between the two. By following the movement between memory maps we see how point A, the Jewish Holocaust Memorial, functions as a conduit for linking the two triangles – and districts – together.
As shown throughout this chapter, these various triangles of memory can be transposed from Berlin’s cartographic surface into the city’s built environment as operative memory districts. In order to evaluate the actual standing of the Sinti/Roma Memorial in the built environment (albeit in an unfinished state), it is necessary to interpret some of the visual images and symbols demarcating it in the city’s administrative and tourist infrastructure: street names, addresses and inclusion onto the city’s (paper and virtual) maps.

**No hits on Google search and the significance of street names**

Street names have a precise utilitarian function in that they “distinguish between streets and provide spatial orientation” (Foote and Azaryahu 2007:128), give residents, visitors and other city-dwellers “the cues, landmarks, and legibility of the city” (Savage 2009:182), and demarcate regions of local political administration (Azaryahu 2009:460). But street, as well as place names, can also be gauged in more conceptual and philosophical terms as they “combine geography and language, politics and culture, vernacular traditions and official policies, and contemporary ideologies and visions of history” (Azaryahu 2009:460). How street and place names are chosen, and how they evolve define the very socio-cultural fabric of a city, and reflect time-specific political
and economic ideologies as well as its historical geography (Palonen 1993; Yeoh 1993). Commemorative street-naming, as explained by Azaryahu (2009), is an especially powerful means of interweaving an official version of history into daily life such that it appears to be a natural and unquestioned component of the urban environment, and is for this reason an important area of analysis (462).

When considering the spatial-geographic relationship between Germany’s three national memorials to the victims of National Socialism, it is thus pertinent for me to mention the difficulties I had in generating the triangle of mixed memory on the Google map introduced in Figure 1 at the beginning of this dissertation and scattered throughout this chapter. The reason for this is because no exact address exists for either the Homosexual or the Sinti/Roma Memorials. Nor does Google Maps (the German version) recognize a search containing the official name of either of the memorials. In order to generate the triangle of mixed memory, I thus had to manually insert point B (Homosexual Memorial) and point C (Sinti/Roma Memorial). When searching for the Jewish Holocaust Memorial one only needs to begin typing the word “Holocaust.” Google Maps then recognizes the location as early as the first four letters – “Holo” – by providing a drop-down menu that indicates the full name of the memorial as well as its address: Cora-Berliner-Strasse 1, 10117 Berlin (Figure 42).
This address is also easily accessible on all official publications referring to the Jewish Holocaust Memorial and on its official website. It is worth noting that two of the four streets bordering it were in fact re-named during the memorial’s construction after prominent German-Jewish women: Cora Berliner and Hannah Arendt (Figure 43).  

**Figure 42.** Drop-down menu generated on Google map search for “Holocaust Memorial” (Design: Nadine Blumer; Source: http://maps.google.de)

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132 Cora Berliner (1890-1942) worked as an advisor to the Reich Ministry of Economics, a member of council in the Reich Department of Statistics and a professor of economics. In 1933 she lost her professor title and became active as a functionary in Jewish organizations, primarily by trying to help Jews emigrate from Germany. She was deported to Minsk in 1942. The circumstances of her death are unknown (*Tätigkeitsbericht* 2003-5:14). Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) was one of the twentieth century’s most important political philosophers. She went into exile first to France in 1933, and then to the US in 1941 (I discuss her influence in the singularity debates in Chapter Three). See Sybille Quack (2005) for a thorough study of the re-naming of streets surrounding the Jewish Holocaust Memorial.
The Foundation Topography of Terror Museum, located at Niederkirchnerstraße 8, 10963 Berlin, and the Jewish Museum, located at Lindenstraße 9-14, 10969 Berlin both come up immediately on a Google map search as well.

By contrast, the Homosexual Memorial does not have a proper address. The website for the Homosexual Memorial, accessible as a link from the Foundation’s homepage simply describes the memorial’s location in the context of the other landmarks in its proximity: “located close to the Brandenburg Gate, the Reichstag building, the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe and the Memorial to the Murdered Sinti and Roma (still under development).” This is the same description in the official flyer advertising the memorial (published by the Foundation), the most widely distributed document pertaining to the memorial and available for download from the Foundation’s website as well. The clearest indication of an address is on another information flyer,

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133 The official flyer of the Homosexual Memorial is prepared by the Foundation in German and English, and made available primarily in the lobby of the PI, at German-wide tourism fairs, and through Berlin Tourism Marketing (BTM). Flyers are also distributed to Berlin’s Gay Museum (although I could not find any on display at a recent visit) and to the LSVD. In 2009, the Foundation provided the BTM with 100 free
available from the website of the LSVD, one of the memorial’s main initiators. Here, a street name is in fact indicated although there is no number: “in the Ebertstraße, in Berlin-Mitte, across from the Holocaust Memorial.” Visitors though are less likely to come across this website and thus, the flyer, since most information publicly available about the memorial is disseminated through the Foundation and not the LSVD. For the most part, regardless of source or publication, the location of the Homosexual Memorial is most clearly indicated in direct reference to the Jewish Holocaust Memorial across the street and at times, in relation to the Sinti/Roma Memorial as well.

The same vagueness holds true for the unfinished Sinti/Roma Memorial. Like the Homosexual Memorial, it has no official address. The most precise location descriptor that I have come across for the Memorial – “Simsonweg in the Tiergarten, next to the Reichstag” – is buried on page 48 of the Activity Report of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial (Tätigkeitsbericht 2006-08), available online on the Foundation’s “downloads” webpage. Again, it is unlikely for the typical visitor to either come across or be interested in downloading this activity report, a rather technical and finely detailed overview of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial’s history and current activities. In any case, Google Maps does not recognize a search for “Simsonweg.”

It is of course possible that things will change upon the Sinti/Roma Memorial’s completion. Based on interviews at the Foundation for the Jewish Holocaust Memorial, however, other then eventual plans to apply to the city of Berlin for a blue sign-marker that indicates the direction and distance to the memorial in the city-centre (see Chapter

English versions of the flyer for advertising purposes at a gay tourism fair in San Francisco (Anne Bobzin, Foundation’s Visitor Services and Museum Education, personal communication 2010).
Five), there are no other plans in the works pertaining to signposting or street naming.\textsuperscript{134} Moreover, if the Homosexual Memorial, which has been opened for almost three years now, is anything of a barometer, then it is unlikely that the location of the Sinti/Roma Memorial will be more clearly marked in the near future.

Since street names “pertain to the societal discourses of national and local history” (Azaryahu 2009:464), that the Homosexual and Sinti/Roma Memorials are situated on officially unmarked and undesignated sites indicates a degree of political disregard by and exclusion from the city’s administrative and tourist infrastructure. I would venture to say the same thing about the fact that a Google search of the official place names yields no hits. Similarly, when looking at the tourist map of Berlin available for download on the city’s official website (www.berlin.de), the “Holocaust Mahnmal” is the only one of the three national memorials indicated (Figure 4; below the red circle demarcating the Brandenburg Gate).\textsuperscript{135} An additional search of eight different paper maps that I conducted at local tourist offices equally reveals omission of the Homosexual Memorial, while the Jewish Holocaust Memorial is exhaustively integrated into the cartographic representation of the city.

\textsuperscript{134} Although not connected (directly) to the Sinti/Roma Memorial, there are plans in Berlin to rename a street in the former eastern Berlin district of Friedrichshain to “Ede and Unku Way,” which will commemorate the Sintezza Erna Lauenberger who was deported to and killed at Auschwitz with her family (Unku was her nickname and Ede refers to the son of a German worker who befriended her) (Deutsche Welle 27 January 2011).

\textsuperscript{135} Note however that “Simsonweg” (just West of the Brandenburg Gate) is in fact indicated here, although it is not recognized on google maps and generally unmarked on paper maps of the city that I have referred to.
There is, however, one especially relevant exception. The one map that I have come across indicating the Homosexual Memorial and even the unfinished Sinti/Roma Memorial is in the 2009 Press Information booklet about the Jewish Holocaust Memorial prepared by the Foundation and available for download on the Foundation’s website. The map is featured on page 26 in a section entitled “Access Routes” [Anfahrtswege] that otherwise provides walking and public transport directions to the Jewish Holocaust Memorial (Figure 45).
As soon as the Sinti/Roma Memorial is completed, new flyers will be printed and made available for download on the Foundation’s webpage of each of the three memorials. The subsequent versions of the three flyers will all include the comprehensively marked map shown in Figure 45 above. In the meantime, however, this comprehensive map has already been included on the Foundation’s webpage, easily accessible by clicking on “Getting There” from the main menu on the homepage.

By reading the city’s (virtual and paper) maps, as well as analyzing street names and addresses, we see how the dominance of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial (and to an extent, the two other institutions in the district of singular memory) is overwhelmingly affirmed in Berlin’s urban landscape. The map above (Figure 45), however, broadens the
spectrum of representation via the ongoing work of the Foundation. As I have shown in previous sections, the very “dominance” of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial’s positioning provides the other two memorials with an “access route” to the very heart of the capital city and additional spaces of visibility and recognition. Specifically, we see how the district of singular memory has unfolded across the Berlin landscape into the district of mixed memory, pushing it Westward into the city-centre – and, in effect, even closer to the country’s symbolic “seat of political power,” the Reichstag building (Marcuse 1998:334). In turn, the completion of the Homosexual Memorial and the ongoing planning of the Sinti/Roma Memorial also influence and alter the narratives communicated by the Foundation of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial (e.g. redesign of official flyers, website content).

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have elucidate the multiple – and entangled – functions of national memorials. These functions are defined according to political interest and pragmatic concerns by formal political leaders, victim group activists and the directors of cultural-historical institutions. Similarly, I have shown how the formation of a capital-city’s memory spaces – geographic space, cartographic space – occurs as a dialectical process of conflict and multidirectionality.

Sinti & Roma and homosexual activists promote the idea that memorials can render history visible both in the physical-geographic spaces of the city and in the nation’s historical narrative. The campaign to secure a site in the capital city for both of these memorials, I have argued, can be read as an act of “place-making” – of marking
various realms of social space and the built environment in order to make visible what was previously invisible (Till 2004). Such a process undeniably requires a readiness to construct central space and authentic space, as captured by Nuttall’s (1992) concept of memoryscape.

For the German state, memorials – particularly those marking the nation’s past crimes – may be used for political reasons, namely, to demonstrate to the international community that the country has undergone political rehabilitation and is committed to democratic principles. Although coming from opposite ends of the ideological spectrum, the memory politics of chancellors Kohl (CDU) and Schröder (SPD) were, in many regards, motivated by this same objective. In turn, I have also shown that the very presence of memorials dedicated to non-Jewish victim groups indicates a de-centralization and dispersion of commemoration – geographically across the city-centre, as well as in terms of the range of subjects now being commemorated. The construction of memorials dedicated to non-Jewish victim group thus performs ideological labour for the German state – these memorials help to maintain a decentralized memorial landscape in Berlin and Germany, a particularly important dimension of the country’s memorial politics as outlined in the federal republic’s Gedenkstättenkonzeption (see Chapter Four).

The state is, however, hardly a uniform entity. Nor is the ideological orientation within a political party necessarily coherent. As shown in the memory politics exercised by Mayor Diepgen and other CDU politicians, some political leaders have a different understanding of the nation-building project. For Diepgen and colleagues, national unity would be built upon the “glorious” past rather than the crimes of the past. And Berlin, in the words of Diepgen, was to be the “workshop” of this unity (cited in Cochrane 2006:6).
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

Two main objectives have motivated this dissertation: (1) to produce a counter-narrative of the Holocaust in Western history by charting the ethnic and memory politics of the Sinti & Roma in Germany; (2) to present a model for understanding how compromise and cooperation are reached in the realm of national memory politics by expanding our theoretical understanding of the spaces in which these (can) take place.

Throughout this dissertation I have analyzed the processes of (ethnic and national) identity formation and collective remembering, and the various actors who engage in them. I drew on a framework that conceptualizes ethnicity as a composite process of constructing boundaries and culture. It explained how identity and memory take shape through the interrelated activities of Sinti and Roma groups (in Germany and across Europe), Jewish community leaders, formal political actors and members of civil society. In Chapters Two to Four, this framework allowed me to identify how the mobilization, and ethnogenesis of the German Sinti & Roma went hand-in-hand with the population’s efforts to gain recognition for the genocide committed against their people. The precedent set by (mostly American) Jewish lobby groups in the 1960s motivated Sinti & Roma ethnic leaders and activists in Germany and across Europe a decade later to align their own narratives of persecution with the “master narrative” of Jewish victimization. Particularly in Germany, Sinti & Roma leaders continue to use this strategy at the centre of their ethnic politics. Another important strategy involves the reshuffling of identity categories. Most frequently, German Sinti & Roma leaders exclude (the historical narratives of) non-German Sinti/Roma/Gypsies as a way of solidifying their own ethno-national identity as a German Volksgruppe. In other instances, however, it is numbers that
matter and we are more likely to hear about the 500,000 European Roma victims of National Socialism or the plight of Europe’s largest minority group (10-12 million Roma).

In addition to examining the actors involved in the production of identity and memory, I have also looked at the particular spaces in which this process occurs. The entangled memory framework provides the tools for this kind of analysis. By bringing together two seemingly contradictory models of collective remembering – conflict-driven and multidirectional – this framework offers a more nuanced understanding of how “dominant” and “other” forms of memory encounter and define each other in the public and political spheres of society. In Chapter Five, the conflict-driven model showed us how the task of curating the underground exhibit of the Jewish Holocaust Memorial was delimited by physical space constraints; as a result, organizers overwhelmingly prioritized Jewish over “other” historical narratives in the exhibit’s final design. The model of multidirectional memory allowed us to then detect an additional part of the story: by expanding their definition of space – into discursive, non-stony, and virtual realms – organizers ultimately embedded memory of Sinti & Roma persecution into the narrative that now constitutes the Jewish Holocaust Memorial.

Similar processes were discussed in Chapter Six. The conflict-driven model helped to explain the complex politics underpinning the memorial battle that took place between Sinti & Roma activists and formal political leaders regarding allocation of capital city space for a national memorial. This contest over geographic space, in turn, pushed activists to re-examine definitions of authentic/inauthentic space and central/peripheral space. I showed how gay activists engaged in a similar process. In the
meantime, both groups have achieved fairly similar outcomes: a prominent location in Berlin’s symbolically charged city-centre and important associations with the Jewish Holocaust Memorial. By analyzing the positioning of the Sinti/Roma and Homosexual Memorials in Berlin’s tourist as well as cartographic spaces, I was able to show ongoing imbalances as well as emergent compromises and alliances taking form between all three of the national memorials and the respective significance of each in Germany’s memory politics and the country’s national identity.

The entangled perspective presented in this study has thus enabled us to disentangle the “contest over ownership, appropriation, and meaning” (Berdahl 1997:325-6) or “pathology of ownership” (Cohen 1994:246) that marks much of the historiography of the Nazi genocide, and which came to a head in response to the campaign for a central Holocaust memorial in Germany in the late 1980s. During the first stage of memorial debates and prior to the Bundestag resolution in 1999, historian Reinhart Koselleck – a vocal proponent of building a shared memorial to all victim groups – wrote that construction of individual victim group memorials to accompany the monumental Jewish Holocaust Memorial would re-inscribe the hierarchy of coloured triangles worn by concentration camp inmates into the city’s built environment (Spiegel 1997). Memorial networks, I have argued, denote a potential middle ground. Both the state and “other” victim groups must manoeuvre sensitively around the thesis and legacy of singularity. For the German state, this has involved finding ways of honouring memory of National Socialist crimes alongside memory of its communist dictatorship but without prioritizing the latter over the former. To achieve this, the Ministry of Culture
(BKM) has introduced the *Permanent Conference for Directors of National Socialist Memorial Sites in the Berlin Area* and the *Historical network for confronting the communist dictatorship in Germany* – administrative networks between memorial institutions dedicated to NS- and communist history respectively. This allows for more efficient allocation of funds, and use of personnel and institutional space. As discussed, it also reinforces Germany’s commitment to decentralizing memory away from one overarching symbol of the past.

In regard to victim group politics, I have presented four interconnected examples of the memorial network: the *triangle of singular memory* and its adjacent *triangle of mixed memory* on Berlin’s cartographic surface; the *district of singular memory* and its adjacent *district of mixed memory* in the city’s built environment. These networks have practical (administration/logistics, pedagogy, research) as well as political and philosophical implications for the memories of dominant and “other” victim groups. Most significantly, the Sinti/Roma Memorial, in its unfinished state, is already being integrated into these networks and, as I have shown, a previously “forgotten” history is now somewhat more accessible, somewhat more visible in society at large.

My analysis of this emergent memorial network has also sought to complicate the universalist/particularist dichotomy, which has placed victim groups on a continuum of suffering in the historiography of the Holocaust. Universalism and particularism are not dichotomous but intersect and overlap in complex and meaningful ways that influence how governments represent their nation’s past. As a historical phenomenon, genocide is best understood when approached comparatively – vis-à-vis or in the context of other forms of racial ideology and nation-building (see Stone 2004).
If we are to understand memory and its narrative representation as a dynamic process involving an entangled constellation of actors and legacies of persecution, then it follows that the memory politics of the Sinti & Roma – like the memorial itself – remains a work in progress. As argued throughout this dissertation, it is only by redefining the spaces of memory in more flexible terms that we can begin to recognize how “other” histories may stake a claim in a nation’s commemorative landscape. By implication, this opens up the possibilities for representing and acknowledging histories that were previously ignored. As Michael Rothberg (2004) so eloquently writes, “an overly rigid focus on memory competition… distracts from the other ways of thinking about the relation between histories and their memorial landscapes” (1233).

An article in the Israeli left-leaning daily, Ha’aretz, written soon after the inauguration of Berlin’s Homosexual Memorial in May 2008 sums up what I see as the most imperative task of memorial networks: the productive interlinking of individual memory narratives – regardless of the rank order attributed to one over the other. I conclude with an excerpt from this article, but not without first bringing attention to one final and striking entanglement: an Israeli publication commenting optimistically on German memory politics and the relationship between the memorials dedicated to Jewish and homosexual victims.

‘What we wanted to emphasize is that the different groups the Nazis persecuted experienced the same horrors,’ said one of the artists [of the Homosexual Memorial]. This is why their monument’s concrete slab resonates with the theme of the [Jewish] Holocaust memorial across the road. ‘This is the correct way to commemorate the persecution,’ says Volker Beck, a Green Party representative in the Bundestag and a gay-rights activist throughout Europe. ‘Visitors to Berlin will see the huge [Jewish] Holocaust monument on one side, the much smaller one for gays on the other side – and understand that we’ve learned something in Germany about human rights from World War II (Uni, Ha’aretz online, 2008).
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