The Commemorative Activity of Ordinary People
in Central Ukraine after the Euromaidan

A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the Faculty of Humanities

2021

Anna Glew

School of Arts, Languages and Cultures

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Word count: 75,657

List of Abbreviations

ATO   Anti-Terrorist Operation (Antyterorystychna operatsiia)

IDP   Internally displaced person

OTH   United territorial community (Obiednana terytorialna hromada)

OUN   Organisation of the Ukrainian Nationalists (Orhanizatsiia ukrainskykh natsionalistiv)

UINR   Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance (Ukrainskyi instytut natsionalnoi pamiati)

Ukrainian SSR   Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic

UNR   Ukrainian People's Republic (Ukrainska Narodna Respublika)

UPA   Ukrainian Insurgent Army (Ukrainska povstanska armiia)

USSR   Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

ZUNR West Ukrainian People's Republic (Zakhidnoukrainska Narodna Respublika)

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Abstract

This thesis identifies and analyses the main characteristics of the commemorative activity of ordinary people in Central Ukraine. It demonstrates how ordinary people in the Poltava oblast commemorate two events: the Euromaidan protests (2013-2014) and the Russia-Ukraine conflict (2014 – ongoing), focusing on how ordinary people construct physical commemorative objects. This research investigates the commemorative activity of ordinary people in Central Ukraine who are 'activated' to carry out commemorative work by these two turbulent and emotionally charged events in Ukraine's recent history and seek to project their individual, private memories into the public arena. This thesis' central argument is that ordinary people in Central Ukraine actively exercise their agency in the area of commemoration, to ensure the memory of the Euromaidan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict is present in the commemorative landscape, playing an important role in public meaning-making. My research demonstrates that while the need to process traumatic experiences is the main driver behind ordinary people's commemorative work, ordinary people use the overarching narratives of grief and trauma as a foundation for adding other narratives. Thus, by utilising different types of visual language, ordinary people narrate protesters' and soldiers' sacrifice in the name of the nation, presenting the Euromaidan protests and the Russia-Ukraine conflict as righteous and noble struggles. Through linking these two events to other periods of Ukraine's history, they create plotlines of Ukraine's centuries-long struggle for sovereignty and self-determination. Therefore, ordinary people contribute to the construction of narratives about history and the identity of the Ukrainian nation.

This thesis is an empirical contribution to the body of knowledge on the commemorative activity of ordinary people as social memory actors. It provides a detailed profile of the ordinary people in the Poltava oblast who carry out commemorative work and an in-depth analysis of the resources they utilise to achieve their commemorative objectives. The thesis investigates how ordinary people use available state mechanisms and shows they demonstrate creativity and persistence to ensure their voices are heard, while also contributing to changing the existing memory paradigm. Additionally, this research offers insights into how the socio-political factors associated with the aftermath of a revolutionary event and an ongoing violent conflict influence ordinary people's agency and their commemorative activity.

This thesis contributes to the knowledge of how ongoing violent conflicts are commemorated. My research reveals that when the outcome of a conflict is unknown, ordinary people seek to future-proof their memorials, selecting memorial designs that will disrupt the routinisation of the conflict and help future and present generations interpret the conflict in a particular way.

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Acknowledgements

Introduction

When societies are in the midst of crisis and conflict, what is the role of ordinary people in the concurrent commemoration of extreme political experiences such as mass protests, state violence, and war? This is the main focus of this thesis. It places an accent on and provides a deep analysis of the commemorative activity of ordinary people in Central Ukraine after the Euromaidan. Specifically, the thesis will explore characteristics of the commemorative activity of those ordinary people who are involved in the construction of memorials to the Euromaidan protests (2013-2014) and the Russia-Ukraine conflict (2014-ongoing)[1] in the Poltava oblast.

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Ukraine has started a process of re-assessment of its national history and re-evaluation of the country's relations with its neighbours, especially Russia and Poland.[2] The Euromaidan protests in 2013-2014 and the subsequent Russia-Ukraine conflict marked a significant shift in Ukraine's interpretation of its past.[3] Competing interpretations of Ukraine's history have played a significant role in the splitting of this society into different camps during the Ukrainian crisis.[4] Events following the Euromaidan have had a great impact on the physical representation of the historical memory in Ukraine, from the mass demolition of Lenin monuments to the erection of new monuments in memory of the victims of

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[1] By using the term 'Russia-Ukraine conflict' I refer to the events that began in March 2014 first with the invasion and occupation of Crimea and then followed with the occupation of parts of the Donbas basin which comprises the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. This conflict is still ongoing. Whilst some have called it a frozen conflict due to the lack of progress in its resolution and the general state of stalemate, on the ground it continues to be a 'hot' conflict with daily gun battles and artillery fire.

[2] Andrew Wilson, 'National History and National Identity in Ukraine and Belarus', in *Nation-Building in the Post-Soviet Borderlands: The Politics of National Identity*, ed. by Graham Smith and others (Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 23–47; Ilya Prizel, 'Nation-Building and Foreign Policy', in *Ukraine: The Search for a National Identity*, ed. by Sharon Wolchik and Volodymyr Zviglyanich (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999), pp. 11–30; Andrii Portnov, 'Memory Wars in Post-Soviet Ukraine (1991-2010)', in *Memory and Theory in Eastern Europe*, ed. by Uilleam Blacker, Alexander Etkind, and Julie Fedor (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 233–54; Sergii Plokhy, *The Gates of Europe* (Allen Lane, 2015).

[3] Barbara Törnquist-Plewa and Yulia Yurchuk, 'Memory Politics in Contemporary Ukraine: Reflections from the Postcolonial Perspective', *Memory Studies*, 12.6 (2019), 699–720; Andriy Liubarets, 'The Politics of Memory in Ukraine in 2014: Removal of the Soviet Cultural Legacy and Euromaidan Commemorations', *Kyiv-Mohyla Humanities Journal*, 3, 2016, 197–214; Oleksandra Gaidai, *Kamianyi Hist. Lenin u Tsentralnii Ukraini* (Kyiv: K.I.C., 2018).

[4] Plokhy, *The Gates of Europe*, p. 348.

the 2013-2014 protests and the ongoing Russia-Ukraine violent conflict. It is notable that changes in the physical objects of historical memory have resulted from a combination of the state's policy (including the 2015 'de-Communisation laws') and the actions of local authorities and ordinary people.

Since independence in 1991, ordinary Ukrainians have repeatedly contributed to the area of historical memory and commemoration through such acts as vandalism, unauthorised demolitions, the erection of unauthorised monuments, the voluntary maintenance of some unattended monuments and appeals to local authorities. Such individual activities intensified following the Euromaidan protests and the onset of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. However, there is currently insufficient research on the role of ordinary people in the area of commemoration, and this thesis intends to address this gap.

The main, overarching research question of this thesis is *What are the characteristics of the commemorative activity of ordinary people in Central Ukraine after the Euromaidan?* To answer the main question, the thesis poses a series of questions. First, to establish who exactly these ordinary people are and what resources enable their work, the thesis asks: *Who are the ordinary people involved in the construction of commemorative objects in the Poltava oblast, and what resources do they utilise to achieve their objectives?* Answering this question will prepare the ground for the analysis of the commemorative activity of the identified research subjects. Second, whilst acknowledging that ordinary people do not operate in a vacuum and must interact with the state, the thesis raises the following sub-question: *How do ordinary people use the mechanisms provided by the state to exercise their agency in the area of commemoration?* Third, construction of monuments by ordinary people inevitably raises the question of *What commemorative narratives of the Euromaidan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict are produced by ordinary people through the construction of memorials?* Finally, given the specific historical context of the analysed commemorative activity (post-Euromaidan and with the violent conflict still ongoing), the thesis also asks *How do factors associated with the aftermath of the Euromaidan*

revolution and the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict impact the commemorative activity of ordinary people in the Poltava oblast?

Regionality of historical memory in Ukraine is a topic that drives heated debates in academic literature. Thus, some scholars seek to compare the historical memories in the geographically 'polar' Lviv and Donetsk.[5] Others insist that it is important to study individual cultural-historical regions to break the wide-spread stereotype of 'two Ukraines' (the nationalistic west and the pro-Russian east or southeast).[6] In this regard, Central Ukraine, geographically located between Western Ukraine and Eastern Ukraine, deserves particular attention.[7] Although some important research has been conducted on different aspects of the historical memory of Central Ukraine,[8] to a large degree this region is still significantly understudied.

Although the thesis analyses cases from only one oblast of Central Ukraine (the Poltava oblast), this choice does not suggest that the commemorative processes in this oblast are significantly different from those in other oblasts in Central Ukraine. Neither is such a suggestion made in relation to the commemorative activity of the analysed memory actors. Instead, the Poltava oblast should be seen as a representative case

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[5] Mykola Riabchuk, *Dvi Ukrainy: Real'ni Mezhi, Virtualni Viiny* (Krytyka, 2003); Viktoria Sereda, 'Regional Historical Identities and Memory', *Ukraina Moderna*, Lviv-Donetsk: sotsialni identychnosti v suchasnii Ukraini, 2007, 160–209; Yaroslav Hrytsak, 'National Identities in Post-Soviet Ukraine: The Case of Lviv and Donetsk', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, Cultures and Nations of Central and Eastern Europe, 22 (1998), 263–81.

[6] Ihor Symonenko, 'Osoblyvosti Struktury Istorychnoi Pamiati Ukrainskoho Narodu Ta Shliakhy Formuvannia Natsionalnoho Istorychnoho Naratyvu', *Strategic Priorities*, 1(10), 2009, 51–61; Serhy Yekelchyk, 'Regional Identities in the Time of War', *The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review*, 46, 2019, 239–44; Oxana Shevel, 'No Way Out? Post-Soviet Ukraine's Memory Wars in Comparative Perspective', in *Beyond the Euromaidan: Comparative Perspectives on Advancing Reform in Ukraine*, ed. by Henry E. Hale and Robert W. Orttung (Stanford University Press, 2016), pp. 21–40.

[7] Central Ukraine includes the Kyiv, Vinnytsia, Zhytomyr, Kirovohrad, Poltava, Sumy, Cherkasy, Chernihiv oblasts.

[8] Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War: The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); Oleksandra Gaidai, *Kamianyi Hist: Lenin u Tsentralnii Ukraini*, (Kyiv: K.I.C., 2018); Serhii Plokhii, 'Goodbye Lenin: A Memory Shift in Revolutionary Ukraine', *Harvard University, Ukrainian Research Institute*, 2018 https://gis.huri.harvard.edu/files/leninfallpaper.pdf; Oleksandr Hrytsenko, *Pamiat Mistsevoho Vyrobnytstva. Transformatsiia Symvolichnoho Prostoru Ta Istorychnoi Pamiati v Malykh Mistakh Ukrainy*, (Kyiv: K.I.C., 2014).

study.[9] The choice of an administrative oblast is made for two key reasons. First, analysis of cases within one oblast gives an opportunity to compare the practices observed in towns and cities that are situated close to each other, and have a similar historical background. Second, it is important to recognise that the commemorative activity of ordinary people is not carried out in a vacuum. Those undertaking this activity have actively examined how their respective events are commemorated in other parts of Ukraine (as confirmed by several interviews).[10] At the same time, it is important to account for the interaction of ordinary people (as memory actors) within the oblast.[11] Thus, they commonly compare how new war memorials are built and positioned in neighbouring cities and towns within the oblast. By examining their neighbours' solutions, these memory actors can decide on what would work best for them.

Many people from the Poltava oblast took part in the Euromaidan protests in Kyiv in 2013-2014, and large cities and towns of the oblast (such as Poltava and Kremenchuk) also had local Euromaidan protests at the same time. One of the specificities of the Poltava oblast is that although it is relatively close to the front line (approximately an eight-hour drive away), its residents have not experienced the conflict directly on their territory (thus, they have not experienced the shelling and broken infrastructure, or the need to flee the combat area). This creates a particular context of commemoration of the violent conflict, as the thesis will demonstrate.

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[9] Although the conclusions made in this thesis can be applied to other oblasts of Central Ukraine and, tentatively, to other Ukrainian oblasts, in doing so it would be crucial to consider the particular characteristics of the respective local landscapes.

[10] For example, in Poltava, when constructing a memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, some of the relatives of the soldiers killed were inspired by the design of a memorial in Vinnytsia (Central Ukraine); specifically, they borrowed the idea of an electronic screen showing the soldiers' portraits.

[11] For example, the veterans' associations that have been formed in individual cities and towns are often linked to the central oblast-level veterans' organisation, which promotes interaction between veterans within the oblast.

Theoretical framework

'State-centred' and 'social-agency' approaches in memory studies

The present thesis examines the commemorative activity of ordinary people, and it is crucial to define what is meant by 'ordinary people' for the purposes of this research. Such a definition, however, requires a prior discussion of the approaches and terminology used within memory studies literature when dealing with different memory actors. In other words, it is necessary to provide an overview of the field of study, to identify the place of ordinary people in this field and outline their profile.

In their joint work *The politics of war memory and commemoration: contexts, structures, and dynamics,* T.G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson and Michael Roper note that academic literature in the area of memory studies tends to focus on two paradigms: a "state-centred" paradigm, which examines remembrance as a political project of the nation-state, and a "social-agency" paradigm, which brings to the fore individual citizens and civil society.[12] According to Ashplant, Dawson and Roper, this dichotomy is exemplified by two key seminal works. The first one is *Inventing Traditions* by Eric Hobsbawm, who examines constructed versions of the past and their role in "establishing or symbolizing social cohesion or the membership of groups", "establishing or legitimizing institutions, status or relations of authority", and "socialization, the inculcation of beliefs, value systems and conventions of behaviours"[13]. Literature utilising the state-centred paradigm predominantly sees politics of memory as "the top-down implementation by elites of ways for society to

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[12] T.G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson, and Michael Roper, 'The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration: Contexts, Structures, and Dynamics', in *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration*, ed. by T.G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson, and Michael Roper (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 3–86 (pp. 10–12).

[13] Eric Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions', in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 1–15 (p. 9). The entire volume is dedicated to invented traditions.

see the past, mostly for political-ideological objectives."[14] Scholars from this group often focus on the most visible instances of memory transformation, including public speeches, school textbooks, public commemorations, monuments and museums,[15] as well as on those agents who possess "sufficient political and symbolic capital"[16] to influence the way the public perceives the past. The present thesis will benefit from the literature on top-down uses of memory as it provides helpful frameworks for examining and describing the context in which ordinary Ukrainian people operate. Moreover, it is necessary to take into account the extent to which ordinary people reflect the dominant discourses in their society and the way they interact with them.

One of the seminal works using the "social-agency" approach is *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* by Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan. These scholars here depart from those who define collective memory as the property of dominant forces in the state and instead "examine collective remembrance ... as the product of individuals and social groups who come together, not at the behest of the state or any of its subsidiary organizations, but because they have to speak out."[17] In his scholarship Jay Winter focuses on "ordinary people" and their remembrance practices.[18] The theoretical framework developed by Winter and Sivan is particularly helpful for examining bottom-up commemorative initiatives in Ukraine. Such binary representation of the uses of memory (top-down and bottom-up) enables the outlining of the main structural levels within which different memory actors operate. However, it is important to note that this binary is only used for the purpose of classification, with an understanding that there is not a strict line between the top-down and

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[14] Igor Pietraszewski and Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, 'Wrocław: Changes in Memory Narratives', in *Whose Memory, Which Future? Remembering Ethnic Cleansing and Lost Cultural Diversity in Eastern, Central and Southeastern Europe*, ed. by Barbara Törnquist-Plewa (Berghahn Books, 2016), pp. 17–48 (p. 19).

[15] Simona Mitroiu, 'Life Writing and Politics of Memory in Eastern Europe: Introduction', in *Life Writing and Politics of Memory in Eastern Europe*, ed. by Simona Mitroiu (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 1–24 (p. 7); Eva-Clarita Onken, 'Memory and Democratic Pluralism in the Baltic States – Rethinking the Relationship', *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 41.3 (2010), 277–94 (p. 285).

[16] Onken, 'Memory and Democratic Pluralism', p. 285.

[17] Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, 'Setting the Framework', in *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 6–39 (p. 9).

[18] Jay Winter, 'Forms of Kinship and Remembrance in the Aftermath of the Great War', in *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 41.

bottom-up work, as private, social, and state-level processes of remembering are often deeply intertwined. [19]

The memory production processes that are the focus of this thesis (commemoration of the Euromaidan protests and the Russia-Ukraine conflict by ordinary people) take place in the bottom-up domain, hence it is important to discuss the terminology used by academic literature to describe different memory actors operating within this domain. Such discussion is also necessary to define the term 'ordinary people' and ascertain the place of ordinary people as a memory actor within bottom-up memory production.

First and foremost, it is important to examine the term 'grassroots', often used in academic literature in such phrases as 'grassroots memory actors', 'grassroots commemoration' and 'grassroots memorials', among others. Analysis of academic literature shows that the term 'grassroots', which is also utilised by social, political and economic studies (among others), is used in memory studies as an umbrella term encompassing different groups of memory actors. Thus, it includes individuals who act independently (often preserving their private memories), loosely organised memory communities, and also well-organised organisations with defined agenda and strategies. This, for example, can be seen in the work of Peter Jan Margry and Cristina Sánchez-Carretero that analyses the activity of individuals who create makeshift memorials in public spaces, acting on the basis of their personal response to traumatic events.[20] The commemorative practices of more organised social groups (tour guides, amateur history groups performing re-enactments of battles, and volunteers and history enthusiasts of search detachments in Sevastopol) is analysed by Judy Brown.[21] The work of social groups with a higher level of organisation is analysed by Tatiana

[19] Julie Fedor, Simon Lewis, and Tatiana Zhurzhenko, 'Introduction: War and Memory in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus', in *War and Memory in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus*, ed. by Julie Fedor and others (Palgrave Macmillan Memory Studies, 2017), pp. 1–42 (p. 26).

[20] Peter Jan Margry and Cristina Sánchez-Carretero, 'Introduction. Rethinking Memorialization: The Concept of Grassroots Memorials', in *Grassroots Memorials: The Politics of Memorializing Traumatic Death*, Remapping Cultural History, 12 (Berghahn Books, 2011), pp. 1–48.

[21] Judy Brown, 'Great Patriotic War Memory in Sevastopol: Making Sense of Suffering in the "City of Military Glory"', in *War and Memory in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus*, ed. by Julie Fedor and others (Palgrave Macmillan Memory Studies, 2017), pp. 399–428.

Zhurzhenko, who examines the activity of "children of war" in Russia who represent a social group with its own self-awareness, collective identity and political agency, which has become a mass social movement with strong links with political forces.[22] These three examples use the term 'grassroots' to describe their memory actors, and this demonstrates the general flexibility and broad scope of this term, as it stretches from memory work on the private, individual level to activity of organisations that belong to the strata of civil society.

One of the benefits of the term 'grassroots' is that it makes it possible to encompass different stages of bottom-up memory work: from the formation of individuals' memories to their transformation into the shared/common memories of a social group and then their projection into a public arena, "whether promoting a new sectional or oppositional narrative, fitting within or modifying an existing dominant national narrative, or connecting with a transnational narrative".[23] However, this term also has a drawback: it covers such a wide range of memory actors (with different objectives and resources), that a thorough analysis of every given actor would require a detailed explanation of who exactly is analysed. Consequently, although the commemorative activity analysed in this thesis does belong to the bottom-up grassroots level, the more specific term 'ordinary people' has been chosen instead to single out a particular type of memory actor.

Identifying ordinary people

The term 'ordinary people' can be found in a range of scholarly works written by political scientists, economists, historians, and anthropologists, among others.[24]

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[22] Tatiana Zhurzhenko, 'Generational Memory and the Post-Soviet Welfare State: Institutionalizing the "Children of War" in Post-Soviet Russia', in *War and Memory in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus*, ed. by Julie Fedor and others (Palgrave Macmillan Memory Studies, 2017), pp. 257–80.

[23] T.G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson, and Michael Roper, 'The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration: Contexts, Structures and Dynamics', in *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration*, ed. by T.G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson, and Michael Roper (Routledge, 2000), pp. 3–86 (p. 18).

[24] When referring to this group of people, scholars use interchangeable terms such as 'ordinary people', 'ordinary citizens', 'everyday people', and 'common people'. The term 'ordinary people' is used throughout this thesis.

However, currently there is no set definition of this term. According to Claire Langhamer, ordinary people can be defined as much by who they are not, as by who they are.[25] First and foremost, these are people whose everyday lives are characterised by certain ordinariness, or, as Nancy Bermeo writes, "They spend most of their lives in personal endeavors — earning money, supporting families, and pursuing whatever leisure activities their social status allows".[26] Such a definition of the 'ordinary' is rather problematic, and requires consideration. First, as Raymond Williams notes, there are instances when ordinary people are seen as 'uneducated' or 'uninstructed' people, and this immediately suggests a limited knowledge and understanding of wider issues.[27] It is important to stress that the present thesis does not characterise ordinary people as being uneducated or uninstructed. Instead, the individuals who are the research subjects of this thesis are drawn from all socio-economic, employment and education levels.[28] Indeed, among those ordinary people who are actively involved in the commemorative processes in the Poltava oblast there are people with higher education and vocational education, with various levels of income, the employed, the self-employed and the retired.

Another risk that this thesis seeks to avoid is that of suggesting that 'ordinary people' are marked by certain moral, social or civic virtues. Such an approach, that shows ordinary people as 'sensible', 'regular', and 'decent',[29] as distinct from 'more corrupt' politicians or intellectuals, is highly problematic. This issue is discussed by James Waller, who in *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing* demonstrates that ordinary people can, in fact, commit extraordinary acts of evil.[30] My discussion does not aim to show the research subjects of this thesis in a bad light: quite the opposite, in the course of field work the author met many great people who

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[25] Claire Langhamer, '"Who the Hell Are Ordinary People?" Ordinariness as a Category of Historical Analysis', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 28, 2018, 175–95 (p. 185).
[26] Nancy Bermeo, *Ordinary People in Extraordinary Times: The Citizenry And The Breakdown Of Democracy* (Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 3.
[27] Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana Paperbacks, 1983), p. 226.
[28] Olga Onuch, *Mapping Mass-Mobilization: Understanding Revolutionary Moments in Argentina and Ukraine* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 305.
[29] Williams, *Keywords*, p. 226.
[30] James Waller, *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing* (Oxford University Press, 2002).

deserve the deepest respect. However, for the purposes of objectivity, it is important to stress that within the scope of the present thesis the term 'ordinary people' does not imply any immediate virtues.

A further important element involved in defining the term 'ordinary people' is that of drawing a line behind which ordinary people stop being ordinary. First, in agreement with such scholars and Nancy Bermeo, Olga Onuch and Nancy Thumin, the term 'ordinary people' is used here to describe those people who are not in positions of social and political power in society.[31] The drawing of this line is rather challenging. On the surface, the requirement that to be considered 'ordinary' a person must not be linked to political power is quite straightforward. In the context of Ukraine, this requirement can be worded as 'an ordinary person is not incorporated into state agencies and not a member of a political party'. In reality, during the four years of this research, several research subjects switched from having no links to political power, to becoming a local councillor or a member of a political party.[32] This posed a significant challenge for this research, as it was consequently necessary to examine the status of every interviewed person individually and to critically assess whether they should be classed as an 'ordinary person' or not.

In addition to whether or not someone belongs to a state agency or a political party, it is also important to consider whether involvement or a position in the strata of civil society precludes people from being classed as 'ordinary'. Scholars have different views on this issue. Thus, John Clarke sees ordinary people as an embodiment of civil society and voluntary/non-governmental organisations – "where people can govern, provision and manage themselves beyond the structures of state systems".[33] At the same time, as anthropologist Janine Wedel argues in her work on the civil society

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[31] Bermeo, *Ordinary People in Extraordinary Times*, p. 3; Onuch, *Mapping Mass-Mobilization*, p. 305; Nancy Thumim, *Self-Representation and Digital Culture* (Palgrave, 2012), p. 22.

[32] A similar challenge of drawing a line between ordinary people and political elites is discussed by Sarah Badcock in her article on ordinary people in post-1917 Russia (Sarah Badcock, 'Talking to the People and Shaping Revolution: The Drive for Enlightenment in Revolutionary Russia', *The Russian Review*, 65.4 (2006), 617–36 (p. 617).)

[33] John Clarke, 'Enrolling Ordinary People: Governmental Strategies and the Avoidance of Politics?', *Citizenship Studies*, 14:6, 2010, 637–50 (p. 638).

organisations that emerged in Eastern Europe after the collapse of the Soviet Union, civil society groups can quickly secure political power and become power brokers.[34] By joining strong, established civil society organisations, ordinary people get access to the leverages, know-how and other resources that are not available to them outside such organisations, and at this stage their 'ordinariness' can and should be questioned. Consequently, this thesis draws a stricter line and does not consider those people who are involved in established, well-connected and well-resourced civil society organisations as 'ordinary people'.

The context in which the analysed commemorative activity takes place also introduces certain challenges. The Euromaidan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict brought many changes to Ukrainian society. Within the period from 2014 to 2020 (the years that are covered by this thesis) many ordinary people felt the need to do something outside their 'quotidian' lives: either through taking part in the Euromaidan protests, through joining the volunteer battalions that went to fight in Eastern Ukraine, or through providing aid to the Ukrainian army and the civilians who fled the combat area. This led to the creation of various new civil society groups: from large organisations that are very visible to the public, to smaller, often local-level groups. From the beginning to the end of this research, the author has been assessing every research subject individually and making decisions on whether they are distanced enough from established civil society groups to be classed as 'ordinary people'. This process, naturally, required making informed judgements, which to a certain degree were subjective.

The decision of ordinary people to step beyond their usual everyday lives and become actively involved in certain activities (be this via protests, volunteering or something else) draws the attention of many scholars,[35] who emphasise that it is important to

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[34] Janine R. Wedel, *Collision and Collusion: The Strange Case of Western Aid to Eastern Europe* (St. Martin's Griffin, 2001), p. 108.

[35] Bermeo, *Ordinary People in Extraordinary Times*; Onuch, *Mapping Mass-Mobilization*; John Clarke, 'In Search of Ordinary People: The Problematic Politics of Popular Participation', *Communication, Culture & Critique*, 6, 2013, 208–26; Graham Martin, ''Ordinary People Only': Knowledge, Representativeness and the Publics of Public Participation in Healthcare', *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 30 (1), 2007, 35–54.

examine the process of activation of ordinary people – a topic that is discussed in this thesis too. Thus, the present thesis examines the commemorative activity of those ordinary people who were not involved in the area of commemoration before the Euromaidan protests and the Russia-Ukraine conflict; their commemorative activity started as a response to these dramatic events – in other words, these events 'activated' them.

This process of activation raises questions that need to be considered. First, there are questions of representativeness and diversity. As Thumin notes, the term 'ordinary people' is used to "unite across difference".[36] While the unity of ordinary people is based on shared separateness from the social and political powers in a given society, they themselves are a very heterogeneous group.[37] This heterogeneity is one of the reasons why the term 'ordinary people' is preferable to such terms as 'the masses' or 'the public', as they both have connotations of singularity and undermine differences and diversity.[38] As the present thesis will demonstrate, the ordinary people commemorating the Euromaidan protests and the Russia-Ukraine conflict represent a very diverse group of people, and this needs to be taken into account. The issue of representativeness can be demonstrated by the following example: although many people took part in the Euromaidan protests and were involved in or affected by the violent conflict in Eastern Ukraine, not all of them decided to become involved in the commemoration of these two historical events. In other words, only some of them 'activated' in the area of commemoration and have become memory actors: now they are drawing sketches of future memorials and take part in design competitions, request funding from the authorities, and construct their own small-scale commemorative objects. Consequently, it is important to stress that the present thesis does not cover ordinary people in general; it focuses specifically on those ordinary people who have become memory actors. The thesis seeks to explore the commemorative activity of these newly emerged memory actors and establish its characteristics.

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[36] Thumim, *Self-Representation and Digital Culture*, p. 22.
[37] Bermeo, *Ordinary People in Extraordinary Times*, p. 3.
[38] Bermeo, *Ordinary People in Extraordinary Times*, p. 3.

Ordinary people as memory actors

The term 'ordinary people' is used in the present thesis to denote a particular type of 'memory actor' – a concept that has been developed and explored by different scholars within the area of memory studies. Some classifications of memory actors draw a line between two groups of mnemonic actors (distinguishing between those operating at the societal level and those at the political level);[39] whereas others conceptualise groups of actors who operate across these levels.[40] Focusing on the societal level, Eva-Clarita Onken defines memory actors as "individual societal actors who are part of and, in some cases, active agents of a particular social memory."[41] This definition is particularly applicable to the memory actors examined in this thesis.

Having examined several existing classifications of memory actors, it is possible to say that scholars normally chose a particular angle and aspects to define their suggested types of actors. Some of these approaches are particularly helpful as they provide frameworks for exploring different characteristics of ordinary people as memory actors. Thus, Eva-Clarita Onken notes that it is beneficial to consider two factors when studying memory actors: first, their "memory consciousness", namely the degree to which they perceive themselves as carriers of a particular historical experience that is deemed relevant in a broader social context;[42] and second, their "social capital" used to "organize his/her personal memories in a wider social framework."[43] Elizabeth Jelin, who offers conceptualisation of the term "memory entrepreneurs", makes the important point that while the motivations and interests of such actors can be moral,

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[39] Onken, 'Memory and Democratic Pluralism'; Jenny Wüstenberg, 'Transforming Berlin's Memory: Non-State Actors and GDR Memorial Politics', in *Remembering the German Democratic Republic: Divided Memory in a United Germany*, ed. by David Clarke and Ute Wölfel (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 65–76; Jan Kubik and Michael Bernhard, 'A Theory of the Politics of Memory', in *Twenty Years After Communism: The Politics Of Memory And Commemoration*, ed. by Michael Bernhard and Jan Kubik (Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 7–36.

[40] Elizabeth Jelin, *State Repression and the Labors of Memory* (University of Minnesota Press, 2003); Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, *Yitzhak Rabin's Assassination and the Dilemmas of Commemoration* (State University of New York Press, 2010).

[41] Onken, 'Memory and Democratic Pluralism', p. 282.

[42] Onken, 'Memory and Democratic Pluralism', p. 282.

[43] Onken, 'Memory and Democratic Pluralism', p. 282.

they can also be lucrative or even constitute a combination of good and bad.[44] Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi notes that "agents of memory" (a term used as a synonym for "memory actors") face structural and cultural constraints and also have different levels of power and capital.[45] Furthermore, Vinitzky-Seroussi pays much attention to the importance of determination and motivation of agents of memory and to the level of their emotional commitment to certain pasts and their memories.[46]

Jenny Wüstenberg considers the factor of emotional attachment to a certain memory, drawing a line between those actors who have a high level of emotional investment in a particular cause, and those whom she describes as "pragmatics."[47] The second group is less personally invested in the events to be remembered, and although these actors also have a high level of motivation, they are "driven primarily by principled beliefs about the crucial function of memory for present-day democracy."[48] Wüstenberg also examines and underlines the importance of a category of actors she terms "for-profits", that is, those agents who are driven predominantly by a profit motive.[49] When using these and other scholarly works that explore different aspects of the activity of different memory actors, such literature will be employed with caution, as the conceptualisations of some authors (for example, Onken,[50] Vinitzky-Seroussi[51] and Jelin[52]) encompass not only social memory actors, but also those who cut across the societal and political levels. Consequently, the present research will employ only those theoretical underpinnings from such literature that can be applied to ordinary people.

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[44] Elizabeth Jelin, *State Repression and the Labors of Memory* (University of Minnesota Press, 2003), p. 34.

[45] Vinitzky-Seroussi, *Yitzhak Rabin's Assassination*, p. 24.

[46] Vinitzky-Seroussi, *Yitzhak Rabin's Assassination*, p. 22.

[47] Jenny Wüstenberg, *Civil Society and Memory in Postwar Germany* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 234.

[48] Wüstenberg, *Civil Society and Memory in Postwar Germany*, p. 234.

[49] Wüstenberg, *Civil Society and Memory in Postwar Germany*, p. 229.

[50] Onken, 'Memory and Democratic Pluralism', p. 284.

[51] Vinitzky-Seroussi, *Yitzhak Rabin's Assassination*, p. 30.

[52] Jelin, *State Repression and the Labors of Memory*, p. 34.

Memory work and sites of memory

The concept of "memory work", developed by Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, is particularly helpful for the present research. Irwin-Zarecka focuses on products or, as she calls it, the "infrastructure" of collective memory in the form of created spaces, objects and texts (such as monuments, films and books) that provide engagement with the past.[53] According to this scholar, the production of such symbolic resources requires work ("memory work"), which in turn is associated with such factors as the decision and intention to create a product, the investment of time, money, and effort, and also the setting of priorities and the selection of audiences.[54] Irwin-Zarecka notes that the concept of "memory work" on its own is not able to cover all the mnemonic processes carried out by individuals: after all, people can privately cherish a particular individual or public memory, but they do not always undertake work in relation to it. At the same time, the scholar believes that the concept of "memory work" can be a helpful lens for investigating those pasts that are activated by individuals, communities, and governments, as well as for identifying the ways in which the "reality of the past" is constructed.[55] Such considerations will be particularly beneficial for the present research.

Considering that the cases analysed in the present thesis represent a particular type of commemorative activity (construction of memorials), it is essential to utilise the concept of "sites of memory" (a *"lieu de mémoire").* This concept was developed by Pierre Nora who defines it as "any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community."[56] Such sites can include geographical places, monuments, and buildings, works of art, and also books and texts, historical persons, memorial days and symbolic actions. According to Nora, sites of

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[53] Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance: The Dynamics of Collective Memory* (Transaction Publishers, 2007), p. 13.
[54] Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance: The Dynamics of Collective Memory*, p. 13.
[55] Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance: The Dynamics of Collective Memory*, p. 15.
[56] Pierre Nora, 'Preface to English Language Edition: From Lieux de Memoire to Realms of Memory', in *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past. Vol. 1. Conflicts and Divisions*, ed. by Pierre Nora (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. xv–xxiv (p. xvii).

memory exist only when there is a will (intention) to remember.[57] Such intent to remember, and also to create and maintain sites of memory, should be examined when analysing the activity of ordinary people in the area of commemoration.

Moreover, Nora also notes the role of threat and defence in remembrance: "We buttress our identities upon such bastions, but what if what they defended were [*sic*] not threatened, there would be no need to build them."[58] The idea that certain memories can be threatened and require protection should also be considered in relation to commemorative objects in Ukraine, especially in the context of the memory politics of different political forces, and taking into account the particular historical period (after a revolution and with an armed conflict still ongoing). Finally, Nora also notes that sites of memory have a pronounced ability to change and generate meaning, which also secures their existence: "lieux de mémoire only exist because of their capacity for metamorphosis, an endless recycling of their meaning and an unpredictable proliferation of their ramifications."[59] This, too, should be considered when studying different monuments in Ukraine and exploring their multifaceted meanings within society.

Commemoration and monuments

The focus of the present research is the activity of ordinary people in the area of commemoration, specifically in relation to monuments. Commemoration is here understood as a "ritual or a display destined to celebrate the memory of a person, a group or an event."[60] Persons and events are commemorated in different ways, including through memorialisation in statues, plaques, street and park names, and national calendars. 'Monument' as one of the forms of commemoration is a rather broad term that encompasses different types of structures that were intentionally

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[57] Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire', *Representations*, Memory and Counter-Memory, 26, 1989, 7–24 (p. 19).
[58] Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire', p. 12.
[59] Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire', p. 19.
[60] Philippe Denis, 'Memory and Commemoration as a Subject of Enquiry for African Christianity Scholars', *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, 41.3 (2015), 1–22 (p. 7).

constructed to commemorate a person or event, or that have become relevant to a social group as a part of their remembrance (such as landmark buildings or features of nature that have been declared national monuments).[61] The present thesis focuses only on intentionally constructed structures: from small makeshift commemorative objects (such as commemorative stands) to larger permanent constructions. The terms 'monument' and 'memorial' will be used in the thesis interchangeably. Academic literature tends to use the term 'monument' for more triumphant objects (celebrating heroes and victories), and 'memorial' for more solemn objects honouring the dead.[62] Although commemorative objects dedicated to the Euromaidan protests and the Russia-Ukraine conflict first and foremost honour the memory of the killed protesters and fallen soldiers, their visual language is not limited to grief (as Chapter Four discusses in more detail), and this expands their characteristics. Furthermore, the public and the media in Ukraine (cited in this thesis) commonly use these two terms interchangeably.[63]

Monument as one of the forms of commemoration is a multifaceted phenomenon, and for the purposes of the present thesis it is necessary to take its three particular facets into account. First, monuments are a place of interaction and inter-influence between collective and individual memories.[64] On the one hand, monuments are an embodiment of the collective memory,[65] and collective memory relies on monuments as a framework which communicates "shared values, beliefs and attitudes".[66] On the other hand, monuments are inextricably linked to individual memories. According to Jelin, the sharing of experiences (both those received personally and learned from others) requires "the existence and putting in motion of a cultural interpretive framework and a meaningful language that enables us to conceptualize, think and

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[61] Sabine Marschall, 'Transforming the Landscape of Memory: The South African Commemorative Effort in International Perspective', *South African Historical Journal*, 55.1, 165–85 (p. 166).
[62] Marschall, 'Transforming the Landscape of Memory', p. 166.
[63] Official Ukrainian terminology is discussed in detail in Chapter Three.
[64] John R. Gillis, 'Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship', in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, ed. by John R. Gillis, 1994, pp. 3–26 (p. 5).
[65] Onken, 'Memory and Democratic Pluralism', p. 279.
[66] Onken, 'Memory and Democratic Pluralism', p. 279.

express such experience."[67] Monuments thus can be seen as an example of such an interpretive framework and meaningful language, allowing people to place their individual memories onto these "material and symbolic markers."[68] Furthermore, monuments also have an ability to shape individual memories. Thus, according to Philippe Denis, "Consciously or unconsciously, what we remember is shaped by what we have heard, seen and read around us. We gain access to events reconstructed for us by others."[69] When examining the monuments created by ordinary people, it is crucial to explore how ordinary people convert their individual memories into material and symbolic markers that can be used and understood by the wider society.

Second, monuments serve as a 'meeting point' of different memory actors. It is a place of their interaction, struggle, and negotiation, particularly regarding what memory should be commemorated, in what way, and also who has the right to decide about it.[70] Writing about struggles and conflicts around memories, Jelin notes that they always raise the question of power relations and hegemony.[71] According to Jelin, the construction of commemorative objects is usually associated with struggles and confrontations, including between the voices of those who call for commemoration, and those who make it their business to act as if nothing has happened.[72] In addition to these voices, it is also necessary to consider those actors who use monuments as a tool to legitimise their authority. Furthermore, writing about asymmetries of power and a hierarchy of memory work, Brian Convey notes that is it common for the state to have the strongest claims on power and authority, compared to the power of individual, small-group, and social-level memory actors.[73] The present thesis will examine the

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[67] Elizabeth Jelin, 'Public Memorialization in Perspective: Truth, Justice and Memory of Past Repression in the Southern Cone of South America', *The International Journal of Transitional Justice*, 1 (2007), 138–56 (p. 141).

[68] Jelin, 'Public Memorialization in Perspective: Truth, Justice and Memory of Past Repression in the Southern Cone of South America', p. 141.

[69] Denis, 'Memory and Commemoration as a Subject of Enquiry for African Christianity Scholars', p. 7.

[70] Jelin, *State Repression and the Labors of Memory*, p. 43.

[71] Jelin, 'Public Memorialization in Perspective: Truth, Justice and Memory of Past Repression in the Southern Cone of South America', p. 141.

[72] Jelin, 'Public Memorialization in Perspective: Truth, Justice and Memory of Past Repression in the Southern Cone of South America', p. 147.

[73] Brian Conway, *Commemoration and Bloody Sunday: Pathways of Memory* (AIAA, 2010), p. 7.

topic of the power of ordinary people as a memory actor and their interaction with other memory actors (in particular, the local authorities).

Third, monuments commemorate those persons and events from the past that were purposefully selected from the rich body of history and that are deemed relevant for the present and the future. According to Philippe Denis, commemorations refer to the past but speak to the present: they "select, shape and orient past experiences for a purpose."[74] Moreover, certain memories are either forgotten or intentionally un-commemorated. In the words of Michael Ignatieff, "The statues of invented traditions are symbols of forgetting as well as remembering, icons in a cunning, but also self-deceiving process of choosing the past one can bear to remember and consigning the rest - the undignified sorrow, the shameful suffering - to oblivion."[75] The Euromaidan protests and the Russia-Ukraine conflict are rather recent historical events (and the conflict is still ongoing). However, it is important to consider how the monuments constructed by ordinary people in commemoration of these dramatic events speak to the present, and to examine what specific memories are selected by them for commemoration.

Literature review

Since 2014, three key topics in the area of commemoration have been drawing attention of scholars: the memorialisation of the Euromaidan protests of 2013-2014, the process of de-communisation (with the mass demolition of Lenin and other Communist monuments and the so-called 'de-communisation laws' of 2015),[76] and the commemoration of those who died in the Russia-Ukraine conflict. It is important to stress that these three topics are considered in connection to each other, and, of

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[74] Denis, 'Memory and Commemoration as a Subject of Enquiry for African Christianity Scholars', p. 7.
[75] Michael Ignatieff, 'Soviet War Memorials', *History Workshop*, 17 (1984), 157–63 (p. 158).
[76] Kateryna Kobchenko, 'Dekomunizatsiia v Ukraini: Postkolonialnyi Kontekst', *Ukrainoznavchyi Almanakh*, 19, 2016, 66–70; Anna Oliinyk and Taras Kuzio, 'The Euromaidan Revolution, Reforms and Decommunisation in Ukraine', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 2021, 807–36; Volodymyr Kulyk, 'Memory and Language: Different Dynamics in the Two Aspects of Identity Politics in Post-Euromaidan Ukraine', *Nationalities Papers*, 47:6, 2019, 1030–47; Andrii Portnov, 'How to Bid Goodbye to Lenin in Ukraine', *Open Democracy*, 2015 <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/on-decommunisation-identity-and-legislating-history-in-ukraine/>.

course, they should be considered only as part of the wider memory-related processes in post-Euromaidan Ukraine, whereby both social and political memory actors seek to re-assess Ukraine's history and its relations with Russia and Europe. The identified existing literature that deals with the activity of social memory actors in post-Euromaidan Ukraine will now be analysed in detail.

In her thesis *Between Lenin and Bandera: Decommunization and Multivocality in (post)Euromaidan Ukraine* (2020; its publication as a book is expected in August 2021),[77] Anna Kutkina recognises that there is currently insufficient discussion of the grassroots activity within the wider process of de-communisation in Ukraine that has become particularly prominent since the Euromaidan protests. In her thesis, Kutkina analyses a range of artistic and political phenomena (such as political poster exhibitions, graffiti, and the pedestals of toppled monuments) that she sees as "powerful spatial and discursive mechanisms for articulating both the ordinary citizens' and governmental stands on 'decommunization' or 'de-Sovietization'".[78] Kutkina's work provides a detailed and insightful analysis of the meaning-making processes that are carried out both top-down and bottom-up, and it is a great source for learning more about the wider changes that are taking place in Ukraine's collective memory post-Euromaidan. The author also underscores that the grassroots and political memory actors most likely interact with each other. While this is an important point, it should be noted that Kutkina's work does not discuss such interactions in detail. Furthermore, although the main focus of her study is the nature, content and modes of articulation of the de-communisation narratives in post-Euromaidan Ukraine both on the governmental and the grassroots (or ordinary citizens') level, it is lacking explanation of who exactly is meant by the terms 'grassroots' and 'ordinary citizens'. A detailed conceptualisation of these terms would help the reader have a better understanding of the memory processes in Ukraine. For example, when discussing different objects observed on the streets of Ukrainian cities (such as posters, graffiti, and decorated pedestals of the demolished Communist monuments), the author sees

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[77] Anna Kutkina, 'Between Lenin and Bandera: Decommunization and Multivocality in (Post)Euromaidan Ukraine' (University of Helsinki, 2020).
[78] Kutkina, 'Between Lenin and Bandera', p. 9.

them as objects produced by ordinary citizens, even though in reality there is a high chance that they might well have been produced by local nationalist forces (i.e. representatives of nationalist parties). It would be very important to discuss such possibility, and to not presume that the analysed objects were produced only by ordinary people.

Andrii Nekoliak's article *Social and Political Memories Colliding in Public Space: the Case of Post-Euromaidan Shyshaky* discusses the complexities of memory work in post-Soviet / post-Euromaidan Ukraine using the provincial town of Shyshaky (Central Ukraine) as a case study.[79] In particular, Nekoliak examines the changes in the commemorative landscape of the town, focusing on the memorials dedicated to the establishment of Soviet rule in Ukraine, the Great Patriotic War, and the activity of the Ukrainian nationalists during the Second World War. As Andrii Nekoliak demonstrates, the changes that have taken place as part of the post-Euromaidan 'de-communisation' processes and general re-assessment of Ukraine's history, are a result of the activity of different memory actors. The detailed analysis of the involvement of different memory actors (such as the local council, the local branch of the nationalist party Svoboda, and the local branch of the Communist Party of Ukraine) provides valuable insights into the complexity of the memory-related processes in post-Euromaidan Central Ukraine. As the author argues, the analysed changes in the commemorative landscape in Shyshaky (such as the removal of the Lenin monument and the covering of the inscription on the memorial to the Fighters for Soviet power), are an examples of social-to-political memory interactions. At the same time, as can be seen in the article, the actors that are assigned to the 'social' level include the "institutionally organized local groups", specifically the local branch of the nationalist party Svoboda, and the local branch of the Communist Party of Ukraine. Furthermore, the personal decision of some of the deputies of the local council to cover the inscription on the memorial to Fighters for Soviet power is described as 'grassroots' activity. This demonstrates the difficulty of drawing a line between the social and political level when discussing different memory actors: after all, an individual can be a member of a political party or a local councillor,

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[79] Andrii Nekoliak, 'Social and Political Memories Colliding in Public Space: The Case of Post-Euromaidan Shyshaky', *Baltic Worlds*, XII.4 (2019), 46–56.

and yet see their commemorative activity as a personal-level activity, instead of seeing it as part of the commemorative activity of their political party or state institution. At the same time, it is difficult to ignore the fact that political parties and state institutions do belong to the political strata, and by being a part of this strata any individual is invariably involved in some political agenda and, at the same time, has better resources than those ordinary people who have no such links to the political strata. This article demonstrates the strong need there is for a better conceptualisation of the terms 'grassroots memory actors' and 'social-level memory actors', as for different scholars they can mean different things.

Lina Klymenko's article *Choosing Mazepa Over Lenin: The Transformation of Monuments and Political Order in Post-Maidan Ukraine* analyses the demolition of the central Lenin monument and the construction of a monument dedicated to the Ukrainian Cossack hetman Ivan Mazepa in Poltava (Central Ukraine), and traces the change and continuity of political order in post-Communist Ukraine in general, and in post-Euromaidan Ukraine specifically (focusing on the period from 2014 to 2016).[80] Klymenko's article provides useful insights into the involvement of different memory actors (such as local authorities, local artists, the nationalist party Svoboda, and residents of the city), who all have their agendas and opinions about Ukraine's past. The author steps away from the common dichotomy 'state' versus 'social memory actors' and paints a more complex local-level picture. At the same time, it is important to note that when discussing the role of the social memory actors in the spontaneous demolition of the Lenin monument in 2014 and its consequent transformation into a temporary Heavenly Hundred memorial, the author tends to describe them in general terms such as 'activists', 'some men', 'people', 'young local artists', and 'some of the Poltava residents'. It should be acknowledged here that the main objective of the article was not to analyse different memory actors in detail, but instead to examine value shifts and changes in national identity in post-Euromaidan Central Ukraine. Moreover, given the spontaneous nature of both the demolition of the Lenin monument in Poltava and its conversion into a memorial site to the Heavenly Hundred,

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[80] Lina Klymenko, 'Choosing Mazepa Over Lenin: The Transformation of Monuments and Political Order in Post-Maidan Ukraine', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 72.5 (2020), 815–36.

it is rather difficult to establish who exactly was involved in these events and whether or not these persons should be seen as societal or political memory actors. At the same time, this article does demonstrate that such discussion is required, as it would ensure a better understanding of the changes observed in Ukrainian society.

In her book *A Stone Guest: Lenin in Central Ukraine* Oleksandra Gaidai analyses the developments around Soviet heritage in Central Ukraine, focusing specifically on monuments to Lenin.[81] Although the book covers a significant period of time (from the Soviet period to the period of Ukraine's independence), it also includes a chapter on the changes in the commemorative landscape in post-Euromaidan Ukraine. The chapter provides a useful overview of such commonly observed phenomena as 'Leninopad' in Ukraine in general and in Central Ukraine in particular, the attempts by some social memory actors to preserve Communist monuments, and also the transformation of the pedestals of the former Lenin monuments into spontaneous memorials to the Heavenly Hundred. Gaidai's work provides an important analysis of the activity of different memory actors, including the Communist Party, the nationalist parties (Svoboda and Right Sector), and the local authorities. In particular, the book provides great insights into the reaction of different regional authorities to difficult commemorative topics and demonstrates their ambiguous decisions and attempts to avoid any confrontation. Such insights are particularly useful for understanding the context in which ordinary people conduct their commemorative activity in Central Ukraine. At the same time, when discussing commemorative activity post-Euromaidan (the demolition of monuments and their consequent transformation into Heavenly Hundred memorials), Gaidai describes the bottom-up memory actors as 'members of the general public', 'civic activists', and 'some residents'. As with the above-discussed work of Klymenko, Gaidai's work focuses on general changes in the national identity, the attitudes towards the Soviet past and its utilisation by different memory actors. In other words, the book did not seek to analyse specifically ordinary people as a separate memory actor. Instead, they appear on the pages of the book as part of a larger group of bottom-up memory actors, and their involvement raises questions

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[81] Gaidai, *Kamianyi Hist*.

about their motives, limits, and resources. At the same time, it demonstrates that the commemorative activity of ordinary people is a topic that requires attention and research.

Natalia Kondel-Perminova's article *The competition "Maidan 2014 / Territory of Dignity": New form of the public discussions* discusses the design competition that was organised by the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine and the Kyiv City State Administration to find the best design for a memorial complex dedicated to the Heavenly Hundred, with an intention of then constructing it in Kyiv.[82] This article and other articles by Kondel-Perminova are invaluable for understanding the official procedures of carrying out design competitions in Ukraine, and together they provide a detailed analysis of the involvement of different memory actors (from state institutions to businesses, experts and representatives of the public). In particular, the articles demonstrates that in the discussed design competition the involved memory actors enabled a shift from more 'traditional' public discussions that were commonly observed in such design competitions before the Euromaidan. Thus, the author shows that while in the past the public would be consulted at a very late stage of design competitions, when any suggestions by the public would be almost impossible to realise, in the analysed competition for the Heavenly Hundred, the involved parties challenged this approach and sought to ensure a more productive and timely carrying out of public discussions, and thus a more meaningful involvement of the representatives of the public. At the same time, while reading the article, it is important to ask the question of who exactly these representatives of the public are. Thus, Kondel-Perminova specifies that the participants of the 'round tables', carried out as part of the public discussions, included people with a strong civic stance, such as experts, civic activists, executives, businessmen, and local residents. It is unclear, however, who exactly these local residents were and the degree to which they were able to participate in the round tables and in the public discussions in general, and whether they had an impact on the

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[82] Natalia Kondel-Perminova, 'Konkurs "Maidan 2014 / Terytoriia Hidnosti": Novyi Format Publichnyh Obhovoren', *Suchasni Problemy Doslidzhennia, Restavratsii Ta Zberezhennia Kulturnoi Spadshchyny*, 2014, 122–42.

final decision-making. Were the matter examined it would give a better understanding of the involvement of ordinary people in the commemorative processes.

Elżbieta Olzacka's article *The Role of Museums in Creating National Community in Wartime Ukraine* discusses new exhibition projects devoted to the Revolution of Dignity and the conflict in Eastern Ukraine that take the form of permanent institutions.[83] Such exhibitions are a rather common phenomena in post-Euromaidan Ukraine, and as the author notes, they are organized not only in the national museums of Kyiv and regional museums, but also in public administration offices, educational institutions, volunteer centres, city streets, squares, parks, courts, airports, and Orthodox churches. Olzacka provides valuable analysis of how the Euromaidan protests and the Russia-Ukraine conflict are narrated in such exhibitions, and considers their role in building national bonds in Ukraine. This article demonstrates that that the outcome of commemoration strongly depends on what type of memory actors have been involved. Thus, the author shows that the exhibitions organised by professional museum employees (who had extensive experience in managing and organising exhibitions) are marked by a higher degree of professionalism than those organised by activists (who, despite being experts in certain areas, had no previous experience with working in museums). Furthermore, the article underscores the importance of material resources in commemorative work, and the respective importance of the assistance provided by the state: the scale and level of organisation of the organised exhibitions depended on the level of support provided by the state. Although the article does not focus specifically on the activity of ordinary people, they do appear as an important memory actor. As Olzacka shows, ordinary people (veterans of the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the families and friends of the fallen soldiers) not only donate a significant percentage of items of the analysed new exhibitions, but they also have an opportunity to make decisions and choices that shape the exhibitions. As Olzacka argues, since there as yet exists neither an official version of the events related to the recent history of Ukraine nor a version widely accepted by all Ukrainians, different social and political memory actors seek to produce their own version of memory and

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[83] Elżbieta Olzacka, 'The Role of Museums in Creating National Community in Wartime Ukraine', *Nationalities Papers*, 2020, 1–17.

capitalize on it. As the article shows, in these conditions, ordinary people (participants and witnesses of the events) become active participants in discussion around the shape of memorialisation, and they help shape the public narrative about the recent history of Ukraine.

The examination of existing literature on memory-related processes in post-Euromaidan Ukraine shows that the majority of works focus on the state politics of memory and analyse, for example, how state agencies and institutions work towards the construction of a memorial to the Revolution of Dignity and the soldiers who died in the Russia-Ukraine conflict,[84] produce and execute the 'de-communisation' laws,[85] and frame the memory of the Russia-Ukraine conflict through exhibitions in museums.[86] At the same time, despite this strong state-centred approach, scholars cannot but acknowledge the role played by social memory actors: they often appear only in the background and mentioned in one or two paragraphs reporting that an ordinary person sought to preserve a Communist memorial,[87] created spontaneous memorials to the Heavenly Hundred,[88] provided items for exhibitions,[89] or took part in public discussions.[90] However, overall, discussions around the involvement of social memory actors in general and ordinary people in particular is very fragmented and sometimes lacks conceptualisation and a detailed profiling of these memory actors. Consequently, there is currently a significant gap in current knowledge relating to the commemorative activity of ordinary people, and the present thesis will address this gap.

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[84] Mykola Sholudko and Maksym Sholudko, 'Pamiatnyi Znak Voinam ATO Ta Heroiam Nebesnoi Sotni Na Bulvari Nezalezhnosti u m. Rivnomu – Yak Syntez Obrazotvorchoho Mystetstva i Arkhitektury v Miskomu Seredovyshchi', *Visnyk Natsionalnoho Universytetu Vodnoho Hospodarstva Ta Pryrodokorystuvannia. Tekhnichni Nauky*, 1, 2018, 136–44.

[85] Liubarets, 'The Politics of Memory in Ukraine in 2014'.

[86] Mariana Verkhoturova and Dmytro Shuleshov, 'Vazhlyvist Vshanuvannia Podvyhiv Heroiv ATO (OOS) Na Prykladi Tematychnoi Vystavky Muzeiu Istorii Natsionalnoi Akademii Sukhoputnykh Viisk Imeni Hetmana Petra Sahaidachnoho', *Naukovyi Visnyk Natsionalnoho Muzeiu Istorii Ukrainy*, 6, 2020, 571–75; Olha Pashkova, 'Rol Viiskovykh Muzeiv u Viiskovo-Patriotychnomu Vykhovanni Kursantiv Vyshchykh Viiskovykh Navchalnykh Zakladiv v Umovakh Zbroinoi Ahresii Proty Ukrainy', *Voienno-Istorychnyi Visnyk*, 38.4 (2020), 238–44.

[87] Gaidai, *Kamianyi Hist*.

[88] Liubarets, 'The Politics of Memory in Ukraine in 2014'.

[89] Olzacka, 'The Role of Museums'.

[90] Kondel-Perminova, 'Konkurs "Maidan 2014 / Terytoriia Hidnosti"'.

Contribution of the study

This study offers a detailed analysis of the commemorative activity of ordinary people. This analysis provides insights into the resources and power of ordinary people as memory actors, their interaction with state institutions, and utilisation of available mechanisms that are created by the state to allow for the participation of ordinary people in commemorative processes. In addition, it produces knowledge on how ordinary people narrate violent events through the visual language of commemorative objects. The present thesis also examines commemorative practices that are carried out immediately after a revolutionary event and in the context of an ongoing conflict — a topic that is not yet sufficiently researched. Focusing on one of the oblasts in Central Ukraine, it also represents an important contribution to research on historical memory in this region. Furthermore, the thesis contributes to the conceptualisation of the term 'ordinary people' in memory studies.

Structure of the thesis

Chapter One examines the state politics of memory in independent Ukraine in order to contextualise the commemorative activity of ordinary people. First, it outlines the overall characteristics of the state politics of memory in post-Soviet Ukraine, focusing on such features as the 'nationalisation' of history and the utilisation of founding myths, the glorification of the past and the use of narratives of heroism and pride, as well as the victimisation of Ukraine, and a distancing from the Soviet Ukrainian historiography. The chapter also discusses the observed ambiguous and hybrid nature of the official politics of memory in post-Soviet Ukraine. The second part of Chapter One provides an overview of the Euromaidan protests, their aftermath, and the Russia-Ukraine conflict. As part of this overview, the chapter examines the utilisation of historical narratives during the Euromaidan and the conflict with Russia, the 'de-communisation' processes in Ukraine, and the perception of the Euromaidan and the conflict by the Ukrainian public.

Chapter Two introduces ordinary people in the Poltava oblast as memory actors and provides a profile of them. Through analysing the different types of resources that ordinary people utilise in the course of carrying out commemorative activity, Chapter Two provides insights into their skills, strategies and interactions with the local authorities. This chapter prepares the ground for the analysis of ordinary people's commemorative activity in the following chapters. Chapter Three recognises that the commemorative activity of ordinary people is not conducted in a vacuum, and that it is crucial to investigate the state mechanisms (including laws, regulations, and official procedures) that are introduced by the state in order to give opportunity to ordinary people to exercise their agency in the area of commemoration. For this purpose, the chapter provides an overview of the identified state mechanisms and focuses on design competitions as a mechanism that is seen as an excellent example of both the power of the state and the participation of ordinary people. As part of the investigation, the chapter also examines different interactions between ordinary people and state agencies.

Chapter Four examines how the two violent events (the Euromaidan protests and the Russia-Ukraine conflict) are narrated by ordinary people through the visual language of commemorative objects. The chapter starts with an analysis of the visual language used to narrate mourning, trauma, and grief, and then proceeds to a discussion of how ordinary people narrate sacrifice in the name of the nation and the need for the recognition of their memories. The second part of the chapter investigates how the visual language used by ordinary people characterises the nature of the commemorated violent events and delivers interpretations of their meaning. As part of investigation, this section of the chapter examines how the utilised visual language narrates the events as a struggle supported by God, presents them as a 'just' and 'noble' struggle, and produces powerful narratives through linking the commemorated events to the Cossack era and other periods in Ukraine's history.

The analysed commemorative activity of ordinary people was carried out in a very particular context: following power-changing protests when demand for radical changes in the governance of the country and elimination of corruption was very high,

and also at a time of an ongoing violent conflict in the country. Chapter Five seeks to take this context into account and investigates how the key factors associated with the aftermath of the Euromaidan revolution and the ongoing conflict in Eastern Ukraine impact on the commemorative activity of ordinary people in the Poltava oblast. The first part of the chapter focuses on the post-revolutionary context of commemoration, and discusses the limits of human agency, the instrumentalisation of memory, and incremental steps towards changing the existing memorial paradigm. The second part of the chapter discusses the peculiarities of the commemoration of an ongoing conflict by ordinary people, including the peculiarity of commemoration in a situation of continuing losses; the striving to future-proof the memories in response to the volatile environment in the country; and the urge to educate present and future generations.

Methodology and sources

Primary and secondary sources

For the purpose of this research, primary and secondary data were used. The primary data consists of interviews with research participants, ethnographic data collected during trips to the sites of memory, and official information held by state institutions (city, town, and district councils). Fifty-six interviews were conducted both face-to-face (during field trips to the Poltava oblast in July-August 2018 and July-August 2019) and remotely (in 2020-2021).[91] Specifically, for the purposes of fieldwork the following cities, towns and villages were visited: Poltava, Kremenchuk, Hadiach, Myrhorod, Khorol, Trudoliub, Opishnia, Pishchane and Horishni Plavni. Due to the travel limitations in 2020-2021, introduced as the result of the coronavirus pandemic, it was not possible to conduct face-to-face interviews during this period, and remote interviews were deemed a suitable alternative. The interviewees were selected through a combination of purposive and snowball sampling. The participants were asked to have one 1-1.5 hour long semi-structured interview with the researcher. The face-to-face interviews were conducted in the Poltava Oblast in Central Ukraine, in

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[91] A list of the interviews is provided in Appendix 1.

public places (such as cafes and parks), and the remote interviews were conducted using Zoom teleconferencing software program.

The research received approval from the University Research Ethics Committee, and as part of the approval process the Committee examined the research methodology, the consent form provided to the research participants (non-vulnerable adults), the participant information sheet and the interview guide. The audio of the interviews was recorded and later transcribed. All personal data were kept securely in identifiable form for only as long as necessary to the project and anonymised as soon as possible, in order to maintain confidentiality. All personal data and all audio recordings were stored on password-protected and encrypted hard disk drives. As the table of interviews demonstrates (Appendix 1), the interviewed research participants are ordinary people, public officials, experts in art and architecture, and members of political parties; all participants were at some point since 2014 involved in different projects aimed at commemoration of the Euromaidan protests and the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Some interviews (including with veterans of the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the parents who lost their sons in the conflict) required a delicate approach, so as not to exacerbate emotional traumas and to not cause unnecessary psychological distress.

The official information held by state institutions was obtained from their websites (such as minutes of official meetings and administrative decrees). When such documents were not available online, official requests for provision of information were submitted to the relevant state bodies, which then provided their formal responses.

The secondary data consists of openly available statistical data, opinion polls and surveys, provided by research institutes and think tanks in Ukraine, and also reports in Ukrainian online newspapers.

Selection of objects for analysis

Involvement of ordinary people in the construction of monuments was the main parameter for the selection of objects for analysis. Such involvement of ordinary people is observed at different stages: from initiation and the design stage, to inviting the architect, obtaining necessary funds, and carrying out construction works.

Chapter One: Historical memory in independent Ukraine: contextualising the commemorative activity of ordinary people

1.1. Introduction

Through constructing memorials to the Euromaidan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict, ordinary people in Ukraine enter the realm of public meaning-making: their memorials add these two events to the existing narratives of Ukraine's past. This chapter aims to contextualise the commemorative activity of ordinary people and to provide an overview of the state politics of memory in independent Ukraine. Placing the commemorative activity of ordinary people in its historical setting, this chapter helps to reveal the contested and multifaceted nature of this activity. By showing how groups in power have struggled to shape the past in independent Ukraine (across time and space) and what discursive strategies have been used to revise the national memory, the following account brings into focus the stimuli and constraints that ordinary people have responded to when they constructed memorials to the Euromaidan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The chapter addresses the following research question: *What are the key developments in the production of historical narratives and formation of national identity in post-Soviet Ukraine?*

However intensely personal memory making and acts of commemoration can be at the micro level, they are not carried out in a vacuum. Ordinary people formed their own individual memory of the Euromaidan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict. However, the memorials constructed by ordinary people to these events are both shaped by and make an addition to the collective memory of Ukrainians. The majority of academic work to date focuses on the politics of memory of the Ukrainian state. As such, it is rather difficult to come to any balanced judgement about the degree of the involvement of different non-state actors in the processes of identity formation, as these have never yet been the primary focus of scholarly attention. As a prelude to examining ordinary people's commemorative activity, this chapter aims to reconstruct the predominantly state-orchestrated context in which commemorative practice has taken place since

Ukraine regained independence. Two distinctly different phases characterise this period: the pre-Euromaidan period, and the post-Euromaidan, Russia-Ukraine conflict period. Accordingly, the chapter at its broadest is organised chronologically. Within each of the two sections, the context within which commemoration takes place is discussed from a number of angles, each of which is indicated through sub-headings. This approach has been propelled by the multidisciplinary character of memory studies itself. Hence, as well as looking at commemorative practice on level of and in terms of state-craft and policy, it also touches on school text books, statues, and the words of the national anthem, together with the various retellings of Ukraine's history as an independent state, and as part of larger political bodies. This generates an understanding of the more official contexts within which ordinary people undertake commemorative activity.

The first part of the chapter focuses on the period from the dissolution of the Soviet Union until the Euromaidan protests in 2013. It highlights the key tendencies in the politics of memory in post-Soviet Ukraine that had the potential to impact on ordinary people's understanding of the Euromaidan protests and the Russia-Ukraine conflict and their consequent commemoration, namely, the ambiguity and regionality of the politics of memory, founding myths and nationalisation of history, the glorification of the past, and the victimisation of Ukraine. The second part of the chapter outlines the changes that have taken place since the Euromaidan (2013-2014) and after the onset of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in 2014. This relates how historical narratives have been utilised, the process of de-communisation, the official commemoration the Euromaidan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict and how the public has perceived these two events.

1.2. Post-Soviet Ukraine: overall characteristics of the state politics of memory

Since the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, Ukraine, like other Eastern European countries, has undergone a range of processes in the area of memory.[92] In the late

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[92] Mitroiu, 'Life Writing and Politics of Memory in Eastern Europe: Introduction'; Aleida Assmann, 'Europe's Divided Memory', in *Memory and Theory in Eastern Europe*, ed. by Uilleam Blacker, Alexander Etkind, and Julie Fedor (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 25–42 (p. 31).

1980s and immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union, past crimes which were committed by the Soviet state against its own citizens have become one of the key topics in Ukraine's culture of memory.[93] Great attention has been paid to the resurfaced and re-discovered stories of those people who suffered during the Second World War and in its aftermath as a result of Soviet and Nazi policies, and different geopolitical activities of the Soviet Union, including during the Cold War.[94] These stories include memories of the forced deportations of Poles, Ukrainians, Crimean Tatars and other peoples, organised by Nazi Germany and the USSR during and after the Second World War.[95] In addition, memories about inter-ethnic violence and old conflicts were brought into focus.[96] Furthermore, Ukraine also had to deal with those memories of the Soviet past that were supported and promoted by the Soviet Union itself.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union led to important changes in the composition of memory actors in Ukraine. Under Communist rule, historical narratives in Soviet Ukraine had been controlled to a significant degree and censored by the Communist regime, with the state authorities dictating a certain version of the past. After the fall of Communism, new actors were able to take part in the representation of the past, including diaspora, newly emerged political forces, and ordinary people.[97] Nevertheless, as Catherine Wanner notes, the state remained the most important memory actor, only this time it was the new Ukrainian state, and it had new task. This was to culturally construct a Ukrainian national identity by utilising and producing collective memories, founding myths and national history, and to ensure a sense of

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[93] Ihor Symonenko, 'Memorialnyi Prostir Ukrainy: Kryzovyi Stan Ta Shliakhy Ozdorovlennia', *Stratehichni Priorytety*, 4, 2009, 53–63 (p. 56).
[94] Uilleam Blacker and Alexander Etkind, 'Introduction', in *Memory and Theory in Eastern Europe*, ed. by Uilleam Blacker, Alexander Etkind, and Julie Fedor (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 1–24 (p. 8).
[95] Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, 'Introduction. Beyond the History of Ethnic Cleansing in Europe', in *Whose Memory? Which Future? Remembering Ethnic Cleansing and Lost Cultural Diversity in Eastern, Central, and Southeastern Europe*, ed. by Barbara Törnquist-Plewa (New York-Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2016), pp. 1–16 (p. 2).
[96] Jerzy Jedlicki, 'Historical Memory as a Source of Conflicts in Eastern Europe', *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 32, 1999, 225–32.
[97] Michal Kopeček, 'Preface', in *Past in the Making: Historical Revisionism in Central Europe after 1989*, ed. by Michal Kopeček (Central European University Press, 2008), pp. vii–x (p. vii).

belonging to one nation among a highly diverse population.[98] In other words, it was crucial for the new authorities to explain why the Ukrainian state had the right to exist, what history it had, and what it meant to be a Ukrainian.

1.2.1. Ambiguity and regionality of the politics of memory

The state politics of memory in independent Ukraine before the Euromaidan has generally been analysed by scholars by dividing it into four periods, corresponding to the tenures of the first four presidents (Leonid Kravchuk, Leonid Kuchma, Viktor Yushchenko and Viktor Yanukovych). All four presidents faced a difficult task – to support (or not) certain historical narratives in the country where different regions had different historical experiences and interpretations of the past. After all, for many centuries the territory of present-day Ukraine was divided between its neighbouring states (including between the Austro-Hungarian empire and the Russian empire until the early 20th century, and then between Poland, Romania, and the Soviet Union before the Second World War). The politics of memory of the first two presidents (Leonid Kravchuk and Leonid Kuchma, 1991-1994 and 1994-2005 respectively) is commonly characterised by scholars as being ambivalent: in the context of diverse regional memories, the idea of 'not rocking the boat' seemed to be their preferred strategy.[99] Thus, for example, if in Western Ukraine most Communist memorials were quickly removed by local memory actors in the early 1990s, in the rest of the country they predominantly remained, while on the official level the issue of Communist memorials was not extensively discussed. During the presidency of Viktor Yushchenko (2005-2010), the state politics of memory took a nationalising approach to history, with the opening of the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance (UINR) in 2006, and the focus on such topics as the Holodomor and the operation of Ukrainian nationalists during the Second World War.[100] The presidency of Viktor Yanukovych (2010-2014), however, was characterised by a different approach to history, with a

[98] Catherine Wanner, *Burden of Dreams: History and Identity in Post-Soviet Ukraine* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), p. xxiv.
[99] Andrii Portnov, 'Uprazhneniya s Istoriey Po-Ukrainski', *Ab Imperio*, 3, 2007, 93–138.
[100] Barbara Törnquist-Plewa and Yulia Yurchuk, 'Memory Politics in Contemporary Ukraine: Reflections from the Postcolonial Perspective', *Memory Studies*, 12(6) (2019), 699–720.

pro-Russian stance and return to Soviet symbols.[101] Although the politics of memory of each of the four presidents had a particular vector and character, they all instrumentalised memory and used it to serve particular political purposes.[102]

Scholars often agree that in general the official politics of memory in post-Soviet Ukraine has been characterised by a lack of consistency, ambiguity and hybridity, which came as a result of the oscillation between competing ideologically charged narratives of the past[103] and political rivalry of the regional elites.[104] Thus, when discussing these characteristics, Mykola Riabchuk suggests that they should be seen as a result of "the hybrid nature of the post-Soviet regime that emerged from the compromise between the former ideological rivals ("national democrats" and "sovereign communists")",[105] and also of the hybrid and highly ambivalent nature of Ukrainian post-Soviet society.[106] As a result of this, historical narratives have been increasingly instrumentalised by the Ukrainian political forces. For example, the local authorities' resistance to the erection of monuments to Ivan Mazepa[107] and Symon Petliura[108] in Poltava was considered to be driven by political interests,[109] just as the

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[101] Törnquist-Plewa and Yurchuk, 'Memory Politics in Contemporary Ukraine', p. 704.

[102] Törnquist-Plewa and Yurchuk, 'Memory Politics in Contemporary Ukraine'; Portnov, 'Memory Wars in Post-Soviet Ukraine (1991-2010)'; Wilfried Jilge, 'The Politics of History and the Second World War in Post-Communist Ukraine', *Jahrbücher Für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 54.1 (2006), 50–81; Shevel, 'No Way Out?'; Taras Kuzio, 'Post-Soviet Ukrainian Historiography in Ukraine', *Internationale Schulbuchforschung*, 23.1 (2001), 27–42; Yulia Yurchuk, 'Reclaiming the Past, Confronting the Past: OUN–UPA Memory Politics and Nation Building in Ukraine (1991–2016)', in *War and Memory in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus*, ed. by Julie Fedor, Markku Kangaspuro, and Jussi Lassila (Palgrave Macmillan Memory Studies, 2017), pp. 107–40.

[103] Oxana Shevel, 'The Politics of Memory in a Divided Society: A Comparison of Post-Franco Spain and Post-Soviet Ukraine', *Slavic Review*, 70.1 (2011), 137–64 (p. 138).

[104] Larysa Nahorna, 'Kultura Istorychnoii Pamiati', in *Kultura Istorychnoi Pamiati: Yevropeiskyi Ta Ukrainskyi Dosvid*, ed. by Yurii Shapoval (Kyiv: IPIEND, 2013), pp. 9–34 (p. 28).

[105] Mykola Riabchuk, 'Holodomor: The Politics of Memory and Political Infighting in Contemporary Ukraine', *Harriman Review*, 16.2 (2008), 4–9 (p. 3).

[106] Riabchuk, 'Holodomor: The Politics of Memory', p. 4.

[107] The initiatives to construct monuments to Mazepa inevitably raised questions about Russia-Ukraine relations in the 18th century. Mazepa, who during the Battle of Poltava (1709) switched sides, leaving Peter the Great and siding with the king of Sweden, was presented by Tsarist and Soviet historiography as a traitor. His rehabilitation in post-Soviet Ukraine symbolically linked medieval Kyivan Rus' to independent Ukraine through the Cossack era.

[108] Symon Petliura became the Supreme Commander of the Ukrainian Army and the President of the Ukrainian People's Republic during Ukraine's short-lived sovereignty in 1918-1921. Ukrainian historiography presents him as key person in Ukraine's struggle for independence, whereas Soviet historiography saw him as a leader of the anti-Soviet counterrevolutionary movement in Ukraine and an organiser of Jewish pogroms.

[109] Portnov, 'Memory Wars in Post-Soviet Ukraine (1991-2010)', p. 246.

protests against the construction of a memorial to Ivan Mazepa in Kyiv.[110] As a result of the hybrid memory regime, it is was not uncommon[111] to find ideologically 'polar' memories co-existing on the city map: the proximity of Kyiv streets named after Ivan Mazepa's ally Pylyp Orlyk and the Ukrainian nationalist poet Olena Teliha to the Bolshevik's Vorovskii, Frunze, and Uritskii is a clear example of this.[112] At the same time, as Andrii Portnov argues, although a lack of political and social consensus on questions of historical politics prevents the development of an all-Ukrainian image of the past, it is also an obstacle to a monopolistic instrumentalisation of the past by one political force.[113]

The regionality of collective memories played an important role in how the politics of memory was shaped in post-Soviet Ukraine. One example of the regional differences, as well as one of the most discussed topics in relation to Ukraine's involvement in the Second World War is the activity of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN)[114] and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA).[115] Scholars, politicians, and ordinary people often have polarised opinions about the activity of the Ukrainian nationalists during the Second World War, especially in relation to their cooperation with the German forces and their involvement in the Holocaust and the ethnic cleansing of the Polish

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[110] Symonenko, 'Memorialnyi Prostir Ukrainy', p. 56.

[111] This situation changed after the 'de-communisation' processes that will be discussed later in this chapter.

[112] Portnov, 'Memory Wars in Post-Soviet Ukraine (1991-2010)', p. 236.

[113] Portnov, 'Memory Wars in Post-Soviet Ukraine (1991-2010)', p. 248.

[114] Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) – a Ukrainian political organisation established in 1929. In 1940, it split into two parts: the OUM-M (headed by Andriy Melnyk) and OUN-B (headed by Stepan Bandera). Nowadays, the media, the public and some scholars commonly refer to the OUN-B simply as the OUN. During the Second World War the OUN's armed units fought against the Soviet troops and the German troops. According to Timothy Snyder, "for patriotic Ukrainians the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists created a moment of Ukrainian sovereign action by declaring a Ukrainian state under Nazi occupation in 1941 and a lasting memory of national heroism by their doomed struggle, for Poles its UPA was the organisation which cleansed Poles from Western Ukraine in 1943 and 1944" (Snyder 2004:41).

[115] Ukrainian Insurgent Army – an armed branch of the OUN that operated in Ukraine in 1942-1953. It was a nationalistic underground movement some of whose members and units were involved in anti-Polish and anti-Jewish actions during the war. UPA continued anti-Soviet resistance until the early 1950s. Its legacy remains highly contested in today's Ukraine. Both the OUN and the UPA (which are nowadays sometimes referred to jointly as "the OUN-UPA") are a very divisive symbol in modern Ukraine (Wilson 2015:134).

population in 1943-1944 in Volhynia.[116] On the level of collective memory,
interpretations of this page of Ukraine's past differ substantially from region to region.
Thus, the western Ukrainian narrative often presents the struggle of the OUN / UPA
against the Soviet forces as heroic and aimed at achieving Ukraine's independence.[117]
Accordingly, the annexation of Western Ukraine (Eastern Galicia, Volhynia, and
Northern Bukovina) by the Soviet forces in 1939-1940 is commonly seen in this region
as occupation, thus opposing the Soviet narrative of liberation.[118] In other regions of
Ukraine, which had been part of the Soviet Union since 1922, the OUN / UPA are often
perceived in a negative light.[119] This can be regarded as a continuation of Soviet
historiography which presented them as collaborators with Nazi Germany and
murderers.[120]

Another example of the regionalisation of the politics of memory is the re-emerging
narratives of Imperial Tsarist Russia, especially observed in Southern regions of
Ukraine.[121] The observed co-existence of different narratives is not always smooth:
when a monument to Catherine the Great was constructed in Odesa in 2007, it caused
local protests and clashes with the police, which was seen as a confrontation between
different political forces, including Ukrainian nationalists and pro-Russian groups.[122] In
2007, the local authorities of Sevastopol also initiated the construction of a monument
to Catherine the Great, which caused similar confrontations.[123] In order to 'defuse the
tension', the head of the city council suggested the construction of a memorial to a

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[116] The ethnic cleansing operations in Volhynia in 1943-1944, which are commonly seen as a conflict
between the OUN-B and the Armia Krajowa, is a source of heated debates in Ukraine and Poland (see,
for example, Portnov 2016).
[117] Andreas Kappeler, 'From an Ethnonational to a Multiethnic to a Transnational Ukrainian History', in *A
Laboratory of Transnational History: Ukraine and Recent Ukrainian Historiography*, ed. by Georgiy
Kasianov and Philipp Ther (Central European University Press, 2009), pp. 51–80 (p. 55).
[118] Anna Wylegała, 'Managing the Difficult Past: Ukrainian Collective Memory and Public Debates on
History', *Nationalities Papers*, 45.5 (2017), 780–97.
[119] Shevel, 'No Way Out?'
[120] Jilge, 'The Politics of History'.
[121] Symonenko, 'Memorialnyi Prostir Ukrainy', p. 54.
[122] Symonenko, 'Memorialnyi Prostir Ukrainy', p. 56.
[123] The monument was unveiled in 2008. Its construction was opposed by the president Viktor
Yushchenko but supported by Viktor Yanukovych.

Cossack hetman Petro Konashevych-Sahaidachny.[124] Such attempts to 'balance' conflicting memories have been seen by scholars as a yet another example of the politicisation of memory in Ukraine.[125] Memory wars[126] continued to play an important role in discussions around Ukrainian history and identity throughout the Euromaidan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict, reminding us once again about the importance of the past for the present. This demonstrates that ordinary people, whose activity is analysed in this thesis, operate in a context in which the interpretation of Ukraine's past is not set in stone and is an area of ongoing contention. As Chapter Five will demonstrate, this influences ordinary people's commemorative activity.

1.2.2. Founding myths and 'nationalisation' of history

Ukraine's post-Soviet historiography sought to replace official Soviet historiography. The Soviet narrative explained Ukraine's journey from Kyivan Rus' through the Cossack times to its development into a Socialist state, along with other Slavic nations.[127] This narrative was well-developed and easy to understand; under the guidance of great leaders, ordinary Ukrainians contributed to the establishment of Soviet rule, played an important role in its economic and cultural development, and also protected their land from the Nazi invaders. This ideologically motivated interpretation of Ukraine's history clearly omitted a range of topics. Thus, it excludes the memory of those events in which Ukrainians either fought for independence or suffered at the hands of Soviet rulers, as this would de-legitimise the idea of the voluntary acceptance of Soviet rule by the locals. Moreover, the commemorative space of Soviet Ukraine did not present any memories of the inter-ethnic conflicts which took place in the country during the 20th century (such as the Polish-Ukrainian conflicts before and during the Second World War). Such omission was not unique to Ukraine: according to Alexei Miller, in Communist countries such ethnic conflicts became a taboo topic, because such issues

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[124] Petro Konashevych-Sahaidachny (1582-1622) was a Cossack Hetman who led military campaigns against the Crimean Khanate, the Ottoman Empire, and the Russian Tsardom (on the side of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth).
[125] Nahorna, 'Kultura Istorychnoii Pamiati', p. 29.
[126] Portnov, 'Memory Wars in Post-Soviet Ukraine (1991-2010)'.
[127] Kuzio, 'Post-Soviet Ukrainian Historiography in Ukraine'.

would undermine the idea of "fraternity of peoples of the Socialism camp."[128] Similarly, Soviet Ukraine had no memorials commemorating the victims of the locals who collaborated with Nazi Germany: such memories would disrupt the image of the Great Patriotic War, in which the Soviet people fought in unity and sacrificed their lives. As scholars note, the Soviet historical narrative did not disappear from the collective consciousness in independent Ukraine, rather, it was adapted to fit present-day conditions[129] and coexisted with the new Ukrainian historiography.[130]

The circumstances in which Ukraine gained its independence laid the foundation for the politics of memory of its new authorities. In the late 1980s, before the collapse of the USSR, leaders of the Ukrainian nationalist movements employed historical narratives to emphasise the oppression of Ukraine by the Soviet Union. Thus, as Catherine Wanner shows, the Chornobyl catastrophe and the death of millions of Ukrainians during the Holodomor (1932-1933) were used as an example of such oppression.[131] According to Serhy Yekelchyk, the nationalist opposition leaders also interpreted history employing economic arguments, explaining that as soon as Ukraine got rid of Moscow's colonial politics (characterised by over-taxation and under-investment), it would be able to manage its own economy and improve the standard of living.[132] Although both historical and economic arguments played an important role in the public's aspirations towards the independence of Ukraine, scholars note that economic prospects were the main reason that Ukrainians overwhelmingly voted for independence on 1 December 1991.[133] With Russia presenting itself as the successor of the Soviet Union and unwilling to recognise Ukraine as an equal state and separate nation,[134] the incorporation of the Soviet legacy into the national myth of the now independent Ukraine became even more difficult. After all, as Andrii Portnov notes, it

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[128] Alexei Miller, 'Introduction. Historical Politics: Eastern European Convolutions in the 21st Century', in *Convolutions of Historical Politics*, ed. by Alexei Miller and Maria Lipman (Central European University Press, 2012), pp. 1–20 (p. 3).
[129] Symonenko, 'Memorialnyi Prostir Ukrainy', p. 54.
[130] Portnov, 'Memory Wars in Post-Soviet Ukraine (1991-2010)', p. 236.
[131] Wanner, *Burden of Dreams*, p. xxv.
[132] Serhy Yekelchyk, 'Cossack Gold: History, Myth, and the Dream of Prosperity in the Age of Post-Soviet Transition', *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 40.3/4 (1998), 311–25 (p. 313).
[133] Portnov, 'Uprazhneniya s Istoriey Po-Ukrainski', p. 97; Yekelchyk, 'Cossack Gold', p. 313.
[134] Andreas Kappeler, 'Ukraine and Russia: Legacies of the Imperial Past and Competing Memories', *Journal of Eurasian Studies*, 5, 2014, 107–15 (p. 108).

would be rather difficult to justify Ukraine's need for independence if it was believed that Ukraine was a product of Soviet-era policies.[135] Furthermore, with the deteriorating economic situation in Ukraine in the early post-Soviet years, positive references to life during the Soviet period would have weakened the pro-independence arguments.

Although after 1991 some former leaders of the opposition secured positions in the upper echelons of power, they legitimised the power of the old Soviet elite, who largely remained in place.[136] Faced with the need to legitimise their own power and the independence of Ukraine in general, the new Ukrainian authorities adopted a nationalist mythology, which focused on Ukraine's pre-Soviet examples of statehood. Thus, scholars note that the first decade of Ukraine's independence was characterised by official efforts to 'nationalise' Ukraine's history.[137] Academic literature demonstrates that similar processes were observed in other post-Communist Central and East European countries, and that in part this was triggered by the need to place the new states on a radically changed geopolitical map and to find answers to identity questions of who 'we' and 'they' are.[138] Jan-Werner Müller notes that this region has been involved in a "catching-up" nation building, which included the mobilisation of collective memories and inventing a more distant past.[139] According to Müller, this process is associated with issues of national self-determination and the associated need of the post-Communist states for "founding myths."[140]

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[135] Portnov, 'Memory Wars in Post-Soviet Ukraine (1991-2010)', p. 234.

[136] Portnov, 'Memory Wars in Post-Soviet Ukraine (1991-2010)', p. 234.

[137] Nahorna, 'Kultura Istorychnoii Pamiati'; Taras Kuzio, 'National Identity and History Writing in Ukraine', *Nationalities Papers*, 34.4 (2006), 407–27 (p. 410); Yurchuk, 'Reclaiming the Past, Confronting the Past', p. 115.

[138] Klas-Göran Karlsson, 'The Uses of History and the Third Wave of Europeanisation', in *A European Memory? Contested Histories and Politics of Remembrance*, ed. by Małgorzata Pakier and Bo Stråth (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010), pp. 38–55 (p. 39).

[139] Jan-Werner Müller, 'Introduction: The Power of Memory, the Memory of Power and the Power over Memory', in *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe*, ed. by Jan-Werner Müller (Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 1–35 (p. 9).

[140] Müller, 'Introduction', p. 9.

Several scholars have explored such processes in independent Ukraine.[141] Thus, Georgiy Kasianov argues that with the fall of the Soviet Union historians started reconstructing Ukraine's history "in reverse" and laid a foundation for the "nationalisation of history".[142] This approach is notable for the particular way in which it interprets Ukraine's history, that is, that gaining sovereignty and its own state was the centuries-long destiny of the nation.[143] According to Kasianov, such nationalisation of history remained the leading trend in Ukraine's historiography and politics of memory in the following decades.[144] When writing about the new school history curricula introduced in Ukraine in the early 1990s, Kostiantyn Bakhanov states that these put forward the following development of Ukraine's history: Slavic settlements – Kyivan Rus' – the Kingdom of Galicia-Volhynia – the Lithuanian period – the Cossack period – the period under the rule of the Austrian and Russian empires – the national revolution (UNR[145] / ZUNR[146]) – Soviet rule (including, among others, the activity of the OUN / UPA and the dissident movement) – independent Ukraine.[147] Bakhanov notes that this early post-Soviet narrative of Ukrainian history required a "pantheon" of new heroes, who were also introduced into the commemorative landscape of the country. This telling of the past was not restricted to school curricula and textbooks; a similar story of Ukraine's history was delivered through monuments and national holidays. For example, since 1999 Ukraine has officially celebrated the Day of Unity of Ukraine (Den' Sobornosti Ukrainy), to remember the unification of the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR) with the West Ukrainian People's Republic (ZUNR) on 22 January 1919. While this episode in Ukraine's history was not emphasised by Soviet historiography, the new Ukrainian authorities have seen the potential of telling the history of the formation of the nation-state.[148]

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[141] Georgiy Kasianov, 'The "Nationalization" of History in Ukraine', in *Convolutions of Historical Politics*, ed. by Alexei Miller and Maria Lipman (Central European University Press, 2012), pp. 141–74; Serhy Yekelchyk, 'Bridging the Past and the Future: Ukrainian History Writing Since Independence', *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 53.2/4 (2011), 559–73; Kostiantyn Bakhanov, 'Novi Chasy – Novi Heroi: Formuvannia Kultury Pamiati v Ukraini', in *Kultura Istorychnoi Pamiati: Yevropeiskyi Ta Ukrainskyi Dosvid*, ed. by Yurii Shapoval (Kyiv: IPIEND, 2013), pp. 182–216.

[142] Kasianov, 'The "Nationalization"', p. 143.

[143] Portnov, 'Memory Wars in Post-Soviet Ukraine (1991-2010)', p. 237.

[144] Kasianov, 'The "Nationalization"', p. 173.

[145] Ukrainian People's Republic.

[146] West Ukrainian People's Republic.

[147] Bakhanov, 'Novi Chasy – Novi Heroi', p. 206.

[148] Jilge, 'The Politics of History', p. 69.

When analysing the nationalising approach of Ukraine's post-Soviet historiography, scholars note that some of its aspects can be problematic. Serhii Plokhy argues that the grand narrative focusing on the Ukrainian ethnic nation's struggle for its own state results in other groups (especially ethnic minorities such as Russians, Jews, Poles, and Germans) being marginalised.[149] As Plokhy notes, these groups played an important role in Ukraine's history, and instead of being presented as aggressors, oppressors, and exploiters in the struggle with whom the Ukrainian nation developed, it would be best to include them in the new narrative of Ukraine's history "not just as 'others'; but as part of the collective 'we'".[150] Both the Euromaidan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict raised questions regarding the role and inclusion of other ethnic groups in the Ukrainian nation,[151] and for the purposes of the present thesis it is important to take this aspect of Ukraine's official politics of memory into account.

Analysing the new Ukrainian historiography, scholars commonly discuss two distinct approaches: victimisation and glorification of the past.[152] These approaches are not unique to Ukraine. Academic literature often examines them in relation to politics of memory in former Communist states,[153] as well as other countries.[154] According to

[149] Serhii Plokhii, *Ukraine and Russia: Representations of the Past* (University of Toronto Press Incorporated, 2008), p. 289.

[150] Plokhii, *Ukraine and Russia*, p. 289.

[151] Olga Onuch and Henry E. Hale, 'Capturing Ethnicity: The Case of Ukraine', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 34.2–3 (2018), 84–106; Volodymyr Kulyk, 'National Identity in Ukraine: Impact of Euromaidan and the War', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 68.4, 588–608; Volodymyr Kulyk, 'Shedding Russianness, Recasting Ukrainianness: The PostEuromaidan Dynamics of Ethnonational Identifications in Ukraine', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 34.2–3, 119–38.

[152] David R. Marples, *Heroes and Villains: Creating National History in Contemporary Ukraine* (Central European University Press, 2007); Andrew Wilson, 'Myths of National History in Belarus and Ukraine', in *Myths and Nationhood*, ed. by Geoffrey Hosking and George Schopflin, 1997, pp. 182–97; Rasevych, 'Polityka Pamiati i Podolannia Mizhnatsionalnykh Stereotypiv v Suchasnii Ukraini', in *Istorychni Mify i Stereotypy Ta Mizhnatsionalni Vidnosyny v Suchasnii Ukraini*, ed. by Leonid Zashkilniak (I.Krypiakevych Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 2009), pp. 53–71; Tetyana Bureychak and Olena Petrenko, 'Heroic Masculinity in Post-Soviet Ukraine: Cossacks, UPA and "Svoboda"', *East/West Journal of Ukrainian Studies*, II.2 (2015), 3–28.

[153] Assmann, 'Europe's Divided Memory', p. 29; Blacker and Etkind, 'Introduction', p. 8; Igor Torbakov, 'History, Memory and National Identity Understanding the Politics of History and Memory Wars in Post-Soviet Lands', *Demokratizatsiya*, 19 (3), 209–32 (p. 215).

[154] Anthony D. Smith, 'Culture, Community and Territory: The Politics of Ethnicity and Nationalism', *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, Ethnicity and International Relations, 72.3 (1996), 445–58 (p. 455); Barbara Misztal, 'Memory and Democracy', *American Behavioral Scientist*, 48.10 (2005), 1320–38 (p. 1334); Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of*

Duncan Bell, to mould a sense of national identity, a nationalist discourse must be able "to represent the unfolding of time in such a way that the nation assumes a privileged and valorized role."[155] However, any discussion about a country's 'glorious past' would also raise questions about the crimes that representatives of the nation in question committed in different historical periods. After all, as rightfully noted by Robin Wagner-Pacifici, "For glorious, heroic moments always leave casualties and sacrifices in their paths."[156] However, discussions about such crimes are not only painful, but also could be seen as a threat to national cohesion.[157] Consequently, presenting the nation as a victim of external forces, or of certain historical circumstances, can be a preferred approach of the state as a memory actor. As Igor Torbakov notes, "having liberated oneself of the sense of historical, political, moral or whatever responsibility, it is arguably much easier to take pride in one's newly minted "unblemished" identity based on the celebratory interpretation of one's country's "glorious past.""[158] Ukraine's fight against internal and external forces has become a key topic during the Euromaidan protests and the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and the second part of this chapter will consider it in more detail. However, we need to thus delve deeper into how this discourse of victimisation was used between 1991-2013, because it will help to contextualise the commemoration of the Euromaidan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict by ordinary people and their portrayal of Ukraine and its nation.

1.2.3. Victimisation of Ukraine

One of the criticisms of the new historiography that has emerged in independent Ukraine concerns its general portrayal of Ukraine's journey to independence and the role of its citizens. For example, in 2007 a group of Ukrainian historians analysed the

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Israeli National Tradition (University of Chicago Press, 1997), pp. 17–22; Heidemarie Uhl, 'From Victim Myth to Co-Responsibility Thesis: Nazi Rule, World War II, and the Holocaust in Austrian Memory', in *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*, ed. by Richard N. Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner, and Claudio Fogu, 2006, pp. 40–72.

[155] Duncan Bell, 'Mythscapes: Memory, Mythology, and National Identity', *British Journal of Sociology*, 54(1) (2003), p. 69.

[156] Robin Wagner-Pacifici, 'Memories in the Making: The Shapes of Things That Went', *Qualitative Sociology*, 19.3 (1996), 301–21 (p. 306).

[157] Misztal, 'Memory and Democracy', p. 1325.

[158] Torbakov, 'History, Memory and National Identity', p. 209.

texts of twelve school history textbooks[159] approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. They came to the conclusion that the textbooks' excessive focus on such topics as 'national oppression', 'colonial status' and the justification (apologetics) of popular uprisings, cultivated feelings of hurt, with respect to how the country had been treated in the past, and thereby produced an image of a 'victimised nation'. Accordingly, these historians suggested that instead of focusing on the impulsivity of popular uprisings, it might be more prudent to feature and examine instances in which individuals exercised their agency as citizens and contributed to the development of their country and culture, and to critically assess the involvement of Ukrainians in the activity of the empires within which they lived.[160]

Post-Soviet Ukrainian historiography discusses the topic of Ukraine's victimhood in relation to a range of historical events, including the collectivisation of the late 1920s, the man-made famine (Holodomor) of 1932-1933, the Ukrainian Ostarbeiters, and the Chornobyl disaster. Thus, Gelinada Grinchenko notes that historians often present Ukrainian Ostarbeiters as people who experienced repression at the hands of both Nazi Germany and the Soviet state, as victims of two dictatorships,[161] with similar narratives observable in other Eastern European countries.[162] Although such narratives are based on the real experience and suffering of Eastern European nations, scholars note they can be problematic. Simona Mitroiu observes that "For the majority of the Eastern European population, the collective memory includes traumatic episodes as seen from the perspective of both victim and victimizer, and sometimes the two roles coincide, which makes the entire process of reckoning with the past more difficult."[163] Thus, the post-Cold War re-examination of history by Eastern European nations has raised questions about the collaboration and the co-participation of local residents in

[159] This discussion was initiated by the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance.
[160] *Shkilna Istoria Ochyma Istorykiv-Naukovtsiv*, ed. by Natalia Iakovenko (Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance, 2008).
[161] Gelinada Grinchenko, 'Ostarbeiters of the Third Reich in Ukrainian and European Public Discourses: Restitution, Recognition, Commemoration', in *War and Memory in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus*, ed. by Julie Fedor and others (Palgrave Macmillan Memory Studies, 2017), pp. 281–306.
[162] Assmann, 'Europe's Divided Memory', p. 31; Eva-Clarita Onken, 'The Baltic States and Moscow's 9 May Commemoration: Analysing Memory Politics in Europe', *Europe-Asia Studies,* 59.1 (2007), 23–46 (p. 43).
[163] Mitroiu, 'Life Writing and Politics of Memory in Eastern Europe: Introduction', p. 4.

the totalitarian crimes of Hitler and Stalin. However, such memories are painful to analyse, resulting in a strong resistance to admit and recognise them. Consequently, they are remembered selectively and can be forgotten.[164] Ukraine is no exception.

One of the topics most often discussed in relation to the victimisation of Ukraine is the Holodomor, the memory of which re-emerged[165] in Ukrainian society with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Some scholars argue that the state politics of memory put excessive emphasis on presenting the Holodomor as a genocide of the ethnic Ukrainian nation by the Communist Party and the Soviet state. [166] Although this politics of memory is often associated with the presidency of Viktor Yushchenko, it was also observed during the first years of Ukraine's independence, as Wanner demonstrates.[167] By declaring the Holodomor an act of genocide against the Ukrainian people, the 'Law on the Holodomor' in 2006 (adopted on Yushchenko's initiative) started an important discussion about this historical event. After all, its memory is strongly present in Ukrainian society and many people know stories about how the famine affected their families in the 1930s. However, the focus on the ethnic (rather than civic) definition of the Ukrainian nation (as the main victim of genocide)[168] polarised Ukrainian society and alienated Russians and Russian speakers.[169] Furthermore, by presenting Ukraine as a victim of the Soviet Union, this official narrative also excludes discussion about the local perpetrators of the crime: although orders came from Moscow, the local Communist Party officials carrying them out were often Ukrainians.[170]

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[164] Mitroiu, 'Life Writing and Politics of Memory in Eastern Europe: Introduction', p. 19; Blacker and Etkind, 'Introduction', p. 8.

[165] Although the Holodomor was present in the collective memory of some Ukrainians during the Soviet rule, its memory was significantly supressed.

[166] Marples, *Heroes and Villains*; John-Paul Himka, 'Interventions: Challenging the Myths of Twentieth-Century Ukrainian History', in *Convolutions of Historical Politics*, ed. by Alexei Miller and Maria Lipman (Central European University Press, 2012), pp. 211–38; Kasianov, 'The "Nationalization"'.

[167] Wanner, *Burden of Dreams*, p. 155.

[168] Notably, the Verkhovna Rada amended the text of the law from "genocide of the Ukrainian nation" (natsiia) to "genocide of the Ukrainian people" (narod), with the view that the first definition was ethnic and the second one political.

[169] Tatiana Zhurzhenko, '"Capital of Despair": Holodomor Memory and Political Conflicts in Kharkiv after the Orange Revolution', *East European Politics and Societies*, 25.3 (2011), 597–639.

[170] Daria Mattingly, ''Idle, Drunk and Good-for-Nothing': The Rank-and-File Perpetrators of 1932-1933 Famine in Ukraine', in *The Burden of the Past: History, Memory, and Identity in Contemporary Ukraine*, ed. by Anna Wylegała and Małgorzata Głowacka-Grajper (Indiana University Press, 2020), pp. 19–48; Wanner, *Burden of Dreams*, p. 155.

It is important to note that both state and non-state memory actors have commemorated the Holodomor in post-Soviet Ukraine. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, numerous commemorative objects emerged around the country, mostly erected by local ordinary people.[171] Usually located at the sites of mass burials of the famine victims, on the outskirts of settlements, these memorials and crosses often read simply "to the victims of the famine in 1932-1933",[172] although some include a clear criticism of Communist rule (as, for example, can be seen on the memorials in Myrhorod).[173] More research is required to examine how ordinary people remember this and other events in Ukraine's history, and whether they see Ukraine as a victim of external forces. Considering that both the Euromaidan protests and especially the Russia-Ukraine conflict are associated with the involvement of external forces (Russia and the West) in Ukraine's destiny as a state and a nation, it is crucial to examine whether the narrative of Ukraine as a victim is present in the memorials produced by ordinary people (this issue is discussed in Chapter Four).

1.2.4. Glorification of the past: narratives of heroism and pride

As the Ukrainian official politics of memory focused on precedents of past statehood, this brought two topics to the fore: the Kyivan Rus' and the Cossack era.[174] During the monetary reform in 1996, when the hryvnia was introduced as the national currency, the banknotes featured new national symbols including the rulers of Vladimir the Great and Yaroslav the Wise, and the hetman of the Zaporozhian Cossacks Bohdan Khmelnytsky.[175] The old familiar statues of the Kyivan Rus' leaders and Cossack

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[171] Oleksandra Veselova, 'Memorialni Znaky i Pamiatnyky Zhertvam Holodu-Henotsydu 1932–1933 Rr. v Ukraini', *Kraieznavstvo*, 1–2, 2009, 169–79.

[172] Veselova, 'Memorialni Znaky i Pamiatnyky'.

[173] Author's observation. Myrhorod (Poltava oblast), 22 July 2018.

[174] Andrew Wilson, *The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nation*, 2015, p. 225.

[175] In Soviet times, Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky was honoured as a person who signed the Pereiaslav Treaty in 1654 and reunited the fraternal people of Ukraine and Russia (Wilson 2015:224; Kuzio 2001:31). In post-Soviet Ukraine, this key event has a range of interpretations, including the popular view that the treaty envisaged a confederation of the two states and autonomy of the Hetmanate (Kuzio 2001:31).

hetmans, constructed or preserved[176] during the Soviet times, were now complemented by newly-introduced monuments honouring these historical periods (including the monument to Princess Olha, unveiled in Kyiv in 1996, and the monument to King Danylo Halytskyi in Lviv, constructed in 2001). The focus on Kyivan Rus' and the Cossack era required re-assessment of the corresponding historical narratives. Thus, it was important to narrate this distant past as a representation of the historical roots of Ukraine's statehood and sovereignty, and to move away from the Soviet historiography that presented these historical periods as a symbol of the unity of the Slavic nations. At the same time, as Andrew Wilson suggests, the memory of this past is characterised by a significant degree of 'plasticity': "An image of Volodymyr or Yaroslav can appeal to Ukrainian nationalists, who see them as the founders of Ukraine-Rus, to Russian nationalists, who believe that Vladimir was the founder of Russia, and to the middle ground, which looks to Rus as a time when present differences or disputes did not exist."[177] Ultimately, the narration of the distant past relies not only on the presence of monuments in the landscape but also on how they are presented in the wider official discourse.

The importance of the Cossack past for the Ukrainian national identity is emphasised by the Ukrainian national anthem,[178] with its refrain running:

> Soul and body shall we lay down
> For our freedom
> And show that we, brethren,
> Are of the Cossack nation.

The anthem refers to two instances of Ukraine's past statehood – the mythologised Cossack era and the Ukrainian People's Republic of 1917-1920,[179] and reflects the belief of Ukrainians in their own historical past. As Larysa Nahorna explains, the glorification of the Cossack past is built on presenting Ukrainians as invariably freedom-loving people who throughout centuries have been seeking democracy.[180] As

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[176] One example is the Bohdan Khmelnytsky Monument in Kyiv, which was built in 1888 and preserved during the Soviet period.
[177] Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, p. 225.
[178] The music was adopted in 1992, and the official lyrics were adopted in 2003.
[179] Ukrainian People's Republic (1917-1920) used the song "Shche ne vmerla Ukraina" as one of its anthems.
[180] Nahorna, 'Kultura Istorychnoii Pamiati', p. 32.

Nahorna notes, although the Cossack past did contribute to the development of democratic traditions in Ukrainian mentality, it would be wrong to forget about other sides of the story including plunder and violence.[181] However, the official politics of memory tends to omit less glorious aspects of the Cossack era.

In addition to the Cossack era, Ukrainian historiography focuses on other historical periods that offer examples of heroic fighting for Ukraine's independence. They include the Battle of Kruty (January 1918)[182] that became a symbol of Ukraine's resistance to the Bolsheviks' aggression,[183] and the struggle of the OUN / UPA during the Second World War.[184] Debates about the role of the OUN / UPA particularly intensified in January 2010 when President Viktor Yushchenko awarded Stepan Bandera the title of Hero of Ukraine for "defending national ideas and fighting for an independent Ukrainian state."[185] Although the award was applauded in Western Ukraine, the reaction in other regions was quite the opposite. Southern and eastern regions were quick to display strong opposition to attempts to present the OUN / UPA in a positive way. Thus, in April 2010, an administrative Donetsk region court ruled the Presidential decree awarding the title to be illegal.[186] In this context, the construction of the 'Shot in the Back' (Vystrel v Spiny) memorial in Simferopol in 2007 is often seen as a reaction to Yushchenko's calls for peace between the UPA and Red Army veterans, who had fought on different sides of the front.[187] The memorial, funded by the Communist Party of Ukraine, reads: "In memory of the Soviet civilian victims killed by the fascist collaborators (OUN / UPA and others)."[188] The actions of the OUN / UPA and

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[181] Nahorna, 'Kultura Istorychnoii Pamiati', p. 32.

[182] The Battle of Kruty in January 2018 took place in the present-day Chernihiv Oblast (about 130 kilometres northeast of Kyiv), where armed units of the Ukrainian People's Republic managed to stop the advance of the Bolshevik forces towards Kyiv, suffering heavy losses.

[183] Uilleam Blacker, 'Martyrdom, Spectacle, and Public Space in Ukraine: Ukraine's National Martyrology from Shevchenko to the Maidan', *Journal Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society*, 1.2 (2015), 257–92 (p. 269).

[184] Serhy Yekelchyk, 'National Heroes for a New Ukraine: Merging the Vocabularies of the Diaspora, Revolution, and Mass Culture', *Ab Imperio*, 3, 2015, 97–123 (p. 104).

[185] *Pro Prysvoiennia S. Banderi Zvannia Heroi Ukrainy*, 2010 <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/46/2010#Text> [accessed 22 January 2020].

[186] According to the court's decision, Bandera was not a citizen of the Ukrainian SSR (vis-à-vis Ukraine).

[187] Symonenko, 'Memorialnyi Prostir Ukrainy', p. 57; Portnov, 'Uprazhneniya s Istoriey Po-Ukrainski', p. 133.

[188] The monument commemorates Soviet citizens and Red Army soldiers who were killed by the Ukrainian Insurgent Army members during and after the Second World War.

the Cossacks were debated during the first two decades of Ukraine's independence, which led to the use of these historical topics during the Euromaidan protests and the Russia-Ukraine conflict, as demonstrated later in this chapter. Overall, when analysing the narratives produced by ordinary people in the course of their commemorative activity, it is crucial to take into account the existing debates around how Ukraine's past should be presented, and the potential impact of these debates.

1.3. The Euromaidan protests and the Russia-Ukraine conflict

As John Keane notes, "crisis periods … prompt awareness of the crucial political importance of the past for the present … They are also times in which controversies erupt about the prevailing definitions of how to understand the past in relation to the present".[189] The Euromaidan protests in 2013 and the consequent onset of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in 2014 brought a range of historical narratives to the fore. At the time of writing, both these events have already become an important part of Ukraine's history, with the conflict in Eastern Ukraine continuing to be a painful part of Ukraine's present. The aim of this second part of this chapter is to discuss the key topics associated with the Euromaidan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict that have a potential to impact on the commemorative activity of ordinary people. For this purpose, the following four topics will be examined: utilisation of historical narratives, de-communisation processes, official commemoration of the Euromaidan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and perception of these two events by the public.

1.3.1. Utilisation of historical narratives

Those involved in the protest events of 2013-2014 and those who later contributed to discussion of them have utilised a range of historical memories and themes to frame the actions that unfolded on Maidan Nezalezhnosti and in other squares across the country. As Chapter Four demonstrates, the Cossack and OUN / UPA symbols are used by ordinary people in the Poltava oblast for commemoration of the Russia-Ukraine

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[189] John Keane, 'More Theses on the Philosophy of History', in *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics*, ed. by James Tully (Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 204–17.

conflict and it is important to understand the wider context of this practice. During the Euromaidan, for example, the units of self-organised groups of protesters were called '*sotni*' (squadrons), referring both to the use of this military unit by Cossacks and the UPA.[190] The Euromaidan brought together people and parties of different political orientations (liberal, social-democratic, and right-of-centre),[191] and of different ages and social backgrounds (although most of them were middle-aged with full-time jobs).[192] Generally, those who framed the protest events in public discussions did not focus on ethnic issues and included both Russian and Ukrainian speakers. The protests were seen as a potential move towards social consensus on the concept of a civic nation.[193] Although Western and Russian media at times focused on the participation of right-wing groups in the protests (including the Svoboda Party and the newly-formed Right Sector movement), scholars emphasise that they were neither the key actor nor the largest group at the Euromaidan.[194] At the same time, their involvement during the most violent stages of the Euromaidan and the use of the OUN / UPA symbols (such as red-and-black flags) re-activated the debates around Ukraine's past and took them to a new level. Thus, while the OUN / UPA symbols refer to actions during the Second World War, Russian media and opponents of the Euromaidan commonly presented Ukraine during and after the Euromaidan as being controlled by fascists.[195]

Andrii Portnov and Serhy Yekelchyk argue in their works that during the Euromaidan the symbol of the OUN / UPA underwent a process of transformation and acquired a new set of meanings.[196] According to Portnov, two factors played a role in this: first, a

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[190] Törnquist-Plewa and Yurchuk, 'Memory Politics in Contemporary Ukraine', p. 705.
[191] Olga Onuch, 'Who Were the Protesters?', *Journal of Democracy*, 25.3 (2014), 44–51.
[192] Onuch, 'Who Were the Protesters?'
[193] Tomasz Stryjek, 'Ukraine between the European Union and Russia since 1991: Does It Have to Be a Battlefield of Memories?', in *The Burden of the Past: History, Memory, and Identity in Contemporary Ukraine*, ed. by Anna Wylegała and Małgorzata Głowacka-Grajper (Indiana University Press, 2020), pp. 253–76 (p. 269).
[194] Olga Onuch and Gwendolyn Sasse, 'The Maidan in Movement: Diversity and the Cycles of Protest', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 68:4 (2016), 556–87; Andrew Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis: What It Means for the West* (Yale University Press, 2014), p. 70.
[195] Onuch and Sasse, 'The Maidan in Movement', p. 576; Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis*, p. 125.
[196] Andrii Portnov, 'Bandera Mythologies and Their Traps for Ukraine', *Open Democracy*, 22 June 2016 <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/bandera-mythologies-and-their-traps-for-ukraine/>; Serhy

rejection of Russia's portrayal of Ukrainians as 'fascists' and 'banderites', and secondly a lack of knowledge about the activity of the OUN / UPA[197] with the official politics of memory playing a role in this lack of public knowledge. Yekelchyk explains that, "in the course of the EuroMaidan Revolution, the image of Bandera acquired new meaning as a symbol of resistance to the corrupt, Russian-sponsored regime, quite apart from the historical Bandera's role as a purveyor of exclusivist ethno-nationalism."[198] After the Euromaidan, when the Right Sector and other nationalist groups formed military units that fought on the front line in Eastern Ukraine, the use of a red-and-black flag as a symbol of resistance became even more common.

Furthermore, scholars note that since 2013-2014 public opinion about the OUN / UPA has changed. As the sociological group "Rating" reported in October 2015,[199] their survey data demonstrates that for the first time the percentage of Ukrainians who supported recognising the UPA as a faction fighting for Ukraine's independence was higher than the number of opponents (41% and 38% respectively).[200] However, the regional aspect needs to be taken into account. In a 2018 survey, when Ukrainians were asked to assess the struggle of the UPA (1942-1950), clearly positive responses ("it was a fight for Ukraine's independence") were received in the Western region (62%). In the Eastern and Southern regions the percentage of respondents who believed the same was much lower (only 13% and 15% positive respectively).[201] In the same 2018 survey, in the Central region, 34% of the respondents believed that the struggle of the UPA was a fight for Ukraine's independence, and another 34% assessed the activity of the UPA as good and bad at the same time ("fight for Ukraine's independence, but also crimes against the civilian population").[202] Tomasz Stryjek

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Yekelchyk, *The Conflict in Ukraine: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 107.

[197] Portnov, 'Bandera Mythologies'.

[198] Yekelchyk, *The Conflict in Ukraine*, p. 107.

[199] 'Dynamics of Attitude to Recognition of OUN - UPA', *Sociological Group 'Rating'*, 12 October 2015 <http://ratinggroup.ua/en/research/ukraine/dinamika_otnosheniya_k_priznaniyu_oun-upa.html> [accessed 10 September 2020].

[200] Wylegała, 'Managing the Difficult Past', p. 782.

[201] Yoanna Konieczna-Sałamatin, Natalia Otrishchenko, and Tomasz Stryjek, *History, People. Events. Research Report on the Memory of Contemporary Poles and Ukrainians* (Warsaw: Collegium Civitas, 2018), p. 50 (p. 34).

[202] Konieczna-Sałamatin, Otrishchenko, and Stryjek, *History, People. Events*, p. 34.

compared this 2018 survey with one carried out in 2007 and noted that although in the Central region the percentage of Ukrainians relating positively to the OUN / UPA increased between 2007 and 2018 (and negative perceptions of the OUN / UPA decreased), this does not decisively indicate that the Centre ceased to play an intermediate role between the west and the east.[203]

The regional differences in the interpretation of Ukraine's past played a role in Russia's annexation of Crimea in February-March 2014 and its consequent backing of the separatist forces of the self-declared Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics later in 2014.[204] Russia justified its actions by utilising historical myths, such as the myths of the undying unity of the Russian and Ukrainian peoples and of the artificial nature of Ukraine's statehood,[205] and Russia's historical right of influence in Ukraine grounded in the notion of the Russkii Mir (Russian World).[206] For many Ukrainians, the Euromaidan and the conflict in Eastern Ukraine once again brought the question of 'What does it mean to be a Ukrainian?' to the fore. As Volodymyr Kulyk demonstrates in his work, as a result of the Euromaidan and the conflict, national identity has become more salient *vis-à-vis* other territorial and non-territorial identities.[207] Simultaneously, as he notes, the meaning of belonging to the Ukrainian nation has also changed, which is manifested in increased alienation from Russia and a greater embrace of the historical narrative of Ukrainian nationalism.[208]

Another significant aspect of Ukraine's official politics of memory in post-Euromaidan Ukraine is the modification of the commemorative symbols of the Second World War.

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[203] Stryjek, 'Ukraine between the European Union and Russia since 1991', p. 271.

[204] Andrew Wilson, 'The Donbas in 2014: Explaining Civil Conflict Perhaps, but Not Civil War', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 2016, 631–52.

[205] Igor Torbakov, 'Ukraine and Russia: Entangled Histories, Contested Identities, and a War of Narratives', in *Revolution and War in Contemporary Ukraine - The Challenge of Change*, ed. by Olga Bertelsen (Columbia University Press, 2017), pp. 89–120 (p. 90).

[206] Tatiana Zhurzhenko, 'A Divided Nation? Reconsidering the Role of Identity Politics in the Ukraine Crisis', *Die Friedens-Warte*, 89.1/2, Die Ukraine-Krise (2014), p. 258; John O'Loughlin, Gerard Toal, and Vladimir Kolosov, 'Who Identifies with the "Russian World"? Geopolitical Attitudes in Southeastern Ukraine, Crimea, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria', *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 57.6 (2016), 745–78; Elise Giuliano, 'Who Supported Separatism in Donbas? Ethnicity and Popular Opinion at the Start of the Ukraine Crisis', *Post-Soviet Affairs,* 34.2–3 (2018), 158–78.

[207] Kulyk, 'National Identity in Ukraine', p. 606.

[208] Kulyk, 'National Identity in Ukraine', p. 607.

If the annexation of Crimea was carried out without numerous casualties, then the conflict in Eastern Ukraine turned into full-scale armed conflict between the Russia-backed separatist forces of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk Republics and the Ukrainian army. The conflict in Eastern Ukraine has led to more than thirteen thousand casualties in total,[209] including more than four thousand battle and non-battle military casualties on the Ukrainian side (as of 2021). As Russia's aggression in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine started unfolding, Ukraine's official politics of memory underwent certain changes. In March 2014 President Poroshenko signed a decree establishing 8 May as Day of Remembrance and Reconciliation in Ukraine, which now co-exists with 9 May as Victory Day (Victory Day is also celebrated in Russia). Ukraine started to commemorate the anniversary of the Second World War, which started in 1939, instead of the Great Patriotic War, which started in 1941 and was commemorated in the USSR. The date switch was important due to the historical experience of Western Ukraine (where the war began two years earlier with the occupation by the Soviet army). The Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance developed a new symbol – a poppy flower complemented with the slogan "Never Again" (Nikoly znovu), which clearly refers to the European tradition of war remembrance and its current post-heroic focus on mourning the victims of war.[210] Ukraine also distanced itself from the St George's Ribbon, which was used by the USSR as a symbol of the Great Patriotic War and is still used by Russia. Until the conflict in Eastern Ukraine, the St George's Ribbon was seen as a rather neutral symbol in post-Soviet countries, but it became a symbol of pro-Russian separatism after the "Russian Spring" in 2014.[211] In 2017, the use and popularisation of the St George's Ribbon was officially banned in Ukraine.[212] On 8 May 2015, Poroshenko called the conflict in Eastern Ukraine "our Great Patriotic War of 2014-2015," and the soldiers taking part in it, "grandchildren, great-grandchildren and

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[209] 'OON Pidrakhuvala Kilkist Zhertv Boiovykh Dii Na Donbasi', *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 19 February 2021 <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-oon-kst-gertv-boyovyh-donbas/31110937.html> [accessed 10 September 2021].

[210] Fedor, Lewis, and Zhurzhenko, 'Introduction: War and Memory', p. 19.

[211] Fedor, Lewis, and Zhurzhenko, 'Introduction: War and Memory'.

[212] *Pro Vnesennia Zminy Do Kodeksu Ukrainy pro Administratyvni Pravoporushennia Shchodo Zaborony Vyhotovlennia Ta Propahandy Heorhiivskoi (Hvardiiskoi) Strichky*, 2017 <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2031-19#Text> [accessed 15 January 2020].

great-great-grandchildren of those who defended the country seventy years ago."[213]
Overall, this and other references to the Second World War were used to add the
armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine to existing official Ukrainian historiography, while
moving away from Soviet historiography.[214] This existing commemorative framework
had a major impact on the nature of commemorative practices of ordinary people. As
Chapters Three and Four demonstrate, when constructing their memorials to the fallen
soldiers of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, ordinary people add them to a commemorative
landscape saturated with Soviet memorials to the Great Patriotic War. Thus, it is
important to consider how the production of new war memorials (to the Russia-
Ukraine conflict) by ordinary people is influenced and shaped by the existing war
memorials and their historical narratives.

1.3.2. De-communisation processes in Ukraine

The existing commemorative landscape is characterised not only by persistence (the
presence of Soviet memorials to the Great Patriotic War) but also by change. The
events of the Euromaidan protests led to a chain of removals of Lenin monuments
across the country, which started with the demolition of the Lenin monument in Kyiv
in Bessarabska Square on 8 December 2013 by Euromaidan protesters.[215] This
phenomenon rapidly spread to all oblasts of Ukraine, quickly becoming known as the
'Leninopad' ('Leninfall').[216] This en masse dismantling was carried out by unauthorised
activists, political parties, and local authorities.[217] According to the Ukrainian Institute
of National Remembrance (UINR), in 2014, 504 Lenin monuments in Ukraine were
removed or destroyed and more than 1,700 Lenin monuments were left standing.[218]

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[213] 'Vystup Prezydenta Ukrainy Petra Poroshenka Na Urochystomu Zasidanni Verkhovnoi Rady Ukrainy, Prysviachenomu 70-Ii Richnytsi Peremohy Nad Natsyzmom v Yevropi, Mistsiu i Roli Ukrainskoho Narodu u Druhii Svitovii Viini', *Verkhovna Rada*, 8 May 2015
<https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/Novyny/108676.html> [accessed 10 March 2020].
[214] Liubarets, 'The Politics of Memory in Ukraine in 2014', p. 204.
[215] 'Pamiatnyk Leninu Znesly', *Ukrainska Pravda*, 8 December 2013
<http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2013/12/8/7005453/> [accessed 1 March 2020].
[216] The scale of the Leninopad can be seen on the website http://leninstatues.ru/leninopad
[217] 'Leninopad Tryvaie: Vozhdia Skynuly v Kanevi, Mykolaievi, Khersoni', *TSN*, 22 February 2014
<https://tsn.ua/ukrayina/leninopad-trivaye-vozhdya-skinuli-v-kanevi-mikolayevi-hersoni-336067.html>
[accessed 19 March 2020].
[218] 'Za Rik v Ukraini Znesly Pivtysiachi Pamiatnykiv Leninu', *Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance*,
December 2014 <https://old.uinp.gov.ua/news/za-rik-v-ukrayini-znesli-pivtisyachi-pam-yatnikiv-

For many people the removal of the monuments to Lenin symbolised their detachment from Soviet and (consequently) Russian rule.[219] However, the memories of those who saw the Soviet past as an important and positive part of their lives, became marginalised.

The 'Leninopad' sparked or contributed to the de-communisation that followed. In April 2015 the Verkhovna Rada adopted a set of four laws[220] including the Law *On the Condemnation of the Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) Regimes and Prohibition of Propaganda of Their Symbols.*[221] The law was written almost entirely by civic activists and historians and called on the local (municipal level) government authorities to dismantle monuments and memorial signs dedicated to,

> the persons involved in organising and committing the Holodomor of 1932-1933 in Ukraine and political repressions, the persons who held high positions in the Communist Party, higher governmental and management bodies of the USSR and the Ukrainian SSR, staff of the Soviet state security service, events relating to Communist Party activities and the setting up of Soviet authority over the territory of Ukraine.[222]

The local authorities were given six months to complete this process. According to the UINR, by the end of 2016, 1,320 Lenin monuments and 1,069 other Communist monuments had been dismantled.[223] However, in many cases the 'six month' time limit was not met. Moreover, although the government attempted to introduce a strict top-

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leninu?q=news/za-rik-v-ukraini-znesli-pivtisyachi-pam-yatnikiv-leninu> [accessed 1 March 2020]. The same source specifies that after the dissolution of the USSR Ukraine inherited 5500 monuments to Lenin
[219] Kobchenko, 'Dekomunizatsiia v Ukraini', p. 66.
[220] The so-called 'de-communisation package' includes the following four laws 1) on recognising members of various Ukrainian political organisations (including members of the wartime and post-war nationalist underground) as 'fighters for Ukrainian independence'; 2) on celebrating victory over Nazism in the WWII (1939–1945), establishing 8 May as Day of Remembrance and Reconciliation, and maintaining 9 May as Victory Day; 3) on creating open access to archives of the Communist regime (1917–1991); 4) on condemning the Communist and Nazi totalitarian regimes (with renaming of towns and streets carrying the names of high-ranking Soviet officials).
[221] *Pro Zasudzhennia Komunistychnoho Ta Natsional-Sotsialistychnoho (Natsystskoho) Totalitarnykh Rezhymiv v Ukraini Ta Zaboronu Propahandy Yikhnoi Symvoliky*, 2015
<http://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/317-19> [accessed 10 December 2020].
[222] *Pro Zasudzhennia*.
[223] 'Ponad 50 Tysyach Vulyts' Zminyly Nazvy Vprodovzh 2016 Roku', *Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance*, December 2016 <http://www.memory.gov.ua/news/ponad-50-tisyach-vulits-zminili-nazvi-vprodovzh-2016-roku> [accessed 10 March 2020].

down control in the area of historical memory, the implementation of the laws depended on the views and positions of the local authorities.

The process of de-communisation caused heated debates in the media, and among the public and scholars, particularly with regard to issues such as freedom of speech, state control over memory, rehabilitation of the OUN / UPA, and the willingness of wider society to accept the changes.[224] Such debates have furthered re-consideration and re-evaluation of a whole range of themes and events in Ukraine's history: from the establishment of the "communist totalitarian regime" (or the "Soviet regime") in Ukraine in 1917, to the Holodomor, the "persecution of the fighters for independence of Ukraine in 20th century", the Nazi regime, and to the activity of the Soviet leaders during more than seven decades.

The questions of victimhood and agency were also raised in relation to the Communist past of Ukraine. The Ukrainian state presents the Soviet past as a period of suppression, justifying the removal of memories of Communist rule. In her critique of the policy of de-communisation, Tatiana Zhurzhenko notes that, "By ignoring Ukrainian Bolshevism and denying the early Ukrainian SSR its nation building role, the politics of decommunization reduces the 'Ukrainian 20th century' to the narrative of national victimhood."[225] However, not all Ukrainians are willing to accept this narrative. The importance of the Communist past for some Ukrainians can be exemplified by the unveiling of the Memory Alley for Heroes of Socialist Labour in the Dnipropetrovsk oblast in September 2014[226] and the renovation of a similar avenue in the Poltava

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[224] Uilleam Blacker, '*Martyrdom, Spectacle, and Public Space: Ukraine's National Martyrology from Shevchenko to the Maidan*', in: *Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society*, vol. 1, no. 2 (2015), pp. 257-295; Andrii Portnov, 'On Decommunization, Identity, and Legislating History, From a Slightly Different Angle', in *Krytyka* (May 2015), Available at: https://krytyka.com/en/solutions/opinions/decommunization-identity-and-legislating-history-slightly-different-angle; John-Paul Himka, '*Legislating Historical Truth: Ukraine's Laws of 9 April 2015*,' in Ab Imperio, April 21 (2015), Available at: http://archive.li/GV846; Oleksandr Savytskyi, 'Dekomunizatsiya v Ukrayini: chempiony, autsaidery ta kuryozy', in *DW* (2016), Available at: http://p.dw.com/p/1I1c0
[225] Tatiana Zhurzhenko, 'The Making and Unmaking of Revolutions. What 1917 Means for Ukraine, in Light of the Maidan', *Eurozine*, 2017 <https://www.eurozine.com/the-making-and-unmaking-of-revolutions/>.
[226] 'Pamiat pro Heroiv Pratsi!', *Profspilka Pratsivnykiv Ahropromyslovoho Kompleksu Ukrainy*, 2 September 2014 <http://profapk.org.ua/news/prof_news/749.html> [accessed 10 September 2020].

oblast in 2017 (both in Central Ukraine).[227] Such Soviet memorial sites, which can also be found in other cities and towns, usually include lists of all those local residents who were successful in different areas of work during the USSR, and, consequently, contributed to the development of Soviet Ukraine as a republic. Although such individual examples of present-day commemoration of 'Heroes of Socialist Labour' might not be representative of the country in general, the fact remains that some Ukrainians see the Soviet past as an "entirely legitimate episode of national history"[228] and as a period when they exercised their agency.

The above-mentioned de-communisation processes point to the importance of considering the role of the state in constructing historical narratives and shaping the commemorative space in post-Euromaidan Ukraine. In this context, it is also crucial to examine the opportunities and channels available to ordinary people when exercising their agency in the area of commemoration (this issue is discussed in Chapter Three). Moreover, the commemorative activity of ordinary people analysed in this thesis has taken place in the context of a large-scale removal of monuments. Thus, this process serves as a powerful reminder that interpretation of historical events can change quickly and dramatically, and that the permanence of monuments is very fragile. This issue is discussed in detail in Chapter Five which examines how ordinary people seek to ensure that their memories will be preserved in the future.

1.3.3. Commemoration of the Euromaidan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict

The Euromaidan has arguably become a new 'foundation myth' for the Ukrainian state. The Day of Heroes of the Heavenly Hundred (20 February)[229] was added to the national calendar of Ukraine pursuant to the 2015 decree of the President of Ukraine "On Commemoration of the Heroism of Participants in the Revolution of Dignity and

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[227] Nadiia Kucher, 'U Hlobynomu Onovyly Aleiu Radianskykh Heroiv', *Kolo.News*, 10 May 2017 <https://kolo.news/category/suspilstvo/3637> [accessed 10 September 2020].
[228] Kasianov, 'The "Nationalization"', p. 145.
[229] On February 20, 2014, the greatest number of Maidan activists (48 people) was killed.

Honouring the Memory of the Heroes of the Heavenly Hundred."[230] Numerous streets in Ukraine now bear the name 'the Heroes of the Heavenly Hundred',[231] as a result of the large-scale renaming of public places carried out by the local authorities in accordance with the 'de-communisation laws' of 2015. As part of the state politics of memory, in 2015, the construction of the Museum of Revolution of Dignity was launched, with the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance acting as the managing body. The design of the future museum was selected in 2018 at a design competition (in 2021, the museum is under construction).[232]

The official commemoration of the Euromaidan, however, needs to be considered with view to the wider context: Ukrainian society in general holds a broad variety of opinions about this event. According to a national survey[233] conducted in October 2014 by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation,[234] 38% of respondents believed that the Euromaidan was "a conscious struggle of citizens who combined forces to protect their rights", 17% believed that these protests were spontaneous, and 31% considered the protests a coup d'état (16% thought that it had been organised by the political opposition, and 15% were convinced that it had been organised with support from the West). The same survey demonstrated significant regional differences in the interpretations of the Euromaidan: while the absolute majority (70.5%) of respondents in Western Ukraine and many respondents in Central Ukraine (48%) saw it as a conscious struggle of citizens, the majority of the residents of Donbas (72%) believed that it was a coup d'état. Consequently, when constructing commemorative objects to the Euromaidan, ordinary people operate in fractured conditions, with the central authorities promoting the memory of this event from a pro-Euromaidan perspective, although on the local level this memory is rather a contentious and divisive issue.

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[230] *Order 'Pro Vshanuvannia Podvyhu Uchasnykiv Revoliutsii Hidnosti Ta Uvichnennia Pamiati Heroiv Nebesnoi Sotni'*, 2015 <https://www.president.gov.ua/documents/692015-18468> [accessed 15 March 2021].

[231] Yekelchyk, 'National Heroes for a New Ukraine', p. 119.

[232] *Pro Utvorennia Derzhavnoho Zakladu "Memorialnyi Kompleks Heroiv Nebesnoi Sotni – Muzei Hidnosti"*, 2015 <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/npas/248644707> [accessed 1 December 2021].

[233] The survey was not conducted in Crimea.

[234] *Richnytsia Maidanu – Opytuvannia Hromadskoi Ta Ekspertnoi Dumky* (Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, 19 November 2014) <https://dif.org.ua/article/richnitsya-maydanu-opituvannya-gromadskoi-ta-ekspertnoi-dumki> [accessed 10 December 2020].

Similar to the Euromaidan, the Russia-Ukraine conflict was added to the national calendar. Thus, in 2015, Defender of Ukraine Day (14 October) was established in Ukraine,[235] symbolically linking[236] present-day Ukrainian soldiers to the Cossack era and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA).[237] This further distanced Ukraine's national calendar from the Soviet calendar, which observed the Defender of the Fatherland Day on 23 February (still observed in Russia and some other post-Soviet countries). Additionally, in 2019 President Zelensky signed a decree[238] marking the 'Day of Remembrance of the Defenders of Ukraine fallen in the struggle for independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Ukraine' on 29 August.[239] Since 2014, many memorials to the conflict have been constructed in Ukraine, however, the question of how different memory actors (top-down and bottom-up) are involved in their construction has not yet been sufficiently researched, and this is specifically the gap that this thesis addresses.

It is crucial to note that commemoration of the Russia-Ukraine conflict is carried out in the context of conflicting interpretations of this event by the public. A survey conducted by the Razumkov Centre in 2019 showed that 40% of respondents believed the Donbas conflict to be a war between Ukraine and Russia; 20% thought that it was a separatist revolt; 15% stated it is a civil war between pro-Ukrainian and pro-Russian citizens of Ukraine; 7% saw it as a war between Russia and the US; and another 7% believed that it is a struggle for the independence of the Donetsk and Luhansk republics.[240] A similar survey conducted in 2019 showed that although in Central Ukraine 54% of the respondents believed that the conflict in Donbas was Russia's

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[235] *Decree 'Pro Den Zakhysnyka Ukrainy'*, 2014 <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/806/2014#Text> [accessed 20 September 2019].

[236] Liubarets, 'The Politics of Memory in Ukraine in 2014', p. 205.

[237] October 14 is traditionally seen as the day of the Ukrainian Cossacks; the Ukrainian Insurgent Army chose this day as the official day of their establishment, trying to link themselves to the Cossacks.

[238] *Decree 'Pro Den Pamiati Zakhysnykiv Ukrainy, Yaki Zahynuly v Borotbi Za Nezalezhnist, Suverenitet i Terytorialnu Tsilisnist Ukrainy'*, 2019 <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/621/2019#Text> [accessed 20 September 2019].

[239] 29 August 2014 was the day of the greatest Ukrainian losses during the Battle of Ilovaisk.

[240] *Hromadska Dumka pro Sytuatsiiu Na Donbasi Ta Shliakhy Vidnovlennia Suverenitetu Ukrainy Nad Okupovanymy Terytoriiamy* (Razumkov Centre, 11 October 2019) <http://razumkov.org.ua/napriamky/sotsiologichni-doslidzhennia/gromadska-dumka-pro-sytuatsiiu-na-donbasi-ta-shliakhy-vidnovlennia-suverenitetu-ukrainy-nad-okupovanymy-terytoriiamy> [accessed 10 December 2020].

aggression against Ukraine with the involvement of local insurgents, the rest of the respondents had other opinions, similar to those described above.[241] It is clear these diverse views in Ukrainian society will impact on how this page in Ukraine's history is commemorated, as Chapter Five explores in detail.

1.4. Conclusion

The ordinary people, whose efforts to commemorate the Euromaidan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict will be analysed in the next four chapters, have formed their own private memories of these two events. Simultaneously, they have been exposed to state-sponsored narratives of the past in post-Soviet Ukraine, where the state as the main memory actor often sought to nationalise Ukrainian history and focus on the narratives of Ukraine's centuries-long fight for statehood and independence. The official memory politics has presented Ukraine either as a victim of external forces, or a fighter against its enemies, without a serious discussion of the wrongdoings of Ukrainians. Such a nationalised version of Ukraine's history, centred on victimhood, heroism and glory, however, co-exists with Soviet historiography, which is still shared by many members of the public and instrumentalised by certain political forces (both in Ukraine and Russia). Those ordinary people who seek to commemorate the Euromaidan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict are operating in conditions in which the history of Ukraine and the portrayal of Ukrainians as a nation are presented differently by a variety of political forces and reflect the regionality of memory and identity in Ukraine.

When constructing commemorative objects to new violent events (the Euromaidan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict), ordinary people are adding them to an already-existing commemorative landscape that features numerous war memorials (in particular, the Soviet Great Patriotic War memorials). While existing war memorials offer a sense of permanence of the commemorative landscape, the de-communisation

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[241] *Shliakhy Dosiahnennia Myru Na Donbasi: Suspilni Nastroi, Ochikuvannia, Perestorohy – Zahalnonatsionalne Opytuvannia* (Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, 6 December 2019) <https://dif.org.ua/article/shlyakhi-dosyagnennya-miru-na-donbasi-suspilni-nastroi-ochikuvannya-perestorogi-zagalnonatsionalne-opituvannya> [accessed 9 September 2021].

processes and the removal of numerous Communist monuments emphasise the temporality and fragility of memories. Moreover, ordinary people are also operating within a context in which members of the public often have polarised opinions about the meaning and historical role of the Euromaidan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict. It is crucial to always keep this context in mind when examining how ordinary people narrate these two events through commemorative objects.

Furthermore, the present chapter demonstrates that although the politics of memory in post-Soviet Ukraine has multiple vectors and for the most part is ambiguous in nature, the state has been strongly present as a top-down memory actor. This, consequently, highlights the importance of examining how ordinary people take part in the area of commemoration. This will be the main task of the next four chapters. To proceed with this task, Chapter Two will introduce the ordinary people, provide their profile (gender, age, and background), and examine the resources they utilise for the purposes of their commemorative goals.

Chapter Two

Ordinary people as memory actors: profile and resources

2.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to provide a profile of the ordinary people who undertake commemorative work in the Poltava oblast, and to examine the resources they deploy to do this. The chapter will address the following two research questions: *What is the general profile of the ordinary people involved in the construction of commemorative objects? What resources do they utilise to achieve their objectives*?

The commemorative activity of grassroots memory actors (also referred to as social or bottom-up memory actors) has drawn the attention of several memory studies scholars. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, such literature covers the activity of different types of memory actors, from individuals to civil society groups. One of the most detailed analyses of the role of social agency in war commemoration is provided by Jay Winter. While acknowledging that memory politics of the state plays an important role, Winter emphasises the importance of examining the work of ordinary people, who he describes as "fictive kin" and as "powerfully unified groups, bonded not by blood ties but by experience."[242] Winter offers an invaluable analysis of ordinary people's motivations that drive them to construct war memorials,[243] and their 'family-like' relationship, noting that they "endure together, they support each other, they quarrel, and they act together.''[244] Winter's works provide an extensive analysis of different cases in western countries during a period when First World War memorials were constructed with the involvement of ordinary people. He emphasises that these examples demonstrate that the exercising of human agency involves a whole range of important factors, including time, money, effort,[245] as well as goals and agenda.[246]

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[242] Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War between Memory and History in the 20th Century* (Yale University Press, 2006), p. 136.
[243] Winter, *Remembering War*, p. 140.
[244] Winter, *Remembering War*, p. 136.
[245] Winter, *Remembering War*, p. 140.
[246] Winter, *Remembering War*, p. 136.

Additionally, there are scholars who identify different factors that can affect and shape a commemorative project. In her book on the dynamics of collective memory, Iwona Irwin-Zarecka explains that before a monument or a memorial plaque appears in the landscape, a whole range of visible and invisible processes must take place: "memory projects call our attention to the fact that there is nothing automatic about entering the public record or being remembered."[247] She emphasises that the work conducted by memory actors is a complex undertaking that requires time, energy, money and other resources.[248] Although Irwin-Zarecka's book identifies the importance of such factors, they are not discussed in detail, and instead can be used as guidance by other researchers. In general, the topic of resources utilised by ordinary people to achieve their commemorative goals is under-researched, and this chapter will address this gap.

This chapter will utilise Jay Winter's concept of "fictive kin" and draw on other memory studies literature on social memory actors to provide a profile of those ordinary people in the Poltava oblast who carry out commemorative work. The concept of resources and the framework for their analysis is borrowed from social studies literature. A rich body of literature argues that the success of social movements depends on resources (such as time, money and skills) and the ability to use them.[249] Such social movement literature can provide useful frameworks for analysing memory production processes.[250] For the purposes of this chapter, the typology of resources suggested by Bob Edwards and John D. McCarthy[251] will be used as a framework for analysis. Specifically, the use of cultural, social-organisational, material, human and moral resources by ordinary people will be explored in detail. This will provide important insights into the agency of ordinary people. I will analyse primary data (interviews that I conducted during my fieldwork in the Poltava oblast in 2018, 2019 and 2020), and also secondary data (information from open sources such as online newspapers).

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[247] Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance*, p. 133.

[248] Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance*, p. 13.

[249] J. Craig Jenkins, 'Resource Mobilization Theory and the Study of Social Movements', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 9 (1983), 527–53.

[250] Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, 'Commemorating a Difficult Past: Yitzhak Rabin's Memorials', *American Sociological Review*, 67.1 (2002), 30–51.

[251] Bob Edwards and John D. McCarthy, 'Resources and Social Movement Mobilization', in *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, ed. by David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi (Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2004), pp. 116–52.

The general profile of ordinary people will be discussed in the first part of the chapter. Following on from this discussion of the profile of ordinary people, the second part of this chapter will analyse how different types of resources are utilised by them and will explore how these resources impact the commemorative activity.

2.2. Ordinary people as memory actors: a general profile

Before introducing the ordinary people in the Poltava oblast, it is important to stress that only some Ukrainians who share memories and experiences of the Euromaidan protests and the Russia-Ukraine conflict seek to commemorate these events publicly. The individuals whose work will be the focus of this thesis are memory actors in the sense that they are actively involved in the construction of commemorative objects (rather than dealing with their memories privately). In this regard, it would be most appropriate to refer to them as ordinary people who are memory actors. However, to avoid long phrases in the text, the phrase 'ordinary people' will be used as a shorthand.

During my investigation, carried out during the fieldwork in Poltava oblast, I identified cases where ordinary people were involved in the construction (whether completed or not) of commemorative objects dedicated to the Heavenly Hundred and the soldiers killed in the Russia-Ukraine conflict between 2014 and the time of the writing (2021). Based on this analysis, three distinctive categories of ordinary people are identified: relatives of the killed soldiers, veterans of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and activists. The term 'activists' is used here to describe a relatively diverse category of ordinary people who neither lost a loved one during the Euromaidan or the conflict nor took part in combat operations during the Russia-Ukraine conflict but who nevertheless are actively involved in the commemoration of these two events. In the next section, a general profile of the people in these three categories will be provided, as this will give an opportunity to better understand their commemorative work.

Determining when ordinary people stop being ordinary can be challenging. Since 2014, in the course of their commemorative and other activities, the identified ordinary people (relatives, veterans and activists) formed communities, and later some of them officially registered their communities as community organisations (hromadska orhanizatsiia). A recurrent theme in the interviews was a sense amongst interviewees that registration as a community organisation would give them more leverage when dealing with the local authorities. As my fieldwork revealed, these organisations are not professionally run, they are unstable and often unstructured, and they have not yet reached the stage at which they can be considered as fully fledged professional civil society organisations. For these reasons, for the purposes of this thesis they are seen not as civil society members, but as ordinary people who have formed memory communities (communities created by individuals who feel a sense of bonding with others because of a shared memory and a shared experience).[252] When analysing their commemorative activity, the present chapter will note any episodes when an official registration was beneficial to the commemorative activity of ordinary people.

2.2.1. Relatives

As of September 2021, the Russia-Ukraine conflict has led to more than four thousand battle and non-battle military causalities on the Ukrainian side;[253] many of the soldiers killed in the conflict were from the Poltava oblast. It is worth noting that a portion of these soldiers went to fight in Eastern Ukraine as volunteers, having joined different volunteer battalions that were formed either by political forces (such as the Right Sector and the Azov battalions) or by the authorities as part of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (such as the 16th Separate armoured infantry battalion 'Poltava'). The others were drafted during the six waves of mobilisation or joined the army on a contract basis. With such diverse paths bringing Ukrainian soldiers to the conflict in Eastern Ukraine, many of them did not know each other even if they were from the same town

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[252] Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance*, p. 47.
[253] 'OON Pidrakhuvala Kilkist Zhertv Boiovykh Dii Na Donbasi'.

or city. For example, it is common for veterans from one wave of mobilisation to report that they do not know veterans from the other waves of mobilisation.[254]

As a result of this, during the early stages of the conflict, when different families in the Poltava oblast received news that their relative had died in Eastern Ukraine, it was a rather lonely experience for them. As one of the mothers of the killed soldiers in Poltava explained, "our children did not know each other, and their families did not know each other either; we were only brought together by the shared grief."[255] Shortly afterwards, many families of the killed soldiers formed support groups: first in the big cities of the oblast (Poltava and Kremenchuk, population 285,000 and 219,000 respectively), and later in smaller towns. A common view amongst interviewees was that this phenomenon (memory communities of relatives) was rather new for Ukrainian society. As one of the interviewed relatives explained, "When the Afghan veterans returned home [after the Soviet-Afghan war], they formed veterans' associations that looked after both the veterans and the families of their killed comrades. But we had no one to look after us, and we had to do it ourselves."[256] This was caused by the fact that when the first soldiers in the Russia-Ukraine conflict were killed, their comrades continued to fight and returned only later (for example, when the next wave of mobilisation started).

Although the families of the killed were brought together by grief, their joint activity was also driven by a need to protect their social rights. One example is a community called 'Poltava families of the killed defenders of Ukraine', which formed in 2015 and officially registered in 2018. Currently, the community organisation has approximately 45 members (relatives of the 26 killed soldiers from Poltava). The core of the organisation is men and women (from their mid-forties to late sixties), although it also includes some young people (brothers and sisters of the killed). According to the head of the organisation, a former military commander, only 10-15% of the members are actively involved in the work of the organisation, and others rely on the core members

[254] Author's Interview 45. Veteran in Kotelva. Online, 20 December 2019.
[255] Author's Interview 24. Two mothers of fallen soldiers in Poltava. Poltava, 7 August 2019.
[256] Author's Interview 48. Father of a fallen soldier. Online, 17 August 2020.

to bring them together for meetings and events.[257] Apart from the head, all other members have a 'civilian' professional background: including private entrepreneurs, office workers and a retired doctor. Since 2015, this memory community has initiated the construction of a memorial[258] (discussed in more detail in Chapter Four), installed commemorative banners in the city, co-operated with local museums, and also initiated and taken an active part in the construction of a military burial ground in Poltava[259] (analysed later in this chapter). Another community organisation of relatives operates in Kremenchuk: this is registered as 'The Poltava region's families of the killed participants of combat operations' (Kremenchuk branch) and is actively involved in the construction of commemorative objects in this city. Similar community organisations operate in many smaller cities and towns of the oblast, although their involvement in commemorative processes varies.

2.2.2. Veterans

Communities of veterans started forming during the early stages of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, when the first soldiers returned to their home cities and towns (approximately in 2015). They come from a wide range of professional backgrounds, ranging from farmers, factory workers and shop assistants to engineers, private entrepreneurs and former public officials, aged from their early twenties to fifties (and even sixties in some rare cases). Although there are female soldiers in the Ukrainian army, the identified veterans in the Poltava oblast who carry out commemorative work are all male. These soldiers went to fight in Eastern Ukraine via a number of routes, though most either went to fight as volunteers (not in far-right battalions) or were drafted by the authorities. Having analysed the construction of monuments by ordinary people in the Poltava oblast, it is possible to say that there is no evidence that veterans from a specific background, of a particular age or from a particular type of mobilisation[260] are

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[257] Author's Interview 48. Father of a fallen soldier. Online, 17 August 2020.
[258] Object 39 in Appendix 2, Figure 13 at page 158.
[259] Object 38 in Appendix 2, Figure 10 at page 151, Figure 11 at page 155 and Figure 32 at page 202.
[260] Different types of mobilisation should be considered here, as there might be an expectation that, for example, soldiers from nationalistic groups (such as the Right Sector, the Azov Battalion or the Svoboda party) would be more active in the area of memory production. However, the evidence collected in the Poltava oblast does not support this.

more active in memory production than others. The conducted interviews show that the primary factor behind a veteran's commemorative activity is his personal belief that remembrance is important.

Upon return, many soldiers from the Russia-Ukraine conflict formed veterans' associations, registered as community organisations. In Ukrainian society, veterans' associations are a rather familiar phenomenon, thanks to the activity of veterans from the Great Patriotic War and the Soviet-Afghan war. Moreover, a number of Afghan veterans also took part in the Russia-Ukraine conflict or tried to advise soldiers returning from Eastern Ukraine what they can do next.[261] A reoccurring theme in interviews with the veterans of the Russia-Ukraine conflict was their need to protect their social rights, and this has motivated them to register community organisations.[262] Such social rights include provision of financial aid, state benefits, as well as medical and psychological rehabilitation. One of the main topics that concerned the interviewed veterans (especially in small towns and villages) was the allocation of plots of land, to which they are entitled by law.[263] As one of the interviewed veterans in Kremenchuk explained, "once we got together, we started thinking about what else we could do as a group"[264]; and at that stage they thought it would be important to construct a memorial to their fallen comrades. Similar developments (from social rights to memory work) were reported in Hadiach, Opishnia, Myrhorod, and Zinkiv, among other locations.

It is important to note that, according to the interviewed veterans in these cities and towns, not all veterans who became members of the veterans' associations, are strongly interested in being involved in memory work. This causes frustration among those veterans who believe it is important to honour the fallen soldiers and remind the public about the ongoing conflict. In Khorol (population 12,800), for example, the

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[261] Author's Interview 16. Afghan veteran. Kremenchuk, 26 August 2018.
[262] In almost every interview with the veterans conducted in the Poltava oblast between 2018 and 2020, they explained that protection of the social rights was the main factor behind their self-organisation.
[263] *Pro Status Veteraniv Viiny, Harantii Yikh Sotsialnoho Zakhystu*, 1993 <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/3551-12#Text> [accessed 1 July 2021]. The Law was adopted in 1993 and amended with the onset of the conflict in Eastern Ukraine.
[264] Author's Interview 15. Veteran in Kremenchuk. Kremenchuk, 25 August 2018.

original head of the local veterans' association stated that "unfortunately, many veterans in our district are mostly interested in their social rights – how to get the promised plots of land and so on."[265] Although he tried to mobilise them to construct a memorial, his attempts failed. As discussed earlier, it is common to hear from interviewees that only 10-15% of the veterans are actively interested in commemoration. While examining the participation of veterans in the area of commemoration it is important to stress that former combatants (including those in Ukraine) often find it difficult to return to 'civilian life', and many face psychological issues (including post-traumatic stress disorder).[266] Thus, while some of them become actively engaged in the life of their communities, others prefer to distance themselves and lead a 'quiet' life – a phenomenon also observed in other post-war societies.[267] At the same time, there is still a significant number of Ukrainian veterans based in the Poltava oblast who place importance on the issues of remembrance. Some take on leadership roles, trying to mobilise and inform their peers while others are happy to take part (attend meetings, sign petitions, and donate funds), if the main organisational and bureaucratic tasks are done by someone else.

2.2.3. Activists

In this thesis, 'activists' is used to describe a diverse category of ordinary people. Their common characteristic is that they seek to construct a commemorative object dedicated either to the Heavenly Hundred or to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Some of them took part in the Euromaidan protests, either in Kyiv or in their local towns or cities. Example volunteer groups commemorating the Heavenly Hundred include the Battalion of the Unindifferent (Batalion Nebaiduzhykh) and Hromada Poltavshchyny in Poltava, and Maidan activists in Chutove and Hradyzk. Sometimes the Heavenly Hundred is commemorated by ordinary people who did not participate in the

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[265] Author's Interview 8. Veteran in Khorol. Khorol, 30 July 2018.

[266] *Life after Conflict: Survey on the Sociodemographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics of Veterans of the Conflict in Eastern Ukraine and Their Families* (International Organization for Migration, January 2020) <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/veterans_reintegration_survey_2020_eng.pdf > [accessed 15 January 2021].

[267] Winter and Sivan, 'Setting the Framework', p. 30.

Euromaidan protests themselves but sympathised with the protesters and believe that the memory of this historic event must be preserved. Examples include a private entrepreneur in Velyki Budyshcha (population 1,124), who initiated and funded the construction of a small memorial, and a small family-run firm in Romodan (population 2,700), that specialises in the production of gravestones, which produced a small memorial for their village.

With the onset of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, many Euromaidan volunteers started helping the Ukrainian army, the people who were fleeing to the Poltava oblast from Eastern Ukraine, and the families of the killed soldiers. For many of the volunteers, the Euromaidan protests and the conflict in Eastern Ukraine became very important on a personal level and it is common for them to be involved in the commemoration of both events. For example, Hromada Poltavshchyny started as a group of Maidan volunteers but with the onset of the conflict quickly switched to helping the army. The same transition was observed with Maidan activists in other locations, including Opishnia, Chutove, Pyriatyn and Kremenchuk. Although some of these activists knew each other before the Euromaidan protests (for example, some of the members of the Hromada Poltavshchyny[268] in Poltava), others met during the Euromaidan and then continued to work together during the conflict in Eastern Ukraine (such as the interviewed activists in Opishnia[269] and Chutove[270]). The identified activists in the Poltava oblast are women and men, aged from their mid-twenties to late sixties, and from different professional backgrounds such as students, teachers, office workers and private entrepreneurs.

2.2.4. Memory communities

All three categories of ordinary people (relatives, veterans, and activists) share characteristics that define them as memory communities. When analysing different aspects of the functioning of "communities of memory",[271] Irwin-Zarecka notes that it

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[268] Author's Interview 34. Two members of Hromada Poltavshchyny. Poltava, 21 August 2019.
[269] Author's Interview 25. Activist in Opishnia. Opishnia, 8 August 2019.
[270] Author's Interview 42. Euromaidan participant in Chutove. Online, 1 September 2019.
[271] Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance*, p. 47.

is important to consider the bonding nature of a shared experience of their members.[272] In the case of the relatives and veterans, such experience is easier to outline: for the former it is the loss of a loved one and for the latter the participation in the combat actions in Eastern Ukraine. As for the activists, they experienced the Euromaidan protests or the Russia-Ukraine conflict in a range of ways: from direct, first-hand involvement at the sites where the events took place, to providing support from afar and sympathising with the cause. Their shared experience is formed by their understanding of the importance of these historical events for their lives and their country.

Shared experience is remembered by a memory community in a particular way. Eviatar Zerubavel states "Rather than a mere aggregate of the personal recollections of its various members, a community's collective memory includes only those shared by its members as a group. As such, it invokes a common past that they all seem to recall."[273] Consequently, a memory community can be formed when a shared experience produces shared memories. In the case of the identified groups in the Poltava oblast, the concept of shared memories should be used carefully. It is possible to say that each of these groups has shared memories whereby they remember the Euromaidan protests or the Russia-Ukraine conflict (or both) as being crucially important historical events. At the same time, the individual memories of each group member can differ. This issue will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters, in particular when exploring the visual language used by ordinary people during the construction of commemorative objects.

While having a shared experience and a shared memory demonstrates how memory communities can be formed, additional factors need to be considered when analysing why only some memory communities decide to act and initiate memory projects. Irwin-Zarecka writes that an active memory community must have a shared sense of meaning and relevance of its shared experience,[274] and Eva-Clarita Onken notes that

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272 Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance*, p. 54.
273 Eviatar Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past* (University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 4.
274 Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance*, p. 54.

the work of memory actors depends on their "memory consciousness."[275] Onken

defines "memory consciousness" as the degree to which memory actors "perceive

themselves as carriers of a particular historical experience that is deemed relevant in a

broader social context."[276] Thus, if a certain memory community has sufficient memory

consciousness, it will enter the realm of action and will seek to achieve certain

commemorative goals. All the ordinary people analysed in this thesis have sufficient

memory consciousness – they all actively seek to publicly commemorate the events

that impacted on them on a personal level. Having identified the ordinary people

whose commemorative activity will be the focus of this thesis, it is now important to

examine their resources as factors that shape commemorative projects and either

facilitate their realisation or prevent their production.

2.3. Resources

Having examined the three categories of ordinary people as memory actors, it is also

important to consider what different resources enable their commemorative activity.

My investigation of the resources utilised by ordinary people is guided by the memory

studies literature on the commemorative activity of social memory actors. A valuable

analysis of societal memory actors' involvement in the processes of public meaning-

making is provided by Eva-Clarita Onken.[277] Onken offers a useful framework for

analysing different types of interactions between societal actors and political actors.

According to Onken, societal actors either passively expect that their memories will be

recognised by the political actors ("recognition"), actively try to find someone from the

political world who can represent them ("representation"), try to enter the political

world ("participation") or are already involved in public meaning-making by belonging

to the 'interpretative elite' ("complicity"). A detailed examination of the interaction

between societal memory actors and state institutions in Germany (1945 - present) is

provided by Jenny Wüstenberg. Wüstenberg considers the different ways grassroots

activists react depending on the behaviour of the authorities and the historical context

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[275] Onken, 'Memory and Democratic Pluralism', p. 282.
[276] Onken, 'Memory and Democratic Pluralism', p. 282.
[277] Onken, 'Memory and Democratic Pluralism', p. 284.

of a particular decade.[278] The works of both scholars provide useful guidance for exploring how ordinary people establish connections with politicians and public authorities. Such connections are one of the important resources used by ordinary people for the purposes of their commemorative goals and will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

A valuable investigation of the commemorative work of non-state "agents of memory"[279] is provided by Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, who emphasises the need to examine the political, economic, social, and cultural capital of the agents of memory, and the impact these factors have on the achieved commemoration. It is important to note that in the case analysed by Vinitzky-Seroussi (the commemoration of the assassinated Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin), the non-state agents of memory cannot be considered as ordinary people: they represent the elite of Israeli society, including politicians, former senior government officials, distinguished professors and wealthy well-connected businessmen.[280] These actors held significant political, economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital and, as Vinitzky-Seroussi notes, "had enough power to make their voices heard, to withdraw from what they considered to be unsuitable events, and to construct alternative practices of commemoration on their own."[281] The discussed works by Irwin-Zarecka and Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi demonstrate the importance of examining the different resources available to memory actors, and the next section of this chapter will provide such an examination regarding ordinary people.

Between the decision to construct a commemorative object and its unveiling, there is a period where a whole range of processes takes place: from planning meetings and development of the design, to finding the funds and materials, producing the actual object, and preparing the site where the object will be installed. Some tasks that are carried out during this period are seemingly mundane: telephone calls to people who can help, transportation of large stones to the site, producing an image using software,

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[278] Wüstenberg, *Civil Society and Memory in Postwar Germany*.
[279] Vinitzky-Seroussi, *Yitzhak Rabin's Assassination*, p. 21.
[280] Vinitzky-Seroussi, *Yitzhak Rabin's Assassination*, p. 30.
[281] Vinitzky-Seroussi, *Yitzhak Rabin's Assassination*, p. 50.

sending payments to the workshop that carves images on granite. However, all the tasks that are involved in this process impact on the project in general and can hinder or promote its success. The next section of this chapter will use Bob Edwards and John McCarthy's typology of resources to examine how different resources are utilised by ordinary people for the purposes of their commemorative goals. Before proceeding with this task, it is important to note the five types of resources in this typology (cultural, social-organisational, material, human and moral) often intersect. This typology is used here to structure the analysis, while keeping in mind that different types of resources can be used simultaneously.

2.3.1. Cultural resources

Cultural resources are defined by Edwards and McCarthy as "artifacts and cultural products such as conceptual tools and specialized knowledge that have become widely, though not necessarily universally, known."[282] According to Edwards and McCarty, this category includes tacit knowledge or know-how about how to accomplish different tasks for the goals of a social movement (for example, organising and holding events, running meetings, forming organisations and using the Internet).[283] When ordinary people seek to construct a commemorative object, one type of cultural resource stands out as particularly important: namely, ordinary people's knowledge of how to use official procedures and interact with the authorities.

The important role of this cultural resource is evidenced in the work of the community organisation 'Poltava families of the killed defenders of Ukraine'. One of the founders of this organisation is a 65-year-old retired male military commander and lawyer, whose son died in the Battle of Illovaisk, in August 2014. In 2014, the first soldiers from Poltava died, which raised the question of where they should be buried. In the context of the first year of the conflict, when Ukrainians still hoped the military activities would soon end,[284] originally there were no attempts to bury the soldiers together. According

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[282] Edwards and McCarthy, 'Resources and Social Movement Mobilization', p. 126.
[283] Edwards and McCarthy, 'Resources and Social Movement Mobilization', p. 126.
[284] *Otsinky Naselenniam ATO Na Donbasi* (NASU Institute for Economics and Forecasting, 2014) <http://ief.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/ATO_-2014_08_28-ukr.pdf> [accessed 1 May 2021].

to this retired commander, his understanding of how military burial grounds could be arranged came from his previous experience.[285] Based on his professional knowledge, he was aware that in principle there must be a governmental regulation governing how soldiers should be buried. Having carried out a search online, he found that the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance (UINR) issued recommendations for local authorities saying the killed soldiers should be buried in specially organised military burial grounds.[286] The interviewee decided to present this information to the local authorities in Poltava; he felt strongly that it would be best to approach the authorities with arguments that have a legal grounding, rather than arguments based only on emotions. In this case, the strategic use of cultural knowledge by the father of a killed soldier was instrumental in the formation of a strong memory community and played a crucial role in the commemorative project in general.

As he explained in the interview, by the end of 2014 – beginning of 2015 some of the relatives of the killed had already met each other. For example, sometimes they would come across each other when visiting the graves of their sons and exchange mobile numbers. Others heard of each other by word of mouth. However, the key moment took place in early 2015, when the interviewee managed to convince the authorities that they were not following UINR recommendations. As a result, Poltava's city council made the decision to organise a meeting for all relatives of the killed soldiers. The contact details of the relatives were collected through the joint efforts of the interviewee and the authorities (some details were received from the local military offices). In spring 2015, a meeting took place on city council premises, where it was decided that the authorities must construct a military sector in one of the city's central cemeteries and discuss its design with the relatives (the design is discussed in detail in Chapter Four).[287] Following this meeting, most of the relatives attending decided to officially register as a civic organisation ('hromadska orhanizatsiia'). Some of the relatives stated in interviews that were they to need to defend their rights in the future, the authorities would take them more seriously if they acted as a registered

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[285] Author's Interview 48. Father of a fallen soldier. Online, 17 August 2020.
[286] *Sektory Viiskovykh Pokhovan* <https://old.uinp.gov.ua/page/sektori-viiskovikh-pokhovan?q=page/sektori-viiskovikh-pokhovan> [accessed 10 July 2021].
[287] Object 38 in Appendix 2, Figure 10 at page 151, Figure 11 at page 155 and Figure 32 at page 202.

group.[288] It is possible to argue that this memory community had increased its joint cultural knowledge as some of the relatives were entrepreneurs, familiar with Ukraine's general registration and other official procedures.

Using knowledge of how to run projects stands out as a key cultural resource used by ordinary people across all three categories (relatives, veterans, and activists) in the Poltava oblast. The relatives of the killed soldiers vary in age: from their early fifties to late seventies. Those who are most active in the area of commemoration are in their fifties and sixties. Many of them have experience of working in public organisations or running a private business, which gave them a good understanding of official processes in Ukraine. As for the veterans, their demographic composition is more complex: their ages range from twenties to sixties, and they have various occupations: from students and labourers to private entrepreneurs and even former public officials. Many of them were able to draw on their wider knowledge for the benefit of their respective memory communities. For example, in Opishnia (population 5,300), the local veterans sought to construct a monument to their fallen comrades.[289] One of Opishnia's activists, who actively helped the veterans in this project, shared in an interview the successful activities of this group has been due to the prior experience of their head.[290] The sixty-year-old head, a lawyer by profession, brought his professional experience to run this community organisation, which included registering the organisation, organising meetings, and contacting the authorities. As a result of this work, the authorities gave official permission for the construction of a monument to the soldiers who died in the Russia-Ukraine conflict and allocated 50% of the required funds. The successful construction of the monument in 2019 depended on a range of factors (especially on receiving the remaining funds from local residents and businesses). Still, this case demonstrates that cultural resources play an important role in the success of ordinary people's activity. Similar examples can be seen in other towns and cities, including in Kremenchuk, where a veterans' association is headed by a fifty-nine-year

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[288] Author's Interview 24. Two mothers of fallen soldiers in Poltava. Poltava, 7 August 2019.
[289] Object 20 in Appendix 2, Figure 28 at page 179.
[290] Author's Interview 25. Activist in Opishnia. Opishnia, 8 August 2019.

old retired military official, and in Horishni Plavni (population 50,800), where the head of the veterans' association is a forty-four-year old former private entrepreneur.

Conversely, a lack of cultural resources can adversely affect ordinary people's work. For example, in 2018 in Novi Sanzhary (population 8,100), a group of local veterans approached the village head and the village council with a request to construct a memorial.[291] According to one of the veterans' leaders (a male in his early 30s), their group lacked understanding of the general structure of the local public agencies and their work.[292] Thus, during the emotionally charged oral exchanges with the public officials, the veterans addressed their questions to departments that were not in charge of that area; this stalled the conversation and prevented the monument's construction. The interviewed veteran stated, "at that stage our lack of knowledge helped our opponents to not take us seriously."[293] He explained that he should have learned more about official procedure before approaching the authorities, and then he would have relied more on procedure and less on emotion. As a young engineer, who had gone to the front line shortly after university, he had insufficient experience of interacting with public agencies. As of 2021, Novi Sanzhary still has no memorials to the killed soldiers. This outcome results from several factors, including a disagreement between the authorities and the veterans on the design and location of a possible memorial. However, a lack of understanding of how to interact with the authorities proved to be a significant setback for the veterans' commemorative activity.

2.3.2. Social-organisational resources

In their conceptualisation of social-organisational resources, Edwards and McCarthy explain that these are used to further social movement goals and to gain access to other types of resources through them.[294] Edwards and McCarthy distinguish three forms of social-organisational resources: infrastructures (such as the postal service and roads, facilitating the smooth functioning of everyday life), social networks, and

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[291] Object 36 in Appendix 2, Figure 34 at page 210.
[292] Author's Interview 46. Veteran in Novi Sanzhary. Online, 15 April 2020.
[293] Author's Interview 46. Veteran in Novi Sanzhary. Online, 15 April 2020.
[294] Edwards and McCarthy, 'Resources and Social Movement Mobilization', p. 127.

organisations. Although while working on commemorative projects ordinary people use all three forms, the use of social networks and organisations requires a detailed analysis. For the purposes of constructing commemorative objects, such social-organisational resources can potentially be used to receive official permissions, to obtain funding, and to recruit more people. According to Edwards and McCarthy, access to such resources is expected to have a considerable impact on the outcome of the group's activity.[295]

Across all three categories of ordinary people (relatives, veterans and activists) there is a strong tendency to try to establish connections with key public officials who could further their commemorative goals. However, the success of this strategy varies greatly. In the case of the 'Poltava families of the killed defenders of Ukraine', while undertaking two commemorative projects (a military burial ground with a memorial; and a memorial with an electronic screen), in each project the relatives built strong connections with a key public official. The construction of the military burial ground (unveiled in 2016) was strongly supported by a city councillor (from the Svoboda Party),[296] and the construction of the memorial (unveiled in 2018) by the then-secretary of the city council.[297] Three interviewed relatives stated that these public officials played a crucial role in the success of their projects.[298] The officials actively and repeatedly defended the relatives' ideas and interests during city council meetings and supported the relatives throughout the entire process: from obtaining the required permissions, to the allocation of public funds. In this regard, the role of public officials' agency should be stressed: these two public officials used a lot of effort and energy to help ordinary people, driven by their own personal commitment to the cause (as they both explained in interviews).[299] The city councillor stated that he had lost a close

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[295] Edwards and McCarthy, 'Resources and Social Movement Mobilization', p. 127.

[296] Author's Interview 18. City councillor in Poltava. Poltava, 28 August 2018; Author's Interview 24. Two mothers of fallen soldiers in Poltava. Poltava, 7 August 2019; Author's Interview 48. Father of a fallen soldier. Online, 17 August 2020.

[297] Author's Interview 24. Two mothers of fallen soldiers in Poltava. Poltava, 7 August 2019; Author's Interview 40. Former secretary of the Poltava city council. Poltava, 30 August 2019.

[298] Author's Interview 24. Two mothers of fallen soldiers in Poltava. Poltava, 7 August 2019. Author's Interview 48. Father of a fallen soldier. Online, 17 August 2020.

[299] Author's Interview 18. City councillor in Poltava. Poltava, 28 August 2018; Author's Interview 40. Former secretary of the Poltava city council. Poltava, 30 August 2019.

friend in the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the secretary of the city council had a strong emotional commitment to the cause due to her own personal experience. Both saw their work on these projects as a personal duty, in addition to their responsibilities as public officials. Similar successful (or partially successful) implementation of projects through the help of local officials, personally committed to the cause, is also observed in the case of Opishnia, Kotelva, Pyriatyn, Myrhorod, Romodan and Chutove.

In some cases, the attempts of ordinary people to forge contacts with public officials have not brought about the desired result. For example, in Hadiach (population 23,300), in 2016 a group of local veterans asked the city mayor to provide support for the construction of a memorial. Although the mayor gave verbal assurances that things would "move forward",[300] local officials did not take any steps for the next two years. In 2018, the veterans decided to attend a meeting of the city council[301] (in accordance with their rights as Ukrainian citizens) and asked one of the city councillors to act as their representative and to raise their request for funding during the meeting. As one veteran shared in an interview, the veterans believe the councillor did not carry out this task efficiently: he only spoke for one minute, which was insufficient time to elaborate on the topic.[302] Feeling they were losing their chance, the veterans took the floor, which led to heated arguments in the chamber, and made the veterans feel that the authorities were not willing to help. After further attempts to communicate with the authorities, in 2019 the veterans finally secured official permission for the use of their preferred site (in the central park). They immediately constructed a small memorial using their personal funds.[303] Meanwhile, the authorities promised to construct a full-featured memorial on the same site. As this case demonstrates, the persistence of ordinary people is a valuable asset for achieving their goals. However, without help from public officials, it is harder for ordinary people to achieve their goals in full. Another example, observed in Kremenchuk, is where the veterans relied on a

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[300] Author's Interview 52. Veteran in Hadiach. Online, 26 August 2020.
[301] In the Ukrainian self-governance system, the issue of funding local projects is decided jointly by the city, town or village council during a meeting (usually in December), when the general budget is planned for the next year.
[302] Author's Interview 52. Veteran in Hadiach. Online, 26 August 2020.
[303] Object 21 in Appendix 2, Figure 20 at page 172.

local official, who through his own professional military experience was strongly committed to their cause. When this official lost his post, he became unable to promote the veterans' cause.[304] The veterans themselves believe[305] this was a significant setback for their project: just like in Hadiach, they only managed to obtain permission for the use of a site and had to self-fund their memorial (unveiled in 2016).[306]

It is important to note that the approach observed to have been used by ordinary people in the Poltava oblast (finding a public official to act as their representative) is strongly influenced by the staff and leadership of Ukrainian local governance. In the context of the Poltava oblast, construction of commemorative objects to the Heavenly Hundred and the soldiers who died in the Russia-Ukraine conflict is a very contentious matter. It goes beyond the purely procedural matters of filing requests to the local authorities, because some public officials involved in budget-related decisions (these are predominantly city, town or village councillors, and also mayors and their deputies, among others) have a personal opinion about the Euromaidan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the need to commemorate them. Moreover, all councillors run for election on different agendas and rely on residents to elect them. For ordinary people, the main way to secure public funds for the construction of a commemorative project is to file an official request to the local authorities, which is then considered by the local councillors during the budget planning meetings. Having analysed different cases across the Poltava oblast, I observed that the success of such filed requests does not always depend on the help of one official acting as a representative of ordinary people. In some cases (for example, in Lokhvytsia, Kotelva and Lubny), the local veterans' official requests (not promoted by a particular official) were processed in a relatively smooth manner and the authorities allocated the required funds. In the case of Zinkiv (population 9,300), on the other hand, the veterans' interaction with the authorities was far from smooth, only receiving the required public funding for their memorial (unveiled in 2018)[307] due to the persistence of the head of their veterans' association.

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[304] Author's Interview 15. Veteran in Kremenchuk. Kremenchuk, 25 August 2018.
[305] Author's Interview 15. Veteran in Kremenchuk. Kremenchuk, 25 August 2018.
[306] Object 17 in Appendix 2, Figure 19 at page 170.
[307] Object 24 in Appendix 24, Figure 15 at page 163.

As he stated in an interview, "I kept going to the authorities, even when I was still on crutches, and I kept asking them [for funding]".[308]

The general picture in the Poltava oblast is rather multifaceted. However, it is possible to argue that when the authorities do not unanimously support ordinary people's requests for the construction of memorials, and when it is difficult to predict how they will respond to a filed request, the involvement of a representative (a public official) often plays a critical role. Such representatives offer advice to ordinary people, guiding them through complex official procedures and promoting their cause from within the public agencies.

2.3.3. Material resources

According to Edwards and McCarthy, material resources include financial and physical capital, such as "monetary resources, property, office space, equipment, and supplies."[309] Undoubtedly, the construction of commemorative objects requires material resources. First and foremost, to construct a commemorative object, one needs materials (stone, metal, wood and so on), design (which may require money, if professional services are used), transportation (to deliver all required elements to the site) and a physical space where planning meetings can be held and, if necessary, the materials stored. The use of material resources by ordinary people will now be examined in more detail. Specifically, the following issues will be discussed: the construction of temporary and permanent commemorative objects; formal and informal requests for funding; and control over memory production through funding.

The cases identified in the Poltava oblast demonstrate that the cost of the final commemorative object depends on what the ordinary people want to construct and the material resources they need. Shortly after the Euromaidan protests and at the early stages of the Russia-Ukraine conflict (approximately 2014-2016), there was a tendency to create temporary commemorative objects, such as wooden or metal

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[308] Author's Interview 44. Veteran In Zinkiv. Online, 17 December 2019.
[309] Edwards and McCarthy, 'Resources and Social Movement Mobilization', p. 128.

stands (Poltava, Chutove, Pyriatyn) and re-decorated former Lenin monuments (Poltava, Hradyzk). The emergence of such temporary memorials (not only in the Poltava oblast, but also across Ukraine) resulted from people's strong need to express their emotions and process the complex traumatic events that took place in the country.[310] This was confirmed by different interviewees who took part in the construction of such objects.[311] Some explained that during 2014-2016, when the military operations in Eastern Ukraine were particularly intense, they felt that helping the army was their main priority, and it would feel wrong to spend a lot of money on a full-scale memorial.[312] At the same time, they also hoped that in the near future their temporary object would be replaced by a full-scale permanent memorial (either to the Heavenly Hundred or to the killed soldiers).[313] As a result of this, the material resources utilised by ordinary people at that time reflect the context in which the objects were built.

This can be seen in Poltava, where in July 2014, five months after the end of the Euromaidan protests, a group of local Maidan activists constructed a stand in memory of the Heavenly Hundred.[314] This was placed in front of the Poltava oblast's state administration building, where the local Maidan protests took place. The stand consists of a wooden frame mounted on metal pipes, and on the front it features a large, printed poster with images and text (the design of the poster is analysed in detail in Chapter Four). The total cost of the stand was 8,000 hryvnia, and this money was donated by sponsors and Poltava residents.[315] To collect the money, the initiators (members of the Maidan Council, formed by activists) used resources that were

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[310] Iryna Sklokina, 'Vshanuvannia Nebesnoi Sotni Ta Zahyblykh v ATO', in *Polityka i Pamiat. Dnipro - Zaporizhia - Odesa - Kharkiv. Vid 1990h Do Siohodni*, ed. by Georgiy Kasianov (Lviv: Shumylovych, 2018), pp. 135–42.

[311] Author's Interview 12. Euromaidan participant in Poltava. Poltava, 15 August 2018; Author's Interview 33. Euromaidan participant in Poltava. Poltava, 20 August 2019; Author's Interview 34. Two members of Hromada Poltavshchyny. Poltava, 21 August 2019.

[312] Author's Interview 33. Euromaidan participant in Poltava. Poltava, 20 August 2019; Author's Interview 34. Two members of Hromada Poltavshchyny. Poltava, 21 August 2019.

[313] Author's Interview 12. Euromaidan participant in Poltava. Poltava, 15 August 2018; Author's Interview 33. Euromaidan participant in Poltava. Poltava, 20 August 2019; Author's Interview 34. Two members of Hromada Poltavshchyny. Poltava, 21 August 2019.

[314] Object 4 in Appendix 2, Figure 7 at page 147.

[315] Ilona Chornohor, 'U Poltavi Vstanovyly Tymchasovyi Memorial Heroiam Maidanu', *Poltavshchyna*, 31 July 2014 <https://poltava.to/news/29213/> [accessed 4 April 2021].

established during the Euromaidan protests: thus, they contacted sponsors (local entrepreneurs) who regularly donated to the activists during the protests and used their Facebook pages to invite their followers to donate to this cause.[316] At the same time, the cost of the project was kept to a minimum: one of the main initiators (a female activist in her 40s), designed the poster on her computer.[317] As an advertising manager and professional designer, she used her existing skills to do this job. She also donated metal pipes that she had kept after doing some repairs in her house. The poster was printed free of charge by a private publishing company, which had previously helped the Maidan activists, and male activists donated their time to put the stand together and fix it in the ground.

Although the role of human resources will be analysed in detail later in this chapter, this case demonstrates that monetary and human resources can be inextricably entwined. In a very similar way, other temporary memorials were constructed, including the metal stand in Chutove (2015)[318] and the wooden stand in Poltava (2016)[319] commemorating the killed soldiers, and the old Soviet brick 'wall of honour' in Hradyzk (population 6,000), which was converted into a Heavenly Hundred stand by local activists (2016)[320]. In all these cases the initiators (ordinary people) relied on their own material resources and on their existing links with activists, volunteers and sympathisers. The observed links were formed (or reinforced) during the Euromaidan protests, and in most cases, were further reinforced with the onset of the conflict in Eastern Ukraine. Overall, the construction of the analysed temporary commemorative objects (and the procurement of material resources) is a result of the commitment and comradeship of the ordinary people involved, who did everything they could at the time to achieve their commemorative goals.

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[316] Author's Interview 33. Euromaidan participant in Poltava. Poltava, 20 August 2019.

[317] Author's Interview 33. Euromaidan participant in Poltava. Poltava, 20 August 2019.

[318] 'V Selyshchi Chutove Vstanovyly Pamiatnyi Shchyt Zahyblym v Zoni ATO Heroiam', *IRT Poltava*, 18 May 2015 <https://irt.pl.ua/video/4274> [accessed 10 December 2020].

[319] 'U Poltavi Vidkryly Stelu Do Rokovyn Ilovaiska', *Depo Poltava*, 29 August 2016 <https://poltava.depo.ua/ukr/poltava/u-poltavi-vidkrili-stelu-do-rokovin-ilovayska-29082016094000> [accessed 10 November 2020].

[320] Object 10 in Appendix 2, Figure 8 at page 148 and Figure 17 at page 166.

Construction of permanent memorials requires more material resources than the construction of a temporary object. In all identified cases in the Poltava oblast, where ordinary people wanted to construct a permanent full-scale memorial, they sought to secure public funding from the local authorities (such as in Poltava, Kremenchuk, Kotelva, Lokhvytsia, Lubny, Myrhorod, Opishnia and Zinkiv). Apart from two permanent memorials to the Heavenly Hundred (in Hadiach and Dykanka), the rest commemorate the soldiers killed in the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

It should be noted that there are three main types of local authority that can provide funding: the city / town council (miska rada), the district council (raionna rada), and the united territorial community (obiednana terytorialna hromada or OTH) – a voluntary administrative unit, consisting of several towns and villages (this was introduced in 2015 as part of Ukraine's decentralisation process). Depending on the city, town or village, each of these three local authorities may have different financial capabilities. Consequently, ordinary people must approach this issue strategically and decide who they should contact to achieve their goals (highlighting the importance of cultural resources). In most of the analysed cases in the Poltava oblast, ordinary people choose to contact the town (village) council first: this agency is often seen as the main 'go-to' and the most familiar public agency. At the same time, the district council or the united territorial community may have more money to fund expensive projects. Thus, it is rather common for the town or village council to contact the united territorial community (OTH) and ask them to cover part or all of the construction costs (as happened in Pyriatyn,[321] Opishnia[322] and Lubny[323]). Although ordinary people can make suggestions to the public officials regarding which local authority could provide funds, in reality the authorities decide on the financial arrangements between themselves (which requires the political will of the officials involved). As discussed earlier, unless ordinary people are familiar with the intricacies of how public agencies operate and how much money each agency has, an important factor will be persuading an official, who understands and can monitor the process, to act as representative.

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[321] Author's Interview 50. Head of the Pyriatyn District State Administration. Online, 22 August 2020.
[322] Author's Interview 25. Activist in Opishnia. Opishnia, 8 August 2019.
[323] Author's Interview 38. Priest in Lubny. Online, 29 August 2019.

An examination of ordinary people's requests for the allocation of public funds in the Poltava oblast, reveals that that not all requests were submitted as an official document. This raises the question of whether formal and informal requests differ in their effectiveness. Examples of informal communications can be seen in the already noted cases in Hadiach and Kremenchuk. In Hadiach, in 2016, the local veterans received the city mayor's spoken rather than written support for their informal request to construct a memorial.[324] The reason for such an approach is that there is still a tendency in Ukraine to rely on informal relations, together, in this case, with the veterans' belief that they deserved the right to receive help from the authorities. One of the veterans stated during an interview that such informality stalled the process and that the veterans should have approached this issue differently and submitted official requests at the very outset of the process.[325] After long negotiations, four years later, the city council organised a design competition. In Kremenchuk in 2015, the local veterans submitted a variety of documents (mostly design ideas) to the local authorities. During an interview, one of the veterans noted that they should have acted strategically and submitted more precise and "bureaucratic" official requests.[326] Furthermore, their main exchanges with the authorities took the form of conversations that were not minuted; with no such documentation, they did not lead to the desired outcome. Tired of unproductive conversations, the veterans eventually constructed their own memorial in 2016. This can be compared with those cases where requests for the construction of a memorial were filed officially. For example, in Kotelva, Lokhvytsia, Lubny and Zinkiv the authorities processed the filed requests, allocated funds, and carried out the required construction works.

According to the Law of Ukraine 'On Citizens' Petitions',[327] citizens have the right to submit official petitions to public authorities, in order to make requests or suggestions

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[324] Author's Interview 41. Veteran in Hadiach. Online, 1 September 2019; Author's Interview 47. Veteran in Hadiach. Online, 16 August 2020; Author's Interview 52. Veteran in Hadiach. Online, 26 August 2020.
[325] Author's Interview 52. Veteran in Hadiach. Online, 26 August 2020.
[326] Author's Interview 15. Veteran in Kremenchuk. Kremenchuk, 25 August 2018.
[327] *Pro Zvernennia Hromadian*, 1996 <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/393/96-вр#Text> [accessed 22 May 2020].

or to critique the work of a public agency. Such petitions can be submitted from an individual or a group. According to the law and the procedural requirements, if a petition is submitted correctly, it must receive an official documented response. For ordinary people this is an important instrument that they can use to obtain funding. Hypothetically, even if they receive a refusal, they can analyse the arguments provided and adjust their strategy accordingly. In the cases analysed, in those towns and cities where the requests were filed officially, a documented exchange began between the ordinary people and the authorities, eventually leading to the construction of a commemorative object. All the identified successful cases required either the strong involvement of an official acting as representative (as in the case of Poltava and Kotelva) or persistence on the part of the ordinary people (for example, in the case of Lubny and Zinkiv). However, adherence to official procedures also greatly contributed to the success of these initiatives. The importance of cultural resources stands out: after all, one needs to know in advance what approach (formal or informal) gives more chance of success. It is important to consider this issue in the context of post-Euromaidan Ukraine.

As academic literature suggests, in the aftermath of the Euromaidan protests, the need to move away from the commonly observed informal relations in business, politics and state administration (a legacy of the Soviet Union) towards the rule of law was brought to the fore of public and political debate. While this led to state initiatives[328] and public discussions,[329] as of 2021, in Ukraine, both formal and informal relations still co-exist, and the analysed cases in the Poltava oblast are examples of this. Ordinary people's attempts to operate in these conditions are exemplified by activists in Poltava, who constructed the wooden stand for the Heavenly Hundred in Poltava[330] and the metal stand for the killed soldiers in Chutove.[331] One of the interviewed activists explained[332]

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[328] Serhiy Kudelia, 'Corruption in Ukraine: Perpetuum Mobile or the Endplay of Post-Soviet Elites?', in *Beyond the Euromaidan: Comparative Perspectives on Advancing Reform in Ukraine*, ed. by Henry E. Hale and Robert W. Orttung (Stanford University Press, 2016), pp. 61–79.
[329] Huseyn Aliyev, 'End to Informality? Examining the Impact of Institutional Reforms on Informal Institutions in Post-Euromaidan Ukraine', *Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe*, 24:3, 207–21.
[330] Object 4 in Appendix 2, Figure 7 at page 147.
[331] Object 25 in Appendix 2.
[332] Author's Interview 33. Euromaidan participant in Poltava. Poltava, 20 August 2019.

that in 2014 they had installed the first stand in the context of the post-Euromaidan turmoil and were driven by emotions, without asking for any official permission. However, for the second stand they decided to obtain official permission: "We decided that if we want to build a country with the rule of law, then we ourselves need to take steps towards that."[333] Conversely, veterans who contacted the authorities in an informal way (Hadiach, Kremenchuk and Novi Sanzhary) believed they would receive a positive response in view of Ukraine's wider political context (as many of the current officials were elected as a result of the post-Euromaidan regime change) but were unsuccessful with their request. The existence of both formal and informal interactions with the authorities in the Poltava oblast points to Ukraine's hybrid state and its journey in the aftermath of the revolution.

It is important to note that access to material resources can define who has control over the design of the final memorial. For example, in Lokhvytsia (population 11,200), one of the interviewed participants (an ordinary person) explained[334] that when assessing designs submitted for a 2018 design competition, the authorities paid great attention to the practical and financial sides of the project and selected the design which they could afford and realise.[335] Although the local veterans (the initiators of the project) were able to share their opinions about the design, the final decision was made by the authorities (the provider of funds for the construction). This can be compared with Kremenchuk, where the veterans did not manage to secure funding from the authorities, but through self-funding were able to produce a monument delivering the narratives they wanted.[336] However, this monument, made of metal, may not be as future-proof as more expensive granite structures. Furthermore, such cultural resource as the ability to accurately estimate the cost of a future monument can help ordinary people achieve their commemorative goals.

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[333] Author's Interview 33. Euromaidan participant in Poltava. Poltava, 20 August 2019.
[334] Author's Interview 49. Retired art teacher in Lokhvytsia. Online, 20 August 2020.
[335] Object 31 in Appendix 2, Figure 6 at page 132.
[336] Object 17 in Appendix 2, Figure 19 at page 170.

2.3.4. Human resources

Edwards and McCarthy state that human resources include labour, experience, skills, and expertise. They explain that "Human resources inhere in individuals rather than in social-organizational structures or culture more generally. … Through their participation individuals make their labor accessible and usable to specific movements or SMOs."[337] Construction of commemorative objects almost always requires the involvement of people who know how to design and produce a memorial using different materials and techniques. It is important to differentiate between those projects where design and production are mainly controlled by the authorities and those where ordinary people have most (or all) control. For example, strong involvement of the authorities is particularly observed in design competitions (ordinary people's involvement in design competitions is discussed in Chapter Three). At the same time, there are also projects where ordinary people have a high level of control over design and production, and the present section will examine how human resources are used in these cases.

The role of artistic and production skills particularly stands out in the creation of temporary commemorative objects. In such cases ordinary people commonly rely on their own skills. For example, in Poltava a professional designer created the poster for the Heavenly Hundred stand using her own computer and software;[338] in Chutove (population 6,100), the design of the ATO stand (2015) was created by two of the members of the group who initiated its construction.[339] In Poltava, two of the main initiators of the ATO stand (2016) searched on the Internet for design ideas and then painted some of the elements (flowers and folk patterns).[340] Such cases demonstrate an abundance of skills held by ordinary people and their ability to independently produce commemorative objects. Notably, this resourcefulness is observed across different generations: from young students (Chutove) and middle-aged people (the Heavenly Hundred stand in Poltava) to more senior citizens (the ATO stand in Poltava).

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[337] Edwards and McCarthy, 'Resources and Social Movement Mobilization', p. 127.
[338] Author's Interview 33. Euromaidan participant in Poltava. Poltava, 20 August 2019.
[339] Author's Interview 33. Euromaidan participant in Poltava. Poltava, 20 August 2019.
[340] Author's Interview 34. Two members of Hromada Poltavshchyny. Poltava, 21 August 2019.

Skills to produce designs of commemorative objects give ordinary people more freedom over the production of commemorative narratives (as discussed in detail in Chapter Four).

Once a shift towards permanent memorials takes place, the use of human resources (specifically artistic and production skills) also changes. At this stage, professional artists and other experts start playing an important role by offering their skills. In Kremenchuk, in 2016, when the local veterans were thinking about the design of their future memorial, a local blacksmith sympathetic to their cause offered his help. Having discussed the veterans' design suggestions, he produced a metal memorial, donating his time, materials, and expertise.[341] In Opishnia, where local veterans originally wanted to install a simple memorial (a stone with a plaque) in memory of their fallen comrades, a local art teacher offered her help. She found different examples of memorials online and discussed their symbolic and production aspects with the veterans.[342] As a result of her help, the veterans decided to produce a full-scale memorial, eventually unveiled in 2019 (its design is discussed in Chapter Four).[343] These examples are not exhaustive: similar developments were also observed in Myrhorod,[344] Romodan[345] and Hadiach.[346] Such cases demonstrate that the term 'ordinary people' should not be interpreted in a simplistic manner. Ordinary people include those with a whole range of skills, and often ordinary people with artistic and production skills see it as their moral duty to commemorate events they sympathise with. As the analysed cases show, their involvement gives an opportunity to produce both simple objects (for example, a stone with a plaque) and more complex designs that deliver a range of narratives.

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[341] Author's Interview 15. Veteran in Kremenchuk. Kremenchuk, 25 August 2018.
[342] Author's Interview 25. Activist in Opishnia. Opishnia, 8 August 2019.
[343] Object 20 in Appendix 2, Figure 28 at page 179.
[344] Author's Interview 2. Wife of a fallen soldier in Myrhorod. Myrhorod, 20 July 2018.
[345] Author's Interview 1. Entrepreneur in Romodan. Myrhorod, 17 July 2018.
[346] Author's Interview 4. Blacksmith in Hadiach. Hadiach, 26 July 2018.

Another category of human resources proposed by Edwards and McCarthy is that of leadership.[347] In the activity of ordinary people, this plays an important role. In all identified cases in the Poltava oblast there are leaders: in some cases, there is one clear leader (Horishni Plavni, Khorol, Zinkiv, Lubny), in others there are two or three (veterans in Kremenchuk, Hromada Poltavshchyny, Kotelva). While some of the identified leaders have useful cultural knowledge and experience, others rely on their persistence and desire to learn new things and find solutions. These are both men and women, and of different ages. What these leaders share is the ability to bring people together and focus on the project over a substantial period of time. As some examples in this chapter show, the construction of commemorative objects can take several years, and memory communities often need to re-mobilise and continue their work after prolonged pauses, at which times leaders play a crucial role.

2.3.5. Moral resources

Edwards and McCarthy state that moral resources include solidarity support, legitimacy and sympathetic support, and are "generally bestowed by an external source known to possess them."[348] Christian (mostly Orthodox) priests and their support for ordinary people plays an important role in the construction of commemorative objects. During the Euromaidan protests and the conflict in Eastern Ukraine, different Christian churches in Ukraine took a proactive position: from hiding the protesters in the St. Michael's Monastery in Kyiv,[349] to setting up volunteer centres and sending chaplains to the front line.[350] In the Poltava oblast, with the onset of the conflict, the Assumption Cathedral in Poltava became the centre of the volunteer group the Battalion of the Unindifferent (Batalion Nebaiduzhykh).[351] Very quickly the work of the archbishop and his team became well-known and respected across the

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[347] Edwards and McCarthy, 'Resources and Social Movement Mobilization', p. 127.
[348] Edwards and McCarthy, 'Resources and Social Movement Mobilization', p. 126.
[349] 'December 11, 2013: The Bell Ringer of St. Michael's', *Euromaidan Press*, 10 December 2016 <http://euromaidanpress.com/2016/12/10/december-11-2013-the-bell-ringer-of-st-michaels/> [accessed 1 December 2020].
[350] Joseph Sywenkyj, 'Fathers on the Front Line', *Topic*, Belief, 22, 2019 <https://www.topic.com/fathers-on-the-front-line> [accessed 10 September 2020].
[351] 'Batalion Nebaiduzhykh' <https://pbn.org.ua/> [accessed 16 July 2020].

oblast. When some of the team's members decided to convert the former Lenin pedestal into a temporary memorial to the Heavenly Hundred,[352] their work received a certain degree of legitimacy through the reputation of the archbishop and his cathedral. However, such legitimacy works only at the local, oblast-wide level as people who are not aware of the oblast dynamic would not recognise that this added legitimacy to the pedestal, decorated with Euromaidan-themed images and texts. While the work of the archbishop and his team can be traced through analysing interviews of ordinary people reporting positively about their work,[353] the role of this moral resource is very difficult to measure. Although this moral resource cannot be considered a decisive factor behind the creation of a commemorative object, it still works in the background, contributing in a less visible way.

Similarly, in Hadiach, where the veterans struggled to negotiate the construction of a permanent memorial with the authorities, they tried to utilise a moral resource. In 2018, feeling frustrated by the inaction of the authorities, they installed a temporary commemorative stand on the territory of St. Michael's church.[354] Later, when continuing their negotiation with the authorities, they referred to this fact, emphasising that the church's priest fully supported them and was happy to install the stand on the territory of his church.[355] Although this demonstrates that the veterans tried to seek legitimacy for their project through the support of the church, it is difficult to accurately measure the impact of this moral resource. Similarly, it is difficult to assess the impact of the main initiator being a local priest on the project in Lubny (population 37,500) (successful construction of a memorial[356] in 2018).[357] It should be stressed that the utilisation of such external moral resources in the Poltava oblast is

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[352] Object 3 in Appendix 2, Figure 29 at page 191.
[353] Author's Interview 12. Euromaidan participant in Poltava. Poltava, 15 August 2018; Author's Interview 25. Activist in Opishnia. Opishnia, 8 August 2019; Author's Interview 33. Euromaidan participant in Poltava. Poltava, 20 August 2019; Author's Interview 48. Father of a fallen soldier. Online, 17 August 2020.
[354] 'U Hadiachi Ziavylas Doshka Pamiati Polehlym v ATO', *Bazar Media*, 22 November 2018 <https://bazarmedia.info/2018/11/22/u-hadiachi-ziavylas-doshka-pamiati-polehlym-v-ato/> [accessed 17 September 2021].
[355] Author's Interview 52. Veteran in Hadiach. Online, 26 August 2020.
[356] Object 32 in Appendix 2, Figure 22 at page 173 and Figure 24 at page 175.
[357] Oleksandr Mishchenko, 'Pamiatnyk Heroiam', *Lubenshchyna*, 2018 <https://lubenshchyna.com.ua/480-pam-yatnik-geroyam> [accessed 17 September 2021].

not a wide-spread phenomenon. In most cases, priests are only invited to the unveiling ceremonies and, although at this stage their presence may give legitimacy to the memory, it did not impact on the general process of the construction.

This thesis extends Edwards and McCarthy's understanding of moral resources by introducing the concept of internal moral resources; for the ordinary people under discussion, their cause is an important internal moral resource. The narrative held by the ordinary people who want to commemorate the Heavenly Hundred and the killed soldiers from the Russia-Ukraine conflict provides a powerful, self-generated motivation (an internal moral resource), self-justifying the determination of the veterans, relatives and activists in their attempts to construct memorials. The importance of this narrative will be examined in closer detail in Chapter Four. With regard to internal moral resources, in most analysed cases, ordinary people emphasise the importance of their cause when requesting help from the authorities. In the context of an armed conflict, ordinary people expect officials to behave like true patriots. The perceived willingness or unwillingness of the authorities to construct a memorial is interpreted as being patriotic or unpatriotic. Accordingly, when examining how ordinary people seek to obtain material resources, it is crucial to account for the wider context in which such activity takes place, as current political events can influence the motivation and actions of ordinary people and the reciprocal decision-making processes of the authorities.

2.4. Conclusion

In the aftermath of the Euromaidan and at the onset of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, ordinary people who engage in commemorative actions can be distinguished in three overlapping groups: activists, veterans and the relatives of those killed. When seeking to construct commemorative objects in memory of the Heavenly Hundred or the killed soldiers, ordinary people utilise different resources, which can variously impact on their project. Cultural resources play an important role in the functioning of a memory community. They help ordinary people approach their project strategically: for example, by registering their group as a community organisation in order to be taken

seriously by the authorities. A lack of cultural knowledge can be detrimental to ordinary people's causes.

When seeking to obtain funds from the local authorities, ordinary people commonly try to co-operate with an official who will be able provide guidance and be their representative (a social-organisational resource). As the analysed cases show, cooperation with an official acting as a representative can lead to the successful construction of a commemorative object (compared to cases where such an official was not involved). However, this does not diminish human agency: persistence on the part of ordinary people is an important factor behind the successful implementation of a project, even when it is not strongly supported by the authorities. Additionally, adherence to official procedures facilitates ordinary people's efforts to receive funding (material resources) from the authorities. Thus, those cases where requests were filed officially tended to have a higher success rate than those cases where such requests were voiced in an informal manner.

In general, it is difficult for ordinary people to operate independently from the authorities. Authorities not only issue permissions for construction but can also provide funds for the construction of a permanent object. At the same time, ordinary people have an abundance of resources that can, to a certain degree, compensate for a lack of others (for example, in some cases human resources can substitute for material and social-organisational resources). Furthermore, the conducted analysis demonstrates that ordinary people involved in commemorative activities come from different backgrounds, have varied skills and use their knowledge and resources for the benefit of their memory community and its commemorative goals. The cases analysed in this chapter demonstrate the persistence and strategical thinking of ordinary people and their active participation in the area of commemoration.

The wider social-political context is particularly important to how ordinary people use all five types of resources. Thus, the post-Euromaidan developments in the area of informal relations, as well as ordinary people's expectations regarding pro-Ukrainian patriotic stance of the officials, have an impact on how ordinary people approach the

authorities. Furthermore, when constructing commemorative objects, some of the analysed memory communities rely on already-existing networks of volunteers and sponsors. These networks were created during the Euromaidan protests and in the early stages of the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

To continue an examination into how ordinary people take part in memory production processes and what avenues are available to them, the next chapter analyses the mechanisms provided by the state specifically to enable the involvement of ordinary people in the area of commemoration.

Chapter Three: State mechanisms and the involvement of ordinary people in commemorative practices

3.1. Introduction

The analysis in Chapter Two shows that although some ordinary people try to implement commemorative projects independently, in most instances they are obliged to interact with state authorities. What prompts such interaction includes the need to apply for official permission for construction, to secure authorisation for the use of a particular public location, or to obtain funding from public sources, all of which demonstrate the inextricability of ordinary people's commemorative activity from a complex system of state mechanisms (such as laws, regulations, and official procedures). This chapter will answer: *What mechanisms does the state provide to specifically give opportunities to ordinary people to exercise their agency in the area of commemoration? How do ordinary people use these mechanisms to exercise their agency?*

My investigation is guided by academic literature that examines issues such as power vectors in memory production, changes in established memory production practices, and the participation of the public in commemorative projects. As Jenny Wüstenberg observes, "Memorials evoke the contention and power relationships that brought about their construction."[358] The findings of my fieldwork confirm that every construction project brings to light the issue of power in memory production, which in turn provokes such questions as who exactly decides on which memories are commemorated, in what form and to what degree. A rich body of academic literature urges researchers to explore the work carried out by a range of non-state actors, such as civil society groups,[359] critiquing an over-emphatic focus on the state as the main memory actor in society. Certainly, the role and authority of the state needs be considered given that when seeking to present a particular memory in the public

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[358] Wüstenberg, *Civil Society*, p. 11.
[359] Wüstenberg, *Civil Society*; Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance*; Vinitzky-Seroussi, *Yitzhak Rabin's Assassination*.

space, non-official memory actors, including ordinary people, are compelled to interact with state agencies at some point of their project.[360] The state, in turn, has the authority to produce laws and regulations to manage commemorative activities in society. Shanti Sumartojo contends that "To understand how states try to shape the historical record through memorials, we must consider how they are approved, who sponsors and pays for them, and the different scales of national, provincial or local bureaucracies that are involved."[361] To fully follow this through, it is important to take into account the role played by citizens in shaping official approaches to memory. This chapter draws on the work of theorists Sumartojo[362] and Duncan Bell[363] who examine issues of power in memory production.

Analysing memories and identities in the post-Soviet societies that moved from a one-party rule to democracy, Blair A. Ruble notes that these societies found it insufficient to only change institutional arrangements: rather, it proved essential for the "ingrained habits of thought and action" of both politicians and citizens to be changed, for them to "think differently about the nature of the political game and the nature of power", and to move towards "more compromise-oriented and inclusive political mechanisms."[364] This chapter draws on the work of Peter Carrier[365] and James Young[366] to examine the issue of what mechanisms facilitate or hinder public participation in memory production. These scholars note that participation in discussions regarding the construction of monuments is often hampered, above all by the existence of differing memories and opinions about the proper way to commemorate.[367] However, they also point out that such participation can have important positive results: citizens can feel that their views are taken into account in the process of memory

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[360] Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance*, p. 139.
[361] Shanti Sumartojo, 'Memorials and State-Sponsored History', in *The Palgrave Handbook of State-Sponsored History After 1945* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 449–76 (p. 458).
[362] Sumartojo, 'Memorials and State-Sponsored History', pp. 449–76.
[363] Duncan Bell, 'Agonistic Democracy and the Politics of Memory', *Constellations*, 15(1), 2008, 148–66.
[364] Blair Ruble, 'The City, Contested Identity, and Democratic Transitions', *Demokratizatsiya*, 9 (2001), 173–81 (p. 174).
[365] Peter Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments and National Memory Cultures in France and Germany since 1989: The Origins and Political Function of the Vél' d'Hiv" in Paris and the Holocaust Monument in Berlin* (Berghahn Books, 2005).
[366] James Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (Yale University Press, 1993).
[367] Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments*, p. 217.

production;[368] consultations with the community make citizens feel more accountable for the final result;[369] and consultations can ensure that the constructed monument is better accepted by the public[370] and that it plays roles which are welcomed and desired by carriers of the memories.[371]

Although the cases analysed in this chapter took place after the Euromaidan protests, they need to be examined in the context of the wider changes in memory production processes that followed the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. As in many other post-Soviet countries, when in independent Ukraine state monopoly in the area of memory came to an end,[372] a range of memory actors emerged or gained a stronger voice,[373] including NGOs, activist groups,[374] veteran groups, unions of artists, and the diaspora. The transition from strong state control over memory during the Soviet period to memory politics in a new setting involved changes in the state mechanisms of memory production.

To frame discussion of these events, this chapter first provides an overview of the identified state mechanisms before moving on to analyse the legislative framework governing the construction of commemorative objects in Ukraine. Next, the chapter examines design competitions as a prime example of a mechanism that exemplifies the power of the state and the participation of ordinary people. The involvement of ordinary people at the four stages of design competitions (formulation of the rules, submission of designs, consideration of the submissions by the jury, and public consultation regarding the submissions) is analysed in detail. Investigation established that eleven design competitions had been held in the Poltava oblast dedicated to the

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[368] Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments*, p. 8.

[369] Young, *The Texture of Memory*, p. 325.

[370] Young, *The Texture of Memory*, p. 324; Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments*, p. 4.

[371] Young, *The Texture of Memory*, p. 136.

[372] Miller, 'Introduction', p. 5.

[373] Tatiana Zhurzhenko, 'Shared Memory Culture? Nationalizing the "Great Patriotic War" in the Ukrainian- Russian Borderlands', in *Memory and Change in Europe: Eastern Perspectives*, ed. by Małgorzata Pakier and Joanna Wawrzyniak (Berghahn Books, 2015), pp. 169–92 (p. 170).

[374] Benjamin Forest and Juliet Johnson, 'Monumental Politics: Regime Type and Public Memory in Post-Communist States', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 27:3, 2011, 269–88 (p. 275).

Heavenly Hundred and / or the Russia-Ukraine conflict. These are listed in Appendix 2, named in this chapter according to the city and the year of initiation.

3.2. Overview of the state mechanisms used by ordinary people

In an analysis of the commemorative sphere in the Poltava oblast after the Euromaidan, four state mechanisms were identified: the filing of official requests, legal action, electronic petitions, and design competitions. The submission of official requests by ordinary people has been discussed in detail in Chapter Two in the context of resources available to ordinary people, where it was demonstrated that the outcome of such requests strongly depends on the extent to which they are supported and promoted by individual public officials (acting as the representatives of ordinary people). Accordingly, we can move on to the second type of state mechanism under discussion here, that of legal action, which is incidentally the least commonly used mechanism in this group: only one legal action is identified in relation to the monuments considered in this thesis. Specifically, in December 2018, a Poltava artist filed a legal suit against the final decision in the Poltava design competition for the best memorial to the Heavenly Hundred.[375] The complainant was concerned that the authorities would waste large sums of money on re-building an entire square instead of building one less expensive memorial. The authorities, in reply, argued that the project that had officially won the design competition envisaged a substantial (and, consequently, expensive) reconstruction because its concept was based around not one memorial in the traditional sense, but a 'Maidan Territory' ("Terytoria Maidanu"). It is crucial to note that when this legal case was initiated, the complainant was running for a seat in the Verkhovna Rada, and that accordingly, it is difficult to consider her as falling within the category of 'an ordinary person'. Although this case demonstrates the possibility of ordinary people undertaking legal action for commemorative purposes, it is not representative of commemorative practices in the Poltava oblast. Moreover, the legal action was a consequence of issues relating to an

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[375] Nina Korol, 'Bilia Poltavskoi ODA Vidbulas Aktsiia: Shyny, Mitynh, Shtovkhanyna', *Kolo.News*, 4 July 2019 <https://kolo.news/category/vlada/14967> [accessed 20 January 2021].

overarching state mechanism, a design competition (rather than a separate activity). Let us now turn to the third type of state mechanism, the use of electronic petitions.

Electronic petitions are a familiar mechanism to Ukrainians, including in the Poltava oblast.[376] They became especially popular after 2015, when the Verkhovna Rada added them to the Law of Ukraine 'On Citizens' Appeals'.[377] With this amendment, the citizens of Ukraine were given the opportunity to use e-petitions to submit their requests to the President, the Verkhovna Rada, the Cabinet of Ministers, and local governmental agencies. Compared with written requests, e-petitions give ordinary people a better opportunity to add their voice even if they do not know other signatories in person. This mechanism has been actively used by citizens in the Poltava oblast to address a wide range of issues in such areas as construction, transportation, education, and healthcare.[378] In addition, some e-petitions seek to achieve commemorative goals. Examples include the petition in Myrhorod (population 38,400) to replace the demolished Lenin statue with a monument to kobza (a type of lute) players,[379] and the petition in Poltava to replace the monument to the Soviet general Mykola Vatutin (1901-1944) with a monument to Mykola Mikhnovsky (1873-1924), a leading ideologue of Ukraine's independence.[380] If a petition collects the required number of e-signatures from the public,[381] it has to be considered by the authorities and receive an official response.

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[376] Anna Dovhoshei, 'Elektronni Petytsii: Yak Kremenchuk Vyperedzhaie Poltavu Ta Myrhorod', *Poltavshchyna*, 28 April 2016 <https://poltava.to/news/38284/> [accessed 10 April 2021].
[377] *Pro Zvernennia Hromadian*.
[378] 'Elektronni Petytsii', *Poltava City Council* <https://petition.rada-poltava.gov.ua/> [accessed 22 May 2020].
[379] 'Stvorennia Pamiatnoho Znaku Myrhorodskym Kobzariam Na Mistsi de Buv Roztashovanyi Pamiatnyk Leninu', *E-Dem*, 1 June 2016 <https://petition.e-dem.ua/myrhorod/Petition/View/37> [accessed 22 May 2020].
[380] Yan Pruhlo, 'U Poltavi Zibraly Pidpysy Za Demontazh Pamiatnyka Heneralu Vatutinu', *Poltavshchyna*, 10 March 2020 <https://poltava.to/news/54703/> [accessed 1 September 2020].
[381] To be considered by the President, the Verkhovna Rada or the Cabinet of Ministers, a petition must collect no less than 25, 000 e-signatures. For petitions to the local authorities, the required number is much less (in hundreds), and it is established by each authority individually. More details on e-petitions can be found here: 'Elektronna Petytsiia: Poriadok Podannia Ta Rozghliadu', *Wiki Legal Aid* <https://wiki.legalaid.gov.ua/index.php/Електронна_петиція:_порядок_подання_та_розгляду> [accessed 1 September 2020].

In the Poltava oblast, it has only been possible to identify two petitions directly relating to this thesis. In the first case, in April 2020, Oksana Halchenko (a local Euromaidan activist) initiated a petition to promote the construction of a memorial to the Heavenly Hundred on the site of the former Lenin monument. The petition, published on the Poltava city council website, mustered the required number of e-signatures (261, slightly over the required minimum of 250).[382] As a result, the petition was considered by one of the city council's commissions,[383] which subsequently decided to support it,[384] forwarding it to another commission, that deals with issues of city planning and architecture.[385] It is difficult to predict what the final outcome of this petition will be. The city council's previous responses to similar public requests suggest that it is likely that the council will respond by organising a design competition.[386] Regardless of the end result, this case demonstrates that as a mechanism provided by the state e-petitions are a good way to draw the general public's attention to a commemorative issue. This petition was covered by different online newspapers, one at national level.[387] However, as discussed in Chapter Two, the outcome of citizens' appeals much depends on the political will of public officials, who decide whether or not to offer their support. This is also confirmed by the petition to construct a memorial to the Heavenly Hundred in Pyriatyn: although this petition was processed by the authorities and officially supported,[388] in the end, the memorial, a small stone with a plaque,[389]

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[382] Olena Halchenko, 'Vstanovlennia Monumentu "Nebesnii Sotni" i Kaplychky Na Mistsi Kolyshnoho Pamiatnyka Leninu', *Poltava City Council*, 15 April 2020 <https://old.petition.rada-poltava.gov.ua/petition/view?id=533> [accessed 1 September 2020].

[383] 'Permanent commission on the development of culture, education, physical education and sport, youth policy, support to veterans of war and participants of the ATO, social protection of the population, healthcare, protection of maternity and childhood'.

[384] 'Minutes of a Session of 03.09.2020' (Permanent commission on the development of culture, education, physical education and sport, youth policy, support to veterans of war and participants of the ATO, social protection of the population, healthcare, protection of maternity and childhood of the Poltava City Council, 2020).

[385] 'Permanent commission on city planning, architecture, development of the municipal services, transport, development of entrepreneurship, city development, investments and tourism'.

[386] 'Olena Halchenko: "My Povynni Stvoryty u Poltavi Muzei Zakhysnykiv Ukrainy!"', *Poltavshchyna*, 23 October 2020 <https://blog.poltava.to/es/11052/> [accessed 10 January 2021].

[387] 'Chy Ziavytsia u Poltavi Pamiatnyk Nebesnii Sotni', *National Memorial to the Heavenly Hundred Heroes and Revolution of Dignity Museum*, 22 July 2020 <https://maidanmuseum.org/uk/node/1117> [accessed 1 September 2020].

[388] 'Minutes of the 23rd Plenary Session of the City Council' (Pyriatyn City Council, 2017).

[389] 'U Pyriatyni Vshanuvaly Heroiv Nebesnoi Sotni', *Novyny Poltavshchyny*, 21 February 2018 <https://np.pl.ua/2018/02/u-pyryatyni-vshanuvaly-herojiv-nebesnoji-sotni/> [accessed 30 September 2020].

was constructed by the authorities in a top-down manner that was unrelated to the petition.[390] Consequently, at the level of interaction between ordinary people and the authorities, e-petitions, a relatively new state mechanism in Ukraine, are not significantly different from 'traditional' written requests. Their primary advantage is that they give ordinary people an opportunity to attract more media attention and generate discussion of the commemorative issue in wider society. We can now turn to the fourth and final state mechanism under discussion, design competitions, thereby bringing this section of the chapter to a close.

Design competitions stand out as the only state mechanism specifically aimed at commemoration. In comparison, while legal action and petitions are often used for commemorative purposes, they are also used in a range of other contexts. Furthermore, design competitions are commonly used by state authorities across Ukraine to create memorials to the Heavenly Hundred and the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Although such competitions are common throughout the world, for the purposes of clarity this thesis will use the term "design competition" to convey the meaning as defined in Ukrainian legislation: "a type of creative competition aimed at discovering the best project proposals developed according to the criteria established by the ordering party."[391] In nine out of the eleven identified Poltava oblast design competitions, the idea to construct a memorial was initially suggested by ordinary people (Appendix 3). Thus, participants of the Euromaidan protests (for example, Poltava 2014 design competition) or veterans (Kremenchuk 2016, Lokhvytsia 2018, Hadiach 2020 design competitions) either formally or informally voiced their request to the authorities, who in turn decided to organise a design competition. In all eleven cases ordinary people took part in at least one stage of the competition.

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[390] Author's Interview 50. Head of the Pyriatyn District State Administration. Online, 22 August 2020. Author's Interview 56. Activist in Pyriatyn. Online, 17 March 2021.
[391] *Pro Zatverdzhennia Poriadku Provedennia Arkhitekturnykh Ta Mistobudivnykh Konkursiv*, 1999 <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2137-99-п/print> [accessed 10 January 2021].

3.3. Legislative framework governing the construction of commemorative objects

To fully grasp design competitions as a state mechanism they need to be viewed against a background of the general legislative framework governing the construction of commemorative objects in Ukraine. As Shanti Sumartojo contends in her analysis of power vectors in the Ukrainian legislative framework, the identification of obscure power vectors in memory production demands a probing of "the official processes by which they are designed, constructed and maintained."[392] Findings from the eleven design competitions analysed demonstrate that the political will and motives of the authorities played a significant role in the construction of commemorative objects.

In Ukraine, the construction of commemorative objects is regulated by several national legislative documents, including the Ruling "On Certain Issues of Construction (Creation) of Monuments", issued by the Cabinet of Ministers,[393] and the Order "On Approval of the Procedure of Construction (Creation) of Monuments", issued by the Ministry of Culture.[394] These documents affirm that a design competition is a mandatory condition for the construction of a monument. For monuments of national significance such competitions are organised by the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine, and for monuments of local significance they are organised by regional culture departments.

Currently in Ukraine, the legal classification of commemorative objects is ambiguous, especially when what is at issue is whether an object should be classed as a monument (pamiatnyk) or a memorial sign (pamiatnyi znak), and this can impact the involvement of ordinary people in commemorative processes. Despite this lack of legal clarity, in practice many local authorities regulate the construction of memorial signs and memorial plaques (deemed to be objects smaller than monuments) and issue corresponding local regulations regarding their construction. This practice can be seen

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[392] Sumartojo, 'Memorials and State-Sponsored History', p. 458.
[393] *Deiaki Pytannia Sporudzhennia (Stvorennia) Pamiatnykiv i Monumentiv*, 2004 <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1181-2004-п#Text> [accessed 16 July 2020].
[394] *Pro Zatverdzhennia Poriadku Sporudzhennia (Stvorennia) Pamiatnykiv i Monumentiv*, 2004 <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z1588-04#Text> [accessed 16 July 2020].

in many towns, cities and districts of Ukraine, with the rulings issued in Smila (Cherkasy Oblast)[395] and Drohobych (Lviv Oblast)[396] serving as good examples. The key requirement of such rulings is that smaller commemorative objects, such as memorial signs and memorial plaques, must be approved by the city, district, or oblast council, depending on their physical location and local significance. However, it is not clear whether such smaller objects require a design competition.[397] Although there are instances of competitions held for memorial signs,[398] most are constructed without competitions, which makes the process simpler, faster and, consequently, more attractive for both the initiators of such projects and the approving authorities. During an interview, the chief architect in Hadiach confirmed that the local authorities chose to build a memorial sign, rather than a monument, in memory of the Heavenly Hundred (unveiled in 2017),[399] because it involved a much simpler procedure.[400]

In practice, under current legislation, the participation of ordinary people depends on the will of the local authorities, as the authorities need to make a conscious effort to provide mechanisms which allow ordinary people to express their views. However, the involvement of ordinary people makes the construction process more complicated and fraught with risk. After all, ordinary people might have contradictory and conflicting interpretations of the same events, and a compromise can be problematic. Consequently, existing memory-related legislation gives authorities a certain leeway, allowing them to decide whether they want to involve ordinary people in memory production or not. How this plays out in practice, that is the state mechanisms and legislative framework governing the construction of monuments, can be seen as we examine the design competitions organised by the Poltava oblast authorities. This

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[395] *Pro Zatverdzhennia Poriadku Vstanovlennia, Obliku Ta Demontazhu Pamiatnykiv, Pamiatnykh Znakiv, Anotatsiinykh Doshchok Ta Memorialnykh Obiektiv Na Terytorii Mista Smila*, 2018.

[396] *Polozhennia pro Poriadok Vstanovlennia Pamiatnykh Znakiv, Memorialnykh Ta Anotatsiinykh Tablyts u Misti Drohobychi*, 2017 <https://drohobych-rada.gov.ua/andriya-fegetsyna-chempiona-svitu-z-ushu-ta-jogo-trenera-oksanu-sotryhinu-pryvitaly-u-drogobytskij-miskij-radi-foto/> [accessed 10 January 2020].

[397] Hanna Bondar, *Arkhitekturni Konkursy Ta Konkursy Rozvytku Terytorii: Demokratiia v Dii* (Kyiv: Art Knyha, 2017), p. 72.

[398] Bondar, *Arkhitekturni Konkursy*, p. 72.

[399] Yan Pruhlo, 'U Hadiachi Vidkryly Pamiatnyi Znak Nebesnii Sotni u Vyhliadi Biloho Holuba', *Poltavshchyna*, 20 February 2017 <https://poltava.to/news/41895/> [accessed 30 September 2020].

[400] Author's Interview 5. Head architect in Hadiach. Hadiach, 26 July 2018.

second half of the chapter takes us through how ordinary people get involved at the following four stages: the formation of the rules of the design competition, the submission of applications, the work of the jury, and public consultation.

3.4. Design competitions

3.4.1. Drawing up the rules

Drawing up the rules of a design competition is a key step toward the construction of a given commemorative object. How to conduct architectural design competitions in Ukraine is guided by the Ruling *On Approval of the Procedure of Conducting Architectural and City-Planning Competitions* that was adopted in 1999 by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.[401] The Ruling defines the main participants of a design competition and the requirements of its mandatory stages. It specifies that the party commissioning a design competition (a government agency or a private individual) must prepare a documentation package which should include the details of the competition and its terms and conditions. It is important to note that the Ruling does not specify anything about the involvement of ordinary people at this stage. However, analysis of the identified design competitions in the Poltava oblast demonstrates that there have been instances when ordinary people were involved in the preparation of the documentation package.

One of the cases providing valuable insight into the involvement of ordinary people is the campaign for the construction of a memorial to the Heavenly Hundred in Poltava. Following the request of the local Maidan participants for permission to construct a memorial, in April 2014 (shortly after the Euromaidan protests), the Poltava Oblast State Administration quickly organised a design competition. When the submitted designs were considered by the jury, which consisted of public officials, experts in architecture, and Maidan participants, it soon became clear that the competition had been rushed and poorly organised. The original documentation for the competition

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[401] *Pro Zatverdzhennia Poriadku Provedennia*.

failed to specify a range of matters, which led to confusion and heated debate once the jury started to assess the received submissions.[402] The main problems with the documentation will now be explored in detail.

The first problem with the original documentation was that it had asked the participants to suggest the location for the future memorial. This caused a significant problem because many of the submissions suggested the site of the former Lenin monument; with designs created with a particular site in mind, it was difficult for another site to be considered. At the same time, during the meeting many members of the jury, including participants of the Euromaidan protests, were strongly in favour of using a different site – specifically, the square in front of the Oblast State Administration building, where the local Maidan protests took place in 2013-2014. The jury believed it would be wrong for them to select the location during the meeting without the involvement of more members of the public and especially the participants of the protests. Second, some debates concerned the format of the future commemorative object, namely whether it should be a monument, a stele, a relief on a building, or an object of another type.[403] The original documentation did not specify any particular format, making the selection process more difficult. Overall, this case demonstrates that clear, precise competition rules, along with consideration of the local context of remembrance, are imperative for the successful completion of the complex process of constructing a memorial.

It is crucial to note that the focus of the heated debates in this case related to the fairness of the selection process rather than the actual design of the future memorial. Specifically, the running theme of the debates was the importance of involving the public in key decision-making processes. Although the issue of fairness was brought up by all members of the jury, including public officials and experts, the Maidan participants played a central role in the discussion. Thus, the jury jointly decided to

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[402] Mykola Lysogor, 'Poltavski Aktyvisty Peresvarylysia Cherez Pamiatnyk Heroiam Maidanu', *Poltavshchyna*, 25 June 2014 <https://poltava.to/news/28711/> [accessed 30 September 2020].
[403] Mykola Lysogor, 'Sytuatsiia Iz Vstanovlenniam Pamiatnoho Znaku Heroiam Maidanu u Poltavi – u Hlukhomu Kuti', *Poltavshchyna*, 30 July 2014 <https://poltava.to/news/29197/> [accessed 10 January 2020].

organise another design competition, and to hold regular roundtables with public officials, experts, and ordinary people, with the aim of preparing clearer, fairer documentation.

Peter Carrier notes that "The social and political function accorded to monuments depends less on their form than on the contexts in which they are conceived, erected and perceived,"[404] and argues that for the successful acceptance of a commemorative object by the public it is essential the project is associated with open, transparent and just processes.[405] The issue of fairness of process will be returned to several times in this chapter, when analysing different stages of design competitions. The analysed case in Poltava shows that adherence to legislation alone is not always enough to ensure a fair process. By deciding to organise roundtables to prepare the rules of the next competition, the members of the jury introduced a new approach not required by law. As Carrier notes, "the dynamic of political and public communication depends primarily on the relative steadfastness of tradition in any given memory culture, which in turn depends on the willingness of individuals and institutions to repeatedly question and renew collective memorial paradigms."[406] In the case of Poltava, the established and familiar process, whereby the rules of design competitions are formulated by the authorities, was challenged and modified to ensure the fairness of the commemorative project.

To better understand the Poltava 2014 design competition, it is worth holding in mind the way that existing memory paradigms have changed in post-Euromaidan Ukraine and the wider historical and political context. A key grievance of the Euromaidan protesters was the problem of corruption in Ukraine.[407] In the aftermath of the protests, the fight against corruption became an important, emotionally charged topic for the Ukrainian public.[408] Given that the project under discussion sought to commemorate the Euromaidan protest, any signs of unfair conduct in its running could

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[404] Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments*, p. 37.
[405] Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments*, p. 214.
[406] Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments*, p. 171.
[407] Onuch and Sasse, 'The Maidan in Movement', p. 559.
[408] Thomas de Waal, 'Fighting a Culture of Corruption in Ukraine', *Carnegie Europe*, 2016.

have been interpreted by the locals as a betrayal of the Heavenly Hundred and the Revolution of Dignity. Arguably, this wider context of commemoration created the impetus for the modification of the existing paradigms, that is, the state mechanisms, as observed in this Poltava case and other cases analysed later in this chapter.

My research reveals that in the case of Poltava, the weekly roundtables were held for two months (May-June 2015), and were advertised on a dedicated website, inviting ordinary people and experts to participate.[409] The roundtables were given substantial media coverage, partly because they always involved such heated and emotional debates, and to such an extent that the chair had to remind participants to treat each other with respect.[410] The high emotional charge of these meetings can be explained by the fact that all core participants were genuinely passionate about the subject matter. After all, they had all volunteered their time and energy to come to the meetings every week and meticulously consider complex procedural issues. Out of the 28 core participants, fifteen were experts in art, design, city planning, and other areas relating to the nature of the competition; many of them held senior positions in public institutions.[411] The remaining thirteen participants were ordinary people. Seven had expertise in art, architecture, and culture; it is possible they wanted to be involved because they not only sympathised with the cause, some of them had taken part in the Euromaidan protests, but also because they felt their expertise could be useful in creating a suitable commemorative object in their city. The other six participants were non-experts, ordinary people,) who had taken part in the Euromaidan protests and who represented different groups formed during and after the protests. Due to the significant media coverage of these roundtables, it is likely that many other residents in Poltava got to hear about them and had a chance to join them. Overall, analysis shows that the organised roundtables were a mechanism that was introduced to

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[409] 'Hromadskyi Forum', *Hromadskyi Forum*, 2016 <https://gromkonkurs.wordpress.com/> [accessed 22 May 2020].

[410] Daryna Synytska, 'Pamiatnyk Nebesnii Sotni u Poltavi Mozhe Nikoly Ne Ziavytys', *Poltavshchyna*, 8 May 2015 <https://poltava.to/news/33528/> [accessed 1 May 2020].

[411] 'Uchasnyky Forumu', *Hromadskyi Forum* <https://gromkonkurs.wordpress.com/про-форум/учасники-форуму/> [accessed 10 May 2020].

modify the existing paradigm, allowing the participation of ordinary people at the stage of rule preparation in this design competition.

My analysis shows that these roundtables lead to an important outcome, namely the terms and conditions of the new design competition, which were officially released by the Poltava Oblast State Administration in May 2016. They specify that the project's aim is not simply to create a memorial, but to create an entire 'Maidan Territory' on the square where the local Euromaidan protests took place. Compared to the brief and non-specific rules of the first competition, the new competition's terms and conditions are much more detailed and include an almost three-page-long conceptual framework of the future commemorative site. For example, it specifies that the project should resolve the conflict between the square's ideological and emotional narratives (the old Soviet narratives and the new Maidan narratives), thereby creating a space in which visitors can reflect on the Euromaidan events, and turning the square into a place that tells current and future generations about "the sacrificial heroic deeds thanks to which Ukrainians now live in a state where life is valued above all else".[412] The document also specifies that "The conceptual framework of the Maidan Territory should serve as a warning to the authorities that the people of Poltava will always be ready to take decisive measures to ensure democracy, protect human rights and eradicate corruption."[413] This objective, along with other sections of the terms and conditions, demonstrates that ordinary people were involved in their production, and that the authorities took their input into account when producing the final documentation package for the competition.

Analysis of the eleven identified design competitions in the Poltava oblast revealed that attempts are being made to involve ordinary people in the drawing up of design competition rules. Their involvement is not required by law; local authorities introduce

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[412] 'Decree No186 of 04.05.2016. Pro Umovy Provedennia Vidkrytoho Arkhitekturno-Khudozhnoho Konkursu Na Vyznachennia Krashchoho Kontseptualnoho Proektu Vidkrytoho Hromadskoho Prostoru Terytoriia Maidanu u m. Poltava' (Head of the Poltava Oblast State Adminstration) <http://oblrada-pl.gov.ua/interview/pro-ogoloshennya-vseukrayinskogo-vidkrytogo-konkursu-terytoriya-maydanu> [accessed 30 September 2020], p.3.

[413] 'Decree No. 186', p. 3.

it on their own initiative[414] and through experimentation. In four of the eleven identified design competitions, the authorities tried to involve ordinary people at the preparatory stage. For example, in Hadiach (2019)[415] and Slobodo-Petrivka (2019),[416] locals were invited to take part in workshops, where they could share their views on the preferred location of the future memorials and their format. The participants of these well-attended workshops visited the potential sites and then offered their views during roundtables. It is important to note the workshops were supported by a Polish NGO Fundacja Inna Przestrzeń.[417] However, the local authorities also played an important role in their organisation and promotion. The key suggestions made regarding the location, target audience and design of the future memorials were added to the documentation packages for these two design competitions, which were organised later in 2019. In Pyriatyn (population 15,200), the city council organised meetings with locals to discuss the future Russia-Ukraine conflict memorial. During these meetings ordinary people, including veterans and families of the fallen soldiers, discussed, among other issues, the future memorial's location. Two main options were considered: to place the new memorial either on the site of the former Lenin monument (in front of the city administration building) or to create a separate alley near the existing Great Patriotic War memorial. In the end, it was the first option that was selected, a decision based on the opinions expressed during the meetings and the results of online voting.[418] Once the location had been determined, it was possible to move on to the design competition, organised in 2019, in which entrants were asked to plan their design with the selected location in mind.[419]

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[414] In this case the authorities are being guided by Article 31 of the Law of Ukraine No280/97-BP 'On local self-government in Ukraine' (Pro mistseve samovriaduvannia v Ukraini) of 1997.

[415] Nadiia Strashko, 'U Hadiachi Obhovoriuvaly, Yakym Mozhe Buty Novyi Prostir Pamiati u Miskomu Parku', *Hadiach City*, 20 November 2019 <https://hadiach.city/articles/52303/u-gadyachi-obgovoryuvali-yakim-mozhe-buti-novij-prostir-pamyati-u-miskomu-parku> [accessed 10 October 2020].

[416] 'Planuvalnyi Zakhid v Formati Vorkshopu', *Hrebinka City Council*, 15 November 2019 <http://hrebinka.org.ua/news/p951> [accessed 10 May 2020].

[417] According to the website of this NGO (https://www.innaprzestrzen.pl/en/), one of its objectives is to develop civil society, including through implementing a program of participatory public space planning processes (Participatory Architecture).

[418] 'Pershi Kroky Do Stvorennia Arkhitekturnovyraznoho Prostoru Vshanuvannia Nashykh Heroiv', *Pyriatyn*, 13 March 2019 <http://pyriatyn.org.ua/news/p3292> [accessed 10 May 2020].

[419] 'Oholosheno Arkhitekturnyi Konkurs Na Krashchu Eskiznu Propozytsiiu Oblashtuvannia Hromadskoho Prostoru Vshanuvannia Zakhysnykiv Terytorialnoi Tsilisnosti Ukrainy v Misti Pyriatyn', *Pyriatyn*, 5 June 2019 <http://pyriatyn.org.ua/news/p3658> [accessed 10 May 2020].

The analysed cases demonstrate that the successful involvement of ordinary people at the preparatory stage of design competitions requires two equally important factors: first, the willingness of the authorities to experiment and to make changes to established "memorial paradigms"[420]; and second, the readiness of ordinary people to put pressure on the authorities and participate in processes that are opened to them. In the analysed cases, both factors were present, leading to the meaningful involvement of ordinary people. One of the key drivers behind this development was the overall call for fairness of official processes in post-Euromaidan Ukraine.

3.4.2. Submission of designs

When considering the submission of designs, it is important to hold in mind that the Ruling *On Approval of the Procedure of Conducting Architectural and City-Planning Competitions* (adopted in 1999) does not expressly envisage the involvement of ordinary people at this stage of design competitions;[421] instead it defines participants of design competitions as experts, teams of authors, and legal entities. Although the level of expertise of these participants is not specified, the overall text of this Ruling makes reference to participants with expertise in architecture, art, and city planning. At the same time, the Ruling also anticipates that state authorities, as the commissioning party, will specify in the documentation package of their design competition, the level of professional expertise that is expected from participants. This gives the local authorities scope to allow non-experts to submit designs. This present section of the chapter examines whether and how the local authorities in the Poltava oblast provide for the involvement of ordinary people at the submission stage of design competitions.

My analysis of the identified eleven design competitions shows that, overall, there is no established procedure that enables ordinary people to submit their designs. Instead, this is a matter of ongoing debate. Eight of the eleven identified design

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[420] Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments*, p. 171.
[421] *Pro Zatverdzhennia Poriadku Provedennia*.

competitions allowed ordinary people to submit designs. For example, their terms and conditions specify that participants can include "private individuals" (Slobodo-Petrivka 2019,[422] Kremenchuk 2016),[423] or simply invite "all those who are interested" (Lokhvytsia 2018).[424] Although the figures make it seem as though ordinary people are commonly allowed to submit designs, the actual situation is rather more complex, and accordingly requires investigation. The eight identified cases permitting submissions from ordinary people fall into two categories: those where other terms and conditions of the competitions discouraged the inclusion of ordinary people's designs (Hadiach 2020, Slobodo-Petrivka 2019, Pyriatyn 2019); and those that accepted and considered submissions from ordinary people (Poltava 2014, Kremenchuk 2016, Lokhvytsia 2018).[425] These categories warrant further consideration.

The terms and conditions of the competitions in the first category did specify that private individuals can submit their designs. However, my analysis of the design requirements suggests they were too complex for an ordinary person, a non-expert, to meet. For instance, the competition in Pyriatyn 2019, asked entrants to provide a "horizontal, frontal and side view of the memorial sign", "technical and economic characteristics", and "perspective visualisation".[426] As a result of this, two designs (simple drawings) submitted by ordinary people were rejected (one of them was later admitted to the competition at the insistence of two jury members who were

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[422] *Decision No863 of 21.11.2019. Pro Orhanizatsiiu Mistsevoho Vidkrytoho Arkhitekturnoho Konkursu Na Krashchyi Kontseptualnyi Proekt Oblashtuvannia Hromadskoho Prostoru Parku Na Terytorii Kvartalu, Obmezhenoho Vulytsiamy Parkova Ta Hoholia v s. Slobodo-Petrivka Hrebinkivskoho Raionu Poltavskoi Oblasti*, 2019 <http://www.hrebinka.org.ua/data/laws/doc2019-11-21-3.pdf> [accessed 20 January 2020].

[423] *Decree No158-P. Pro Zatverdzhennia Polozhennia pro Vidkrytyi Konkurs v m. Kremenchutsi Na Vyznachennia Proektu Memorialnoi Formy Dlia Uvichnennia Pamiati Uchasnykiv, Zahyblykh (Pomerlykh) Uchasnykiv Antyterorystychnoi Operatsii Ta Revoliutsii Hidnosti v Ukraini*, 2016 <https://kremen.gov.ua/?view=decision-mayor-archive&decision-mayor-period=2016-05&page=3> [accessed 26 May 2019].

[424] 'U Lokhvytsi Oholosyly Konkurs Na Krashchyi Proekt Pamiatnoho Znaku Zahyblym Voinam ATO', *Novyny Poltavshchyny*, 15 March 2018 <https://np.pl.ua/2018/03/u-lohvytsi-oholosyly-konkurs-na-kraschyj-proekt-pamyatnoho-znaku-zahyblym-vojinam-ato/> [accessed 20 January 2020].

[425] There are also three cases that cannot be analysed further (in Novi Sanzhary and Karlivka the competitions were initiated but later closed because no designs were submitted; the new competition in Kremenchuk, which was announced in 2020, is still accepting submissions).

[426] *Decision No161. Pro Arkhitekturnyi Konkurs Shchodo Oblashtuvannia Hromadskoho Prostoru Vshanuvannia Zakhysnykiv Terytorialnoi Tsilisnosti Ukrainy v Misti Pyriatyn*, 2019 <http://pyriatyn.org.ua/data/laws/doc2019-4-25-12.pdf> [accessed 15 December 2020].

veterans).[427] The competition in Hadiach 2020 likewise asked entrants to provide a "3D visualisation".[428] In the case of Slobodo-Petrivka (population 783), the aim of the competition in 2019 was not simply to construct a memorial, but to develop and construct an entire park in the centre of the village. As such, contestants were asked to provide a detailed plan of the future park, including its "engineering and transportation provision" and "zones for children of different age groups".[429] Thus, in Slobodo-Petrivka, all the submissions were from experts who knew how to create detailed and professional designs; the participation of ordinary people was prohibited because it would have been too difficult for them to meet these requirements.

In some isolated cases, ordinary people have still tried to take part at the design stage of a competition despite having no suitable expertise. During an interview, one veteran in Hadiach shared that as soon as he heard that a competition was being organised for a memorial to the soldiers who died in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, he contacted an architect of whom his comrades had spoken.[430] Specifically, he knew this architect uses "metal that has bullet holes and has a burnt and torn look",[431] and, hoping the future memorial in Hadiach would have this style, he asked the architect to take part in the competition. Similarly, in Lokhvytsia, local veterans contacted a local artist, a retired art teacher, and asked him to take part in the competition. Even though this competition was open to non-experts and accepted simple drawings, the veterans felt themselves unable to draw at the level required and believed this artist's ideas were close to their own (he drew a soldier walking through a field of wheat). These two examples demonstrate that to make sure that the future memorial will correspond with their vision, some ordinary people exercise their agency and actively try to find a

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[427] Author's Interview 54. Architect in Pyriatyn. Online, 15 March 2021; Author's Interview 55. Veteran in Pyriatyn. Online, 23 February 2021.

[428] *Polozhennia pro Poriadok Orhanizatsii Ta Provedennia Vidkrytoho Vseukrainskoho Arkhitekturnoho Konkursu Na Krashchyi Kontseptualnyi Proekt Obiekta Blahoustroiu (Pamiatnoho Znaku) - 'Zemliakam, Shcho Staly Na Zakhyst Ukrainy' v Parku 'Peremoha' m. Hadiach*, 2020 <https://hadiach-rada.gov.ua/docs/402705/> [accessed 10 May 2021].

[429] *Decision No863*.

[430] Author's Interview 52. Veteran in Hadiach. Online, 26 August 2020.

[431] Monuments made from corten steel (with a rusty look) are becoming increasingly popular in Ukraine, especially for commemoration of the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

way to utilise the available state mechanisms even when they do not have the requisite skills.

With respect to the second category of cases (Poltava 2014, Kremenchuk 2016, Lokhvytsia 2018), these provide insight into how submissions from ordinary people are accepted and considered. As one jury member of the Poltava 2014 competition stated, and in the process alluding to a common expression that is often attributed to Lenin, the aim of the competition was to allow "all residents of Poltava, even lady cooks,[432] to take part."[433] There were fourteen entries to the competition, with only one from a non-expert , that is, a simple drawing featuring a female figure with a yellow-and-blue flag (Figure 1).[434] All the rest came from experts, professionally produced using specialised visualisation and architectural design software (Figure 2). Given that the Poltava National Technical University has a well-established faculty of architecture, it is not surprising that the competition attracted experienced and early career architects. Most likely, the high level of the experts' submissions was one reason why the non-expert submission was considered by the jury as "being not of a professional standard" and removed from the competition.[435] Although, as discussed earlier in this chapter, the authorities had decided to close their initial competition and organise a new one, it is clear that the attempt to involve ordinary people ended in failure.

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[432] The well-known expression, commonly attributed to Vladimir Lenin, runs, "Every female cook should learn to govern the state".

[433] Lysogor, 'Poltavski Aktyvisty Peresvarylysia'.

[434] Mykola Lysogor, 'Konkurs Na Pamiatnyk Heroiam Maidanu Ye, Ale Poltavska Vlada Na Noho Ne Zvertaie Uvahy', *Poltavshchyna*, 13 July 2014 <https://poltava.to/news/28955/> [accessed 22 May 2020].

[435] Lysogor, 'Poltavski Aktyvisty Peresvarylysia'.
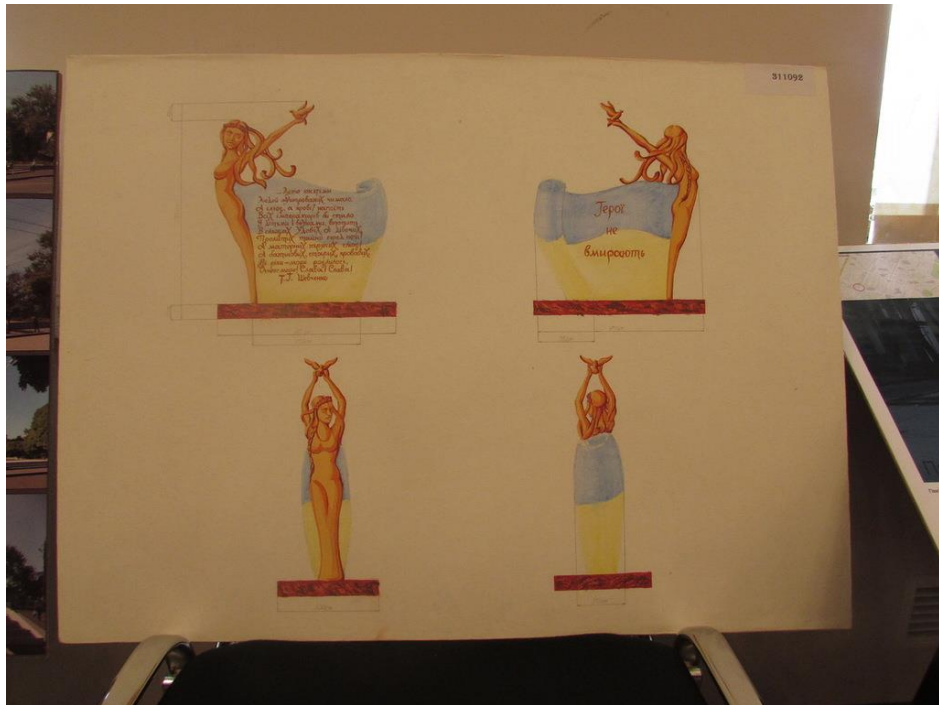
Figure 1. Design competition in Poltava (2014) for the construction of a memorial to the Heavenly Hundred. Design submitted by an ordinary person.

Figure 2. Design competition in Poltava (2014) for the construction of a memorial to the Heavenly Hundred. One of the designs submitted by experts.

In this context, the competitions in Kremenchuk and Lokvytsia, which did consider the submissions from ordinary people, stand out. In Kremenchuk, the competition was

initiated in May 2016,[436] with terms and conditions specifying that it was open to non-experts. After an initial slow start, by November 2017 sixteen submissions had been registered. Out of twelve participants (some submitted two designs), six can be considered as experts, and the remaining six as ordinary people: a group of blacksmiths, a local artist, and four local residents.[437] Analysis of the participant's professional profiles revealed that each of the six experts had very close connections with the local authorities or the professional area of architecture. For example, one expert is an artist and the director of a big public art gallery in Kremenchuk; her directorship is closely linked to the authorities. On the other hand, three of the ordinary people are local artists for whom art is a hobby and not part of their professional activity.

Some of the non-expert participants submitted simple drawings with a written explanation of their concepts (Figure 3). For example, Valentyna Kramarenko suggested using installations with millstones as a symbol of the tools that shape the national identity: "millstones eliminate unnecessary elements and leave only the best elements."[438] Euhen Shorokhov drew an obelisk featuring the face of a young mourning woman, and Liubov Vasylieva drew a young soldier with his beloved woman: the soldier is standing upright and looking into the distance, while the woman is kneeling next to him, crying. In her project notes Liubov Vasylieva suggests that the figures be made of either glass or marble, and the soldier be white, and the woman, black.[439] One visually striking project is a drawing by a local artist, an ordinary person, Serhii Bryliov, depicting two little refugee children: a boy stepping on a toy tank, and an older girl holding his hand and carrying a suitcase.[440] Overall, the submitted designs

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[436] Originally the competition was for the best design to both the Euromaidan victims and the soldiers who died in the Russia-Ukraine conflict. In the course of the competition, it was decided to select only the winning design for a monument to the soldiers, and to organise a new competition for a Euromaidan monument (which was initiated in 2019 and then again in 2020).
[437] Aliona Dushenko, 'Rozpochalosia Holosuvannia Na Eskiz Memorialu Heroiam ATO u Kremenchutsi', *Telegraf*, 15 November 2017 <https://www.telegraf.in.ua/kremenchug/10065956-rozpochalosya-golosuvannya-na-eskz-memoralu-geroyam-ato-u-kremenchuc.html> [accessed 10 April 2020].
[438] Dushenko, 'Rozpochalosia Holosuvannia Na Eskiz Memorialu'.
[439] Dushenko, 'Rozpochalosia Holosuvannia Na Eskiz Memorialu'.
[440] Currently most of the memorials in Ukraine that commemorate the Russia-Ukraine conflict focus on the memory of the fallen soldiers or, in rarer cases, the memory of the killed civilians. The experiences of the IDPs are still not included into the commemorative practices.

provided rich material that inevitably raises the question of how the conflict in Ukraine should be commemorated and what narratives would be most suitable: for example, mourning of the dead, defence of the country and / or formation of the national identity for future generations.

Figure 3. Kremenchuk design competition (2016) for the memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Examples of submissions from ordinary people

Figure 4. Kremenchuk design competition (2016) for the memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Examples of submissions from experts

The issues of visual language will be explored in more detail in Chapter Four. However, at this stage it is important to note the difference between the designs submitted by ordinary people and those submitted by experts. Experts tend to use more conventional materials and forms commonly observed in war memorials in Ukraine, such as the use of granite or bronze statues, as Figure 4 demonstrates. Ordinary people, by contrast, often suggest unusual designs and different materials, such as corten steel, forged metal, and glass; this can be considered these people's own particular way of intervening in the ongoing discussion and advocating the best way to commemorate events. Although ordinary people's designs are not always selected, significant media coverage of the competitions ensures that their suggestions are

discussed by the public. Overall, without the participation of ordinary people in the competitions, discussion about the appropriate symbols, narratives and materials would not be as rich and thought-provoking.

As my analysis demonstrates, the Kremenchuk 2016 jury considered all submitted designs with due attention.[441] Although the inclusion of designs by ordinary people is a positive step, it also raised questions about how such non-expert ideas could be realised. After all, the construction of a memorial requires detailed architectural calculations and implementation plans. In the case of Kremenchuk, one of the promising designs submitted by ordinary people, local blacksmiths, was rejected by the jury because "it did not include a three-dimensional visualisation to help create a sense of the actual appearance of the future memorial."[442] Similarly, when commenting on the winning design, created by an established sculptor (titled *DNA of Memory*), one jury member maintained that this design was most suitable due to its monumentality, sophistication of detail and durable construction.[443] The design shows a tall grey column featuring images of Ukraine's historical struggles for independence (from Cossacks to volunteer battalions in the current conflict), topped by a bronze angel holding a bronze spiral with doves of peace (Figure 4, top left). Although this design was largely selected due to its visual strengths, its durability was used as an argument in its favour. However, while a memorial's durability can be demonstrated by an expert in a professional design providing detailed calculations, this is something a simple drawing by a non-expert would not express. In theory, ordinary people could pay an expert to produce a professional visualisation of their design, however, this would limit participation to only those people who can afford such services.

Reflecting on the hypothetical prospect of turning a non-expert's simple design into a memorial, one experienced architect, a participant in the competition in Slobodo-

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[441] Ksenia Omelchenko, 'U Miskradi Nareshti Vyznachyly, Yakyi Vyhliad Matyme Pamiatnyk Heroiam ATO', *Prohrama Plius*, 16 May 2018.
<http://pplus.in.ua/news/u_m_skrad_naresht_viznachili_yakiy_viglyad_matime_pam_039yatnik_geroy am_ato23529> [accessed 30 April 2020].
[442] Omelchenko, 'U Miskradi Nareshti Vyznachyly'.
[443] Omelchenko, 'U Miskradi Nareshti Vyznachyly'.

Petrivka 2019, explained in an interview that local authorities often treat ordinary people's submissions with caution because of the risk they carry.[444] After all, on the basis of a drawing it is unclear to the authorities whether or not it will later be possible to commission an architect to produce a strong, safe, and durable memorial. At the same time, this interviewee believed this concern to be only partially justified, because when submissions were considered, the jury, which by law includes experts, is sufficiently qualified to foresee how and whether any particular simple design can be converted into a professionally made memorial. Were this perspective to be adopted, it could enable more involvement by ordinary people at the design stage of construction. An example of such an approach can be seen in the competition in Lokhvytsia 2018, where the local authorities expressly invited "all those who are interested" to take part. By chance, all this competition's submissions were from non-experts including simple drawings featuring a soldier holding a rifle, and Cossack crosses drawn with pencil, pen and felt tips (Figure 5). Although the winning design was made by an experienced artist (a retired art teacher), he explained in an interview[445] that he too provided only a drawing, and after the competition the authorities passed his drawing to an architect who produced a professional design of the future memorial (unveiled in 2018, Figure 6).[446]

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[444] Author's Interview 53. Architect in Poltava. Online, 26 January 2021.
[445] Author's Interview 49. Retired art teacher in Lokhvytsia. Online, 20 August 2020.
[446] 'Vidkryttia Pamiatnoho Znaku Zahyblym Voinam – Uchasnykam Boiovykh Dii v Zoni Provedennia ATO', *Lokhvytsia District Council*, 5 December 2018 <https://lohvica-rayrada.gov.ua/news/08-45-00-05-12-2018/> [accessed 30 April 2020].
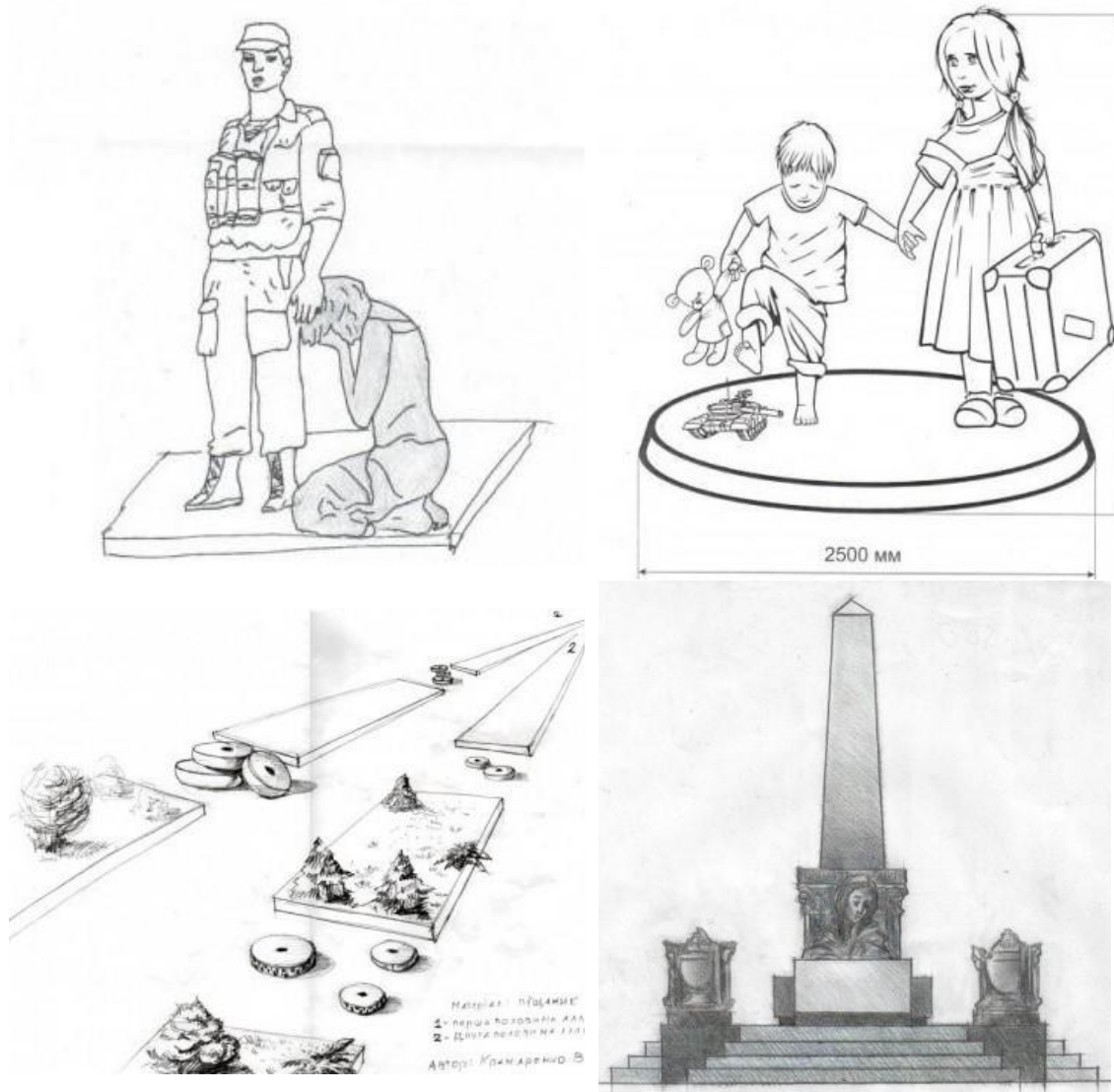
Figure 5. Lokhvytsia design competition (2018) for the memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Examples of submissions from ordinary people

Figure 6. Lokhvytsia design competition (2018) for the memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Final memorial constructed based on the design submitted by an ordinary person

Examining issues of power in memory production, Duncan Bell states "Power can never be expunged from any political community and contestation can never be extinguished, but it is essential to minimize the grounds for conflict, and to design institutions and encourage attitudes responsive to and capable of accommodating the various perceptions of the past that exist within society."[447] This is confirmed and

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[447] Bell, 'Agonistic Democracy', p. 159.

exemplified in the cases here analysed, which demonstrate that overall the issue of memorial design is controlled by public officials and experts, and the inclusion of ordinary people into the design process is only possible when the authorities decide to take a calculated risk to construct a memorial using a non-expert design. Such a transfer of power is possible, but it requires careful strategy and initiative on the part of the authorities. At the same time, there is evidence that ordinary people do try to exercise agency even when the existing mechanisms do not allow their direct involvement.

3.4.3. Consideration of the submissions by the jury

The involvement of ordinary people as jury members in design competitions facilitates the expression of a wider range of views; non-expert opinions may be grounded in the first-person experience of family members, veterans and activists. Together they come to determine which memorial most effectively reflects the collective memory of the commemorated event. According to the Ruling *On Approval of the Procedure of Conducting Architectural and City-Planning Competitions*, at least two thirds of the jury members must be made up of experts in city planning and architecture.[448] Furthermore, the jury must include representatives of the commissioning party (in the analysed cases this is the local authorities). Experts are permitted to hold public office, which often means a high total number of public employees on the jury. The Ruling does not demand the inclusion of ordinary people, such as carriers of memory, neither does it prohibit them. In six out of eleven identified cases the jury included ordinary people, Euromaidan protesters or veterans, depending on the type of memorial. For example, in Pyriatyn, the appointed jury consisted of fourteen members, composed of nine public officials (some of whom were experts), three experts in architecture (not holders of public office), and two veterans (ordinary people). According to the Ruling, a design can win if the majority of members present support it. Consequently, ordinary people can never independently decide on the winning project as by themselves they

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[448] *Pro Zatverdzhennia Poriadku Provedennia*.

cannot form a majority. Thus, selection of the winning project requires a certain consensus between the jury members.

In interviews conducted during my fieldwork, two veterans who were members of a jury (Pyriatyn 2019, and Hadiach 2020) shared that they saw their inclusion as a positive step, because it gave them an opportunity to voice their views directly to the officials and experts during meetings of the jury.[449] Given that the number of ordinary people on the jury in these two cases was not high (two in Pyriatyn and one in Hadiach), the veterans involved were seen as representatives of all veterans in these towns. These two interviewees confirmed they wanted to serve as a communication line between the local carriers of memory (veterans and families of the fallen soldiers) and the local authorities. Thus, these veterans met with other carriers of memory and set up communication via social media (such as Viber) to discuss the future memorial, to establish people's wishes and to deliver them to the authorities. This approach (the inclusion of individuals as representatives of the larger group of carriers of memory) requires analysis and will now be examined in more detail.

First, the actual power of ordinary people as members of the jury needs be considered. When serving on a jury, ordinary people hold power not because of their number, which is very small compared to other jury members, but because they represent a large group of carriers of memory. Both interviewees felt they were taken seriously by other members of the jury, and stressed that this aspect was very important to them. At the same time, they also believed that the experts and public officials had dominated in the discussions. As noted earlier in this chapter, the construction of a memorial requires expertise in architecture and budget planning, thus ordinary people will struggle to take a leading role in discussions as they will normally be limited to simply explaining their preference for given visuals. In the case of Pyriatyn, although the participating veterans (as well as their local fellow veterans) preferred one submitted design, the jury eventually voted for another – a more professionally executed project with detailed technical specifications. Two architects who were

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[449] Author's Interview 52. Veteran in Hadiach. Online, 26 August 2020; Author's Interview 55. Veteran in Pyriatyn. Online, 23 February 2021.

members of the jury in Haidach and Pyriatyn shared in the interviews that there was a tangible tension between the experts and the veterans, whereby the experts believed they had the required expertise to decide which design would work best, but the local veterans insisted they were the carriers of memory and had the right to decide which memorial to construct.[450] In the case of Pyriatyn, this tension was one of the reasons[451] why the authorities eventually decided to shelve the design that came first in the design competition and asked the veterans to simply pick the design they wanted.

Second, it is crucial to remember that local veterans are not a homogenous group of people; they can have different opinions about how the Russia-Ukraine conflict should be commemorated. Moreover, larger towns and cities often have several veterans' associations. Non-homogeneity among the carriers of memory raises the question of whom to include on the jury as representatives of the entire community of memory. The complexity of this issue is exemplified by Kremenchuk, where the seventeen-strong appointed jury consisted of eleven public officials and experts, and six representatives of different local civil groups formed by war veterans and volunteers helping the army. However, during the time in question, Kremenchuk had more than ten veteran associations of the Russia-Ukraine conflict,[452] and it is clear that some were not represented on the jury. In Hadiach and Pyriatyn, which have only one veterans' organisation each, the issue of representation was still acute, because some local veterans disagreed with the views of their representative on the jury and felt their voices went unheard.[453]

My analysis suggests that ordinary people who from the very beginning are most proactive in campaigning for a memorial, are more likely to be included in the different stages of a design competition. Furthermore, these people must be willing to dedicate

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[450] Author's Interview 53. Architect in Poltava. Online, 26 January 2021; Author's Interview 54. Architect in Pyriatyn. Online, 15 March 2021.

[451] This decision was made after the Ukrainian local elections in 2020, when Pyriatyn elected a new mayor. It is very likely that this change of leadership is one of the reasons why the project, organised by the predecessors, was discarded.

[452] 'Official Letter No01-19/212 of 04.07.2017' (Executive Committee of the Kremenchuk City Council, 2017).

[453] Author's Interview 52. Veteran in Hadiach. Online, 26 August 2020; Author's Interview 55. Veteran in Pyriatyn. Online, 23 February 2021.

time and energy to the memorial building project. Design competitions can take several months (and sometimes two or more years), and the ordinary people involved have to persevere in attending a range of meetings, learning about official procedure, and consistently making their voices heard. Understandably, they also feel frustrated when other members of their memory communities, who only check in on the project from time to time, voice criticism of their work.[454]

James Young highlights the issue of fairness within the decision-making processes of commemorative projects. In particular, he draws attention to the formation of juries of design competitions, demonstrating the importance of forming a jury or a committee which is seen as an "authoritative body whose integrity and credentials c[an] withstand any storm their final decision might provoke,"[455] one which also ensures a balance of both ordinary people and experts.[456] The cases analysed show that the process of forming a jury that meets this standard is proving a difficult task: this in part because according to legislative criteria, the number of ordinary people present will always constitute a minority, and they will have to find a way to make their voice heard. Furthermore, it is highly likely that tension will arise between the carriers of memory, who believe they have the right to decide which design will best memorialise their experiences, and the experts, who feel they have the required expertise to make design-related decisions. The cases analysed demonstrate that there is no perfect formula which can eliminate such power disbalance and tension; to ensure fairness, the experts and the ordinary people need to co-operate when selecting which design delivers the desired narratives, has the appropriate physical qualities (such as durability), and is affordable. Furthermore, even if the number of ordinary people on the jury is increased, there will always be a risk that the included ordinary people do not represent all possible views and opinions within the wider community of memory. Therefore, the successful involvement of ordinary people as jury members resides in a twofold renegotiation, that is, of both the complex relationships that exist between the different groups of ordinary people themselves, those both represented and not

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454 Author's Interview 52. Veteran in Hadiach. Online, 26 August 2020; Author's Interview 55. Veteran in Pyriatyn. Online, 23 February 2021.
455 Young, *The Texture of Memory*, p. 326.
456 Young, *The Texture of Memory*, p. 326.

represented on the judging panel; and the complex relationships that exist between different groups of jury members, that is, the public officials, the experts and the ordinary people.

3.4.4. Public consultation regarding the submissions

Analysis of the identified cases shows that public consultation regarding the submitted designs may take place either before or after the jury has voted. When local authorities involve the public prior to the jury's decision, this takes a number of forms. At times members of the public are permitted to see and vote on all the accepted designs (for example, Kremenchuk 2016,[457] Poltava 2016[458]). There are also different types of access to the designs. For example, the Poltava authorities have organised exhibitions in an art gallery (Poltava 2014),[459] in a centrally located municipal building,[460] and in a popular shopping centre (Poltava 2016).[461] In addition to this, local media sometimes organises separate, unofficial online voting (Kremenchuk 2016,[462] Poltava 2016[463]), providing informational support to the event and ensuring wider public participation. Although it is not a statutory requirement that voting be open to the public, and results that emerge from such events are only advisory, they do help a jury gauge public preferences. When local authorities seek to ascertain public attitudes, they are interested in the sentiments of all members of the public, not solely the ordinary people who are active memory actors, that is, in the meaning applied in this thesis.

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[457] 'Kremenchuk Hromadske Obhovorennia' <https://poll.kremen.org.ua/poll/processed> [accessed 30 April 2020].

[458] Ilona Chornohor, 'Za Eskiz Roboty Na Vshanuvannia Uchasnykiv Maidanu Mozhe Proholosuvaty Kozhen Poltavets', *Poltavshchyna*, 26 June 2014 <https://poltava.to/news/28722/> [accessed 25 April 2021].

[459] Lysogor, 'Konkurs Na Pamiatnyk Heroiam Maidanu'.

[460] 'Rozpochato Ofitsiine Internet-Holosuvannia Za Krashchyi Konkursnyi Proekt "Terytoriia Maidanu"', *Poltava City Council*, 26 September 2016 <https://rada-poltava.gov.ua/people/94730444/> [accessed 30 September 2020].

[461] 'U TRTs "Konkord" Tryvaie Vystavka Proektiv Konkursu "Terytoriia Maidanu"', *Kolo.News*, 26 September 2016 <https://kolo.news/category/suspilstvo/339> [accessed 30 September 2020].

[462] 'Zminyvsia Lider u Holosuvanni Za Pamiatnyk Heroiam Nebesnoi Sotni', *Telegraf*, 30 December 2017 <https://www.telegraf.in.ua/kremenchug/10066925-zmnivsya-lder-u-golosuvann-za-pamyatnik-geroyam-nebesnoyi-sotn.html> [accessed 30 September 2020].

[463] 'Oberit Naikrashchyi z 10 Proektiv Memorialu Na Chest Maidanu i Revoliutsii Hidnosti u Poltavi', *Poltavshchyna*, 20 September 2016 <https://poltava.to/news/40092/> [accessed 30 September 2020].

Public consultation after a jury has voted is what is envisaged in the Ruling *On Approval of the Procedure of Conducting Architectural and City-Planning Competitions*.[464] This specifies that after a jury has come to a decision, all the submitted designs have to be exhibited to the public for a minimum of two weeks. Such exhibitions can be organised in different ways: for example, in a local museum or a council building (Hadiach 2020,[465] Slobodo-Petrivka 2019[466]), or on a local authority website (Hadiach 2020,[467] Slobodo-Petrivka 2019[468]). During the exhibition period, the public can share their views, which the authorities are obliged to consider. In addition, during this public consultation period some authorities organise public meetings to discuss the winning design. Although such meetings are not detailed in the legislation, they appear to be common practice in design competitions in Ukraine.[469] My analysis shows that such meetings attract ordinary people, and often the carriers of memory, who use these occasions to suggest changes to the winning design. In Pyriatyn, the meeting was attended by local veterans and families of the soldiers who had died in the Russia-Ukraine conflict; some of the veterans asked for a female figure to be added to the winning design, that featured a single male figure. These veterans contended that female soldiers and medics are not remembered because most memorials to the Russia-Ukraine conflict have only featured male fighters.[470] The creator of the design, a local architect, acknowledged this observation as justified and implemented the requested change.[471] In Hadiach, during a similar meeting, the creator of the winning

[464] *Pro Zatverdzhennia Poriadku Provedennia*.

[465] 'Provedeno Vseukrainskyi Arkhitekturnyi Konkurs Na Krashchyi Kontseptualnyi Proiekt Obiekta Blahoustroiu (Pamiatnoho Znaku) – "Zemliakam, Shcho Staly Na Zakhyst Ukrainy" v Parku "Peremoha" u m. Hadiach', *Hadiach City Council*, 28 July 2020 <https://hadiach-rada.gov.ua/news/1595931746/> [accessed 30 September 2020].

[466] 'Rezultaty Arkhitekturnoho Konkursu', *Hrebinka City Council*, 3 July 2020 <http://www.hrebinka.org.ua/news/p1210> [accessed 30 September 2020].

[467] 'Provedeno Vseukrainskyi Arkhitekturnyi Konkurs'.

[468] 'Mistsevi Arkhitekturni Konkursy', *Hrebinka City Council*, 10 July 2020 <http://www.hrebinka.org.ua/pages/p80> [accessed 30 September 2020].

[469] Author's Interview 53. Architect in Poltava. Online, 26 January 2021.

[470] Author's Interview 55. Veteran in Pyriatyn. Online, 23 February 2021.

[471] 'Zatveryly Ostatochnyi Eskiz Pamiatnoho Znaku', *Pyriatyn*, 2 October 2020 <http://pyriatyn.org.ua/news/p6222> [accessed 10 January 2021].

design adapted his design in response to the request of some local veterans. [472] They believed that a downward-pointing rifle might be read as a signal of surrender by Ukrainian soldiers, so asked the designer to make it point upwards.[473] Although both in Hadiach and Pyriatyn these veterans supported designs that did not in the end win, public consultation meetings gave them an opportunity to make their views heard.

Analysing the role of public debates and public participation in the construction of memorials, Peter Carrier notes that these processes can ensure a "partial displacement of the authority over collective consciousness from professional historians to journalists and public opinion,"[474] and James Young echoes this, stating that public debates support the "process of the memorial's self-definition" and its "finding its role in the community."[475] The cases analysed above show that just as when ordinary people are involved at the preparatory stage of design competitions, so too when they take part in public consultations, an opportunity arises to partially displace authority from public officials and experts to the public, which thereby helps to ensure that the community accepts the constructed memorial. However, it is crucial to note that the effect of public consultations is limited: the voting results and public comments are considered solely advisory in nature, and meetings with the carriers of memory only give an opportunity to partially change the design selected by experts. Consequently, whether or not ordinary people perceive public consultations as useful greatly depends on whether or not they regard all other stages of this process to have been fair and inclusive, meaning that public consultations generally play a secondary role with regard to whether ordinary people feel involved in the memorial production process.

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[472] 'Tak Vyhliadatyme Pamiatnyi Znak "Zemliakam, Shcho Staly Na Zakhyst Ukrainy"', *Hadiach City Council*, 20 August 2020 <https://hadiach-rada.gov.ua/news/1597929480/> [accessed 30 September 2020].
[473] Author's Interview 52. Veteran in Hadiach. Online, 26 August 2020.
[474] Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments*, p. 189.
[475] Young, *The Texture of Memory*, p. 324.

3.5. Conclusion

This chapter contends that when ordinary people seek to address their commemorative needs, four main state mechanisms are available to them: the filing of official requests, legal action, electronic petitions, and design competitions. Legal action is the least used mechanism, and there is no evidence to suggest that ordinary people commonly consider taking this path. When using official requests and electronic petitions, ordinary people heavily depend on support from public officials who are willing to promote such requests within the state agencies and thus prevent them from being 'lost' in a bureaucratic labyrinth. Of the four analysed state mechanisms, design competitions stand out because this mechanism is specifically aimed at commemorative needs. Analysis of the identified design competitions demonstrates that ordinary people actively try to use this mechanism to exercise their agency in the area of commemoration, and moreover, in most cases ordinary people were the main initiators of the construction of a memorial, which makes them an interested party. At the same time, their involvement at different stages of design competitions is only possible insofar as the authorities are willing to transfer some power to ordinary people. This transfer of power is possible within the current legislation; however, it requires changes to existing paradigms and established ways of running design competitions. Thus, the cases analysed demonstrate that by modifying established practice, the authorities can allow for the involvement of ordinary people in all stages of design competitions.

Sharing of power by the authorities should be considered in context: the pressure for decision-making processes to be more open to ordinary people comes from the general historical context and from individual ordinary people, that is, the post-Maidan drive for more transparent and just governance. It is difficult to establish which of these two factors plays the main role; most likely, they complement each other. Overall, the willingness of the authorities to make changes and pressure from wider society are the key driving factors behind the formation of more inclusive commemorative mechanisms. However, this is an ongoing process with different authorities experimenting with different approaches. It is not currently possible to say

that the involvement of ordinary people has become an established practice with distinct or typical approaches.

Analysing the involvement of ordinary people at different stages of design competitions shows that their voices are often heard and have an impact. This helps them feel that their experiences are recognised and respected. Furthermore, their involvement also sends the message that the construction process has become more transparent and just, and this has a legitimising effect, helping to ensure that the constructed memorial will be accepted by the carriers of memory and by the public. At the same time, it is crucial to note that in some cases while 'on the surface' the involvement of ordinary people appears to be substantial, in fact their power and impact is limited. This is often linked to a tension between the experts and the ordinary people, as each of these groups believes they have the right to decide on the design of the memorial. Finally, it is important to emphasise that while utilising design competitions as an available state mechanism, ordinary people demonstrate creativity and persistence: they try to find a way to make their voices heard and persevere while dealing with complex bureaucratic procedures, and many of them continue to be involved in the commemorative project over long periods of time. The following chapter examines the visual language used by ordinary people in the production of commemorative objects dedicated to the Euromaidan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict and analyses the commemorative narratives created as a result of this.

Chapter Four   Narrating violent conflicts through visual language

4.1. Introduction

The first three chapters have shown that ordinary people seek to create specific narratives for the Euromaidan protests and the Russia-Ukraine conflict through their involvement in the construction of commemorative objects. This chapter explores this meaning-making activity through analysing ordinary people's designs of commemorative objects and thereby answers the following research questions: *What visual language do ordinary people use to narrate their memory of the Euromaidan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict? What commemorative narratives are created using this visual language?*

Most literature on the commemoration of violent conflicts focuses on narratives produced by state authorities in a top-down process. Scholars such as Jay Winter,[476] James Young,[477] Alex King[478] and John Bodnar[479] have made important contributions to discussions of the role played by ordinary people in the commemoration of violent conflict, particularly in Western countries. Still, there remains a significant gap in knowledge about how conflicts are commemorated by ordinary people in the post-Soviet space. Furthermore, currently, academic literature tends to study war commemoration in a polarised fashion, focusing either on the political project of the nation-state or on the commemorative activity of social memory actors.[480] Accordingly, commemoration of war is either presented as a politically motivated activity undertaken by the state, concentrating on the narratives of 'noble sacrifice' of 'dying for your country' and thereby seeking to legitimise the nation-state and the power of

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[476] Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War In European Cultural History* (Cambridge University Press, 2014).
[477] Young, *The Texture of Memory*.
[478] Alex King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain: The Symbolism and Politics of Remembrance* (Berg Publishers, 1998).
[479] John Bodnar, 'Public Memory in an American City: Commemoration in Cleveland', in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, ed. by John R. Gillis (Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 74–89.
[480] Ashplant, Dawson, and Roper, 'The Politics of War Memory', p. 8.

the elites.[481] Or it is looked at as a project undertaken by social memory actors, focused on collective mourning, and as a human response to the death and suffering associated with violent conflict.[482] In this chapter, I address the gap left by this polarised approach and provide an integrated account of the narratives produced by ordinary people through their commemoration of violent conflicts. While this chapter provides a detailed analysis of ordinary people's commemorative activity as a means of processing trauma and enabling mourning, that is, the activity that academic literature expects them to carry out, it also demonstrates that ordinary people can construct meanings of the past that reach beyond the personal and familiar and support the formation of Ukrainian national consciousness.

In this chapter, I utilise the concept of "commemorative narratives" as defined by Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, namely:

> selective accounts with beginnings and endings, constructed to create meanings, interpret reality, organize events in time, establish coherency and continuity, construct identities, enable social action, and to construct the world and its moral and social order for its audience.[483]

Commemorative narratives can be delivered via a range of media, including national calendars, films and documentaries, ceremonies, rituals and educational practices. This thesis focuses on physical commemorative objects, such as memorials and commemorative stands. My analysis of their design is guided by the framework provided by Gill Abousnnouga and David Machin.[484] Specifically, these scholars emphasise that for a successful analysis of the visual language of memorials it is important to consider the wider historical, political, and social context in which they were produced. Additionally, Abousnnouga and Machin suggest a model for analysing different characteristics that can be visually apprehended, including the style and design, poses and facial expressions, gaze (as a means to engage the audience), size and raise, materials and form. My analysis of the symbols used by ordinary people to commemorate violent conflict is underpinned by the theoretical conceptualisations of

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481 Ashplant, Dawson, and Roper, 'The Politics of War Memory', p. 7.
482 Ashplant, Dawson, and Roper, 'The Politics of War Memory', p. 8.
483 Vinitzky-Seroussi, 'Commemorating a Difficult Past', p. 34.
484 Gill Abousnnouga and David Machin, 'Analysing the Language of War Monuments', *Visual Communication*, 9.2 (2010), 131–49.

the use of symbols in war memorials proposed by Alex King[485] and Jon Davies.[486] Finally, the theoretical works of Eviatar Zerubavel[487] are employed to explore the potential of certain visual elements to produce meaning-making historical narratives. This chapter also draws on academic literature on the history and culture of Ukraine, to examine the key symbolism of the analysed visual elements.

The structure of the chapter is guided by eight different, often interlinked, types of commemorative narratives produced by ordinary people. These narratives became evident as I was analysing and looking for patterns within the main corpus of my primary data, namely the interviews and direct observations of commemorative objects collected during my fieldwork in the Poltava oblast in 2018 and 2019. Secondary data obtained from open information sources, such as newspaper articles and public Internet discussions, supported my classificatory system, as did the wider socio-political context of memorial production drawn on to support analysis of this data. Accordingly, the first part of the chapter focuses on narratives related to the loss of life. It explores the visual language used by ordinary people to narrate their personal experiences of trauma and grief, to interpret the reasons behind the loss of life using the concept of sacrifice, and to express a need for recognition. The second part of the chapter examines how ordinary people use visual language to define characteristics of the Euromaidan protests and the Russia-Ukraine conflict. This second part in particular discusses how ordinary people narrate a struggle that is supported by God, narrate a just and noble struggle, and how they create historical narratives by linking the Euromaidan protests and the Russia-Ukraine conflict back to the Cossack era and other periods in Ukraine's history.

[485] King, *Memorials of the Great War*.
[486] John Davies, 'War Memorials', *The Sociological Review*, 40.1 (1992), 112–28.
[487] Zerubavel, *Time Maps*; Eviatar Zerubavel, 'Social Memories: Steps to a Sociology of the Past', *Qualitative Sociology*, 19.3 (1996), 283–99.

4.2. Employing visual language to narrate the loss of life

A rich body of memory studies literature explores different issues associated with the design of commemorative objects. Literature focusing on the commemoration of violent conflict holds that the design of a memorial can be associated with different, although interlinked, processes. First, every memorial to a violent conflict says something about a grieving community. As the studies of Jay Winter[488] and Alex King show,[489] mourning is an important factor in the design production of a war memorial. Although memory actors will employ different symbols, depending on their commemorative culture, they commonly narrate lives lost as a tragedy. Jay Winter offers a definition of grief and mourning that is highly apposite in this context: "Grief is a state of mind; bereavement a condition. Both are mediated by mourning, a set of acts and gestures through which survivors express grief and pass through stages of bereavement."[490] Scholars discuss whether memorials can facilitate the healing of psychological trauma suffered as a result of violence. For example, Noël Carroll suggests that

> Memorials and the ceremonies that attend them give articulate focus to the unease the loss has caused and allow for the reassessment of the event in retrospect; this enables mourners to manage their emotions, to move from shock to healing inasmuch as the memorial enables them to digest and process what has happened in a focused way.[491]

Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, however, note that although is important to discuss how memorials function in this way, this capacity should not be overestimated – after all, the process of healing can be hindered by a range of factors, and complete healing may never take place.[492]

Second, as Siobhan Kattago notes,[493] memorials to violent conflict are associated with the interpretation of death at the hands of other people. As Reinhart Koselleck states

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[488] Winter, *Sites of Memory*.
[489] King, *Memorials of the Great War*.
[490] Winter, *Sites of Memory*, p. 29.
[491] Noël Carroll, *Art in Three Dimensions* (Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 172.
[492] Winter and Sivan, 'Setting the Framework', p. 32.
[493] Siobhan Kattago, 'War Memorials and the Politics of Memory: The Soviet War Memorial in Tallinn', *Constellations*, 16.1 (2009), 149–65 (p. 151).

"dying happens alone; killing another takes two."[494] The design of a memorial might reflect a search for the reason for such killings. Different interpretations of reasons for human loss produce a range of narratives, from "the cost of a political error"[495] to a "sacrifice for a noble cause."[496]

Both the Euromaidan protests and the Russia-Ukraine conflict are associated with violent deaths. The protests in Kyiv in 2013-2014 lead to the death of more than one hundred protesters, who are now jointly commemorated as the Heavenly Hundred. Many residents of the Poltava oblast participated in the protests in Kyiv and witnessed traumatic events. The protesters killed were from different regions of Ukraine, including two from the Poltava oblast (Andrii Chernenko from the village of Slobodo-Petrivka and Ihor Serdiuk from Kremenchuk). In addition, the city of Poltava saw a series of protest actions that took place between November 2013 and February 2014, and which were part of the Euromaidan protests. Although the local protests did not lead to a loss of life, their participants nevertheless had traumatic experiences (such as clashes with law enforcement).[497] As a result of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict which began in 2014, more than 3,300 civilians and more than 4,000 Ukrainian soldiers have died, not to mention the numerous losses among the Russian-backed fighters.[498] More than 160 of the Ukrainian soldiers killed were from the Poltava oblast.[499] Now let us turn to analyse in detail how visual language is used by ordinary people to process the traumatic events of the Euromaidan protests and the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

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[494] Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts* (Stanford University Press, 2002), p. 288.
[495] Barry Schwartz and Todd Bayma, 'Commemoration and the Politics of Recognition: The Korean War Veterans Memorial', *American Behavioral Scientist*, 42.6 (1999), 946–67 (p. 957).
[496] Schwartz and Bayma, 'Commemoration and the Politics of Recognition', p. 957.
[497] Oleg Dubyna, 'Poltavskyi Yevromaidan: Istoriia Cherez Pryzmu Obiektyvu' <https://doa.in.ua/news/1369-poltavskij-evromajdan-istoriya-cherez-prizmu-ob-ektivu-fotoreportazh.html> [accessed 30 September 2021].
[498] 'OON Pidrakhuvala Kilkist Zhertv Boiovykh Dii Na Donbasi'.
[499] *Knyha Pamiati Polehlykh Za Ukrainu. Poltavska Oblast* <http://memorybook.org.ua/regions/poltavska.htm> [accessed 7 November 2021].

4.2.1. Narrating trauma: commemoration of the Heavenly Hundred

This section examines two commemorative stands, one in Poltava and the other in Hradyzk (see Figure 7 and Figure 8).

During an interview one of the activists in Poltava, a woman in her forties, explained that the violence during the Euromaidan came as a big psychological shock to her and other activists in the Poltava oblast.[500] Together with other local protesters, she attended protests in Kyiv and took part in the Poltava protests, where she witnessed traumatic incidents. Subsequently, she and her friends had a strong need to process their trauma, she explained. Feeling overwhelmed by her experiences, in April 2014 she spent all night working on her computer and created a design of a commemorative stand for the Heavenly Hundred.

Figure 7. Commemorative stand to the Heavenly Hundred in Poltava (2014).

This stand (Figure 7), now located on the site of the local Euromaidan protests, and facing the oblast administration building), is made of wood, and features a very dense collection of images. The black-edged photographs of the victims and images of violent

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[500] Author's Interview 33. Activist in Poltava. Poltava, 20 August 2019.

clashes demonstrate a strong desire to express and process the horror of the violent deaths. These mournful images are complemented by religious references: images of candles, the call to "Pray for Ukraine!" and the central image of a woman. The woman looks up in despair at the dark sky; the clouds are separated by a higher force, presumably God, and bright rays of light shine down onto the woman.

Figure 8. Commemorative stand to the Heavenly Hundred in Hradyzk (2016).

A similar narrative of trauma is articulated by the Heavenly Hundred commemorative stand (Figure 8) in the village of Hradyzk. In 2016, a group of Hradyzk activists created this object by decorating a former information board near the central park. The local authorities provided some support, such as paint and other materials, but let the activists take care of the design. The activists decorated newly mounted sheets of plywood with photographs of the Euromaidan victims and painted a helmet, burning candles, wings, and Ukraine's national symbols, that is, yellow-and-blue flags and a trident. A large section of the memorial is given over to a poem[501] written in white words on a black background:

> The Heavenly Hundred was met by the Heavens…
> They were flying with ease, although the Maidan wept…
> Tears mixed with blood…
> A father could not let his son leave….

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[501] The poem was written by Liudmyla Maksymliuk in 2014. Author's translation.

God cried having seen this squad…
In the front - a young, handsome commander,
And a young boy in a blue helmet,
And an elderly teacher with grey, grey hair…
Their wounds are not giving them pain anymore,
A yellow-and-blue flag covered their body.
Just like a winged angel that flies backwards,
The Heavenly Hundred flew to the Vyriy.[502]

Similar to the stand in Poltava, this object demonstrates a desire to process a painful memory associated with violent death. Both objects contain positive references to the protesters, who are pictured, after death, as being welcomed into heaven, which highlights the righteousness of their actions. The references to the Ukrainian national flag suggest that they died for Ukraine. The observed visual language produces complex interlinked narratives. At the same time, the main overarching narrative is that of mourning for the loss of life. According to Jay Winter, grassroots memory actors are often motivated by "deeply personal" reasons: they act "in order to struggle with grief, to fill in the silence, to offer something symbolically to the dead…"[503] The objects analysed demonstrate that the need to process traumatic memories can operate as a very powerful driver of the activity of ordinary people.

Distinctive religious elements can be observed in both analysed cases, and are shared by other commemorative objects to the Heavenly Hundred produced by ordinary people in the Poltava oblast, for example, the former Lenin pedestal in Poltava that was turned into a memorial to the Heavenly Hundred (Figure 29). According to Winter, the use of religious symbols by ordinary people is often propelled by the symbols' potential to deliver ideas of hope, aesthetic redemption of the suffering, resurrection, and the involvement of higher forces.[504] In the cases analysed, ordinary people employed religious images to express their emotions and thereby process their traumatic memories.

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[502] Vyriy is a mythical place in Slavic mythology where birds fly for the winter and souls go after death; it is often identified with paradise.
[503] Winter, *Remembering War*, p. 140.
[504] Winter, *Sites of Memory*, p. 93.

4.2.2. Narrating grief: commemoration of the Russia-Ukraine conflict

One of the first commemorative objects that emerged to preserve the memory of the soldiers fallen in the Russia-Ukraine conflict were graves. So now let us move on to analyse the visual language of the military burial grounds in Kremenchuk and Poltava (Figure 9 and Figure 10).

When the first military casualties occurred in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the officials and the public hoped that the conflict would stop relatively soon.[505] As a result of this expectation and the turbulent environment in conflict-affected Ukraine, the first fallen soldiers were buried separately from each other, in a non-centralised manner. As the conflict continued and the arrival of new coffins became a familiar tragic event, some oblast localities decided to create separate sections in cemeteries, where all fallen soldiers would be buried together. The examples of Poltava and Kremenchuk demonstrate that the authorities were willing to involve the families in the design process. My fieldwork reveals that whether or not the soldiers killed knew each other or not, after their deaths their families and friends, driven by grief, sought to meet and support each other. Furthermore, as the bereaved had a common shared memory, they strongly believed that one way to show these soldiers respect was to bury them together in an honourable way. [506] This point needs to be held in mind when analysing the visual language of the graves.
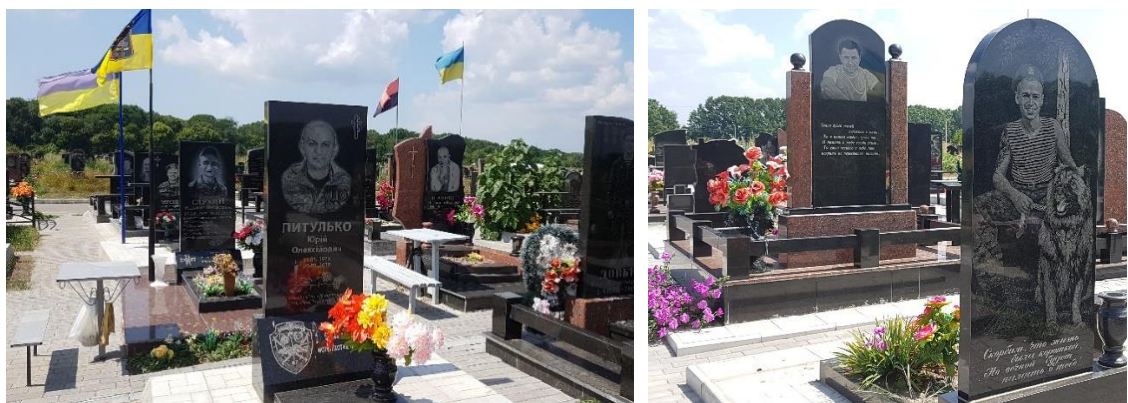
Figure 9. Military burial ground in Kremenchuk (2019).

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[505] *Otsinky Naselenniam ATO Na Donbasi*.
[506] In some cases, the relatives asked to re-bury their loved ones in the military sector. There are also cases when the families preferred to bury the soldiers near their relatives (not in the military sector).

Figure 10. Military burial ground in Poltava (2016).

My analysis reveals that in Poltava and Kremenchuk close cooperation between the authorities and grieving families led to the standardisation of design for soldiers' graves. Thus, all the new gravestones are made of the same material, namely black granite; they have a similar size, and the same supplementary elements, that is, a mount for a flag or flowers, and a bench. A city councillor in Poltava explained[507] that the Poltava authorities decided to partially standardise the visuals on the granite gravestones so that they all include images of the soldier's medals and the emblem of his military unit (at the time of my fieldwork all soldiers buried there were male). The rest of each gravestone's surface was to be used by the families as they deemed fit; for example, in Kremenchuk, the relatives were free to use the entire space themselves.[508] In both these cities, the graves deliver strong messages of private grief. For example, some inscriptions on the gravestones read "Sleep peacefully, my dear brother, you are always in my heart", "Tears are dropping on the white roses of our love… No hope to

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[507] Author's Interview 18. Public official in Poltava. Poltava, 28 August 2018.
[508] Author's observations in Poltava (30 August 2018) and Kremenchuk (29 July 2019).

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meet you again", "You showed us kindness and love when you were alive", "Mother, forgive me for my impetuous character."[509] In many cases, it is clear who wrote the messages: the soldier's brother or sister, his wife or parents. While these messages tell us something about the grieving families, they also help viewers imagine what each soldier was like as a person. Moreover, thanks to modern technologies, the portraits of the soldiers are very detailed and high-quality. The portraits and the texts indicate that the grieving families have aimed to show they have lost an important member of their family and that he should be remembered as such.

The high level of memory personalisation, which is also to be observed in other memorials to the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the Euromaidan protests, warrants further analysis. Scholars have noted that the practice of presenting the dead as individuals with different character traits, and with friends and relatives, has the capacity to provoke "a powerful emphatic response."[510] This personalisation of memorials, and use of faces, invites the audience into a relationship with the pictured person and seeks to elicit their recognition of the dead.[511] In the Poltava oblast, this personalisation of graves is associated with two key processes, one involving the creators of the commemorative objects and the other the audience observing them.

First, as regards the grieving families, the personalisation of graves allows them to express and process their private grief. Writing on the commemoration of the First World War, Winter notes that war memorials can provide "a framework for and legitimation of individual and family grief."[512] Additionally, the high level of personalisation of the graves also allows each family to describe the scale of their loss, as the families try to show others "Look what an important person we lost." Second, it is important to refer to the process conceptualised by Reinhart Koselleck, who notes that in the case of war memorials observers are "put in a position where they are

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[509] Author's observations in Poltava (30 August 2018) and Kremenchuk (29 July 2019).
[510] Zachary Beckstead and others, 'Collective Remembering through the Materiality and Organization of War Memorials', *Journal of Material Culture*, 16(2), 2011, 193–213 (p. 206).
[511] Jay Winter, 'The Face of War and Genocide', in *Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Genocide and Memory* (Springer, 2018), pp. 117–46 (p. 120).
[512] Winter, *Sites of Memory*, p. 93.

offered an identity: an offer to which they should or must react."[513] One of the reactions war memorials can elicit from observers is the paying of respect and recognition of the expressed loss. According to Koselleck,[514] such acknowledgement of the survivors' memories by the audience is of crucial importance because it helps the families, "the survivors", to deal with their loss. In the memorials to the Euromaidan protests and the Russia-Ukraine conflict constructed by ordinary people in the Poltava oblast, it is the narrative of grief that takes centre place. How this is interlinked with other observed narratives also merits consideration.

4.2.3. Narrating sacrifice in the name of the nation

As previously stated, gravestone designs in Kremenchuk and Poltava created by ordinary people for the narrative of grief are inextricably intertwined with military and national images. Most families here chose to portray their soldier in full military uniform, although some are portrayed wearing a Ukrainian embroidered shirt instead. Many gravestones show the conflict settings where the soldier fought, such as in images of the destroyed Donetsk airport, or they display images of tanks, armoured vehicles and aeroplanes. Some gravestones include texts which unmistakably deliver messages of pride: "For honour, for glory, for Poltava!", "Died protecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine," "Nobody but us!" Although such writings are less common than messages of grief, they need to be considered in the context of other elements of the burial grounds. For example, many families chose to fix a flag in the mount provided by the authorities; although some families use this for flowers. As a result of this, military burial grounds are densely covered in the yellow-and-blue national flag of Ukraine. Occasionally flags showing the colours red-and-black are flown, with some of them featuring references to the Ukrainian nationalist political party Right Sector. Beckstead et al note that it is important to consider the effect that different visual elements can produce when seen together: "There can be no direct social control over individuals' perceptions and values; however, through the hyper-abundance of signs, social guidance is exerted, pushing the viewer toward certain

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[513] Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, p. 287.
[514] Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, p. 287.

interpretations and reactions."[515] Taken together, the abundance and density of visual elements of the military burial grounds in Poltava and Kremenchuk produce an additional narrative, which will be now be considered.

Koselleck notes that violent deaths are linked to the idea of "dying for something," explaining that "the meaning of "dying for …" as it is recorded on memorials is established by the survivors and not by the dead."[516] In the case of the military graves under discussion, it is difficult to establish how exactly the dead would have wanted to be commemorated. Perhaps their families knew their sons and brothers very well and tried to deliver the soldiers' interpretation of the armed struggle and military death; however, the relatives still made the final design decision. The resulting combination of all the grave designs in each burial ground unequivocally expresses an idea about sacrifice in the name of the nation.

Academic literature, nevertheless, documents that a variety of narratives of sacrifice can be found on war memorials, with some making no mention of it at all, and others making it their central attribute. John Stephens explains that the use of the motif of sacrifice, in masking the horrors of war by images of "beautiful death",[517] can lead to a tradition of forgetting. Using the example of the First World War, Winter writes that when an armed conflict is still in progress, censorship of the real horrors of war operates to support mobilisation.[518] In the case of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, all of the war memorials, including the soldiers' graves, were constructed during ongoing conflict. Hence, the role of the state politics of memory should not be overlooked. Both in Poltava and Kremenchuk, the authorities played an important role in the creation of the military burial grounds. For example, they erected official memorials near the graves (Figure 11 and Figure 12) which convey a clear narrative of dying in the name of the nation. Although it was the local authorities that prepared the framework

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[515] Beckstead and others, 'Collective Remembering', p. 209.
[516] Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, p. 288.
[517] John Stephens, 'Concepts of Sacrifice and Trauma in Australian War Commemoration', *Commemoration and Public Space*, 15.2 (2015), p. 23.
[518] Winter, *Sites of Memory*, p. 80.

for producing this narrative of sacrifice; ordinary people themselves willingly generated the same through the design of individual gravestones.

Figure 11. A section of the official memorial at the military burial ground in Poltava (2016).

Figure 12. Official memorial at the military burial ground in Kremenchuk (2018).

Similar processes were analysed by Schwartz and Bayma, who use an example of Korean War commemoration in America to show that the narrative of sacrifice is not confined to state politics of memory; in this case, ordinary people, veterans, sought to inscribe the names of the war dead and to express "the virtue of sacrifice for a transcendent cause."[519] Other studies show that how the narrative of sacrifice is used on war memorials much depends on how the conflict itself is perceived by their makers. Writing about the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, Nathan Glazer notes that "It does not tell us that these men died for their country, or for liberty, or for democracy, or even that they died in vain. It says nothing except that they died."[520] In the Poltava oblast memorials, things are quite otherwise; the narrative of sacrifice for the nation is strongly present. It is seen not only on the graves but also in other commemorative objects constructed by ordinary people. For example, the memorial in Zinkiv says "Eternal glory to Heroes who gave their lives for Ukraine," and a memorial plaque in Opryshky reads "He gave his life for the future of Ukrainians, protecting the integrity and independence of Ukraine"; both were constructed by veterans. This aspect of the commemorative activity of ordinary people should be seen as a part of the processes of mourning. The idea of sacrifice gives the grieving families, friends and

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[519] Schwartz and Bayma, 'Commemoration and the Politics of Recognition', p. 964.
[520] Nathan Glazer, *From a Cause to a Style: Modernist Architecture's Encounter with the American City* (Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 99.

comrades-in-arms an opportunity to find solace and to say to themselves as well as to others that their loved ones did not die in vain.

4.2.4. Narrating the need for recognition

Let us now place the visual language of conflict-related memorials within the wider social and political context. [521] A full understanding of the commemoration of the Euromaidan protests and the Russia-Ukraine conflict demands that attention be paid to the full scope of opinions that Ukrainian society holds about these events. They range from indifference to strong proactive positions, both in support of and in opposition to the Euromaidan protesters and the pro-Ukrainian fighters.[522] As active combat is taking place only in one part of Ukraine, relatively far from many other regions, when veterans return from the conflict zone to their native cities and towns, they often find it difficult to see people going about their everyday lives, visiting restaurants, going to parties, and other luxuries, not thinking about the ongoing war and "those who protect their peace."[523] For them, such indifference or forgetfulness of the public is evidenced in very quotidian activities. For example, the Ukrainian media has numerous reports on how the public continues to use fireworks while knowing they cause huge distress to veterans who react badly to explosions due to their combat memories.[524] Similar views are shared by families of fallen soldiers, who said in interviews that they find it difficult to preserve the memory of their loved ones when many people around them are indifferent to the war.[525] Furthermore, numerous incidents in which objects commemorating the ATO soldiers have been vandalised,

[521] Jeffrey K. Olick, 'Genre Memories and Memory Genres: A Dialogical Analysis of May 8, 1945 Commemorations in the Federal Republic of Germany', *American Sociological Review*, 64.3 (1999), 381–402; Winter, *Remembering War*.

[522] *Richnytsia Maidanu – Opytuvannia Hromadskoi Ta Ekspertnoi Dumky*; *Hromadska Dumka pro Sytuatsiiu Na Donbasi Ta Shliakhy Vidnovlennia Suverenitetu Ukrainy Nad Okupovanymy Terytoriiamy*.

[523] Author's Interview 11. Head of a veteran's association in Kremenchuk. Kremenchuk, 12 August 2019

[524] 'Veterany ATO Prosiat Ukraintsiv Vidmovytys Vid Novorichnykh Feierverkiv', *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 31 December 2015 <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news/27458988.html> [accessed 5 November 2019].

[525] Author's Interview 24. Two mothers of fallen soldiers in Poltava. Poltava, 7 August 2019.

have taken place in the Poltava oblast including in Poltava,[526] Kremenchuk,[527] Chutove,[528] Myrhorod,[529] and many other places. Objects commemorating the Heavenly Hundred have been defaced many times, as well. The design of commemorative objects by ordinary people is influenced by this socio-political climate.

For instance, it is unlikely that the Poltava oblast public will come across the soldiers' graves in the Poltava and Kremenchuk cemeteries unless they are actively looking for them. The cemeteries are in the suburbs and sometimes their military sectors are not easy to find, as in Kremenchuk. Therefore, ordinary people actively try to place commemorative objects in places where it is more likely that the public will see them. Such cases will now be analysed in more detail: specifically, a memorial in Poltava (2018) and a billboard in Opishnia (2018) (Figure 13 and Figure 14). These two cases have two things in common: both utilised modern approaches and were erected when neither Poltava nor Opishnia had any centrally located official memorials to the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

The memorial in Poltava stands in the middle of a small park. Constructed on the initiative of a local group of mothers whose sons lost their lives in the conflict,[530] it features a medium-size granite structure with an in-built electronic screen. The screen shows slowly changing slides, each dedicated to a different local soldier; hence, the audience can see a black-and-white photograph of each soldier, most of whom are in their military uniform, his date of birth and death, the circumstances of his death, and his military awards. The information on the screen can be updated.

[526] 'U Poltavi Nevidomi Ponivechyly Memorialni Doshky Heroiam ATO i Symonu Petliuri', *5 Kanal*, 8 April 2017 <https://www.5.ua/suspilstvo/u-poltavi-nevidomi-ponivechyly-memorialni-doshky-heroiam-ato-i-petliuri-142739.html> [accessed 19 November 2019].

[527] 'Vandaly Poshkodyly Pamiatnyk Heroiam ATO v Kremenchutsi', *Censor.Net*, 6 September 2017 <https://censor.net/ua/n454274> [accessed 19 November 2019].

[528] Daryna Synytska, 'U Chutovomu Nevidomi Poshkodyly Pamiatnu Doshku Heroiam ATO', *Poltavshchyna*, 9 October 2019 <https://poltava.to/news/52881/> [accessed 19 November 2019].

[529] 'Student Poshkodyv Stelu Zahyblym Uchasnykam ATO', *Kremenchuk Today*, 14 April 2017 <http://kremen.today/2017/04/14/student-poshkodiv-stelu-zagiblim-uchasnikam-ato/> [accessed 19 November 2019].

[530] Author's Interview 24. Two mothers of fallen soldiers in Poltava. Poltava, 7 August 2019.

Figure 13. Memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict in Poltava (2018).

The billboard in Opishnia is located on a busy path very close to the central park. Standing approximately two metres high, it features two coloured posters, one on each side, which are covered with transparent plastic sheets secured with a metal frame. Such billboards are a familiar format for Ukrainians, often used for advertising and social projects. On this billboard, one poster shows local soldier Roman Yakovets' in his military uniform, an image of a tank, Ukraine's national flag and an ear of wheat. The other poster shows a golden field of wheat under a cloudless sky and black-and-white pictures of five local soldiers. The poster's text reads "Ukraine is thankful to you for the peaceful sky! They protected the state's independence with their own life! Remember!" The messages on the posters leave little room for misinterpretation: the audience is asked to see these soldiers as ordinary and down-to-earth people, this symbolised by the images of wheat, a sign of a peaceful, rural life for many Ukrainians. At the same time, the military theme is strongly present, with viewers called to recognise that their fellow men have sacrificed their lives in the name of a higher cause. The billboard was created by a female activist who acted on behalf of the local veterans.

Figure 14. Billboard to the Russia-Ukraine conflict in Opishnia (2018).

The soldiers' mothers in Poltava and the activist in Opishnia explained[531] that they wanted to honour the memory of the killed and remind their fellow citizens about the war. During interviews, they shared that, in their opinion, many people prefer to forget about the war or ignore it, which these memory actors find hard to accept. The activist in Opishnia, a small town, explained that it had been extremely difficult for her to raise funds for the billboard. She pointed out that local residents and businesses were not always keen to donate money for commemorative objects, even though she was asking for moderate sums. She noted while the local authorities were not proactive and did not construct any official memorials, she found this much less frustrating than the indifference of the population at large. A similar situation was reported in Poltava: although the interviewed group of mothers were thankful that some individual officials

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[531] Author's Interview 24. Two mothers of fallen soldiers in Poltava. Poltava, 7 August 2019; Author's Interview 25. Activist in Opishnia. Opishnia, 8 August 2019.

had helped with the construction, they were disappointed that the city had no official memorial. Still, they find it even more frustrating that many local people prefer to forget about the war. One of the mothers said that sometimes she sits on a bench and watches people walking in the park, passing the memorial: "People do not even look at it, as if it does not exist,"[532] she commented. For her, that signifies their indifference. Given that the efforts of memory actors do not always evoke their anticipated and desired response, let us examine more closely the methods and visual language these memory actors used to deliver their messages to the public.

The above-described designs aimed to draw the viewer's attention first by size. They imitate the size of a medium-height adult, which helps the viewer to imagine a real person whose memory is commemorated. This effect is supported by further elements of personalisation: the photographs of the soldiers are close in size to an adult head, and they are placed at eye level. Thus, the group of mothers intended viewers to look at the photographs and be prompted to imagine what it would be like to have eye contact with the commemorated person. Such personalisation of memorials promotes engagement. Second, both objects have additional elements that attract viewers' attention. In Poltava, the images on the memorial's electronic screen slowly change; a pedestrian walking past the memorial at normal speed will see the screen changing at least two or three times. The intention is to encourage viewers to look at the screen, see the photograph and read the texts. The billboard in Opishnia features bright colours to draw the audience's attention and aid their engagement.

Writing on the commemorative activity of war veterans, Barry Schwartz and Bayma Todd note that "Human beings are so vulnerable to injury through insult and disregard that they depend for their well-being on the respect and approval of others…, whereas society depends for its solidarity on the mutual satisfaction of this need."[533] According to these scholars, the commemorative activity of ordinary people can be driven by the need to see their memories recognised; depending on the context, such recognition

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[532] Author's Interview 24. Two mothers of fallen soldiers in Poltava. Poltava, 7 August 2019.
[533] Schwartz and Bayma, 'Commemoration and the Politics of Recognition', p. 961.

can be sought either from other individuals or from the state.[534] In the cases in Poltava and Opishnia the initiators of the commemorative objects use similar strategies, such as a public location and visual elements promoting engagement, to ensure that their memories are recognised by their fellow citizens. First and foremost, such recognition helps them cope with their trauma. At the same time, these memory actors also try to elicit a response from the population to the current issues in Ukraine. Writing about the "authority of direct experience" and "moral witnesses," Winter suggests that ordinary people can see it as their duty to tell others about their memories: "They have seen radical evil and have returned to tell the tale. They embody memory of a certain kind, and remind us that remembering the cruelties of the past is not a choice but a necessity."[535] The two cases detailed above demonstrate that objects commemorating violent conflicts can be created by ordinary people determined to ensure that the general public recognises that memory and that they make strategic design choices to facilitate such recognition.

Having now considered the construction of memorials to the dead as a way of processing personal trauma and grief; as a way of transforming the personal into something common and collective, that is, giving death a rationale; and finally, as a way eliciting attention from the wider community, let us now look in more detail at the elements featured on the memorial objects under discussion, at how they draw on Ukrainian culture and history to position contemporary conflict and loss within a broader narrative.

4.3. Characterising the violent events and constructing their meaning

Through their design, memorials to a violent conflict can reflect how a particular conflict is perceived and characterised by the memory actors. For example, Jay Winter shows how different First World War memorials narrate a large-scale tragedy, calling for it to never happen again; Scott W. Palmer demonstrates how, through the use of certain visual elements, the Soviet memorials to the Great Patriotic War narrate a

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[534] Schwartz and Bayma, 'Commemoration and the Politics of Recognition', p. 961.
[535] Winter, *Remembering War*, p. 271.

righteous struggle resulting in victory over Nazism.[536] Scholars also discuss how designs of memorials can tell us about conflicts that are not perceived by society as a 'victorious', 'righteous' or 'heroic' struggle. Thus, Robin Wagner-Pacifici and Barry Schwartz demonstrate[537] how the Vietnam Memorial delivers the idea of an ambiguous war, and Natalia Danilova states[538] that memorials in Russia reflect that the Soviet-Afghan war is commonly perceived as an unpopular and unheroic campaign. Narratives about conflict take a variety of forms, depending on the power relations between different state and non-state memory actors.[539]

My analysis of visual language focused on the commemorative narratives produced as a result of ordinary people's need to process their private experiences of grief or trauma. However, other commemorative narratives can be seen in the Poltava oblast. Ordinary people also use certain visual elements to present the violent events of the Euromaidan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict in a particular light and to define the events' characteristics. In what follows, I analyse in turn four types of narrative produced as a result of this activity, which can be categorised in terms of: divine support; just and noble struggle; Cossack references; more general Ukrainian historical references.

4.3.1. Narrating a struggle that is supported by God

Many commemorative objects observed during my fieldwork use images and inscriptions that make references to God and His support of the struggle, which is a way of representing the struggle as righteous and divinely ordained. This section analyses three commemorative objects that make such references, that is, in Zinkiv, Velyki Budyshcha, and Hradyzk (Figure 15, Figure 16, and Figure 17).

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[536] Scott W. Palmer, 'How Memory Was Made: The Construction of the Memorial to the Heroes of the Battle of Stalingrad', *The Russian Review*, 68, 2009, 373–407.

[537] Robin Wagner-Pacifici and Barry Schwartz, 'The Vietnam Veterans Memorial: Commemorating a Difficult Past', *The American Journal of Sociology*, 97.2 (1991), 376–420.

[538] Nataliya Danilova, *The Politics of War Commemoration in the UK and Russia* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

[539] Vinitzky-Seroussi, 'Commemorating a Difficult Past', p. 46; Ashplant, Dawson, and Roper, 'The Politics of War Memory', p. 17.

Figure 15. Memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict in Zinkiv (2018).

The construction of a memorial that was built in the town of Zinkiv in 2018 (Figure 15) was initiated by a group of veterans. One of them, a male in his late 30s, explained in an interview[540] that the design was a result of cooperation between the veterans and the local authorities. The officials chose to inscribe a poem that conveyed the idea of hope for peace in Ukraine while the veterans insisted that the central inscription read "Eternal memory to heroes who gave their lives for Ukraine", with a large carved image to the left. The latter depicts soldiers displaying Ukrainian military insignia walking up a stairway to the sky, welcomed with bright rays of light.[541] This memorial clearly expresses the idea that the soldiers who died in the Russia-Ukraine conflict go to heaven, which in turn indicates that their struggle is approved of and supported by God.

References to God can also be seen in some objects that do not use religious symbols but instead refer to the poem *Caucasus,* by Ukraine's national poet Taras Shevchenko. Written in 1845, it is traditionally interpreted as a harsh criticism of Tsarist Russia's colonial ambitions and its imperialist wars, and as a general criticism of the oppressive behaviour of the ruling elites. Nations that are experiencing attacks and pressure from

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[540] Author's Interview 44. Veteran In Zinkiv. Online, 17 December 2019.
[541] Very similar designs are observed on other commemorative objects to the Russia-Ukraine conflict: for example, in the Lviv oblast and the Chernihiv oblast (they were both constructed before the analysed case in Zinkiv). It is not clear whether there is a common source of inspiration.

the coloniser, Russia, are encouraged by Shevchenko to fight back, and their struggle is presented as righteous and just:

> Keep fighting—you are sure to win!
> God helps you in your fight!
> For fame and freedom march with you,
> And right is on your side![542]

This poem, and especially these lines, are familiar to most Ukrainians from school: *Caucasus* was included in the school curriculum both when Ukraine was a Soviet Republic and after the dissolution of the USSR. These lines became one of the main slogans of protesters during the Euromaidan and were used in speeches and a range of media: posters, clothing, and signs.[543] They are now used on numerous commemorative objects to the Heavenly Hundred across Ukraine. One example can be seen in Kremenchuk, where a group of local Euromaidan protesters created a large graffiti that combines a portrait of Shevchenko, a barricade from the Euromaidan in Kyiv, and the line "Keep fighting—you are sure to win!"[544] The same poem is cited on a small memorial to the Heavenly Hundred in the village of Velyki Budyshcha (Figure 16).
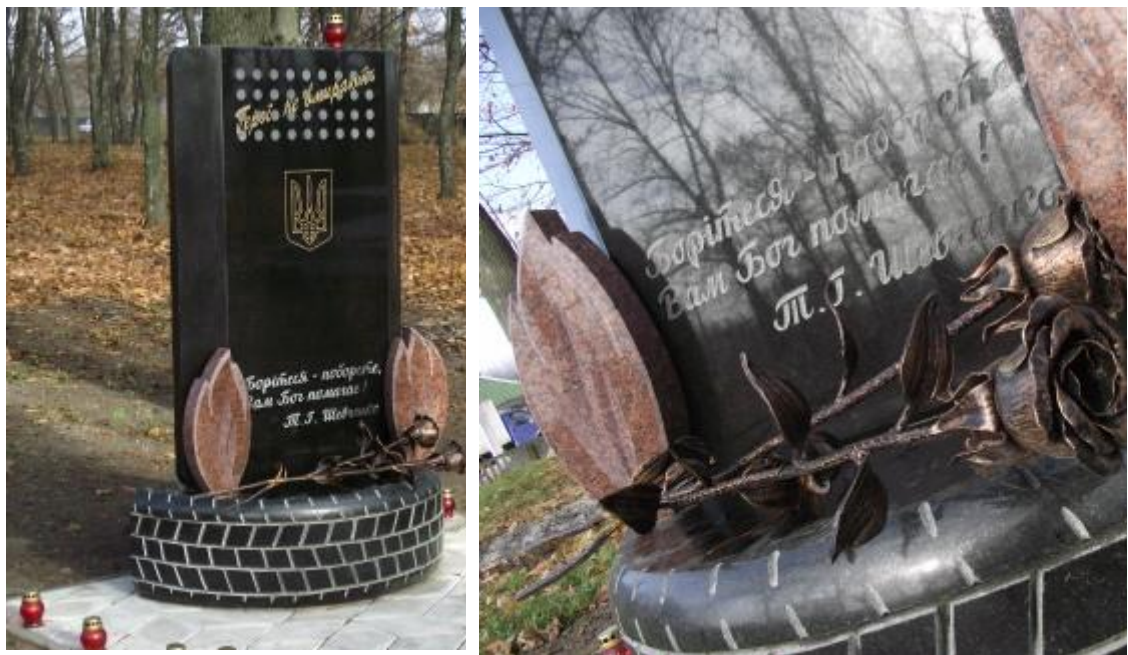
Figure 16. Memorial to the Heavenly Hundred in Velyki Budyshcha (2018).

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[542] Translated by John Weir.

[543] Mykola Zhulynskyi, '"Za Shcho Ya Vkrainu Liubliu?" Taras Shevchenko Ta Yevromaidan', *Den*, 7 February 2014 <https://incognita.day.kyiv.ua/taras-shevchenko-ta-yevromajdan.html> [accessed 25 November 2019].

[544] Ilona Chornohor, 'V Kremenchutsi Namaliuvaly Hrafiti Iz Portretom Kobzaria', *Poltavshchyna*, 9 March 2014 <https://poltava.to/news/26985/> [accessed 20 November 2019].

This stone memorial was constructed by a local entrepreneur, with some financial support from other residents. It is composed of elements that evoke the protests in Kyiv: a shield, a tyre, and flames. The shield is decorated with two metal roses, a symbol of mourning, and includes two inscriptions: "Heroes do not die!" and Shevchenko's "Keep fighting—you are sure to win! God helps you in your fight!"

Both the Velyki Budyshcha and the Zinkiv memorials present the Euromaidan and the military activity of the Ukrainian soldiers as a struggle supported by God: He either provides help during the struggle ("God helps you in your fight") or gives eternal rest in heaven. The use of this narrative by ordinary people can also be seen in the poetry on the temporary memorial to the Heavenly Hundred in Poltava,[545] and in the commemorative stand in Hradyzk[546] (see Figure 17, showing an angel-like warrior, symbolising both the protesters and the soldiers). The use of religious symbols to define the characteristics of the commemorated event is discussed by Jay Winter, who writes that religious symbols can deliver the idea of "a conflict of the children of light against the children of darkness."[547] This is precisely the idea expressed on the Hradyzk memorial, where ordinary people have employed the idea of a battle of light against darkness to define the characteristics of the Euromaidan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict. This produces a narrative of a righteous struggle of the protesters and the soldiers fighting on the front line.

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[545] Former monument to Lenin.
[546] After the commemorative stand in Hradyzk was vandalised in 2019, the activists changed its design. The present analysis refers to the new design introduced in 2019.
[547] Winter, *Sites of Memory*, p. 80.

*Figure 17. Commemorative stand to the Heavenly Hundred
and the Russia-Ukraine conflict in Hradyzk (2019).*

4.3.2. Narrating a just and noble struggle

Another way of valorising the struggle has been to draw on military iconography. Accordingly, the use of images such as firearms, bullets, armoured vehicles, and battle settings, goes beyond simply evoking the soldiers' recent battlefield experiences. The manner in which these are combined with accompanying inscriptions can generate value judgements about the soldiers' actions. One particularly notable practice is that of using swords in the memorials to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The following section will analyse two memorials in which they feature, in Myrhorod and Kremenchuk (Figure 18 and Figure 19).

The topic of the symbolism of swords in present-day Ukraine is challenging. Unlike the poetry of Taras Shevchenko, which has a known source and is substantially researched, it is difficult to conclusively identify what has prompted ordinary people to use swords

on the memorials they erect. A range of sword symbolism can be found in contemporary Ukrainian culture and iconography. For example, a Scythian sword is the key topic of the song *The Sword of Ares*[548] which became popular among Ukrainian soldiers after the onset of the conflict in 2014. When in 2017 the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine approved the new Ukrainian military insignia and symbols, it devised a number of striking emblems.[549] A symbol of an owl piercing a map of Russia with a sword began to be used by the Military Intelligence Service. The Armoured Forces was conferred a symbol featuring a knight's glove, referring[550] to the victorious fight of a Volhynian[551] prince over the Grand Duchy of Moscow in 1514, which in turn evokes the period when some ancestors of present-day Ukrainians wore suits of armour and used swords. Another image used after 2014 in relation to the Ukrainian soldiers,[552] and for their commemoration,[553] that later became popular was that of the archangel Michael, the sword-bearing patron of the Ukrainian Cossacks.[554] Swords are a common feature on many Soviet Second World War memorials; according to John Garrard and Carol Garrard, they convey the Biblical idea (albeit secularised in the Soviet context) of "Live by the sword, die by the sword."[555] While the range of symbolic meanings conveyed by this usage of swords in Ukraine's present-day culture can be clarified with reference to academic literature on Ukrainian mythology and iconography, it is also essential to determine how ordinary people, as memory actors, understand this symbolism. Hence questions were posed during interviews.

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[548] The song refers to the sword-bearing Scythian warriors that lived on the territory of present-day Ukraine in the VII-II century B.C. Nowadays, some Ukrainians make references to Scythians to narrate the bravery and fearless nature of their ancestors.

[549] Olha Skorohod, '"Nashi Voiny Mozhut Buty Sytymy i Dobre Sporiadzhenymy, Ale Bez Ideolohii Tse Dosi Radianska Armiia", - Istoryk Vasyl Pavlov pro Rebrendynh ZSU', *Censor.Net*, 18 April 2018 <https://censor.net/ru/r3061504> [accessed 10 December 2019].

[550] '"Profesiine Sviato Ukrainskykh Tankistiv Maie Svoie Velychne Natsionalno-Istorychne Pidgruntia", – Heneral Armii Ukrainy Viktor Muzhenko', *Ministry of Defence of Ukraine*, 8 September 2018 <https://www.mil.gov.ua/news/2018/09/08/profesijne-svyato-ukrainskih-tankistiv-mae-svoe-velichne-naczionalno-istorichne-pid%D2%91runtya-general-armii-ukraini-viktor-muzhenko/> [accessed 15 December 2019].

[551] A part of the historical region of Volhynia is located in the present-day Western Ukraine.

[552] For example, in 2017 the Ukrainian Air Assault Forces received two new symbols (a maroon colour and a sword), both of which are associated with the archangel Michael.

[553] For example, the local authorities of Hlobyne and Horishni Plavni (Poltava oblast) built statues of the sword-bearing archangel Michael to commemorate the soldiers of the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

[554] Viktor Karpov, *Ukrainska Zvytiaha u Symvolakh* (Kyiv: Oleh Filiuk, 2016), p. 20.

[555] John Garrard and Carol Garrard, 'Bitter Victory', in *World War 2 and the Soviet People*, ed. by John Garrard and Carol Garrard (St. Martin's Press, 1993), pp. 1–27 (p. 17).

Figure 18. Memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict in Myrhorod (2016). The image on the right shows its state after it was vandalised by unidentified persons.

In 2015, a group of local blacksmiths in Myrhorod revived the annual festival of blacksmithing craftsmanship that had been initiated by their colleague, the well-known blacksmith Petro Fedoryaka.[556] When Fedoryaka died in the Russia-Ukraine conflict in 2014, his family and colleagues decided to continue his legacy. Since then, every year they use the festival as a chance to produce a metal sundial dedicated to one Ukrainian blacksmith who has died in the conflict. This started an engaging commemorative tradition: festival visitors can see the blacksmiths at work producing a commemorative object from red-hot metal. Although the first sundials mainly symbolised the sun, time, and light,[557] in 2016 the blacksmiths created a sundial displaying war-related symbolism (Figure 18). This object features a sword-shaped gnomon[558] that points downwards and rests on a metal shield marked out with clock digits. The makers explained the sword symbolism in the following way: "This smith, this person finished his battle and stuck his sword into the ground, like a knight bringing his career to an end. Upward-pointing swords symbolise readiness to fight, but downward-pointing swords mean the person is not ready to fight or cannot fight anymore. This smith can no longer fight."[559] Scholarly literature indicates that swords

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[556] Author's Interview 2. Wife of a fallen soldier in Myrhorod. Myrhorod, 20 July 2018.
[557] Author's Interview 2. Wife of a fallen soldier in Myrhorod. Myrhorod, 20 July 2018.
[558] The gnomon is the part of a sundial that casts a shadow.
[559] 'Myrhorod Hotuietsia Do Chetvertoho Festyvaliu Nozhovykh Maistriv' (TV Ltava, 2017) <https://youtu.be/Hz1KMviz_kA> [accessed 30 August 2019].

in commemorative objects are commonly associated with noble, knightly combat and chivalry.[560] I suggest that even though the viewers do not know the exact intended symbolism of the sword on the sundial, they can still interpret it as a military symbol, a weapon, and connect it to the idea of a valiant fight. Arguably, the role of the sun in the functioning of the sundial in combination with the sword amplifies the righteousness of the commemorated soldier's actions.

The above-described sundial does not announce what this soldier fought for: this part of the story is left open to the audience's interpretation. However, the sundial serves as a useful starting point for analysing similar objects, and specifically the symbolism of swords pointing downwards or upwards, which as mentioned earlier, symbolise respectively the end of the battle or peace, or readiness to fight. Such meanings are on display in the Soviet Great Patriotic War memorials created by Yevgeny Vuchetich in Berlin and Volgograd (*The Motherland Calls* and the *Let Us Beat Swords into Plowshares* memorials).[561] In the well-known 62-metre high *Motherland Monument* in Kyiv, a sword is held aloft by a woman, who thereby shows her readiness to protect the city. Writing about the history of Ukraine's military symbols, Viktor Karpov suggests that the above interpretation of downward- and upward-pointing swords is deeply rooted in Ukraine's history.[562] However, swords can convey other meanings, for example, on the emblem of the Military Intelligence Service of Ukraine, the owl carrying a downward-pointing sword over a map means defence and not the end of a battle.

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[560] Stefan Goebel, 'Chivalrous Knights versus Iron Warriors: Representations of the Battle of Matériel and Slaughter in Britain and Germany, 1914–1940', in *Picture This: World War I Posters and Visual Culture*, ed. by Pearl James (University of Nebraska Press, 2009), pp. 79–110.

[561] Oleg Riabov, '"Rodina-Mat" v Sovetskom Diskurse Stalingradskoy Bitvyi: Voennaya Propaganda i Kommemoratsiya', *Labirint. Jurnal Sotsialno-Gumanitarnyih Issledovaniy*, 1, 2017, 21–34 (p. 30).

[562] Karpov, *Ukrainska Zvytiaha u Symvolakh*, p. 124.

Figure 19. Memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict in Kremenchuk (2016).

To turn away from official usage and back to ordinary people's deployment of sword imagery, in Kremenchuk, a group of veterans constructed a memorial in 2016 to commemorate their comrades who died in the Russia-Ukraine conflict with a design that includes four large swords. These denote the four military sectors in Eastern Ukraine where the Kremenchuk soldiers fought (Figure 19). The swords emerge from a metal crown symbolising a trident (the coat of arms of Ukraine).[563] The design of the memorial was jointly devised by the veterans and local blacksmiths. One of the participants explained that the veterans did not want to use downward-pointing swords and instead insisted that the swords pointed upwards, "to show that we are ready to protect Ukraine from any aggression."[564] The initiators of this project tried to add a therapeutic element to the production process: they invited other veterans to

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[563] 'U Kremenchutsi Vidkryly Pamiatnyi Znak Voinam ATO', *Kremenchuk Today*, 29 August 2016 <http://kremen.today/2016/08/29/u-kremenchutsi-vidkrili-pam-yatnij-znak-voyinam-ato/> [accessed 12 October 2019].

[564] Author's Interview 11. Head of a veteran's association in Kremenchuk. Kremenchuk, 12 August 2018.

strike the red-hot metal with hammers, and thus to "work through their memories."[565] Furthermore, large rocket shells and other metal military objects from the front line were melted and used in the creation of the four swords, which "locked the memories into the memorial forever."[566] Such therapeutic procedures call to mind the major problems veterans have with their mental health in conflict-affected Ukraine. One of the interviewed veterans shared that the community of veterans[567] has a strong and urgent need to commemorate their fellow soldiers and they want to enable grieving families and friends to have a place to visit to think about their loved ones.[568] During my fieldwork, several interviewees began discussing memorials only to soon move on to tell me about the psychological traumas which they or their friends had suffered a result of the conflict. However, in Kremenchuk, it is not trauma that is the main theme of the visual language on show to the audience, but rather defence. Specifically, it conveys a narrative about the soldiers' readiness to defend their country, with the swords demonstrating that such activity is valiant.

When analysing the use of medieval and modern weapons in First World War memorials in Germany and other European countries, George Mosse suggests that the use of medieval weapons was driven by a desire to mask the horror of mechanical warfare.[569] Additionally, he notes that "Dying by the sword … was to die by the hand of man, and only a fight which took place in single combat was truly heroic."[570] At the same time, he notes that it is common for medieval and modern weapons to co-exist within the same commemorative culture.[571] This can be seen in the Poltava oblast: a modern soldier leaning mournfully on a sword in Hadiach (Figure 20) stands in the same pose as a soldier leaning on a modern automatic rifle depicted in Kotelva (Figure

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[565] Author's Interview 11. Head of a veteran's association in Kremenchuk. Kremenchuk, 12 August 2018.
[566] Author's Interview 11. Head of a veteran's association in Kremenchuk. Kremenchuk, 12 August 2018.
[567] These veterans act as individuals rather than as members of an organisation or on behalf of organisation.
[568] Author's Interview 15. Veteran in Kremenchuk. Kremenchuk, 28 July 2019
[569] George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 101.
[570] Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, p. 101.
[571] Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, p. 102.

21).[572] Overall, it is modern weapons that are used in the Poltava oblast's commemorative repertoire, particularly on gravestones. As a result of this, the harshness of mechanical warfare is not removed from the commemorative objects and is instead used purposefully, as part of narrating sacrifice for the nation and the need for recognition. Currently, there are no unified and commonly agreed "narrative tools"[573] to narrate the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and instead ordinary people search for the most suitable design to bring one or another narrative into foreground.

Figure 20. Memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict in Hadiach (2019).
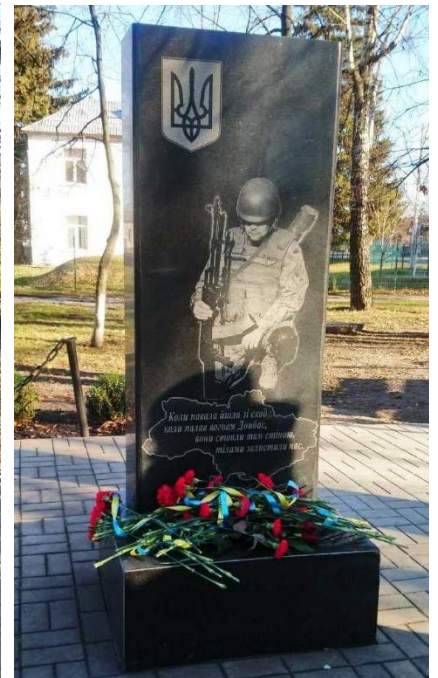
Figure 21. Memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict in Kotelva (2019).

It is worth noting, as we come to an end of this discussion of how ordinary people manage to portray a struggle as just and noble, that not only is there as yet no established narrative repertoire for portraying the Russia-Ukraine conflict but that the enemy is practically never portrayed: attention is overwhelmingly on the valiant defenders of Ukraine. According to Nico Carpentier, war discourses commonly have a dichotomised nature based on the "key binary opposition of good and evil,"[574]

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[572] Both memorials were constructed by ordinary people.

[573] James V. Wertsch, 'Memory and Narrative Templates', *Social Research*, 75.1, 133–56 (p. 139).

[574] Nico Carpentier, 'Introduction: Strengthening Cultural War Studies', in *Culture, Trauma, and Conflict: Cultural Studies Perspectives on War*, ed. by Nico Carpentier (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), pp. 1–22 (p. 3).

structuring the identity of "Self" and "Enemy" through a range of characteristics, including "just/unjust, innocent/guilty, rational/irrational, civilized/barbaric", "heroic/cowardly."[575] In addition to the Self and the Enemy, Carpentier also suggests the discursive position of the Victim, which "may range from abstract notions, such as world peace or world security, to more concrete notions, such as a people, a minority, or another nation."[576] He explains that sometimes the position of the Victim can be combined with the Self (when, for example, the Enemy attacks the Self).[577] Applying Carpentier's conceptualisation to the analysed memorials reveals not only what is present in the visual language, but also what is missing. Specifically, out of the identified 22 commemorative objects in the Poltava oblast that were designed by ordinary people (Appendix 2), only two specify the enemy. The memorial in Lubny (Figure 22) states that the soldiers "died fighting against the armed aggression of the Russian Federation," and the memorial in Kotelva (Figure 23) states that the soldiers protected Ukraine from "invaders from the East." The narrative in these two cases is one of Ukrainians as protectors against the aggression of Russia. Except for these two cases, ordinary people in the Poltava oblast primarily seek to interpret the actions of Ukrainian soldiers, who are not pictured as victims, but rather as fighters ready to defend their country.

Figure 22. Plaque near the memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict in Lubny (2018).

Figure 23. Inscription on the memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict in Kotelva (2017).

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[575] Carpentier, 'Introduction', p. 3.
[576] Carpentier, 'Introduction', p. 4.
[577] Carpentier, 'Introduction', p. 4.

4.3.3. Linking to the Cossack era

The visual language pertaining to history that is deployed by ordinary people in the objects they have designed and devised, extends far beyond that of ancient weaponry. Allusion is made to numerous periods in the history of Ukraine. The most frequently observed of these is that of the Cossack past, specifically, the Cossacks of the semi-autonomous polity of the Zaporozhian Sich,[578] in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, and the Cossack state of Hetmanate in Central Ukraine, in the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries. Most, if not all, of the territory of the present-day Poltava oblast, was part of the Hetmanate, and the Poltava Regiment was one of its ten territorial-administrative subdivisions. Nowadays, Cossack symbols can be seen in different commemorative objects in the oblast. This section analyses a memorial in Lubny (Figure 24) and a memorial plaque in Reshetylivka (Figure 26).

In Lubny, the memorial to the soldiers who died in the Russia-Ukraine conflict was unveiled in October 2018 (Figure 24). The memorial was initiated by a local priest of a Christian church (Orthodox Church of Ukraine) who was driven by private grief as his son died in the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The local authorities funded this project and wanted to place the memorial in a central location. However, the initiator felt that it would be most appropriate to place the memorial near the church, so that locals could remember the soldiers killed when they come to pray.[579] The proximity of the church increases the mournful tone of official commemorative ceremonies now regularly held near the memorial. At the same time, the visual language of the memorial includes narratives besides grief. The memorial is built in the shape of a Cossack cross,[580] which was suggested by the priest. The characteristic shape of this cross is easily recognised by Ukrainians and immediately associated with the Cossack era. In the past, Cossack crosses were used to mark the graves of Cossack fighters, and in modern-day Ukraine

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[578] The territory of the Zaporozhian Sich included parts of the present-day Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Kirovohrad, Zaporizhia, Luhansk, Mykolaiv and Kherson oblasts of Ukraine.
[579] Author's Interview 38. Priest in Lubny. Online, 29 August 2019.
[580] A type of Christian cross which has arms narrow at the centre and flared in a straight-line shape, to be broader at the perimeter.

they are used to commemorate famous Ukrainians and are featured on different military symbols. Elsewhere in the Poltava oblast it is possible to see other examples of Cossack crosses being used by ordinary people to commemorate the Russia-Ukraine conflict: either as the main design feature (Reshetylivka, Figure 25) or a supplementary element (Kremenchuk, Figure 19).

Figure 24. Memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict in Lubny (2018).

Figure 25. Memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict in Reshetylivka (2021).

Some other references to the Cossack era take the form of verbal text, as in the example from Reshetylivka (population 9,200). In 2015 staff and students from a local school created a memorial plaque in memory of Mykola Zakarliuka who had studied at this school and died on the front line. The text selected by the initiators, ordinary people, reads: "He had a Cossack surname, and he died as a Cossack… He died in battle, protecting the territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine" (Figure 26). The black plaque with a solemn portrait of the soldier clearly speaks of the felt sadness over the loss of this young life.

Figure 26. Memorial plaque to a fallen soldier of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in Reshetylivka (2015)

Both the characteristic shape of the cross in Lubny and the text on the plaque in Reshetylivka conveyed an idea of dying as a Cossack. Its most immediate meaning is provided by the symbolism of Cossacks as being brave, fearless, and noble fighters, an interpretation shared by many Ukrainians. By using symbolism referring to Cossacks, the visual language in these two examples presents the commemorated individuals as brave soldiers. To see whether this visual language can be made to yield an interpretation of the conflict itself, it is helpful to employ the conceptualisation of the social shape of the past used by Eviatar Zerubavel. According to Zerubavel, the "social meaning of [ ] past events is essentially a function of the way they are structurally positioned in our minds vis-à-vis other events."[581] What the cases in Lubny and Reshetylivka demonstrate is that ordinary people are trying to explain the meaning of the current conflict through linking it to other armed struggles in Ukraine's history. As part of this process, they create "plotlines"[582] which help "mentally string past events into coherent, culturally meaningful historical narratives."[583] The symbolic linking of the Russia-Ukraine conflict to the armed struggles of the Cossacks in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries creates a plotline of Ukraine's history. Specifically, Ukraine is presented as an entity that has been rightfully fighting for its self-determination and sovereignty for many centuries.

Such an approach provides meaning to the current conflict: the conflict is not an unprecedented occurrence but is deeply rooted in history and is a continuation of previous struggles. Several interviews support this interpretation of the analysed visual language: several memory actors (veterans, families of the killed and activists) maintained that the soldiers were continuing the work carried out by their ancestors. Thus, when the initiators of a memorial stand to the Ukrainian soldiers in Poltava were asked about their decision to paint red poppies on it, they explained that they saw it as a symbol of the Cossacks and used it "because we all, as well as our Poltava soldiers, are Cossacks."[584] Some interviewees mention their genealogical trees, showing their direct descent from Cossacks; others refer to the people in the Poltava oblast and

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[581] Zerubavel, *Time Maps*, p. 7.
[582] Zerubavel, *Time Maps*, p. 13.
[583] Zerubavel, *Time Maps*, p. 7.
[584] Author's Interview 34. Two members of Hromada Poltavshchyny. Poltava, 21 August 2019.

Ukraine in general as of 'Cossack origin' (kozatskogo rodu). Periods of Cossack military history are not, however, the only to which ordinary people make reference.

4.3.4. Linking to other historical periods

A historical linking of the Russia-Ukraine conflict to past conflict struggles in Ukraine's history has been undertaken since the onset of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in 2014, by both ordinary people and state authorities, with each group influencing the other, and neither operating in a vacuum. This can be evidenced by the above-mentioned introduction of the military insignia in 2017, which symbolically connected the present-day Ukrainian army to a whole range of historical events, spanning centuries: from Daniel of Galicia in the thirteenth century and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania's battles in the sixteenth century, to the Battle of Kruty in 1918. As discussed in Chapter One, in 2015, Defender of Ukraine Day was established in Ukraine, symbolically linking[585] present-day Ukrainian soldiers to the Cossack era and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA).[586] Data collected during my fieldwork in the Poltava oblast indicates that when ordinary people are narrating the historical meaning of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in commemorative objects, they use the Cossack era as their main point of reference. However, there are some instances when they link to other historical periods. This can be seen in a planned memorial in Reshetylivka and a memorial in Opishnia (Figure 28).

In 2018, a group of activists in Reshetylivka decided to initiate the construction of a memorial[587] to the Ukrainian heroes who died in the Ukrainian War of Independence (1917-1921). During the organisational meeting and also during a public discussion with the local residents on Facebook, it was decided to build a memorial not to one event, but to "all fighters for Ukraine", which would cover the Ukrainian War of Independence, the Heavenly Hundred, the Russia-Ukraine War,[588] and "all other heroes

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[585] Liubarets, 'The Politics of Memory in Ukraine in 2014', p. 205.

[586] October 14 is traditionally seen as the day of the Ukrainian Cossacks; the Ukrainian Insurgent Army chose this day as the official day of their establishment, trying to link themselves to the Cossacks.

[587] The original idea was to commemorate Yurii Horlis-Horskyi, a military leader of the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR, 1917-1921) who was born in the Poltava oblast; later it developed into a wider project.

[588] A term used during the discussion, referring to the Russia-Ukraine conflict (2014-ongoing).

who have died for Ukraine."[589] As part of the public discussion on Facebook, local residents suggested design ideas for the memorial. One design included an artwork showing a modern-day Ukrainian soldier, solemnly looking at a grave. Behind the soldier, there are three ghost-like figures: a Cossack, a Kyivan Rus' soldier, and a UPA soldier (Figure 27). The artwork was devised by the Ukrainian artist Oleksiy Bondarenko and was also used in a commemorative project in Kherson.[590] This project in Reshetylivka is still in progress and its design is still being discussed. This case demonstrates that ordinary people have created a historical narrative that links several historical periods into one continuous story of Ukraine's struggles.

Figure 27. Artwork by Oleksiy Bondarenko.

Figure 28. Memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict in Opishnia (2019).

In 2019, a memorial to the soldiers who had died in the Russia-Ukraine conflict was unveiled in Opishnia (Figure 28). Designed by ordinary people, both local veterans and activists, it consists of a large rectangular structure from which the shape of an armed

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[589] Author's Interview 43. School teacher in Reshetylivka. Online, 8 December 2019.
[590] Ivan Antypenko, 'Bez Avtorskykh Prav i Voina UPA', *Den*, 3 December 2016
<https://day.kyiv.ua/uk/article/cuspilstvo/bez-avtorskyh-prav-i-voyina-upa> [accessed 1 June 2019].

soldier has been hewn. The memorial speaks about the loss of life: small images of white birds on the upper left are used to symbolise life and death, and the soldier's cut-out shape shows that the killed fighters are now "missing in our lives".[591] The stone structure has two equally sized parts: the left side is made of red granite, and the right side of black granite. Together, unmistakably, they look like a red-and-black flag. Such flags are currently associated with the Right Sector Party and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). When asked about the symbolism of these colours, the main initiator, a woman in her 40s, limited her answer to "this is a symbol of the defenders of Ukraine." The use of red-and-black flags in the Poltava oblast demands careful examination. While the UPA symbols are commonly found in Western Ukraine, in Central Ukraine people are significantly less comfortable with their use. When analysing the geopolitics of how the UPA is remembered in Ukraine, Serhii Plokhii notes "The Center [Central Ukraine], which had no direct exposure to living memory of the UPA, has been slow to accept the relevant historical mythology as part of its own narrative."[592] For example, for several years the residents of Poltava have had heated debates on the unauthorised use of a red-and-black flag on the monument to the Battle of Poltava.[593] In 2019, the oblast councillors voted against the proposition to use a red-and-black flag in official commemorative events,[594] and when the local authorities of Novi Sanzhary decided to use this flag for official commemorations of the Euromaidan, the media presented it as a 'first of its kind' and an unusual phenomenon.[595] When explaining their decision, the Novi Sanzhary authorities said a red-and-black flag is "a symbol that independence is born through struggle," which resonates with the interpretation provided by the memory actors in Opishnia and Reshetylivka.

[591] Author's Interview 25. Activist in Opishnia. Opishnia, 8 August 2019.

[592] Plokhii, 'Goodbye Lenin'.

[593] 'Ne Znimaty: U Poltavi Tryvaiut Superechky Navkolo Praporiv Na Monumenti Slavy', *Depo Poltava*, 11 June 2019 <https://poltava.depo.ua/ukr/poltava/ne-znimati-u-poltavi-trivayut-superechki-navkolo-praporiv-na-monumenti-slavi-20190611977598> [accessed 5 November 2019].

[594] 'Poltava – Chervono-Chorna, Oblast – Ni. Deputaty Proholosuvaly Proty Vykorystannia Prapora Borotby', *Zmist*, 12 July 2018 <https://zmist.pl.ua/news/poltava-chervono-chorna-oblast-ni-deputati-progolosuvali-proti-vikoristannya-prapora-borotbi> [accessed 5 November 2019].

[595] 'Pershi v Oblasti: Novi Sanzhary Vyvisyly Chervono-Chornyi Stiah Na Postiinii Osnovi', *Novi Sanzhary Village Council*, 24 August 2018 <https://www.novsan-rada.gov.ua/news/995/> [accessed 5 November 2019].

Andrii Portnov[596] and Serhy Yekelchyk[597] note that during the Euromaidan the symbol of UPA underwent a process of transformation and acquired a new set of meanings. According to Portnov, two factors played a role in this: Ukrainians' rejection of being portrayed by Russia as 'fascists' and 'banderovites', and a lack of knowledge about the activity of the UPA.[598] Yekelchyk explains that "in the course of the EuroMaidan Revolution, the image of Bandera acquired new meaning as a symbol of resistance to the corrupt, Russian-sponsored regime, quite apart from the historical Bandera's role as a purveyor of exclusivist ethno-nationalism."[599] After the Euromaidan, when the Right Sector formed frontline military units, the use of a red-and-black flag as a symbol of resistance became even stronger. The analysed cases in Opishnia and Reshetylivka demonstrate that when linking the current conflict to different Ukrainian historical periods, ordinary people tend to use historical references that are more commonly acceptable in Central Ukraine, but they have also started to introduce the memory of the UPA as a symbol of resistance.

4.4. Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates that when commemorating the Euromaidan protests and the Russia-Ukraine conflict, ordinary people in the Poltava oblast commonly produce narratives of grief and trauma. Nevertheless, the visual language used to deliver these narratives is not uniform: depending on the case, the visual language of mourning often includes either inscriptions about loss of life or about religious symbols indicating a hope for God's help, or both. Furthermore, most of the objects analysed are highly personalised, an effect achieved through the use of detailed portraits, photographs and messages, all of which encourage the audience to think about the commemorated persons as individuals with different character traits and interests. Simultaneously, the same visual language used to narrate grief and trauma can deliver other narratives. This highlights the multi-layered nature of certain visual elements. As this chapter has shown, messages of mourning are also an integral part of narrating sacrifice in the

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[596] Portnov, 'Bandera Mythologies'.
[597] Yekelchyk, *The Conflict in Ukraine*, p. 107.
[598] Portnov, 'Bandera Mythologies'.
[599] Yekelchyk, *The Conflict in Ukraine*, p. 107.

name of the nation and the need to recognise the memory of the dead. Specifically, narratives of sacrifice and the need for this to be acknowledged are created through combining various elements including military images, such as uniforms and insignia, and national images, flags and symbols, with certain strategic solutions, such as a public location, an eye-level positioning, and visual elements that aid engagement.

This chapter shows that ordinary people in the Poltava oblast often narrate the Euromaidan protests and the Russia-Ukraine conflict as righteous, noble struggles. These narratives are devised using religious images and inscriptions that testify to God's support for their activity as well as swords which symbolise chivalrous and valiant combat. Furthermore, the analysed cases demonstrate that ordinary people seek to construct meaning from the commemorated violent events. As part of this process, they commonly use references to other periods of Ukraine's history, especially the Cossack era and, in some cases, also that of the UPA. Consequently, the meaning of the contemporary conflicts is derived from placing them into a plotline of Ukraine's centuries-long struggle for sovereignty and self-determination. This also indicates a regional character of commemoration: Central Ukraine in general, and the Poltava oblast in particular, has a strong memory of the Cossack past. For ordinary people, it now serves as a rich reserve of symbols utilised to narrate the present-day violent events. The regional character of commemoration is also observed in the use of references to the UPA. Its symbols are not widely present in the oblast, however, in some instances, ordinary people use a transformed version of the UPA symbol (seen as "defenders of Ukraine") to narrate the struggle of the Ukrainian soldiers in Eastern Ukraine.

The visual language used for commemoration of the Euromaidan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict has not yet taken a definite form. Ordinary people are still contemplating the most appropriate way to commemorate these two events, and their choice of design usually depends on the specific narrative they want to bring to the fore. Crucially, although the majority of academic works on war commemoration expects ordinary people to predominantly narrate their grief and trauma, this chapter demonstrates that the narratives created by ordinary people are not limited to the

need to mourn the loss of life. Instead, ordinary people carry out a nation-building activity by adding the Euromaidan protests and the Russia-Ukraine conflict to a plotline of Ukraine's centuries-long history and by presenting these two events as formative for the Ukrainian nation.

Chapters Two and Three discussed what kind of commemorative activity the ordinary people in the Poltava oblast carry out and how they do this, including their interaction with the authorities, the use of resources, utilisation of the available state mechanisms, and the narration of the commemorated events through visual language. The analysed commemorative activity has been carried out in a very particular socio-political context: namely, in the aftermath of a revolutionary event and at the time of an ongoing armed conflict. Chapter Five will examine how the factors associated with this socio-political context impact the commemorative activity of ordinary people.

Chapter Five

The aftermath of the Euromaidan and the ongoing violent conflict: impact on the commemorative activity of ordinary people

5.1. Introduction

The commemorative activity of ordinary people analysed in this thesis is one of a range of important social and political changes that have taken place in Ukraine in the wake of the aftermath of the revolutionary Euromaidan protests and the current Russia-Ukraine conflict in Eastern Ukraine. This context poses certain challenges. Ukrainian society's reaction to the Euromaidan was, and still is, heavily influenced by the Russian Federation's annexation of Crimea and the subsequent violent conflict in Eastern Ukraine.[600] Euromaidan was not immediately followed by any period of peace and consolidation that offered Ukrainians an opportunity to assess the results it had achieved, such as the ousting of President Yanukovych and a change in power, nor were conditions right for them to work towards reforming the country according to the aspirations of the protesters. The violent conflict continues, and currently, there is little understanding of how and when it will end. Accordingly, when analysing how ordinary people commemorate these events it is crucial to consider the influence of socio-political factors. This chapter aims to answer the following research question: *How do factors associated with the aftermath of the Euromaidan revolution and the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict impact on the commemorative activity of ordinary people in the Poltava oblast?*

When examining the commemoration of revolutions, existing academic literature discusses two key aspects. First, scholars discuss how the memory of a revolution can be instrumentalised by ruling elites to legitimise their power, including through the construction of monuments.[601] Second, academic literature examines how social

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[600] Olga Burlyuk, Natalia Shapovalova, and Kateryna Zarembo, 'Introduction to the Special Issue: Civil Society in Ukraine: Building on Euromaidan Legacy', *Kyiv-Mohyla Law and Politics Journal*, 3, 2017, 1–22.
[601] Thomas Benjamin, *La Revolución: Mexico's Great Revolution as Memory, Myth, and History* (University of Texas Press, 2000); Matthew Crippen, 'Contours of Cairo Revolt: Street Semiology, Values and Political Affordances', *Topoi*, 40, 2021, 451–60; Igor Torbakov, 'Celebrating Red October: A Story of

memory actors remember revolutionary events, including a significant time after the events have happened.[602] However, existing research rarely discusses how ordinary people construct monuments that memorialise revolutions, even though such cases have been observed.[603] Furthermore, although some literature documents that the aftermath of a revolution shapes how social memory actors choose to commemorate it, the issue remains under-researched.[604] This chapter aims to analyse the process of interpretation and commemoration of the Euromaidan revolution immediately after its end and to understand which socio-political factors impacted on the commemorative activity of ordinary people during the first post-revolutionary years.

When exploring the memory of violent conflicts, academic literature predominantly examines the commemoration that has taken place after the end of a violent conflict, when it is possible to establish which side won or lost, or at least to assess the general outcome of a conflict. In such cases, it is common for both state and non-state memory actors to reflect on, and narrate a conflict's outcome through the construction of war memorials.[605] This, however, raises the question of how a violent conflict can be commemorated if it is still ongoing, and its outcome is difficult to predict. This topic is under-researched, and the existing literature tends to suggest points for consideration rather than providing detailed analyses. For example, Alex King notes that during a conflict, official commemoration of the dead may be used "to keep up home-front morale and to focus attention on servicemen at the front in a

the Ten Anniversaries of the Russian Revolution, 1927–2017', *Scando-Slavica*, 64.1 (2018); Nartsiss Shukuralieva, 'Official Memory and Legitimization in Kyrgyzstan. The Revolutionary Past in the Public Statements of President Kurmanbek Bakiyev after 2005', in *Beyond Transition? Memory and Identity Narratives in Eastern and Central Europe*, ed. by Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, Niklas Bernsand, and Eleonora Narvselius (The Centre for European Studies at Lund University, 2015), pp. 131–48.

[602] Conor O'Dwyer, 'Remembering, Not Commemorating, 1989: The Twenty-Year Anniversary of the Velvet Revolution in the Czech Republic', in *Twenty Years After Communism: The Politics of Memory and Commemoration*, ed. by Jan Kubik and Michael Bernhard (Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 171–212; Susanna Trnka, 'When the World Went Color: Emotions, Senses and Spaces in Contemporary Accounts of the Czechoslovak Velvet Revolution', *Elsevier*, Emotion, Space and Society, 5, 2012, 45–51.

[603] W.J.T. Mitchell, 'Image, Space, Revolution: The Arts of Occupation', *Critical Inquiry*, 39, 2012, 8–32 (p. 19); Elizabeth Buckner and Lina Khatib, 'The Martyrs' Revolutions: The Role of Martyrs in the Arab Spring', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 41.4 (2014), 368–84 (p. 383).

[604] O'Dwyer, 'Remembering, Not Commemorating, 1989'; Mona Abaza, 'Walls, Segregating Downtown Cairo and the Mohammed Mahmud Street Graffiti', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 30(1), 2013, 122–39.

[605] Ashplant, Dawson, and Roper, 'The Politics of War Memory', p. 266; Danilova, *The Politics of War Commemoration*, p. 7; Müller, 'Introduction', p. 4; Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz, 'The Vietnam Veterans Memorial', p. 376.

personal way."[606] Likewise, Vamik. D. Volkan's analysis of memorials to the Georgian–Ossetian conflict demonstrates that memorials to an ongoing conflict can be used to show one party as the victim, and to reinforce the other party's image as the enemy,[607] which according to Volkan can motivate the party depicted as victims to continue fighting.[608] The commemorative activity of ordinary people, as non-state memory actors, during an ongoing violent conflict has been even less researched, and this chapter will seek to address the gap.

To support my analysis of socio-political influences on ordinary people's commemorative activity, I will refer to Jay Winter's[609] discussion of the limits of human agency; to analyse how the conflict affects ordinary people's perception of the future and their understanding of the need to preserve their memories, I will refer to Reinhart Koselleck's conceptualisation of historical times. According to Koselleck, investigation of people's experiences of the past and their consequent expectations regarding the future enables a better understanding of their actions in the present.[610] Similarly, it is important to discuss commemorative work as a struggle against forgetting, as conceptualised by Iwona Irwin-Zarecka.[611] Finally, to underpin my analyses, I will refer to the findings of Alex King, who notes that the political circumstances of different societies is an important factor behind the emergence of different commemorative practices.[612] In Ukraine's case, it is essential to take into account the socio-political factors associated with the post-Euromaidan period and the ongoing armed conflict in the country.

This chapter analyses eleven commemorative projects. The first part of the chapter explores three key issues associated with the commemoration of the Heavenly Hundred: the limits of agency in the context of the post-revolution and conflict-

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[606] King, *Memorials of the Great War*, p. 60.
[607] Vamik D. Volkan, 'What Some Monuments Tell Us About Mourning and Forgiveness', in *Taking Wrongs Seriously: Apologies and Reconciliation*, ed. by Elazar Barkan and Alexander Karn (Stanford University Press, 2006), pp. 115–31 (p. 127).
[608] Volkan, 'What Some Monuments Tell Us', p. 127.
[609] Winter, 'Forms of Kinship and Remembrance'; Winter, *Remembering War*.
[610] Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, p. 127.
[611] Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance*.
[612] King, *Memorials of the Great War*, p. 8.

affected society, the instrumentalisation of memory by local authorities, and the gradual steps taken towards developing engaging state mechanisms. The second part of the chapter examines three key issues associated with the commemoration of the Russia-Ukraine conflict: the continued human losses, ordinary people's perception of the future that is grounded in their present-day experiences, and ordinary people's desire to ensure that their memories are recognised in the present and preserved for future generations. It is important to stress that the impacting factors associated with post-Euromaidan and the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict are closely linked as they occurred during the same period. Conceptually, post-Euromaidan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict are two distinctive settings. However, it is also important to point out that commemoration of both these events is shaped by the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

5.2. Commemorating the Euromaidan revolution

5.2.1. The limits of human agency

As discussed in Chapter One, on the state level the Euromaidan has become a new 'foundation myth' for the Ukrainian state. However, in the Poltava oblast, which has a population of 1.4 million people, only thirteen completed memorials commemorate the Euromaidan. Those constructed with the involvement of ordinary people were built within the first two years the protests of 2013-2014 (Table 1, an excerpt from Appendix 2). They include both permanent and temporary objects. Similar objects were created in Kyiv and across Ukraine.[613] As Table 1 demonstrates, since 2016, the involvement of ordinary people in the construction of commemorative objects to the Euromaidan has dropped, and some of the already initiated construction projects risk being frozen or forgotten (as discussed in Chapter Three). It is crucial to examine the factors that have contributed to the reduced involvement of some ordinary people.

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[613] *Polityka i Pamiat. Dnipro - Zaporizhia - Odesa - Kharkiv. Vid 1990h Do Siohodni*, ed. by Oleksandra Gaidai, Iryna Sklokina, and Georgiy Kasianov (Lviv: Shumylovych, 2018), p. 136; Catherine Wanner, 'Commemoration and the New Frontiers of War in Ukraine', *Slavic Review*, 78.2 (2019), 328–35 (p. 330); Karpov, *Ukrainska Zvytiaha u Symvolakh*, p. 206.

Where	Who initiated and constructed	Construction year
Romodan (small memorial)	Ordinary people and authorities (head of the village)	2014
Velyki Budyshcha (small memorial)	Ordinary people (local entrepreneurs)	2014
Poltava (former Lenin pedestal)	Ordinary people (Euromaidan protesters)	2014
Poltava (temporary stand)	Ordinary people (Euromaidan protesters)	2014
Pyriatyn (temporary stand)	Ordinary people and authorities	2014
Kremenchuk (temporary stand)	Ordinary people and authorities	2015
Novi Sanzhary (memorial)	Authorities (head of the Novi Sanzhary village council)	2015
Lokhvytsia (small memorial)	Authorities (city mayor)	2015
Velyka Bahachka (small memorial)	Political party (Samopomich)	2016
Hradyzk (temporary stand)	Ordinary people, supported by the authorities	2016
Dykanka (small memorial)	Political party (Batkivshchyna), supported by the authorities	2016
Hadiach (memorial)	Authorities constructed in a top-down manner (ordinary people initiated in 2014)	2017
Pyriatyn (memorial)	Authorities (head of the Pyriatyn District State Administration)	2018
Slobodo-Petrivka (memorial)	Authorities initiated a design competition in 2019; the winning design was selected in 2020	Not yet constructed
Kremenchuk	Authorities initiated a design competition in 2016. The competition is still ongoing	Not yet constructed
Poltava	Authorities initiated a design competition in 2014. The winner was selected in 2016	Not yet constructed

Table 1. Commemorative objects to the Euromaidan in the Poltava oblast

The Euromaidan protests ended on 22 February 2014. In March 2014, Russia annexed

Crimea. The unrest in Eastern Ukraine started in early April 2014, followed by the

initiation of the Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO) by Ukraine on 15 April 2014.[614] Within a

short period, many former Euromaidan protesters formed groups to help the internally

displaced persons (IDPs) arriving from Crimea and Eastern Ukraine, to collect and

deliver supplies to the front line, and later to help the veterans and the families of

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[614] 'Ukraine Says Donetsk "anti-Terror Operation" under Way', *BBC News*, 15 April 2014
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-europe-27031318> [accessed 20 August 2021].

soldiers killed. In Poltava, such groups of activists include Krym SOS, Hromada Poltavshchyny, and the Battalion of Unindifferent. It is crucial to take all these events into account when analysing the efforts of ordinary people to commemorate the Euromaidan. The need to multitask in the context of a violent conflict and the overall exhaustion that results from this profoundly affect ordinary people's commemorative activity.

The new activities carried out by ordinary people in response to the outbreak of violent conflict in Eastern Ukraine required time, effort and, in most cases, money. As the conflict in Eastern Ukraine continued, many started to feel the pressure of their voluntary work, resulting from emotional strain combined with running out of personal funds.[615] The emotional strain was felt after several months of intense protest in Kyiv and Poltava followed by the experience of living through radical changes to the country, both of which were experienced at the same time as trying to help affected civilians as well as dealing with the loss of friends who had died in the Russia-Ukraine conflict. In addition to those protesters who almost overnight turned into conflict response teams (operating in the Poltava oblast), many went to fight against the Russian and pro-Russian forces in Eastern Ukraine.[616] Thus, many ordinary people who at the end of the Euromaidan wanted to commemorate it soon became involved in a range of intense conflict-related activities. Two cases will now be analysed in more detail: a commemorative stand to the Heavenly Hundred in Poltava, and the former Lenin monument in Poltava converted into a temporary Heavenly Hundred memorial in Poltava.

In Poltava in 2014, a group of activists constructed a temporary memorial stand to the Heavenly Hundred on the site of the local Euromaidan protests (the visual language of this object is analysed in Chapter Four). One of its creators, a female entrepreneur in her 40s, shared in an interview that she and her friends were driven by the need to process their memories of the Euromaidan protests: "It [the stand] shows everything

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[615] Author's Interview 33. Euromaidan participant in Poltava. Poltava, 20 August 2019; Author's Interview 34. Two members of Hromada Poltavshchyny. Poltava, 21 August 2019.
[616] Author's Interview 6. Veteran in Hadiach. Hadiach, 26 July 2018; Author's Interview 23. Veteran in Novi Sanzhary. Poltava, 7 August 2019.

that we endured, including our day-and-night duties [on the Maidan] in Kyiv, and the shootings both in Kyiv and Poltava."[617] According to this interviewee, these emotions were intensified by the split taking place in Ukrainian society, and she felt it was important to make people in Poltava think about the events that had taken place during the Euromaidan.[618] The stand was built as a temporary commemorative object in the hope it would soon be replaced by a permanent state-sponsored memorial. However, as of 2021, Poltava has no permanent memorials to the Euromaidan. When the Poltava authorities organised a design competition in April 2014, the stand's creators initially took an active part in the discussions and general meetings. However, when this competition turned into a protracted project with an unclear outcome, most of the stand's creators stopped being involved, above all because they felt a need to prioritise activities necessitated by the outbreak of violence in Eastern Ukraine.[619] These activities, such as delivering supplies to the front line and helping the IDPs, were time-consuming and demanded a high level of emotional involvement. After the first three to four years of the conflict, the interviewee eventually felt that it was time to focus on her own job and on earning money: "To help others you need to have something yourself."[620] She added that some of her fellow activists eventually went to work abroad while others stayed in Ukraine but focused on their jobs.

Choosing between different issues that arise in a conflict-affected society also plays an important role. Another activist in Poltava, a woman in her 20s, shared that as the conflict in Eastern Ukraine continued, she had to decide which area to focus on.[621] During the conflict's first couple of years, she helped soldiers from the Poltava oblast who went to the front line, at the same time as helping IDPs arriving in the Poltava oblast from Eastern Ukraine. In addition, she played a key role in turning the pedestal of a former Lenin monument into a Heavenly Hundred memorial (Figure 29). The pedestal, which in 2014 was decorated with poems and painted images, eventually

[617] Author's Interview 33. Euromaidan participant in Poltava. Poltava, 20 August 2019.
[618] Author's Interview 33. Euromaidan participant in Poltava. Poltava, 20 August 2019.
[619] Author's Interview 33. Euromaidan participant in Poltava. Poltava, 20 August 2019; Author's Interview 34. Two members of Hromada Poltavshchyny. Poltava, 21 August 2019; Author's Interview 12. Euromaidan participant in Poltava. Poltava, 15 August 2018.
[620] Author's Interview 33. Euromaidan participant in Poltava. Poltava, 20 August 2019.
[621] Author's Interview 12. Euromaidan participant in Poltava. Poltava, 15 August 2018.

started to deteriorate. In 2015 and 2016, she organised events at which artists and volunteers re-touched the worn-off elements of the memorial and planted flowers.[622] However, this memorial was conceived as a temporary commemorative object. In her opinion, the authorities did not do enough to create a permanent and suitable memorial for the Heavenly Hundred in Poltava.[623] To emphasise that the city needed such a memorial, she decided to stop improving the former Lenin pedestal and let the decoration wear off, to send a message to the authorities and the public. However, another reason behind her decision was that of having to choose between different areas of activity. As large numbers of soldiers from Poltava started to return from the front line, many of them faced a range of problems, such as trying to find a job and needing medical and psychological rehabilitation. The interviewee felt she had to prioritise helping the veterans, meaning she had less time and energy to invest in the area of commemoration.[624] Similar difficult choices were made by ordinary people in other locations of the Poltava oblast (such as in Kremenchuk[625] and Hadiach[626]).

Figure 29. The former Lenin monument in Poltava converted into a memorial to the Heavenly Hundred newly decorated (left – in June 2014) and degraded (right – in August 2018).

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[622] Author's Interview 12. Euromaidan participant in Poltava. Poltava, 15 August 2018.
[623] Author's Interview 12. Euromaidan participant in Poltava. Poltava, 15 August 2018.
[624] Author's Interview 12. Euromaidan participant in Poltava. Poltava, 15 August 2018.
[625] Author's Interview 17. Euromaidan participant in Kremenchuk. Kremenchuk, 27 August 2018.
[626] Author's Interview 3. Euromaidan participant in Hadiach. Hadiach, 24 July 2018.

When analysing such cases, it is helpful to use the concept of "memory consciousness"[627] suggested by Eva-Clarita Onken. She defines this as "the degree to which […] [social memory actors] perceive themselves as carriers of a particular historical experience that is deemed relevant in a broader social context."[628] Even though in the analysed cases the memory consciousness of ordinary people is strong, their commemorative work is obstructed by exogenous factors. Writing about the "the life cycle of agency,"[629] Jay Winter explains that agency is "arduous,"[630] and social agents undertake commemorative work "at the cost of other ventures; when their lives change, and other business calls, the bonds of such agency begin to fray, and unravel."[631] Factors limiting the agency of ordinary people exist in all societies, not only those experiencing a violent conflict. However, significant events like the Euromaidan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict bring in extra factors that have an impact on social agency: from the financial pressure experienced by the activists in their private lives to their physical and emotional exhaustion, to a lack of time and energy.

5.2.2. Steps toward changing the memorial paradigm

One of the factors shaping the commemorative activity of ordinary people post-Euromaidan is the activity of the local authorities. After ousting President Yanukovych in February 2014, Ukraine held a presidential election in May 2014. The newly elected President Poroshenko had to appoint key public officials to local and regional government agencies. While some existing officials kept their seats, many appointments brought new people to power, including new heads of the oblast and city state administrations. Another significant change in the ranks of local public officials took place in autumn 2015, after the Ukrainian local elections.[632] Many

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[627] Onken, 'Memory and Democratic Pluralism', p. 282.
[628] Onken, 'Memory and Democratic Pluralism', p. 282.
[629] Winter, 'Forms of Kinship and Remembrance', p. 40.
[630] Winter, *Remembering War*, p. 140.
[631] Winter, 'Forms of Kinship and Remembrance', p. 40.
[632] In October 2014 Ukraine also held a parliamentary election. Although this election was an important post-Euromaidan event too, the deputies of the Verkhovna Rada do not have direct power to erect

members of the public feel that the people who kept or received top positions in local and regional government agencies should appreciate the price protesters paid for the changes in the country. As one resident of Pyriatyn stated in 2016 in his petition to construct a memorial to the Heavenly Hundred, "Our local authorities and their deputies obtained their posts through the deaths and blood of the heroes [protesters]".[633] There were high expectations that the authorities would adhere to the values of a democratic, open, and non-corrupt governance which the protesters had fought for. In this context, it is not surprising that some local authorities sought to commemorate the Euromaidan protests following the 2014 presidential and 2015 parliamentary elections. How the local authorities' actions affected and shaped the commemorative activity of ordinary people during that period will next be explored.

In the Poltava oblast, the currently existing objects commemorating the Euromaidan protests can be divided into two main groups: first, temporary objects, constructed by ordinary people; and second, permanent objects constructed by the authorities during the period 2014 to 2018 (a detailed list is provided in Table 1 on page 185).[634] As far as objects constructed by the authorities are concerned, they are characterised by a significant top-down involvement. These cases raise the issue of the lack of visibility of ordinary people's commemorative activity, except for the memorial in Dykanka, where the authorities set up a coordination group that allowed ordinary people to take part in the decision-making process).[635]

One example of a top-down construction is the Heavenly Hundred memorial in Novi Sanzhary. In 2015, the head of the Novi Sanzhary village council carried out the construction of a memorial to the Heavenly Hundred. This was initiated by local

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memorials in their constituencies. The changes within the ranks of local authorities are much more significant for the issue of commemoration on the local level (including in the Poltava oblast).

[633] Anatolii Buriak, 'Petytsiia 01/287-E3 pro Vstanovlennia v Misti Pamiatnoho Znaku Na Chest Zahyblykh Heroiv Nebesnoi Sotni.' (Rozumne Misto, 2016). <https://rozumnemisto.org/pyriatyn/petitions/document/1551> [accessed 29 March 2020].

[634] Currently there are also design competitions that being held in Poltava, Kremenchuk, and Slobodo-Petrivka (discussed in more detail in Chapter Three); however, these projects are still ongoing, and their future cannot be predicted.

[635] 'Letter No9/01-15 of 10.04.2020' (Dykanka District State Administration) (Provided to the author by request).

participants of the Euromaidan, with many locals donating money towards the construction.[636] At the same time, the design of the memorial was devised by the head of the council, who saw this project as his personal and civic duty (see Figure 30).[637] The large metal structure consists of a fierce fire arising from burning tyres which holds a flying crane;[638] the crane's wings have 100 feathers, representing the protesters killed. During the opening ceremony, the head of the council explained that "the crane is taking flight from the fire, carrying the souls of the Heavenly Hundred to the sky."[639] The construction of this object did not involve a lot of public funds: most of the metal was donated by local entrepreneurs, and the local blacksmiths volunteered their time and labour to create the memorial.[640] Thanks to the initiative of the council head, Novi Sanzhary became one of the first places in the Poltava oblast to install a permanent commemorative object to the Euromaidan. Moreover, as of 2021, it is still one of the few permanent memorials to the Heavenly Hundred in the oblast.

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[636] Author's Interview 23. Veteran in Novi Sanzhary. Poltava, 7 August 2019.
[637] Author's Interview 23. Veteran in Novi Sanzhary. Poltava, 7 August 2019; Author's interview 32. Veteran in Novi Sanzhary. Poltava, 20 August 2019.
[638] In Ukraine, the symbolism of cranes is very rich: cranes are called 'God's birds' and 'birds of the sun', they are seen as heralds of spring, who are also able to carry souls of unborn or dead people
[639] 'U Novykh Sanzharakh Vidkryly Pamiatnyi Znak Heroiam Nebesnoi Sotni', *Novyny Poltavshchyny*, 27 March 2015 <https://np.pl.ua/2015/03/u-novyh-sanzharah-vidkryly-pamyatnyj-znak-heroyam-nebesnoji-sotni/> [accessed 10 August 2020].
[640] Author's Interview 23. Veteran in Novi Sanzhary. Poltava, 7 August 2019; Author's interview 32. Veteran in Novi Sanzhary. Poltava, 20 August 2019.

Figure 30. Memorial to the Heavenly Hundred in Novi Sanzhary (2015)

Ordinary people demonstrate a mixed reaction to the top-down approach of this memorial design. One of the local residents, a male in his late 20s who was actively involved in the Euromaidan protests in Kyiv, shared in an interview that he was happy to see that the head of the council was proactive: "After the Euromaidan, pro-Ukrainian and pro-European officials came to power, and they worked hard to commemorate the Revolution; after all, they came to power through the people who had lost their lives."[641] However, he also reported that other local Euromaidan protesters were unhappy with the general design and its symbolism but later they got used to it: "The memorial exists, and it is a good thing – after all, other towns have nothing."[642] Another local resident, a male in his 40s, a private entrepreneur, emphasized "at least we have a place to lay a few flowers".[643] Still, a third interviewee from Novi Sanzhary, a male engineer in his early 30s, shared that he found it

[641] Author's Interview 23. Veteran in Novi Sanzhary. Poltava, 7 August 2019.
[642] Author's Interview 23. Veteran in Novi Sanzhary. Poltava, 7 August 2019.
[643] Author's Interview 32. Veteran in Novi Sanzhary. Poltava, 20 August 2019.

frustrating that the memorial had been constructed in a top-down manner: "I understand that discussions with people are a thankless task: the more people and opinions are involved, the more difficult it is to reach a consensus."[644] However, he still believes it is important for people's voices to be heard: "We should start moving away from the idea 'I am the head and can do what I want' towards 'I am the head, and so I can hear other people's opinions'."[645] In 2015, in Lokhvytsia, a memorial to the Heavenly Hundred was constructed in a very similar top-down fashion, with the key role played by the then city mayor.

Other examples of top-down approaches can be observed in Hadiach and Pyriatyn. The design of the memorials to the Heavenly Hundred in these two cities, where they were unveiled in 2017 and 2018 respectively, involved only limited consultation with the public. In Hadiach, the designs of six young architects were published on the chief city architect's page on the social network Vkontakte,[646] where residents were asked to vote for the design they preferred. Similarly, the authorities in Pyriatyn published three designs on one of the city's public Facebook pages and asked the locals to share in the comments which design they favoured. Although locals were able to express their opinions in both these cases, they were not involved in any of the selection processes, as these were not formal design competitions. Thus, the final decisions were taken by the authorities almost behind closed doors.[647] Despite this, when reporting about the project, the authorities in Hadiach emphasised the fact they had involved public consultations,[648] which should be seen as an attempt to legitimise their choice of memorial.

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[644] Author's Interview 46. Veteran in Novi Sanzhary. Online, 15 April 2020.
[645] Author's Interview 46. Veteran in Novi Sanzhary. Online, 15 April 2020.
[646] Before 2017, Vkontakte was one of the most popular social networks in Ukraine, and many public agencies had pages on Vkontakte. When this social network was blocked in Ukraine as part of the country's response to Russia's aggression, many public agencies moved their pages to Facebook.
[647] Author's Interview 5. Head architect in Hadiach. Hadiach, 26 July 2018; Author's interview 50. Head of the Pyriatyn District State Administration. Online, 22 August 2020.
[648] 'Reaktsiia Na Publikatsiiu "Pamiatnyk Heroiam"', *Bazar Media*, 11 February 2016 <https://bazarmedia.info/2016/02/11/reaktsiya-na-publikatsiyu-pam-yatnik-geroyam/> [accessed 4 April 2020].

As my analysis demonstrates, in all these cases ordinary people were active at the initiation stage of the construction, approaching the authorities informally and asking to construct a memorial. In the case of Hadiach, the initiative to construct a memorial came from local participants of the Euromaidan protests in Kyiv. There is evidence that they were eager to suggest designs and tried to put pressure on the authorities to complete the construction. Acting as a group, they produced simple drawings of a memorial featuring a hand-made shield, similar to those used by the protesters in Kyiv, and also suggested involving school children in the production of the design.[649] When the authorities constructed the memorial in a top-down manner, these ordinary people considered this to be unfair and undemocratic.[650] They also felt left out of the commemorative process in general and expressed frustration at not having been invited to the opening ceremony in 2017.[651] Similar exasperation with the top-down approaches of the authorities was voiced by interviewees in Pyriatyn[652] and Novi Sanzhary.[653] Overall, the process of designing the Heavenly Hundred memorials in Novi Sanzhary, Lokhvytsia, Hadiach and Pyriatyn demonstrates that to a significant degree the social memory of the Euromaidan was appropriated by the authorities.

Approaching these selected cases using an instrumentalist approach to memory illuminates them further. While noting that not all mechanisms of social memory formation are politicised,[654] Kubik and Bernhard suggest that political memory actors "often try to treat history instrumentally, as they tend to construct a vision of the past that they assume will generate the most effective legitimation for their efforts to gain or hold power."[655] This view is supported by Forest and Johnson who believe that

> By co-opting, creating, altering, contesting, ignoring, or removing particular monuments, political actors engage in a symbolic dialogue with each other and with the public in an attempt to gain symbolic

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[649] Author's Interview 3. Euromaidan participant in Hadiach. Hadiach, 24 July 2018; Author's Interview 6. Veteran in Hadiach. Hadiach, 26 July 2018.
[650] Author's Interview 6. Veteran in Hadiach. Hadiach, 26 July 2018.
[651] Author's Interview 6. Veteran in Hadiach. Hadiach, 26 July 2018.
[652] Author's Interview 56. Author of the electronic petition in Pyriatyn. Online, 17 March 2021.
[653] Author's Interview 46. Veteran in Novi Sanzhary. Online, 15 April 2020.
[654] Kubik and Bernhard, 'A Theory of the Politics of Memory', p. 10.
[655] Kubik and Bernhard, 'A Theory of the Politics of Memory', p. 9.

capital—the prestige, legitimacy, and influence derived from being associated with status-bearing ideas and figures.[656]

However, in the cases analysed, it is difficult to draw a clear line between local officials' emotional involvement in commemorating Euromaidan and their strategic decisions to gain political advantage from the use of memory.

Some of the key state officials who pushed for the construction of the memorials had a personal emotional attachment to the commemorated events. For example, the head of the Pyriatyn District State Administration took an active part in the Euromaidan protests in Kyiv; at the time he did not hold any public posts and was an entrepreneur. After his appointment to a public post in April 2014, he saw it as his personal responsibility to ensure that Pyriatyn had a memorial to the victims of the Euromaidan protests, putting a lot of energy into this project.[657] Similarly, the head of the Novi Sanzhary village council, who had held this position since before the Euromaidan, was also driven by his respect for the cause. However, despite the emotional involvement of these public officials, it would be wrong to ignore the possibility that they also sought political benefits from their commemorative activity. Arguably, by constructing memorials to the Heavenly Hundred, they aimed to send the message they were on the side of the people and supported the idea of making Ukraine a more transparent and democratic state. At the same time, their approach to the construction of the memorial somewhat contradicted this message.

There is no evidence to suggest that in the cases analysed ordinary people actively challenged the top-down approaches; most likely, they simply voiced their disapproval from time to time, during different meetings with the authorities. Although the ordinary people's response looks weak, as has been pointed out, the context in which these projects took place needs to be taken into account. At this time, conflict was taking place in Eastern Ukraine, which involved violent battles and numerous casualties, all of which impacted on ordinary people's ability to be involved in commemorative processes. In Hadiach, for instance, after the two most active

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[656] Forest and Johnson, 'Monumental Politics', p. 273.
[657] Author's interview 50. Head of the Pyriatyn District State Administration. Online, 22 August 2020.

initiators had approached the authorities requesting permission to construct a memorial to the Heavenly Hundred, their lives were almost immediately affected by the conflict. One of them, a woman in her 30s, lost her husband in the conflict, and the other, a man in his 30s, went to fight on the front line. Another post-Euromaidan context that needs to be considered is the reaction of the public to the reforms in the country. According to a national survey conducted in 2016 on the topic of reforms in Ukraine, in answer to the question "Do you believe in the success of the reforms in Ukraine?", more than 65% of respondents answered negatively.[658] Another survey conducted in the same year showed that almost half the respondents did not trust the local and regional authorities.[659] Given the public's strong dissatisfaction with the changes in post-Euromaidan Ukraine and its lack of trust in state institutions,[660] it is not surprising that ordinary people resented the authorities' top-down commemoration, even though they regarded it as an unpleasant norm. This could explain why ordinary people did not want to spend large amounts of personal time engaging with the authorities during the construction of the memorials. It can also explain the view, imparted during interviews, that can best be worded: 'at least we have some sort of commemorative object, unlike other cities'. In other words, even the top-down activity of the authorities can be seen as better than no activity.

The cases analysed in this section provide important insights into the changing approaches to commemoration since the Euromaidan. Although the construction of these memorials highlights ordinary people's exclusion from the decision-making process, their exclusion served as a driver for changes. Reflecting on the top-down approach to memorial construction, these people recognised that in a democratic society commemoration should be undertaken differently, which pushed those involved to consider what changes could be made. Thus, the chief architect of Hadiach

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[658] *Reformy v Ukraini: Hromadska Dumka Naselennia-2016* (Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, 11 July 2016) <https://dif.org.ua/article/reformi-v-ukraini-gromadska-dumka-naselennya> [accessed 10 March 2021].

[659] *Otsinka Hromadianamy Sytuatsii v Kraini, Stavlennia Do Suspilnykh Instytutiv, Elektoralni Oriientatsii* (Razumkov Centre, 22 November 2016) <https://razumkov.org.ua/napriamky/sotsiologichni-doslidzhennia/otsinka-hromadianamy-sytuatsii-v-kraini-stavlennia-do-suspilnykh-instytutiv-elektoralni-oriientatsii> [accessed 21 May 2021].

[660] Wanner, 'Commemoration', p. 330.

stated in an interview that her experience of constructing the Heavenly Hundred memorial had helped her realise that decisions made behind closed doors are problematic. Later, when local veterans asked the Hadiach authorities to construct a memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, she was proactive in challenging the top-down approach and promoted instead the idea of an official design competition, which was eventually organised in 2020.[661] Similarly, the authorities in Pyriatyn and Lokhvytsia organised design competitions for the construction of memorials to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, in 2019 and 2018 respectively. Although the authorities in Novi Sanzhary have not been as active in constructing a memorial to the conflict, local veterans keep putting pressure on them and asking them to organise a design competition.[662] The organisation of such competitions and the development of state mechanisms that enable the participation of ordinary people are discussed in detail in Chapter Three. It is important to note that such changes in the "memorial paradigm", [663] from top-down to more inclusive approaches, were slow to happen. Even after the Euromaidan protests, old paradigms of memory production continued to be used. However, these gradual changes prepared the ground for more concrete developments in the official approaches to commemoration in post-Euromaidan Ukraine.

[661] Author's Interview 5. Head architect in Hadiach. Hadiach, 26 July 2018
[662] Author's Interview 46. Veteran in Novi Sanzhary. Online, 15 April 2020.
[663] Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments*, p. 171.

5.3. Commemorating the Russia-Ukraine conflict

5.3.1. Continued losses in the ongoing conflict

One of the current challenges faced in the commemoration of the Russia-Ukraine conflict is the ever-growing list of fallen soldiers. As of the end of 2021, the number of casualties continues to increase, and this has a clear impact on the commemorative projects in the Poltava oblast. Some practices used by the local authorities are necessitated by pragmatic reasons. For example, in Kremenchuk, when the local authorities decided to build a new military burial ground, they planned a layout that would accommodate graves of future victims (whose number had to be estimated). Currently, the large memorial in the middle of the burial ground commemorates dozens of local soldiers.[664] However, it is also ready to accommodate more 'anticipated' losses: right next to the memorial, there is a spacious paved section with allocated slots for more than twenty graves, serving as a grim reminder that the conflict is not over yet (Figure 31).

***Figure 31. Military burial ground in Kremenchuk with the official memorial
to the Russia-Ukraine conflict (2019).***

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[664] Author's observations. Kremenchuk, July 2019.

Figure 32. A section of the memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict at the military burial ground in Poltava (2017).

In Poltava, the military burial ground includes a large wall displaying the names of the dead: it has plenty of empty space, used on an ongoing basis, to add new names (Figure 32). In Kobeliaky (population 9,600), the authorities made a rushed decision to carve six portraits of the local fallen soldiers on a granite memorial (Figure 33).[665] By the time the memorial was unveiled, in 2016, more locals had lost their lives in the conflict.[666] A decision was made to add a smaller plate with the additional portraits. However, it is unclear what will happen with this commemorative object if more soldiers from the Kobeliaky district lose their lives in the conflict.

Figure 33. Memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict in Kobeliaky (2016).

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[665] The memorial in Kobeliaky was initiated and funded by the local authorities. They contacted an ordinary person, a monumental mason in Poltava, and asked him to suggest a design, which they then approved.

[666] 'U Kobeliakakh Na Pamiatnyku Voinam ATO Ne Vystachylo Mistsia Dlia Portretiv Usikh Zahyblykh', *TV Ltava*, 13 April 2016 <https://youtu.be/kD4HveDBdz0> [accessed 1 November 2020].

For ordinary people, this issue is very current. This can be seen in the case of a memorial in Poltava, constructed in 2018, on the initiative of a local group of mothers whose sons lost their lives in the conflict (also analysed in Chapter Four, Figure 13).[667] The memorial stands in the middle of a small park and features a medium-size granite structure with an in-built electronic screen that allows information to be updated. As the initiators of the memorial explained during an interview,[668] their original idea was to create a memorial that would be big enough to carve all the names of the local fallen soldiers. They all strongly believe that people have to know the names of the soldiers who have given their lives and that a joint 'nameless' object was not an option. The main issue with this idea was that the conflict was still ongoing: "we came to realise that since the war is still going on, we would need to keep adding new names, and this would require more space."[669] Their final solution, that of using an electronic screen, is a pragmatic solution to issues faced by ordinary people.

With the military burial grounds in Kremenchuk and Poltava, it was in the power of the authorities to create a project which could be extended in the future, and to include the funds required for such extensions into the annual budgets. In the case of the local mothers' group in Poltava, it faced numerous obstacles from the very outset. It took its members a lot of effort to receive official permission to use the site and to convince the authorities to allocate funds for the project.[670] According to the interviewed mothers, they had to put pressure on the officials to include costs for the maintenance of the memorial into the annual city budget.[671] For these memory actors, learning what an uphill struggle such a project could be, and becoming aware that adding names in the future would require further interaction with the authorities, shaped their design. These ordinary people tried to design a project they could control, which satisfies their

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[667] Viktoria Baberia, 'U Poltavi Stvoryly Aleiu Pamiati Zakhysnykiv Ukrainy', *Zmist*, 6 March 2018 <https://zmist.pl.ua/news/u-poltavi-stvorili-aleyu-pamyati-zahisnikiv-ukrajini-foto> [accessed 15 June 2018].
[668] Author's Interview 24. Two mothers of fallen soldiers in Poltava. Poltava, 7 August 2019.
[669] Author's Interview 24. Two mothers of fallen soldiers in Poltava. Poltava, 7 August 2019.
[670] Author's Interview 24. Two mothers of fallen soldiers in Poltava. Poltava, 7 August 2019.
[671] Author's Interview 24. Two mothers of fallen soldiers in Poltava. Poltava, 7 August 2019.

need to commemorate soldiers individually in the context of the ongoing conflict. The idea of using an electronic screen seemed to meet these needs. As part of their commemorative work, this Poltava group continues to collect information about new soldiers who have lost their lives and to add their information to the screen.

5.3.2. Impact of the volatile environment on commemoration

From April 2014 to April 2018 the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine was officially referred to as the "Anti-Terrorist Operation"[672] (ATO). One of the official reasons given for not introducing martial law, and consequently not naming the conflict "a war", was the prohibition on holding elections under martial law.[673] In the aftermath of the Euromaidan protests (2013-2014) which resulted in the ousting of President Viktor Yanukovych and significant power shifts, elections were crucially needed. In April 2018, the name ATO was replaced with the "Joint Forces Operation", which changed aspects of the legal framework within which Ukraine was undertaking activity in the occupied territories in Eastern Ukraine.[674] However, the abbreviation "ATO" and its derivatives "atoshnyky" and "atovtsi", referring to the Ukrainian soldiers participating in the ATO, continue to be commonly used by the public. [675] Ambiguity and even frustration were the outcomes of having several different terms in circulation to describe the same conflict: in the interviews conducted for this research, ordinary people commonly expressed the idea that Ukraine is at war with Russia and that the term "war" should be used openly. However, when constructing their commemorative object, the very same people either do not write anything at all, for example, in the instance of the electronic screen in Poltava and the memorial in Opishnia, or they write "ATO", such as

[672] *Decree of the President of Ukraine Pro Rishennia Rady Natsionalnoi Bezpeky i Oborony Ukrainy Vid 13 Kvitnia 2014 Roku "Pro Nevidkladni Zakhody Shchodo Podolannia Terorystychnoi Zahrozy i Zberezhennia Terytorialnoi Tsilisnosti Ukrainy"*, 2014 <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/405/2014#Text> [accessed 10 April 2020].

[673] Sviatoslav Khomenko, 'Voiennyi Stan Chy ATO: Yak Nazvaty Sytuatsiiu Na Donbasi?', 2 July 2014 <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/politics/2014/07/140702_ato_martial_law_sx> [accessed 10 May 2020].

[674] 'Zmina ATO Na OOS: Yaki Novovvedennia Ochikuiutsia Na Donbasi', *Slovo i Dilo*, 4 May 2018 <https://www.slovoidilo.ua/2018/05/04/infografika/bezpeka/zmina-ato-oos-yaki-novovvedennya-ochikuyutsya-donbasi> [accessed 15 May 2020].

[675] Oleksandr Ponomariv, 'Bloh Ponomareva: Atoshnyky Chy Atishnyky?', *BBC News Ukraine*, 18 December 2017 <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/blog-olexandr-ponomariv-42398686> [accessed 1 June 2020].

the memorial in Kremenchuk, unveiled in 2016[676]. Out of the identified memorials

constructed in the Poltava oblast on the initiative of ordinary people, only the

memorial in Lubny, unveiled in 2018, openly refers to the Russia-Ukraine conflict as

"the armed aggression of the Russian Federation".[677] In all other cases, the name of the

commemorated event is either absent or ambiguous: for example, in Kotelva

(population 12,000), the memorial initiated by the local veterans (2017) says that the

soldiers protected Ukraine from "invaders from the East."[678]

As of December 2021, there is no knowing when and how the conflict in Eastern

Ukraine will end. Ordinary people's concerns about the future are a factor that can

affect their design choices. For example, in Zinkiv in 2018, a memorial to the Russia-

Ukraine conflict was constructed by the local authorities in response to the initiative of

a local veteran.[679] According to the veteran, a male in his late 30s, he created the

design of the memorial, which includes images of soldiers walking up a staircase to

heaven, and two more sections for inscriptions (see further analysis in Chapter Four,

Figure 15).[680] The inscription on the right-hand side was selected by the authorities and

consists of a quote from Taras Shevchenko's poem *Both Archimedes and Galileo*

(1860):

> And on the reborn earth
> There will be no enemy, no tyrant
> There will be a son, and there will be a mother,
> And there will be people on the earth.[681]

Although this text expresses hope for a peaceful future for Ukraine, it avoids making

any statements about the commemorated conflict. The inscription in the middle

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[676] Aliona Dushenko, 'U Kremenchutsi Vidkryly Memorialnyi Znak Heroiam ATO Ta Zahyblym v Ilovaiskomu Kotli', *Telegraf*, 29 August 2016 <https://www.telegraf.in.ua/kremenchug/10056174-illovaysk.html> [accessed 1 June 2018].

[677] 'U Lubnakh Vidkryly Pamiatnyi Znak Voinam ATO', *Novyny Poltavshchyny*, 18 October 2018 <https://np.pl.ua/2018/10/u-lubnakh-vidkryly-pam-iatny-znak-voinam-ato/> [accessed 15 May 2020].

[678] Anatolii Dzhereleiko, 'U Kovpakivskomu Skveri Vidkryto Pamiatnyi Znak Uchasnykam ATO', *Zoria Poltavshchyny*, 18 November 2017 <http://www.old.zorya.poltava.ua/2017/11/18/у-ковпаківському-сквері-відкрито-пам/> [accessed 10 April 2020].

[679] 'U Zinkovi Osviatyly Pamiatnyi Znak Zahyblym Voinam', *Novyny Poltavshchyny*, 16 October 2018 <https://np.pl.ua/2018/10/u-zin-kovi-osviatyly-pam-iatny-znak-zahyblym-voinam/> [accessed 10 December 2019].

[680] Author's Interview 44. Veteran in Zinkiv. Online, 17 December 2019.

[681] Danylo Husar Struk, *Encyclopedia of Ukraine, Volume IV Ph-Sr*, 1993. (the source of the translation)

section was selected by the veteran and unambiguously characterises the commemorated soldiers: "In eternal memory of the heroes who gave their lives for Ukraine". In an interview, he shared that for him this short phrase required a lot of effort and consideration.[682] In his original draft, the wording was "To the fallen participants of the ATO [anti-terrorist operation]." However, he was concerned the wording could cause problems in the future:

> The national authorities could change, their views about the ATO could change also. Who knows what could annoy them about the wording? I tried to make the wording neutral, but also to let people know who is commemorated here.[683]

To future-proof the wording, he contacted some analysts in Kyiv, who also advised him against mentioning the ATO. Although the local authorities did not appear to have any strong opinions about his choice of wording, he still wanted to make sure the memorial would say exactly what he wanted: "I was still recovering from my war injury, but I kept walking on my crutches to their offices and asking them to not change the wording in any way."[684] His concerns are clearly linked to the issue of how to name the armed conflict in Ukraine.

To help examine the issue of naming the conflict, we might profitably draw on Reinhart Koselleck's concepts of the "space of experience" and the "horizon of expectation", which analyse the relationship between past, present and future.[685] "[T]he past and the future are joined together in the presence of both experience and expectation," according to Koselleck, and these two categories "guide concrete agents in their actions relating to social and political movement."[686] Likewise, Irwin-Zarecka notes "… there are times when a very specific vision of the future frames the utilization of the past."[687] When it comes to defining the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine, ordinary people, memory actors, experienced a clear mismatch between how they personally saw the conflict and how it is officially defined. This could, arguably, explain the reason

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[682] Author's Interview 44. Veteran In Zinkiv. Online, 17 December 2019.
[683] Author's Interview 44. Veteran In Zinkiv. Online, 17 December 2019.
[684] Author's Interview 44. Veteran In Zinkiv. Online, 17 December 2019.
[685] Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, p. 126.
[686] Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, p. 127.
[687] Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance*, p. 101.

behind their reluctance to write the word "war" on the commemorative objects: after all, using the official name or avoiding any names at all is a much safer strategy. As the case in Zinkiv shows, the decision taken by the memorial's initiator to avoid naming the conflict was guided by his expectation that in the future the conflict and the actions of the Ukrainian soldiers may be interpreted differently. It is difficult to pinpoint the exact source of his concerns, but it is possible that the above discussed mismatch and ambiguity in naming the conflict played a role. Furthermore, in post-Euromaidan Ukraine, the perceived 'timelessness'[688] of memorials has been strongly questioned: the 'Leninopad' of 2013-2014 and the 'de-communisation laws' of 2015 clearly show how drastically interpretations of the past can change, demonstrating that the meaning of memorials is not guaranteed. [689] One of the concerns voiced by some interviewed veterans was linked to the re-interpretation of the memory of the people who fought for the establishment of Soviet rule in Ukraine, and the consequent removal of numerous memorials to Fighters for the Soviet Rule (Bortsiam za Vladu Rad). As one veteran shared, "Many of these people genuinely believed in what they fought for; there is no guarantee that our memory will not be re-interpreted similarly".[690] Moreover, within three decades of its independence, Ukraine experienced three revolutionary events, demonstrating that significant political changes in the country are not an unusual occurrence. [691]

Thus, ordinary people's future expectations are often uncertain. For example, one of the initiators of the memorial in Opishnia (discussed in Chapter Four, Figure 28) shared:

> We decided to construct this memorial, but we do not know what will happen in the future. Will these people be seen as heroes or ...? Our history can have a very sharp turn, and then they will be considered not as heroes, but as some kind of militia [opolchentsi].[692]

[688] Lisa Maya Knauer and Daniel J. Walkowitz, 'Introduction', in *Memory and the Impact of Political Transformation in Public Space*, ed. by Daniel J. Walkowitz (Duke University Press, 2004), pp. 1–20 (p. 5).
[689] Liubarets, 'The Politics of Memory in Ukraine in 2014'; Plokhii, 'Goodbye Lenin'.
[690] Author's Interview 15. Veteran in Kremenchuk. Kremenchuk, 28 July 2019.
[691] Olga Onuch, 'Maidan's Past and Present: Comparing the Orange Revolution and the Euromaidan', in *Ukraine's Euromaidan: Analyses of a Civil Revolution*, ed. by David R. Marples and Frederick V. Mills (ibidem, 2015), pp. 27–56.
[692] Author's Interview 25. Activist in Opishnia. Opishnia, 8 August 2019.

This memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, unveiled in 2019, was constructed on the initiative of local veterans and activists, that is, ordinary people.[693] Although nothing is inscribed on the memorial and it only shows a cut-out figure of an armed soldier, it does feature a marble structure resembling a red-and-black flag. As discussed in Chapter Four, this design choice can raise questions even in the present. Currently, in Ukraine red-and-black is associated with the Ukrainian nationalist political party Right Sector and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (a Ukrainian nationalist paramilitary formation that operated during and after the Second World War). In the context of the ongoing conflict, it is unclear how this newly shaped symbolism of red-and-black flags will be used in the future. However, the main initiator of the memorial tries to stay optimistic: "I believe that Ukraine now has a small, but significant, percentage of people who will not let history turn backwards... Together, we will not let that happen – after all, we paid a very high price to get here."[694] This memory actor is focusing on the positive "space of experience" whereby recent events in Ukraine demonstrate that there are members of society ready to protect their views and memories, no matter what political changes Ukraine might face in the future. The examples of Zinkiv and Opishnia testify that ordinary people's expectations about future interpretations of the present ongoing conflict, grounded in their experiences, shape their commemorative activity.

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[693] Vasyl Neizhmak, 'Koshty Na Pamiatnyk v Opishni Zbyraly Vsiieiu Hromadoiu', *Holos Ukrainy*, 25 October 2019 <http://www.golos.com.ua/article/323172> [accessed 10 April 2021].
[694] Author's Interview 25. Activist in Opishnia. Opishnia, 8 August 2019.

5.3.3. Educating the present and future generations

As discussed in Chapter Four, the construction of memorials to violent conflicts by ordinary people can be associated with different inter-connected needs: to process traumatic experiences and mourn the loss of life, to ensure their memories are recognised, and to search for the meaning of the commemorated conflict. Another aspect of the commemorative activity of ordinary people can be added to this list, one which recurred as a subject in interviews with ordinary people in the Poltava oblast: the need to educate present and future generations through memorials. Accordingly, we now turn to the educational aspect of the commemorative activity of ordinary people while taking into account the impact of the ongoing violent conflict.

In 2019 in Novi Sanzhary, a local veteran, a male engineer in his 30s, created a detailed memorial design dedicated to the soldiers of the Russia-Ukraine conflict (Figure 34). He maintained that the main elements of the design are full of symbolism and tell a story.[695] A metal sword is interwoven with tree branches that hold individual metal plates. The plates are curved like body armour and shaped like the 25 Ukrainian administrative regions. Seen from the front, the metal plates show a map of Ukraine. On this map, the occupied parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts are shown in red ("as if on fire"), and Crimea is grey ("because it was not defended, it was simply given away").[696] The tree branches also include the chevrons of different military brigades. During the interview, the veteran explained that "For me personally this tree symbolises all of us [Ukrainians] as a family; before the war, we were estranged, but the war made us mobilise and create one united family, as demonstrated by the map of Ukraine as one 'shield'."[697] From above, the memorial site is designed to look like a Cossack cross. The sword features an inscription "Glory to Ukraine! Glory to heroes" on one side, and the code "4.5.0"[698] on the other side. As of 2021, this memorial exists

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[695] Author's Interview 46. Veteran in Novi Sanzhary. Online, 15 April 2020.
[696] Author's Interview 46. Veteran in Novi Sanzhary. Online, 15 April 2020.
[697] Author's Interview 46. Veteran in Novi Sanzhary. Online, 15 April 2020.
[698] The code "4.5.0." is part of a military radiocommunication slang developed during the Russia-Ukraine conflict. This code is used by the Ukrainian military for notifications and translates as "everything is alright, everything is peaceful".

only as a 3D visualisation on the creator's computer. Although he discussed his idea with the local authorities of Novi Sanzhary and asked them to organise a design competition in which he could take part, currently the authorities are not actively trying to construct a memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The designer of this conceptual memorial explained in an interview why he believes a local memorial to the fallen soldiers of the Russia-Ukraine conflict should be future-oriented. He stated that he is focusing on those people in Ukraine who are younger than him:

> Today's young people are very active, they have broader skills than me: they travel abroad faster, they use low-cost airlines, they communicate with people in different countries. However, the war is a very distant thing for them. When the war started, they were only teenagers; now they are thinking about education and their plans for the future. I would want them to at least understand what this war is about, not to see it as a distant thing, and not to ruin the memorial.[699]
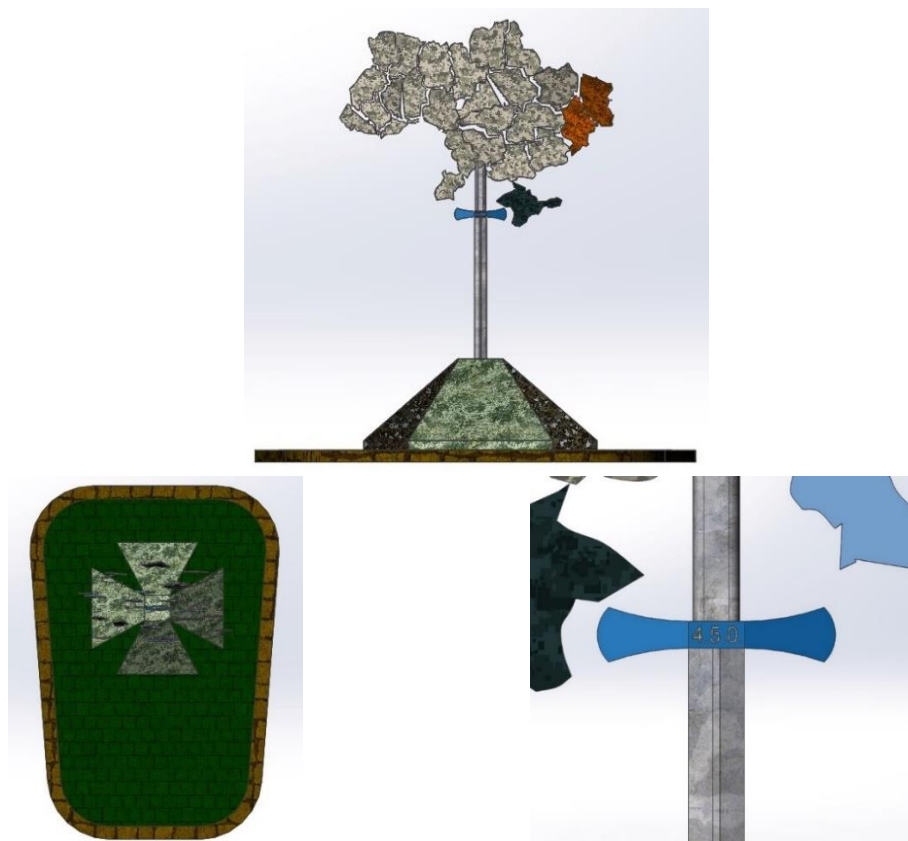

Figure 34. Design of a memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict in Novi Sanzhary.

The veteran fears that this part of Ukraine's history will be forgotten or remembered as a trivial episode: "People still remember that there was a year when the price of the

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[699] Author's Interview 46. Veteran in Novi Sanzhary. Online, 15 April 2020.

dollar jumped from five to eight hryvnia. If we do not speak about the war through memorials, then it will register in people's memory on the same level as the fluctuation of the dollar."[700] His memorial design has a strong potential to fulfil the required task by telling a story about the war that goes beyond mourning over the loss of life. However, to tell a complex story, this project uses a range of creative design techniques that may require more work and funding than more conventional memorials used in the Poltava oblast (such as granite or marble plates or bronze statues). Thus, this case raises the question of whether highly conceptual memorials with complex narrative-focused designs can be realised, especially when they are proposed by ordinary people.

In the case of Novi Sanzhary, the veterans' inability to deliver a complex story led to their frustration. As of December 2021, Novi Sanzhary has no memorials to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The interviewed veteran reported that the local veterans were offered two options by the authorities: either to 'add' their memory to the already-existing memorial to the Soviet-Afghan war, a real infantry fighting vehicle raised on a concrete platform, or to produce a separate simple memorial, the equivalent of a large stone with a plaque on it.[701] According to the interviewed veteran, he and many other veterans did not agree with either of these ideas. First, they do not want the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the Soviet-Afghan war to be mixed because they see them as ideologically different. Second, they do not want a "cemetery-like gravestone"[702] because that would not tell a substantial story about the war. The veterans approached the authorities to ask them to organise an official competition in which different designs could fairly compete. The interviewed veteran shared that he finds it frustrating that the authorities have not tried to organise a competition: "For them to say that they do not have funds for a serious memorial they first need to ascertain how much exactly such a project could cost; however, they have not even made any calculations."[703] Although he appreciates that money could be a serious issue, he is

[700] Author's Interview 46. Veteran in Novi Sanzhary. Online, 15 April 2020.
[701] Author's Interview 46. Veteran in Novi Sanzhary. Online, 15 April 2020.
[702] Author's Interview 46. Veteran in Novi Sanzhary. Online, 15 April 2020.
[703] Author's Interview 46. Veteran in Novi Sanzhary. Online, 15 April 2020.

disappointed that the authorities do not think about the wider picture and the need to tell future generations about this war.

A similar discussion about the need for future-oriented commemoration can be observed in Kremenchuk, raising the question of whether memorials should be made easier for children to understand. In 2016-2018 the Kremenchuk local authorities held a design competition for a memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The winning design titled *DNA of Memory* was created by an established Ukrainian architect and produces a historical narrative (Figure 35).

Figure 35. A model of the winning design ('DNA of Memory') in the Kremenchuk design competition for a memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict.
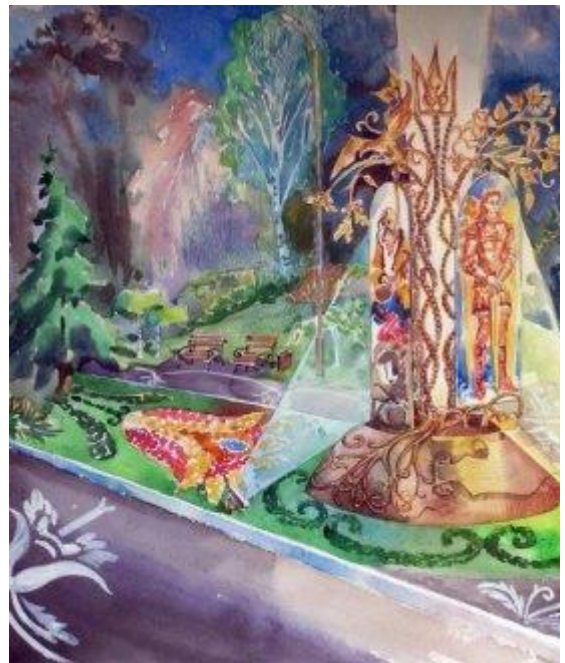
Figure 36. Design submitted by Oksana Boiko for the Kremenchuk design competition for a memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

It features a solemn angel on top of a spiralled column, decorated with three-dimensional images picturing Ukraine's history from the Cossack era to the current conflict.[704] As of 2021, the construction of this memorial has not yet started. Although this design delivers a historical narrative of the commemorated conflict, it was not

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[704] Aliona Dushenko, '"DNK Pamiati" Peremih u Konkursi Eskiziv Pamiatnykiv Heroiam ATO u Kremenchutsi', *Telegraf*, 17 May 2018 <https://www.telegraf.in.ua/kremenchug/10069931-dnk-pamyati-peremg-u-konkurs-eskzv-pamyatnikv-geroyam-ato-u-kremenchuc.html> [accessed 1 May 2020].

supported by one group of local veterans because they believe that "it is too difficult for children to understand."[705] In the design competition, they supported a highly artistic memorial proposed by a local artist. This memorial is rich in folklore images (Figure 36). It includes three stained glass panels featuring a girl in traditional Ukrainian embroidered clothes, a semi-mythical Cossack Mamay (with a shot-through heart) and the archangel Michael.[706] The memorial also incorporates red poppies, guelder roses, and a metal 'tree of the nation' (*derevo rodu*) with the names of the fallen soldiers on its leaves.[707] According to the artist, this project would impact on the viewers at an emotional level, and the veterans who supported her agreed.[708]

Although the analysed projects in Novi Sanzhary and Kremenchuk have not been realised, the memory actors in these cases still seek to educate younger generations using other means. Thus, the veterans in Kremenchuk take part in the work of a grassroots museum of the Russia-Ukraine conflict (opened in 2015), and they have been giving guided tours to school children free of charge:

> Kremenchuk is only 500 kilometres away from the front line … but the city is drinking, partying, and dancing. No one remembers the war. However, when the children come here and touch the rockets and shells, I can see their eyes change … They begin to understand that the war is indeed taking place.[709]

The veteran who designed the memorial in Novi Sanzhary believes he is fulfilling his task of educating younger generations through joining a civil society project aimed at young people.[710]

There are numerous reports of commemorative objects to the Russia-Ukraine conflict being vandalised in the Poltava oblast, and in Ukraine in general, indicating that some members of Ukrainian society are disrespectful towards the memory of this event.

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[705] Author's Interview 15. Veteran in Kremenchuk. Kremenchuk, 28 July 2019.
[706] Archangel Michael is traditionally seen in Ukraine as the protector of soldiers.
[707] 'U Kremenchutsi Prezentuvaly Eskizy Novykh Pamiatnykiv Zahyblym Heroiam ATO', *Depo Poltava*, 24 January 2017 <https://poltava.depo.ua/ukr/poltava/u-kremenchutsi-prezentuvali-eskizi-novih-pam-yatnikiv-zagiblim-24012017141700> [accessed 10 March 2020].
[708] Author's Interview 19. Artist in Kremenchuk. Kremenchuk, 28 August 2018; Author's interview 15. Veteran in Kremenchuk. Kremenchuk, 28 July 2019.
[709] Author's Interview 11. Head of a veterans' association in Kremenchuk. Kremenchuk, 12 August 2018.
[710] Author's Interview 46. Veteran in Novi Sanzhary. Online, 15 April 2020.

Some of the vandals' identities are unknown and their actions have the potential to be interpreted as politically motivated provocations (examples can be seen in Poltava,[711] Kremenchuk,[712] and Karlivka[713]). In some cases, it was established that acts of vandalism and disrespect towards the memorials were above all carried out by young people (Myrhorod,[714] Chutove[715]), including one of the most discussed incidents in Hadiach. Here two schoolgirls inappropriately danced near the memorial constructed by local veterans in 2021 (this memorial is analysed in Chapter Four, Figure 20).[716] In the light of young people's negative responses to Russia-Ukraine conflict memorials, it is easy to understand why ordinary people who seek to commemorate the conflict would be concerned, and why they want to educate younger generations.

According to James Young,

> If societies remember, it is only insofar as their institutions and rituals organize, shape, even inspire their constituents' memories. For a society's memory cannot exist outside of those people who do the remembering – even if such memory happens to be at the society's bidding, in its name.[717]

Ultimately, the veteran who produced the computer designed memorial in Novi Sanzhary and the veterans supporting the Kremenchuk memorial design by Oksana Boiko believe in the same idea: that Ukrainian society, especially younger and future generations, should be provided with an organised and shaped information package

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[711] 'U Poltavi Vandaly Znovu Znyshchyly Memorialni Doshky Zahyblym Atovtsiam i Petliuri', *Ukraina Moloda*, 6 April 2020 <https://www.umoloda.kiev.ua/number/0/196/145118/> [accessed 10 April 2021].

[712] 'U Kremenchutsi Nevidomi Znovu Poshkodyly Pamiatnyk Heroiam ATO', *UNIAN*, 6 September 2017 <https://www.unian.ua/incidents/2118886-u-kremenchuku-nevidomi-znovu-poshkodili-pamyatnik-geroyam-ato.html> [accessed 10 April 2021].

[713] 'Akt Vandalizmu', *Karlivka City Council*, 14 November 2016 <https://karlivka.ucoz.ua/news/akt_vandalizmu/2016-11-14-238> [accessed 10 April 2021].

[714] 'U Myrhorodi Molodyk Poshkodyv Memorialnu Plytu u Pidnizhzhia Stely Zahyblym Uchasnykam ATO', *Novyny Poltavshchyny*, 14 April 2017 <https://np.pl.ua/2017/04/u-myrhorodi-molodyk-poshkodyv-memorialnu-plytu-u-pidnizhzhya-stely-zahyblym-uchasnykam-ato/> [accessed 22 August 2019].

[715] Volodymyr Parshevliuk, 'Na Poltavshchyni Rozshukaly 17-Richnoho Khulihana, Yakyi Nohamy Pobyv Memorial Uchasnykam ATO', *0532.Ua*, 10 October 2019 <https://www.0532.ua/news/2538774/na-poltavsini-rozsukali-17-ricnogo-huligana-akij-nogami-pobiv-memorial-ucasnikam-ato> [accessed 10 April 2021].

[716] 'U Hadiachi Politsiia Nichoho Ne Vbachaie u Diiakh Nepovnolitnoi Bilia Pamiatnyka Zakhysnykam Ukrainy', *OblNewsPl.Ua*, 26 March 2021 <https://oblnews.pl.ua/2021/03/26/u-gadyachi-politsiya-nichogo-ne-vbachaye-u-diyah-nepovnolitnoyi-bilya-pam-yatnyka-zahysnykam-ukrayiny-video/> [accessed 21 May 2015].

[717] Young, *The Texture of Memory*, p. xi.

because they are the people who will do the remembering in the future. As Irwin-Zarecka notes, efforts to secure remembrance are "often framed as […] work to prevent forgetting."[718] This is exactly the aim of the two commemorative projects discussed here: to ensure that the next generations do not forget about the war. However, in these two cases, memory is shaped in different ways. In Novi Sanzhary, the memorial's designer wants to tell younger generations that the war brings death but also leads to unity of the nation, while the interviewed veterans in Kremenchuk want to send a different message. They hoped the folklore images would be better understood by children and would more effectively speak about Ukrainians as a separate nation, explaining that the project:

> produces a historical narrative that will be easier for children to understand; the children will know for certain that in Ukraine's history there have been times when its neighbour, a so-called 'brotherly nation', turned out to be Cain. We must educate about such things.[719]

Although the two projects seek to deliver different narratives, both aim to prevent the Russia-Ukraine conflict from being forgotten. Their efforts to preserve the memory are also driven by the fact that the authorities in the Poltava oblast do not generally seek to construct memorials to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Thus, out of the sixteen instances in the Poltava oblast when ordinary people have asked the local authorities to construct a permanent full-scale memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the local authorities have completed the construction in nine cases, often as a result of the persistence of the ordinary people (as Appendix 2 demonstrates). In the remaining cases, the construction projects are either making very slow progress or have not yet started.[720] This level of support from the local authorities fuels ordinary people's lack of confidence in how this ongoing conflict will be remembered and interpreted in the future

Another issue requiring consideration is the routinisation of violent conflict in Ukraine through the media, everyday practice and language, all of which "leads to the

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[718] Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance*, p. 115.
[719] Author's Interview 15. Veteran in Kremenchuk. Kremenchuk, 28 July 2019.
[720] In some cases (for example, Kremenchuk and Hadiach) ordinary people did not want to wait any longer and constructed small memorials themselves.

'normalization' of an otherwise *ab*-normal situation of violence, death, destruction and loss…"[721] Such routinisation makes it hard to capture the attention of a public who have grown used to the ongoing nature of events in Eastern Ukraine. According to a national survey conducted in 2018, when respondents were asked to specify the main political event in Ukraine, only 7% named the ongoing conflict, with 17% naming the martial law that was briefly introduced that year.[722] When the same survey was conducted a year later, in 2019, 8% of the respondents named the release of prisoners of war and 2% named the withdrawal of the forces in Eastern Ukraine.[723] By the end of 2020, the percentage of those who named the conflict was even lower.[724] Conflict fatigue is not uncommon in protracted conflicts.[725] As the situation on the frontline is not showing any signs of change, and despite the continuing losses, life in Ukraine continues, and other issues in the country start drawing the public's attention.

The routinisation of the ongoing conflict shapes ordinary people's commemorative activity. In Myrhorod, for example, some local veterans intend to construct a memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict featuring a real armoured personnel carrier brought from the front line. Notably, they want to use a vehicle that has been damaged and misshaped during the conflict. According to one of the veterans, they want to move away from conventional memorial forms, such as a statue, to remind people how serious and dangerous the conflict is: "People will see that even metal cannot withstand what we had to go through."[726] The use of real objects from the conflict, such as shells and vehicles, can be seen in different grassroots commemorative projects in Ukraine, where such projects aim to capture "the authentic experience of

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[721] Burlyuk, Shapovalova, and Zarembo, 'Introduction to the Special Issue', p. 10.
[722] *Pidsumky-2018: Hromadska Dumka* (Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, 28 December 2018) <https://dif.org.ua/article/pidsumki-2018-gromadska-dumka> [accessed 25 May 2021].
[723] *Pidsumky-2019 i Prohnozy Na 2020: Hromadska Dumka* (Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, 26 December 2019) <https://dif.org.ua/article/pidsumki-2019-gromadska-dumka> [accessed 25 May 2021].
[724] *Ukraina-2020: Nevypravdani Ochikuvannia, Neochikuvani Vyklyky. Pidsumky Roku u Dzerkali Hromadskoi Dumky (Hruden 2020r.)* (Razumkov Centre, 16 December 2020) <https://razumkov.org.ua/napriamky/sotsiologichni-doslidzhennia/ukraina2020-nevypravdani-ochikuvannia-neochikuvani-vyklyky-pidsumky-roku-u-dzerkali-gromadskoi-dumky-gruden-2020r> [accessed 25 May 2021].
[725] Ho Won Jeong, *Conflict Management and Resolution: An Introduction* (Taylor & Francis Ltd, 2009), p. 45.
[726] Author's Interview 51. Veteran in Myrhorod. Online, 22 August 2020.

the war".[727] The use of metal, especially corten steel with its distinctive 'rusty' look, in Russia-Ukraine conflict memorials is becoming increasingly popular (also analysed in Chapter Three). Thus, in Hadiach, one of the local veterans, an active memory actor, hoped that the memorial in his city would feature "burnt and contorted metal with bullet holes".[728] This echoes the concept used in the mobile exhibition *War is Near*, initiated in Kyiv by a veteran of the Russia-Ukraine conflict.[729] Before the conflict, the veteran, who moved to Kyiv from Myrhorod, had worked as a marketing expert, and having returned from the frontline, he felt his skills could be used to draw the Kyiv public's attention to the war that, for the public, seemed so distant. The 2018 exhibition included twenty metal silhouettes of civilians with real bullet holes (Figure 37). According to the artist, he deliberately placed the works in public places such as parks where people would least expect to be reminded about a war.[730] In his opinion, the supersaturated infosphere, with propaganda and conflicting opinions, led to people tiring of the topic of war and tending to ignore any messages about it. By placing shot-through metal figures of civilians in unexpected locations he hoped to make people feel something again.[731]

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[727] Gaidai, Sklokina, and Kasianov, *Polityka i Pamiat*, p. 139.
[728] Author's Interview 47. Veteran in Hadiach. Online, 16 August 2020.
[729] Natalia Ishchenko, 'Twenty Silhouettes of Bullet-Ridden People on Kyiv's Streets: About Oles Kromplias's Project', *Den*, 20 June 2018 <https://day.kyiv.ua/en/article/time-out/war-nearby> [accessed 20 July 2020].
[730] Author's Interview 9. Veteran in Kyiv. Kyiv, 31 July 2018.
[731] Author's Interview 9. Veteran in Kyiv. Kyiv, 31 July 2018.
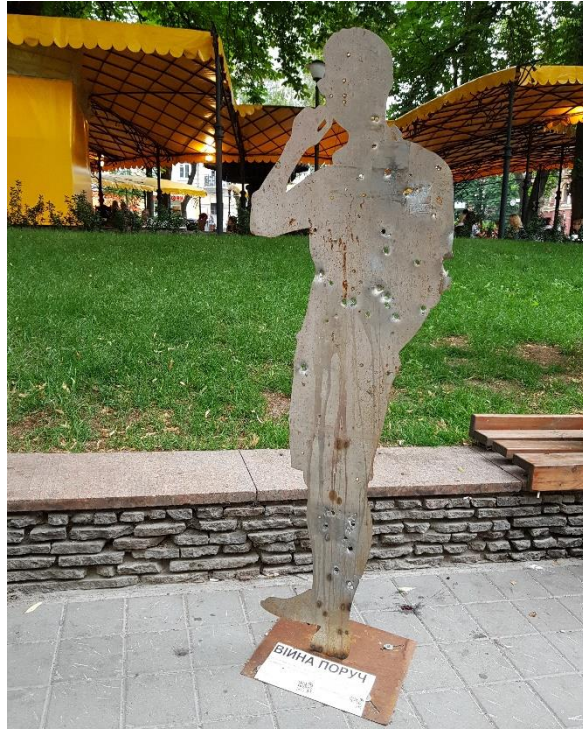
Figure 37. One of the metal silhouettes from the War is Near project in Kyiv (2018)

5.4. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed factors that shape the commemorative activity of ordinary people in the context of the post-revolutionary developments in Ukraine and the ongoing armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine. In this complex setting, several key factors influence the commemorative activity of ordinary people. First, despite ordinary people's strong need to process their experiences of the emotionally charged events of the Euromaidan protests and to commemorate the victims, their agency is affected by their general exhaustion. This emotional, physical, and financial depletion is caused both by their participation in the Euromaidan protests and their need to respond to the new challenges presented by the onset of the violent conflict in Ukraine. Second, despite the aspirations of the protesters and their hope that after the Euromaidan the Ukrainian authorities would govern openly and democratically, the desired changes did not happen quickly, and top-down approaches to commemoration continued. This negatively affected the commemorative activity of ordinary people as they were often excluded from the commemorative process. At the same time, such top-down commemorations drew attention to the fact that ordinary people are not involved in

the decision-making process, and this gradually prepared the ground for concrete changes in the official approaches to commemoration, such as the initiation of formal design competitions.

My analysis demonstrates that continued human losses in the Russia-Ukraine conflict generate a need to find solutions that enable the commemoration of individual soldiers. The need for individualised remembrance is driven by ordinary people's desire to remind the public that the fallen soldiers gave their lives for their country as individuals, and not an abstract group. The unknown outcome of the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the possibility of its future re-interpretation influences the design choices made by ordinary people when constructing memorials. Thus, ordinary people tend to avoid any wording and naming of the conflict that could jeopardise their memorial in the future. However, in some instances, ordinary people interpret the present-day struggle positively and hope that even in the unpredictable future they will be able to defend their memories and their interpretation.

A lack of commemorative initiative on the part of the authorities' and the public's conflicting views about the conflict are significant factors shaping the design of the memorials ordinary people seek to construct. They want to ensure that the memorials explain the commemorated events to future generations, and that future generations remember those who died and also interpret the events in a particular way.

Above all, the cases analysed demonstrate that ordinary people want their memorials to produce narratives that tell of Ukrainian national identity and the unity of the Ukrainian nation and warn about the potential threat from neighbouring Russia. At the same time, the overall conflict fatigue observed in Ukrainian society motivates ordinary people to design their commemorative objects to disrupt the routinisation of the conflict and remind the disinterested public about the reality of war.

Conclusion

This thesis identifies and examines the main characteristics of the commemorative activity of ordinary people in Central Ukraine. My analysis demonstrates how ordinary people in the Poltava oblast commemorate two events: the Euromaidan protests (2013-2014) and the Russia-Ukraine conflict (2014 – ongoing), and specifically how ordinary people construct physical commemorative objects. Through researching members of the Ukrainian public who decide to act in the area of commemoration, thereby entering the area of public meaning-making and becoming memory actors, I extend the term "ordinary people" as found in a range of scholarly works written by political scientists, economists, historians, and anthropologists. Building on other scholars' conceptualisation of the term "ordinary people", I expand the term for the area of memory studies, to suggest that *ordinary people as memory actors* can be defined as a heterogeneous group of people whose everyday lives are characterised by a certain ordinariness: they come from different socio-economic, employment and education levels, and their key common characteristic is that they seek to project their individual, private memories into the public arena. This term does not attribute any particular moral, social, or civic virtues to these people.

The thesis' central focus is inspired by a gap in knowledge in existing memory studies literature on commemorative practices where the focus is often on the activity of the state and political memory actors. Additionally, the thesis deepens our understanding of memory-related processes in post-Soviet Ukraine. To achieve this thesis' objective, I have identified a group of ordinary people and examined the commemorative work they carry out, analysing how the wider socio-political and legislative context in post-Euromaidan Ukraine shapes their activity.

My research demonstrates that in post-Euromaidan Ukraine ordinary people are actively involved in the area of commemoration. They seek to memorialise the turbulent and emotionally charged events of the Euromaidan protests and the Russia-Ukraine conflict through the construction of both temporary and permanent commemorative objects. My findings reveal that in post-Euromaidan Ukraine many

ordinary people believe that the local authorities have a duty to construct memorials to the victims of the Euromaidan protests and the soldiers fallen in the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The authorities are expected to act for the benefit of Ukraine as a nation and recognise that they have received and kept their posts thanks to the sacrifices of the protesters and soldiers. However, when these expectations are not met, ordinary people feel it is their duty to act and ensure that these two events are memorialised. Ordinary people are driven by their strong need to process traumatic experiences and by the idea "Yakshcho ne my, to khto?" ("Nobody but us"), a popular motto used by the Euromaidan protesters, soldiers and volunteers helping the army and civilians during the conflict. Ordinary people exercise their agency through constructing commemorative objects independently, putting pressure on the authorities, and trying to make changes in the official commemoration processes. By exercising their agency, ordinary people make a significant contribution to public meaning-making in Central Ukraine and play a role in the formation of open and democratic governance.

Ordinary people in the Poltava oblast

Three groups of ordinary people are identified: activists, veterans, and relatives of fallen soldiers. These groups consist of men and women of different ages and from different backgrounds, from recent graduates to college teachers, engineers, shop assistants, general labourers, entrepreneurs, and the retired. What unites these three groups is that prior to the Euromaidan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict none of these people were involved in the area of commemoration. They all led the very same lives as other members of the public: studying, working, and going about regular daily activities. They did not take part in Ukrainian civil society or the political sphere. All three groups of ordinary people became active in the area of commemoration only because of the Euromaidan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict, as a result of the significant impact these two events had on their lives.

Most of the activists from the Poltava oblast participated in the Euromaidan protests. Some brought supplies to the protesters in Kyiv and took part in the protests, becoming direct witnesses of the clashes with the security forces. Other activists took

part in the Euromaidan protests in Poltava, while some ordinary people followed the protests in the media and strongly sympathised with the cause. There are also activists who did not take part in the Russia-Ukraine conflict as soldiers but delivered supplies to the front line and supported the Ukrainian army in general. These activists now strongly believe that the events of the Euromaidan or the Russia-Ukraine conflict, or both, need to be commemorated. By referring to them as 'activists', I convey that my research captures the period in their lives when they became 'activated' to carry out commemorative work. For the veterans and the relatives of the fallen soldiers, their desire to construct commemorative objects is driven by the need to process their private experiences of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, be it the death of a comrade or relative, or the hardship of combat.

During their involvement in the construction of the analysed commemorative objects, none of the identified ordinary people belonged to structured or professionally run civil society groups. At the same time, my analysis reveals the difficulty of drawing a clear line between ordinary people and civil society. Though some ordinary people focused on the construction of a commemorative object while continuing to live their everyday lives, others eventually became active members of professionally run civil society groups (such as those helping internally displaced persons and veterans) or tried to run for a seat on the local council, demonstrating the fluidity of the term "ordinary people". To address this challenge, as part of my research I closely examined each interviewee's position during their involvement in a commemorative project, to ensure that each interviewee was an ordinary person. Using this methodology, I identified a significant number of ordinary people in the Poltava oblast who actively seek to construct commemorative objects.

Resources of ordinary people

My research in Chapter Two demonstrates that ordinary people utilise a range of resources to carry out their commemorative projects. The types of resources used depend on whether they are attempting to construct a commemorative object independently or seeking to obtain public funding. My analysis shows that ordinary

people can produce commemorative objects independently. In such cases, human, cultural, social-organisational and material resources play a particularly important role. To independently produce commemorative objects, ordinary people use their leadership skills, knowledge of project management, and knowledge of how to estimate costs and raise funds. They offer their expertise in design, and often rely on already established networks (in the case of the Poltava oblast, these are networks of protesters established during the Euromaidan and the networks of volunteers established after the onset of the Russia-Ukraine conflict). Independent commemorative projects demonstrate an abundance of skills possessed by individual ordinary people, and when ordinary people get together and form memory communities, this can increase their resources. At the same time, my analysis shows that working independently from the authorities, ordinary people often only produce temporary memorials. While these memorials play an important role in the memorialisation of the Euromaidan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict, they deteriorate over time, serving as a strong reminder of the acute need for permanent memorials.

The construction of permanent memorials requires public funds allocated by the local authorities. In view of this, ordinary people need to utilise resources that help them obtain public funds. An important role is played by cultural resources, as ordinary people need to know whether formal or informal requests have a greater chance of success. They must also know how to submit and follow up on official requests, and how to use legislation to support their requests. My analysis demonstrates that adherence to official procedures and submission of formal requests leads to a higher rate of success. A lack of cultural capital (in particular, an insufficient understanding of how to interact with the local authorities) can be detrimental to the success of an ordinary people's project. Additionally, my analysis of the use of social-organisational resources in Chapter Two shows that across all three categories of ordinary people (activists, veterans, and relatives) there is a strong tendency to try to establish connections with key public officials who could further their commemorative goals. Ordinary people's use of informal requests (observed in some cases) can be explained by the still existing tendency in post-Euromaidan Ukraine to rely on informal relations. As academic literature suggests, in the aftermath of the Euromaidan protests, the need

to move away from the commonly observed informal relations in business, politics and state administration (a legacy of the Soviet Union) towards the rule of law was brought to the fore of public and political debates. My analysis demonstrates that there is evidence that ordinary people are also trying to shift away from informal connections towards formal requests, seeking to implement the Euromaidan protesters' call for more open and democratic governance.

In some cases, ordinary people's attempts to establish contact with public officials have not brought about the desired result. At the same time, my research shows that the involvement of a representative (a public official) often becomes important, especially in the currently observed socio-political context in Ukraine when the local authorities do not unanimously support ordinary people's requests for the construction of memorials. Asking a public official to act as their representative is a strategy that much depends on chance, as there is no guarantee that one of the local public officials will sympathise with the ordinary people's cause and dedicate time and energy to promote their objectives. Overall, my thesis demonstrates that to achieve their objectives, ordinary people need to analyse the particularities of the local governance and find a context-specific strategy to garner the support of the local authorities.

The determination of ordinary people is a crucial resource for the successful construction of a permanent memorial, to learn new things and find solutions, to monitor the project over a long - sometimes several-year - period, and to keep applying pressure on the authorities. Such ongoing persistence of ordinary people as memory actors is grounded in their desire to commemorate events they personally find important.

State mechanisms

My research identifies the state mechanisms which give ordinary people the opportunity to exercise their agency in the area of commemoration and analyses how ordinary people use these mechanisms. As discussed in Chapter Three, when ordinary

people want to address their commemorative needs, they can utilise four state mechanisms: filing official requests, legal actions, electronic petitions, and design competitions. Design competitions are increasingly used by ordinary people who want to ensure that the Euromaidan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict are memorialised. In the analysed cases in the Poltava oblast, ordinary people take part in different stages of design competitions aimed at constructing memorials (formulation of the rules, submission of designs, consideration of the submissions by the jury, and public consultation regarding the submissions). Academic literature demonstrates that citizens' meaningful engagement in memorial construction can ensure that a memorial is better accepted by the public and plays roles welcomed and desired by carriers of the memories. At the same time, the degree of ordinary people's inclusion in the process depends on the local authorities' political will, as current Ukrainian legislation does not specify the involvement of ordinary people in design competitions.

My research reveals that there are currently no established ways to involve ordinary people in design competitions. Instead, the local authorities are experimenting with different approaches. Thus, in some cases, ordinary people are meaningfully included in the formulation of design competition rules, and in other cases the local authorities allow ordinary people to submit their designs and become jury members.

Sometimes the involvement of ordinary people appears to be substantial on the surface but, in fact, their power and impact are limited. This can be caused by tension between experts and ordinary people involved in jury work, whereby both groups believe they have the right to decide on the design of the memorial. Through simulating the involvement of ordinary people, local authorities can seek to legitimise their commemorative project and the power they received following the revolutionary events of the Euromaidan. In such cases, the involvement of ordinary people in the decision-making process is minimal and does not have a substantial influence on the final memorial design.

There is evidence that in post-Euromaidan Ukraine both ordinary people and local authorities are working towards changing the existing memorial paradigm whereby the state plays a dominant role in memorial construction processes. These changes

(evidenced in ordinary people's meaningful involvement in different stages of design competitions) are driven by ordinary people's desire to be involved and an overall call for fairness of official processes in post-Euromaidan Ukraine. In this context, the local authorities feel the pressure to develop more engaging mechanisms. When using design competitions as an available state mechanism, ordinary people demonstrate persistence and creativity. They look for ways to make their voices heard and persevere while dealing with complex bureaucratic procedures, and many of them continue to be involved in the commemorative project over long periods of time.

Narrating violent events through the visual language of memorials

In Chapter Four, my analysis of the visual language used by ordinary people in commemorative objects dedicated to the Euromaidan protests and the Russia-Ukraine conflict demonstrates that the dominant commemorative narratives are those of grief and trauma, delivered through emotive inscriptions and religious symbols. This confirms the expectations of academic literature, which states that ordinary people use the visual language of grief and trauma in the commemoration of violent events to process personal traumatic experiences. However, my analysis also shows that in most of the analysed memorials, a visual language delivering overarching narratives of grief and trauma is used as a foundation on which to add other commemorative narratives, which expand beyond private memories and enter the area of public meaning-making. Specifically, ordinary people produce narratives of the protesters' and soldiers' sacrifice in the nation's name and the need for recognition of this sacrifice. This is achieved through the commemorative objects featuring a high level of personalisation and the use of military images, national symbols, aids to engage the audience, and strategic solutions for the positioning of the commemorative objects. In using this visual language, ordinary people seek to remind other citizens that they have a duty to remember those killed and recognise that they gave their lives for the benefit of Ukraine as a nation.

Additionally, as I demonstrate, ordinary people seek to define the nature of the commemorated violent events and narrate them as righteous, noble struggles. This is

achieved through the use of religious images and inscriptions telling of God's support for the protesters' and soldiers' activity, along with swords as symbols of a knightly, brave fight. Furthermore, ordinary people seek to find meaning in the commemorated violent events, and for this purpose they use a visual language that makes references to other periods of Ukraine's history, especially the Cossack era and sometimes the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). With this approach, the meaning of the contemporary violent events is established by their being placed in a plotline of Ukraine's centuries-long struggle for sovereignty and self-determination. The visual language utilised by ordinary people in commemorative objects to the Euromaidan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict has not yet taken a definitive form, and ordinary people are still reflecting on the best ways to memorialise these two important events.

My analysis shows that when selecting a visual language for their memorials, ordinary people draw on Ukraine's commemorative traditions (as exemplified by their use of religious symbols and the poetry of Taras Shevchenko) and reflect on the visual language they encounter in Ukraine's existing commemorative landscape (such as the language of memorials to the Great Patriotic War and the Soviet-Afghan war). Their commemorative work also reflects wider discourses and controversies in post-Euromaidan Ukraine. This is evidenced by the occasional, yet intentional, use of red-and-black flags, in line with the wider processes of the re-interpretation of UPA symbols in post-Euromaidan Ukraine.

As discussed in Chapter One, since the independence of Ukraine, the Ukrainian public has been exposed to an official politics of memory. The Ukrainian official politics of memory has largely been characterised by a lack of consistency, multiple vectors, ambiguity, and hybridity. At the same time, it has been underpinned by two distinct approaches: victimisation and a glorification of the past. My analysis demonstrates that when adding the Russia-Ukraine conflict to the plotline of Ukraine's history, ordinary people in Central Ukraine actively draw on official narratives glorifying Ukraine's historical struggles, especially from narratives presenting Cossacks as brave, freedom-loving and noble warriors. In the same way that the Cossack past is not critically assessed in official narratives, so too is Ukrainian soldiers' current activity

during the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict not critically assessed by ordinary people promoting a positive image of the soldiers. At the same time, the Russia-Ukraine conflict is not glorified to the same degree as Ukraine's distant past, as the reality of human losses brings the narratives of grief and trauma to the fore.

Although in independent Ukraine ordinary people have been exposed to the official narrative of Ukraine as a victim, in their commemorative work they often focus on the sacrificial nature of the protesters' and soldiers' deaths. When creating plotlines of Ukraine's history, ordinary people reinforce the image of Ukraine as a nation constantly under attack from outside forces. However, ordinary people commonly present Ukrainians as agents ready to defend their country, rather than as victims. Thus, my research demonstrates that while ordinary people draw on official narratives, they do so selectively and bring to the fore those aspects that they see as important in the current socio-political context.

Impact of the ongoing conflict

This thesis demonstrates that the commemorative activity of ordinary people is significantly influenced by the socio-political context of an armed conflict, in the aftermath of mass mobilisation. Chapter Five shows that despite the expectations of the Euromaidan's protesters and sympathisers, the power change in Ukraine in 2014 did not rapidly lead to more open and democratic governance. Instead, a top-down approach to commemoration continues to be observed. Some cases in the Poltava oblast demonstrate that the construction of Euromaidan memorials by public officials afforded them the potential to legitimise their power and that some public officials significantly limited the involvement of ordinary people in decision-making about the memorials' design. Post-Euromaidan, the issue of open and transparent governance is still a key concern. Top-down approaches to commemoration are increasingly challenged by ordinary people, generating discussions with public officials about how the existing memory paradigm can be changed. These discussions have prepared the ground for concrete changes in the official approaches to commemoration, as

demonstrated by the initiation of design competitions allowing for the participation of ordinary people.

My research has shown that the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict has a significant impact on ordinary people's commemoration of the Euromaidan in the Poltava oblast. For example, the need to respond to the new challenges presented by the onset of a violent conflict in Ukraine (including helping the army, the affected civilians, and the veterans) has led to the emotional, physical, and financial exhaustion of ordinary people. This exhaustion has a negative impact on ordinary people's agency, as although they strongly desire to construct memorials, they feel unable to do so.

With regard to the construction of memorials to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, there are several ways the conflict shapes ordinary people's commemorative activity. First, the continued human losses create a need to find design solutions that will enable future fallen soldiers to be included and memorialised. In the context of the Ukrainian public having different opinions about the conflict and seeing it as a never-ending phenomenon, ordinary people produce highly personalised memorials, to remind the public that the fallen soldiers (as individuals, and not an abstract group) have given their lives for the country. Additionally, through the design of their memorials (for example, by using corten steel and vehicles from the battle zones) ordinary people seek to disrupt the routinisation of the conflict and remind the disinterested public about the reality of war.

Furthermore, ordinary people's memorial design choices are influenced by the fact that the outcome of the Russia-Ukraine conflict is unknown, and there is a future possibility that events could be re-interpreted. During its period of independence, Ukraine has experienced three revolutionary events; the most recent, the Euromaidan, has led to a radical re-interpretation of Ukraine's Communist past. In this context, commemorative narratives of memorials to historical events are not perceived as permanent, and there is a common perception that they could be radically changed in the future. As my analysis in Chapter Five demonstrates, ordinary people seek to

future-proof their memorials, and for this purpose tend to avoid any wording and naming of the conflict which could jeopardise their memorial in the future. Responding to a perceived lack of interest in the Russia-Ukraine conflict on the part of the public and driven by the fact it is unclear how the conflict will be interpreted in the future, ordinary people try to select memorial designs that will help present and future generations interpret the conflict in a particular way. Specifically, through their memorial designs, ordinary people want to produce narratives that tell of Ukrainian national identity and the unity of the Ukrainian nation and warn about the potential threat from neighbouring Russia.

Contributions of the study

This study makes an original contribution to the area of memory studies by providing valuable insights into bottom-up commemorative activity in local communities, carried out during an ongoing conflict. This thesis combines different theories from memory studies and social sciences in an original manner and extends them to ordinary people as memory actors. The main contribution of my research is empirical, as it offers new data on the commemorative activity of ordinary people as memory actors. This data was collected through in-depth interviews with ordinary people and public officials, during visits to the sites of constructed memorials, from official documents of local authorities in the Poltava oblast, and from legislative documents and online newspapers. This data enables us to explore a range of processes involved in the implementation of commemorative projects at a local level, including the use of official procedures, and the role of different actors. By focusing on the period immediately following a major political event (the Euromaidan), which also coincides with an ongoing armed conflict, my research offers insights into how ordinary people are 'activated' to carry out commemorative work. Focusing on only one oblast, as a micro-case, allowed me to get closer to the research subjects and to explore in depth the complex details of the commemorative activity of ordinary people, and to cover cities, towns and villages that have different dynamics of local governance. Additionally, these locations are linked to each other through the overarching governance of the Poltava oblast administration, and through the oblast-level networks of different

ordinary people who help each other in their commemorative and other activities, and who learn from each other in the process.

The Poltava oblast's historical past reflects the history of Central Ukraine, and it is seen as representative of the wider Central region. This thesis is a valuable contribution to existing research on memory processes in Central Ukraine, which is currently an under-researched area. It shows that Central Ukraine, often perceived as a mediator or a buffer zone between Ukraine's Eastern and Western regions, contributes to the development of narratives about Ukraine's distant and recent history and toward defining Ukraine's national identity.

While the region's Cossack past continues to be a key source of symbols used to create narratives about Ukraine's past and present, my research provides evidence that Central Ukraine is slowly embracing the nationalistic symbols of the UPA (which were largely rejected in this region before the Euromaidan), using the post-Euromaidan interpretation of these symbols that presents the UPA as defenders of Ukraine. In relation to post-Euromaidan Ukraine, my thesis offers insights into how wider society and public officials have responded to the Euromaidan protesters' calls for open and democratic governance in Ukraine and shows how some changes are realised at a local level. Furthermore, my research contributes to the knowledge of how an unfinished violent conflict shapes ordinary people's commemorative activity.

There is substantial evidence that ordinary people in the Poltava oblast are actively involved in the construction of narratives about history and the identity of the Ukrainian nation. Existing academic literature predominantly sees the production of nation-building narratives as the domain of the state and political memory actors. However, a significant finding of my research is that ordinary people also play an important and active role in the construction of these narratives.

Potential avenues for further research

My thesis covers the commemorative activity of ordinary people in the Poltava oblast from 2014 to 2021. At the time of writing, at the end of 2021, Russia is building up military forces near the Russia-Ukraine border, triggering debates in Ukraine and the West about whether the currently frozen conflict in Eastern Ukraine will flare up and turn into a full-scale attack from Russia. This inevitably raises the question of how the ongoing conflict will be interpreted and commemorated in the future, in Ukraine, by ordinary people and the state. Carrying out a further investigation of how the Euromaidan and Russia-Ukraine conflict are commemorated in the Poltava oblast several years from now, it may be possible to see how narratives of these events have progressed and changed, to gain further understanding of how Ukraine's narrative arcs develop.

My research offers an examination of one oblast in Central Ukraine (which includes eight oblasts in total). Due to time constraints, I did not intend to examine the commemorative dynamic in all eight oblasts. Further research could be expanded to other oblasts of Central Ukraine, to produce a more comprehensive picture of Central Ukraine's commemorative processes and to explore possible differences between the oblasts. The findings of my research can be used to examine ordinary people's commemorative activity in other regions of Ukraine and to explore in more depth the regional dynamics of commemoration in post-Euromaidan Ukraine. While in my thesis I focus on commemoration of the Euromaidan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict, ordinary people in post-Euromaidan Ukraine are also involved in preserving and removing the memory of Ukraine's Communist past and seeking to commemorate other events, such as the short period of Ukraine's independence between 1917 and 1920. Expanding this research to ordinary people's commemoration (or de-commemoration) of these and other historical events would create a more comprehensive understanding of ordinary people's agency in post-Euromaidan Ukraine. Additionally, my findings can be extended to the commemoration of ongoing crises and armed conflicts in other countries and contexts where outcomes are unknown.

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List of interviews (chronologically)

Interview number	Interviewee	Place and date
1	Entrepreneur, owner of a firm producing gravestones in Myrhorod (a man in his 30s, who produced and donated a memorial to the Heavenly Hundred in Romodan)	Myrhorod, 17 July 2018
2	Wife of a blacksmith from Myrhorod who died in the Russia-Ukraine conflict (a woman is her 50s, a schoolteacher)	Myrhorod, 20 July 2018
3	Euromaidan activist and volunteer, helping the army (man in his 40s, temporary unemployed, who took an active part in local discussions around the construction of the memorial to the Heavenly Hundred)	Hadiach, 24 July 2018
4	Blacksmith in Hadiach (a man in his 50s who made the metal dove for the Heavenly Hundred memorial)	Hadiach, 26 July 2018
5	Head architect of Hadiach, who took an active part in the construction of the memorial to the Heavenly Hundred in this city (a woman in her 30s)	Hadiach, 26 July 2018
6	Euromaidan protester and veteran of the Russia-Ukraine conflict who initiated the construction of the memorial to the Heavenly Hundred in Hadiach (a man in his 30s, a driver)	Hadiach, 26 July 2018
7	Blacksmith in Myrhorod (a man in his 50s, one of the organisers of the Festival of Metal Art – an annual event during which Ukrainian blacksmiths produce metal sundials in memory of the smiths who died in the Russia-Ukraine conflict)	Trudoliub, 28 July 2018
8	Veteran of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, former head of Khorol veterans' association, who made attempts to initiate a memorial to the killed soldiers in this city (a man in his 50s, a former shop assistant, now retired due to injuries received during the conflict)	Khorol, 30 July 2018
9	Veteran in Kyiv (originally from Myrhorod) (a man in his 30s, an artist and a photographer, who created the mobile exhibition 'War is Near', featuring metal figures of soldiers and civilians)	Kyiv, 31 July 2018
10	Deputy Head of the Culture and Tourism Department in Kremenchuk (a woman in her 40s, one of the local officials who processes official requests from ordinary people)	Kremenchuk, 02 August 2018

11	Head of a local veterans' association in Kremenchuk (a retired male colonel in his 60s, who was actively involved in the construction of the memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict in this city)	Kremenchuk, 12 August 2018 and 27 July 2019
12	Euromaidan activist and volunteer helping the Ukrainian army, who initiated the transformation of the former Lenin's pedestal into a temporary memorial to the Heavenly Hundred (a woman in her late 20s, a teacher by education)	Poltava, 15 August 2018
13	Euromaidan activist, an active member of the CityLab civic organisation in Poltava (a man in his early 30s, an architect by education, a university teacher, who took an active part in creating the design of a memorial to the Heavenly Hundred that won the local design competition)	Poltava, 16 August 2018
14	Veteran, the Head of the Poltava's division of the All-Ukrainian Union "Svoboda" (a man in his 30s, who played a key role in the construction of the military burial ground in Poltava and the installation of memorial plaques in memory of the soldiers killed in the Russia-Ukraine conflict)	Poltava, 16 August 2018
15	Veteran of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in Kremenchuk (a man in his mid-40s, a private entrepreneur, who was actively involved in the construction of the memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict in this city)	Kremenchuk, 25 August 2018 and 28 July 2019
16	Afghan veterans in Kremenchuk (a retired man in his 60s and a man in his 40s, who took an active part in the construction of the Afghan memorial in Kremenchuk and co-operate with some local veterans of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in the area of commemoration)	Kremenchuk, 26 August 2018
17	Euromaidan activist and volunteer, helping the army; the head of the civic organisation 'ATO-Maidan-Kremenchuk' (a man in his 40s who took part in the public discussions around the construction of the memorials to the Heavenly Hundred and the soldiers who died in the Russia-Ukraine conflict)	Kremenchuk, 27 August 2018
18	Councillor of the Poltava City Council from the Svoboda Party (a man in his 30s, who played a key role in the construction of the military burial ground in Poltava and the installation of memorial plaques in memory of the soldiers killed in the Russia-Ukraine conflict)	Poltava, 28 August 2018
19	Artist, the head of the Kremenchuk City Art Gallery (a woman in her 40s, who submitted her design for	Kremenchuk, 28 August 2018

	the design competition for the construction of a joint memorial to the Heavenly Hundred and the soldiers killed in the Russia-Ukraine conflict)	
20	Euromaidan activist, a member of the CityLab civic organisation in Poltava who took an active part in creating the design of a memorial to the Heavenly Hundred that won the local design competition (a man in his early 30s, an architect by education)	Poltava, 29 August 2018
21	Secretary of the Renaming Committee (a woman in her 30s, one of the local officials who processes official requests from ordinary people)	Kremenchuk, 30 August 2018
22	Secretary of the Kremenchuk City Council (a man in his 50s, who took an active part in the construction of the commemorative stand to the Heavenly Hundred in Kremenchuk)	Kremenchuk, 29 July 2019
23	Veteran of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in Novi Sanzhary (a man in his 20s, who took an active part in the construction of the Heavenly Hundred memorial in Novi Sanzhary)	Poltava, 7 August 2019
24	Two mothers of the killed soldiers in Poltava (a retired medic in her 60s and a private entrepreneur in her later 40s), who were actively involved in the construction of the memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict in Poltava	Poltava, 7 August 2019
25	Activist in Opishnia (a female college teacher in her mid-40s, who was actively involved in the construction of the memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict in this town)	Opishnia, 8 August 2019 Online, 12 August 2020
26	Priest of an Orthodox church in Kremenchuk (a man in his 30s who maintains the memorial to the soldiers killed in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, which was constructed on the territory of his church by a local confectionery factory)	Kremenchuk, 10 August 2019
27	Head teacher at the comprehensive school in Pishchane, who took an active part in the placement of a memorial plaque on the school, in memory of its two former pupils who died in the Russia-Ukraine conflict	Pishchane, 13 August 2019
28	Member of staff of the Kremenchuk Military Registration and Enlistment Office (a woman in her 30s, who processes requests of the relatives of the killed soldiers for the installation of memorial plaques in the city)	Kremenchuk, 13 August 2019
29	Head of the Military Registration and Enlistment Office in Horishni Plavni (a man in his 40s, who works with families of the soldiers killed in the Russia-Ukraine conflict)	Horishni Plavni, 15 August 2019

30	Veteran and the head of the civic organisation 'Cyborgs' Hearts' ('Sertsia Kiborhiv') in Horishni Plavni (a man in his 40s, a private entrepreneur, who initiated the planting of oak trees in memory of the soldiers who died in the Russia-Ukraine conflict)	Horishni Plavni, 15 August 2019
31	Secretary of the Kobeliaky City Council (a woman in her 40s, who oversaw the construction of the memorial to the soldiers killed in the Russia-Ukraine conflict)	Online, 16 August 2019
32	Veteran of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in Novi Sanzhary (a man in his mid-40s, a private entrepreneur, former public official, who participated in the veterans' negotiations with the officials regarding the construction of a memorial to the soldiers killed in the Russia-Ukraine conflict)	Poltava, 20 August 2019
33	Euromaidan activist in Poltava, a volunteer helping the Ukrainian army (a woman in her 40s, a designer and event planner, who took an active part in the construction of the wooden stand to the Heavenly Hundred in Poltava and the metal stand to the killed soldiers in Chutove)	Poltava, 20 August 2019
34	Two key members of the civic organisation Hromada Poltavshchyny, Euromaidan activists, volunteers helping the Ukrainian army (women in their late 60s, retired; in the past – employees of public organisations)	Poltava, 21 August 2019
35	Priest of an Orthodox church in Hadiach (a man in his 30s who permitted the local veterans to construct a memorial stand on the territory of his church)	Online, 25 August 2019
36	Farmer in Velyki Budyshcha (a man in his 40s, who self-funded the memorial to the Heavenly Hundred in this village)	Online, 26 August 2019
37	Secretary of the veterans' association in Hlobyne (a woman in her 30s, who reported on the involvement of the veterans in the construction of commemorative objects in the Hlobyne District)	Online, 27 August 2019
38	Head priest of an Orthodox church in Lubny (a man in his 50s who initiated the construction of the memorial to the soldiers killed in the Russia-Ukraine conflict)	Online, 29 August 2019
39	Judge in Poltava (a woman in her 30s, who processed a claim from an ordinary person regarding the design competition that was held in Poltava for the construction of a memorial to the Heavenly Hundred)	Online, 30 August 2019

40	Former secretary of the Poltava City Council, who took an active part in the construction of the memorial to the killed soldiers in this city (a woman in her 40s)	Poltava, 30 August 2019
41	Veteran of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in Hadiach (a male in his 50s, a private entrepreneur, who was actively involved in the construction of a memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict in this city)	Online, 1 September 2019
42	Euromaidan activist, a volunteer helping the Ukrainian army; former public official in Chutove (a woman in her 40s, who took an active part in the construction of the metal stand to the killed soldiers in Chutove)	Online, 1 September 2019
43	Teacher of history in a comprehensive school in Reshetylivka (a man in his 40s, who seeks to construct a memorial commemorating the soldiers killed in the Russia-Ukraine conflict)	Online, 8 December 2019
44	Veteran of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in Zinkiv (a male in his late 30s, a private entrepreneur who was actively involved in the construction of the memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict in this city)	Online, 17 December 2019
45	Veteran in Kotelva (a man in his 30s who initiated the construction of the memorial to the soldiers killed in the Russia-Ukraine conflict in Kotelva)	Online, 20 December 2019
46	Veteran of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in Novi Sanzhary (a man in his early 30s, an engineer by education, who produced a professional design of a memorial to the killed soldier which he suggested to the local authorities)	Online, 15 April 2020
47	Veteran of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in Hadiach (a man in his 40s, working in the area of agricultural trade, who was actively involved in the negotiations with the local authorities regarding the construction of a memorial to the soldiers killed in the Russia-Ukraine conflict)	Online, 16 August 2020
48	Father of a Poltava soldier killed in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the head of the civic organisation 'Poltava families of the killed defenders of Ukraine', who took an active part in the construction of the military burial ground with a memorial and the memorial with an electronic screen in this city (a retired man in his 60s, in the past – a military commander)	Online, 17 August 2020
49	Retired art teacher in Lokhvytsia (a man in his 60s who submitted his design for the design competition organised by the local authorities for	Online, 20 August 2020

	the construction of a memorial to the soldiers killed in the Russia-Ukraine conflict)	
50	Head of the Pyriatyn District State Administration (before the Euromaidan – a private entrepreneur) (a man in his 40s, who initiated the construction of the memorial to the Heavenly Hundred in Pyriatyn)	Online, 22 August 2020
51	Veteran in Myrhorod (a man in his 40s, a private entrepreneur, who seeks to construct a memorial to the soldiers killed in the Russia-Ukraine conflict in this city)	Online, 22 August 2020
52	Veteran of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in Hadiach (a male in his 40s, a private entrepreneur, who was actively involved in the construction of a memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict in this city)	Online, 26 August 2020
53	Architect in Poltava (a woman in her 30s, who won in the design competition for the construction of a Heavenly Hundred memorial in Slobodo-Petrivka organised by the Hrebinka City Council; she also was a member of the jury in the design competition for the construction of a memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict that was organised by the Hadiach City Council)	Online, 26 January 2021
54	Architect in Pyriatyn (a woman in her 30s, who won in the design competition for the construction of a memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict that was organised by the Pyriatyn City Council)	Online, 15 March 2021
55	Veteran of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in Pyriatyn (a man in his 30s, a member of the jury in the design competition for the construction of a memorial to the Russia-Ukraine conflict that was organised by the Pyriatyn City Council)	Online, 23 February 2021
56	Author of the electronic petition for the construction of a Heavenly Hundred memorial in Pyriatyn (a man in his 30s)	Online, 17 March 2021

Memorials to the Euromaidan in the Poltava oblast

Object number	Location	Who initiated and constructed	Construction year
Object 1	Romodan (small memorial)	Ordinary people and authorities (head of the village)	2014
Object 2	Velyki Budyshcha (small memorial) (Figure 16)	Ordinary people (local entrepreneur)	2014
Object 3	Poltava (former Lenin pedestal) (Figure 29)	Ordinary people (Euromaidan protesters)	2014
Object 4	Poltava (temporary stand) (Figure 7)	Ordinary people (Euromaidan protesters)	2014
Object 5	Pyriatyn (temporary stand)	Ordinary people and authorities	2014
Object 6	Kremenchuk (temporary stand)	Ordinary people and authorities	2015
Object 7	Novi Sanzhary (memorial) (Figure 30)	Authorities (head of the Novi Sanzhary Village Council)	2015
Object 8	Lokhvytsia (small memorial)	Authorities (city mayor)	2015
Object 9	Velyka Bahachka (small memorial)	Political party (Samopomich)	2016?
Object 10	Hradyzk (temporary stand) (Figure 8 and Figure 17)	Ordinary people, supported by the authorities	2016
Object 11	Dykanka (small memorial)	Political party (Batkivshchyna), supported by the authorities	2016
Object 12	Hadiach (memorial)	Authorities constructed in a top-down manner (ordinary people initiated in 2014)	2017
Object 13	Pyriatyn (memorial)	Authorities (head of the Pyriatyn District State Administration)	2018
Object 14	Slobodo-Petrivka (memorial)	Authorities initiated a design competition in 2019; the winning design was selected in 2020	Not yet constructed

Object 15	Kremenchuk (memorial)	Authorities initiated a design competition in 2016. The competition is still ongoing	Not yet constructed
Object 16	Poltava (memorial)	Authorities initiated a design competition in 2014. The winner was selected in 2016	Not yet constructed

Memorials to the Russia-Ukraine conflict in the Poltava oblast

Object number	Location	Who initiated and constructed	Construction year
Object 17	Kremenchuk (metal memorial featuring three swords) (Figure 19)	Constructed by ordinary people (veterans)	2016
Object 18	Kremenchuk (memorial near the Lukas confectionery factory)	Constructed by ordinary people (factory owners)	2015
Object 19	Kotelva (small memorial in the central park) (Figure 21 and Figure 23)	Initiated by ordinary people (veterans), constructed by the authorities	2017
Object 20	Opishnia (full-scale memorial in the central park) (Figure 28)	Initiated by ordinary people (veterans and activists), constructed with help from the authorities	2019
Object 21	Hadiach (small memorial in the central park) (Figure 20)	Constructed by ordinary people (veterans)	2019
Object 22	Hadiach (full-scale memorial in the central park)	Initiated by ordinary people (veterans). The authorities organised a design competition	Still at the planning stage
Object 23	Hadiach (commemorative stand near a church)	Constructed by ordinary people (veterans)	2018
Object 24	Zinkiv (medium-size memorial in the central park) (Figure 15)	Initiated by ordinary people (veterans), constructed by the authorities	2018
Object 25	Chutove (metal stand with photographs of the fallen soldiers)	Initiated and constructed by ordinary people (activists)	2015
Object 26	Chutove (memorial in the central park)	Initiated by ordinary people (veterans), who approached the local authorities; constructed by a politician	2018

		who was running for a seat in the Verkhovna Rada	
Object 27	Hlobyne (full-scale memorial, featuring the archangel Michael)	Initiated and constructed by the authorities	2015
Object 28	Horishni Plavni (a joint memorial for the Soviet-Afghan war and the Russia-Ukraine conflict, with a plaque reading "To participants of combat operations")	Initiated by ordinary people (Afghan veterans), constructed by the authorities	2019
Object 29	Karlivka (small memorial in the central park)	Initiated by ordinary people (veterans and families of the fallen soldiers), constructed by a politician who was running for a seat in the Verkhovna Rada	2017
Object 30	Kobeliaky (small memorial in the central park) (Figure 33)	Initiated and constructed by the authorities	2016
Object 31	Lokhvytsia (full-scale memorial in the central park) (Figure 6)	Initiated by ordinary people (veterans), constructed by the authorities	2018
Object 32	Lubny (a Cossack cross near a local church) (Figure 22 and Figure 24)	Initiated by ordinary people (families of the fallen soldiers), constructed by the authorities	2018
Object 33	Myrhorod (metal sundials made by blacksmiths) (Figure 18)	Initiated and constructed by ordinary people (families and friends of the fallen soldiers)	2015-
Object 34	Myrhorod (a stone with a plaque)	Initiated by ordinary people (veterans), constructed by the authorities	2016
Object 35	Myrhorod (memorial featuring a real armoured personnel carrier)	Initiated by ordinary people (veterans)	Not yet constructed
Object 36	Novi Sanzhary (a highly conceptual memorial featuring 25 administrative regions of Ukraine) (Figure 34)	Initiated by ordinary people (veterans)	Not yet constructed

Object 37	Poltava (temporary stand)	Initiated and constructed by ordinary people (activists)	2016
Object 38	Poltava (full-scale memorial at the military burial ground) (Figure 11 and Figure 32)	Initiated by ordinary people (families of the fallen soldiers), constructed by the authorities	2016-2017
Object 39	Poltava (memorial with an electronic screen) (Figure 13)	Initiated by ordinary people (families of the fallen soldiers), constructed by the authorities	2018
Object 40	Poltava (stand with photographs)	Local museum and ordinary people (activists)	2020
Object 41	Pyriatyn (memorial)	Initiated by ordinary people (veterans). The authorities organised a design competition and constructed the memorial	2021
Object 42	Kremenchuk (full-scale memorial)	Initiated by ordinary people (veterans). The authorities organised a design competition in 2016-2017	Not yet constructed
Object 43	Kremenchuk (memorial at the military burial ground) (Figure 12 and Figure 31)	Initiated and constructed by the authorities	2019
Object 44	Reshetylivka (memorial) (Figure 25)	Initiated and constructed by ordinary people (veterans)	2021
Object 45	Billboard to the Russia-Ukraine conflict in Opishnia (Figure 14)	Initiated and constructed by ordinary people (activists and veterans)	2018

Design competitions for the construction of memorials to the Euromaidan and the Russia-Ukraine conflict in the Poltava oblast

Identifier	Commemorative event	Initiator	Organiser	Participation of ordinary people in drawing up the rules of the competition	Submission of designs	Inclusion of ordinary people into the jury	Public consultation
Hadiach 2020	Russia-Ukraine conflict	Ordinary people	Hadiach City Council (Decision of 18.06.2020)	Workshop	Ordinary people are allowed to submit	1 out of 9	Exhibition in a local museum. Meeting with the carriers of memory
Karlivka 2018	Russia-Ukraine conflict	Ordinary people	Karlivka City Council (Decision No. 32 of 19.03.2018)	None	Ordinary people are allowed to submit	None out of 5	None
Kremenchuk 2016	Heavenly Hundred and Russia-Ukraine conflict (in 2017 the competition was split in two parts; a design for the Russia-Ukraine conflict was selected; it was	Ordinary people and public officials	Kremenchuk City Head (Decree No. 158-P of 06.05.2016; Decree No. 200-P of 10.07.2017)	None	Ordinary people are allowed to submit	6 out of 14	Online voting

	decided to organise a separate competition for the Heavenly Hundred)						
Kremenchuk 2019	Heavenly Hundred	Ordinary people and public officials	Kremenchuk City Council (Decision No. 71 of 18.01.2019; extended in 2020)	None	Only experts	None out of 12	Online voting (not organised yet; the competition is still ongoing)
Lokhvytsia 2018	Russia-Ukraine conflict	Ordinary people	Lokhvytsia City Head (Decree No. 29 of 07.02.2018)	None	Ordinary people are allowed to submit	None out of 6	None
Novi Sanzhary 2014	Heavenly Hundred	Public officials	Novi Sanzhary Village Council (no official documentation)	None	Ordinary people are allowed to submit	The competition did not finalise	The competition did not finalise
Poltava 2014	Heavenly Hundred	Ordinary people and public officials	Poltava Oblast State Administration and Poltava Oblast Council (Decree No. 106/74 of 11.04.2014)	None	Ordinary people are allowed to submit	3 out of 19	Online voting and exhibitions in central buildings

Poltava 2015	Heavenly Hundred	Ordinary people and public officials	Poltava Oblast State Administration and Poltava Oblast Council (Decree No. 382/198 of 18.09.2014)	None	Only for experts	3 out of 27	Online voting and exhibitions in central buildings
Poltava 2016	Heavenly Hundred	Ordinary people and public officials	Poltava Oblast State Administration (Decree No. 12 of 18.01.2016)	Roundtables	Only for experts	2 out of 22	Online voting and exhibitions in central buildings
Pyriatyn 2019	Russia-Ukraine conflict	Ordinary people and public officials	Pyriatyn City Council (Decision No. 161 of 25.04.2019)	Meetings with carriers of memory	Ordinary people are allowed to submit	2 out of 14	Meetings with carriers of memory
Slobodo-Petrivka 2019	Heavenly Hundred	Public officials	Hrebinka City Council (Decision No. 863 of 21.11.2019)	Workshop	Ordinary people are allowed to submit	None out of 9	Exhibition in a public building