



Cultural Heritage and the Re-construction of  
Identities after Conflict

# CRIC - reflection on 'results' and recommendations

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[www.cric.arch.cam.ac.uk](http://www.cric.arch.cam.ac.uk)  
[www.youtube.com/user/CRICResearchProject](http://www.youtube.com/user/CRICResearchProject)



# Project Outline

- Aim to investigate how reconstruction of cultural heritage after conflict impact identity
- Explore tangible and intangible dimensions
- Use case study approach
- Qualitative research methods, field observations, archival work



# The Case Studies



The forms of heritage – tangible and intangible



## 7 Case Study Regions

>25 micro case studies

## 14 Meetings

>60 conference and workshops

## 6 Books

>50 chapters and articles

## 14 Films and Videos

>150 mins of footage

## 1 Website

>190,000 hits

## 1 Digital Photo Archive

>900 digital images

also exhibitions, apps, master classes, public workshops and press releases



# The Project in Numbers



# Cultural Heritage and the Re-construction of Identities after Conflict

## Country case study: **Spain**



# Thematic foci of the Spanish case

## Places:

- Construction and transformation of a site of memory (including modern myths)
- Sites of contested and competing memories

## Processes:

- The silenced memory narratives and acts of mourning
- The performance of public mourning: anniversaries, and grassroots memorial processes
- The politics of memory

## Memory-scapes/heritage-scapes:

- The evolution of real and symbolic spaces marked by 'memory events' and by deliberate silencing.

# Remembering Gernika/Gernika Remembers

## Commemorations of the bombing of Gernika , 1939-2009

- Themes: Performance and uses of a site of memory (stage-setting), political rhetoric, uses for identity building, symbolic appropriation, of voices and silences, rhetorical referencing, symbolic capital.
- Methods: Historic material, creation of a press archive, interviews, participant observation
- Results: → The bombing of Gernika became a 'memory event' and a 'modern myth'
- despite the iconic quality of the event, meanings and memories associated have been malleable, changing with time and in relation to political contexts
- Various narratives have been constructed using the bombing, they have included those of victim-hood, recovery, independence, democracy, and peace.



40th anniversary Gernika, April 1977



Occupation of the Astra Factory



ETA poster, 1975



# Train bombings of the 11th of March 2004

## Official versus alternative commemorations

- Themes:
- Conflictive Performances of mourning, 2005 – 2010
  - Spontaneous memorialization and institutionalization of official 'sites of memory'
  - Displacement of the national commemoration ceremony, different acts at the same site (Atocha)
- Methods:
- Creation of an archive, ethnographic observation, interviewing
- Outcomes:
- Grassroots memorials emerged as a distinct process
  - Competition between 'victim associations' resulted in opposed memory narratives of events
  - A memorial topography of Madrid has emerged which includes elements of contestation and competition.



# Post-project proposal: Exhibition



**GERNIKA**

**MEMORY**  
transform  
symbolic  
reconstruction  
**MEMORIAL SCAPE**

**GERNIKA**

Remembering Gernika? Gernika Remembrance Landmarks is a Memoryscape and Signposts of Memory.

In the aftermath of the bombing of Gernika (26 April 1937), the reconstruction of the town by the Franco government sought to forget a new reality: the fact that the town had suffered the heaviest attack while at the same time playing down the story of the town's destruction.

With Franco's death a new phase began in attempts to deal with the town's historical fate. These came in the shape of memorials celebrating the bombing, of public art and memorials with more or less direct references to it, and to more subtle allusions. Each one of these allusions and images reflects a different symbolic intention. For many public groups the act of being visible in Gernika, through a monument, was an attempt to establish legitimacy. Recognition and its association with one or several of the town's symbolic core values.

The result has been a symbolic landscape with many possible readings: a landscape of recognition, but on the surface a more deeply symbolic.

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**ASTRA**

ASTRA, a new factory: the evolution and appropriation of a memory space.

The destruction caused by the bombing of Gernika was so great that it was easier to identify the buildings that were destroyed. Among the buildings that survived the bombing was the ASTRA (Astrak) and its use as a factory. The building, along with other important ones such as the Casa de San Juan and the former school, was used by the Francoist regime as a factory for the production of munitions. The building was used by the Francoist regime as a factory for the production of munitions.

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**CARABANCHEL**

La memoria de la ciudad de Carabanchel

La guerra civil española y la destrucción de Carabanchel: un conflicto que se ha convertido en un conflicto de memoria. La memoria de la guerra civil española y la destrucción de Carabanchel: un conflicto que se ha convertido en un conflicto de memoria.

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**11M Madrid**

**MEMORY**  
transform  
symbolic  
reconstruction  
**MEMORIAL SCAPE**

**11M**

Remembering and Memory in Madrid: the aftermath of March 11, 2004, Spain. At the University of Cambridge.

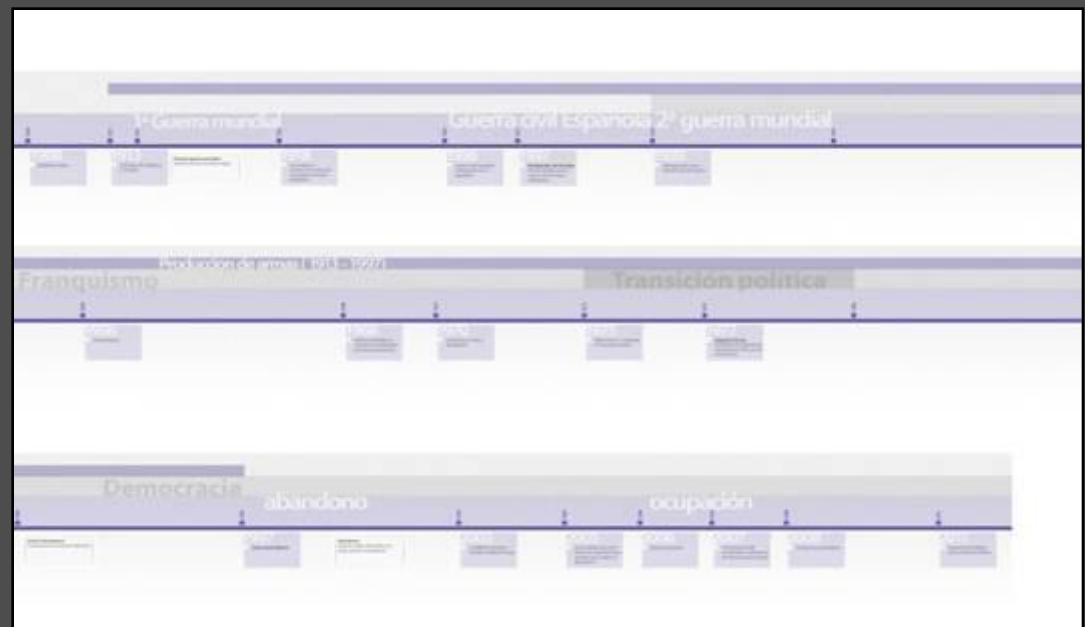
On March 11, 2004, the train bombings in Madrid caused the death of 191 people and injured more than 2,000. The aftermath of the bombings was a period of mourning and reflection.

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# Post-project dissemination: Website, data visualisations

## I-phone application







# Cultural Heritage and the Re-construction of Identities after Conflict

## Country case study: **France**

- A landscape of loss and destruction
- A symbolic 'lieu de mémoire'
- What relationship between the two?
- Role of physical landscape in memorial transmission and identity formation?





# The materiality of a 'lieu de mémoire': the battlefield of Verdun 1919-2011



# Continuity: 'legendary topographies'

The role of heritage as  
'sacred' places that  
crystallise and confirm  
the collective memory:

- A *French* space
- A place of *war*



# Continuity: commemoration and local identity

- Local commitment to commemoration and 'duty of memory'
- the lieu de mémoire is part of the fabric of *place*
- war is a key dimension of *local* history and identity





# New beginnings? nature and the battlefield

1920s-30s:

‘Nature’ and the  
repose of the dead

Healing and rebirth

2000s:

Biodiversity, rare  
species

A new type of  
heritage value?





# Landscapes as actors of memory and identity

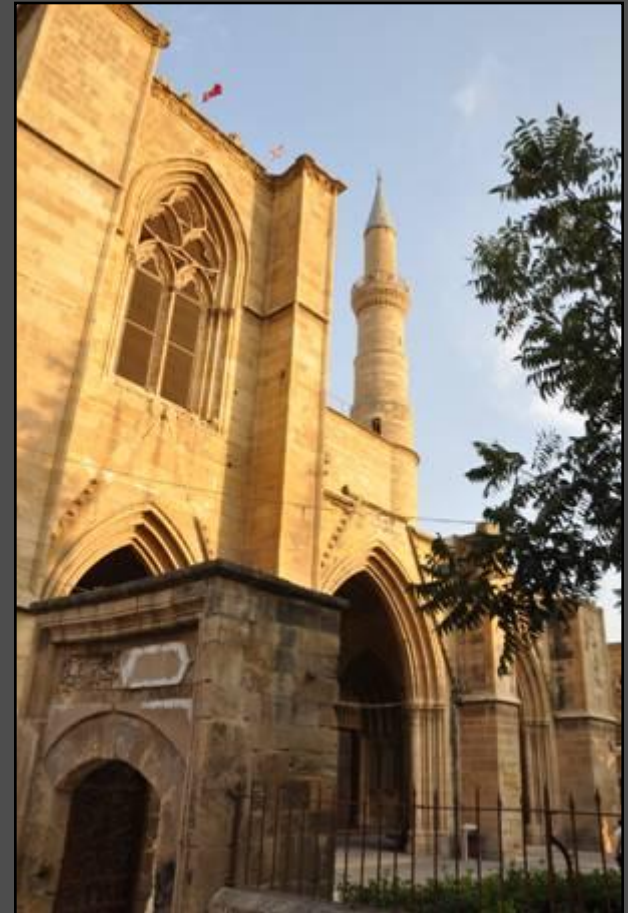
- Consider the *materiality* of lieux de mémoire
- partially *independent* of narrative and representation
- *actors* in memorial transmission and identity formation
- influence memory and identity, challenge reinterpretation over the *long term*





# Cultural Heritage and the Re-construction of Identities after Conflict

## Country case study: **Cyprus**



# The Impact of Ethnicizing Heritage

- What it means to ethnicize heritage in protracted conflict regions: (1) privileged protection, (2) targeted destruction, (3) targeted reconstruction for reconciliation purposes (ethnicization ambivalent effects, a curse or blessing depending on the circumstances)

(1) Looked at two villages, Kapouti (Greek-Cypriot, north) and Alihodes (Turkish-Cypriot, south) and the impact of destruction, neglect or selective preservation; unintended consequence of conflict

(2) 'Uncanny heritage' - familiar yet foreign, 'trapped' on the wrong side of the dividing line (problems and opportunities for reconstruction – who takes control of the reconstruction and what practices are allowed following reconstruction)

# Marginalization/Exclusion of Minority Heritage and Shared Cultural Spaces

The fate of heritage outside the mono-ethnic or bi-ethnic focus; if recognition, recognition of *what* heritage?

- (1) Cypriot Maronite Culture: the initial non-recognition and subsequent feeble attempts to protect Cypriot Maronite Arabic and the hybrid Maronite culture that complicates the mono- or bi-communal vision of the island (religious/ethnic)
- (2) Shared Sites: The difficulty of locating these spaces and of protecting/reconstructing them as cross-ethnic heritage



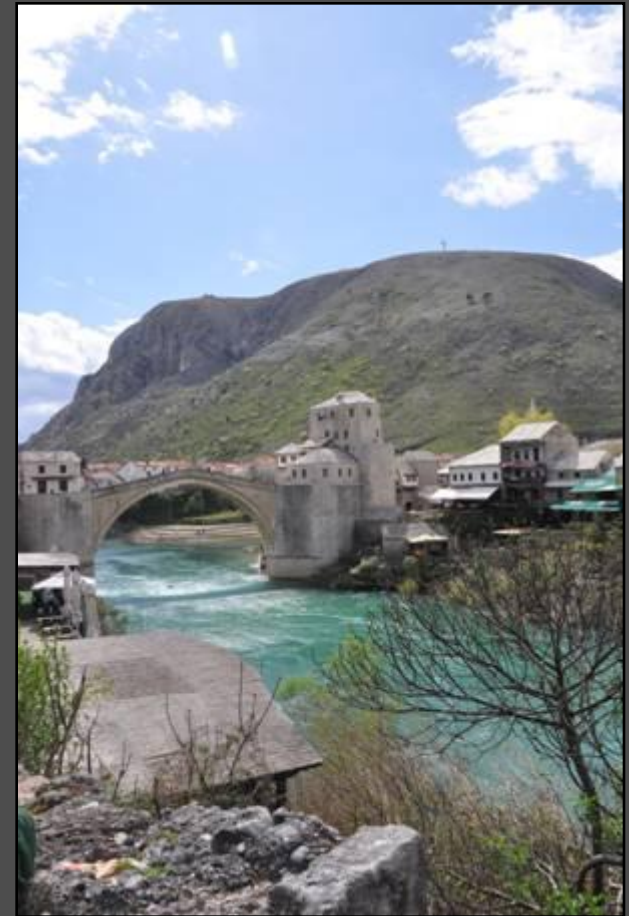
## Peace-building and Heritage Dilemmas

- How peacebuilding efforts and agendas have sometimes resolved but sometimes exacerbated heritage issues
  - (1) Converted churches/building new mosques. The change of policy in the north has brought about Turkification/Islamization that creates anxieties on both sides
  - (2) The ancient Kyrenia Ship: whereas it is a potentially unifying cross-ethnic symbol, its past political utilization makes it difficult to be to a common national symbol.



# Cultural Heritage and the Re-construction of Identities after Conflict

## Country case study: **Bosnia**



## Bosnia case study

- Context: Post Dayton Bosnia, three ethnic groups in two entities, uncertain future of the country, continuation of conflict
  - Mostar Bridge – Conflict over heritage and landscape
  - Potocari Memorial Centre – Mourning and remembrance practices and ethnic politics
  - World War II Monuments – Five micro cases: Changing meaning of cultural heritage
  - Tuzla – re-imagining community and re-conceiving inclusive politics

## Bosnia - reflections

- Micro: mourning and memorialisation, complexity
- Macro: identity formation, nation-building and warfare by other means
- Privatization of Cultural Heritage and the role of the state
- The role of the International Community and the EU in post conflict situations





# Cultural Heritage and the Re-construction of Identities after Conflict

## Country case study: **Germany**



# The Frauenkirche as an ambivalent symbol of “lost” city





# The Heidefriedhof as a medium of collective memory



# Dresden as space, place and landscape of memory





## **Our findings on the links between heritage, conflict, and identity start with reflections such as:**

- Heritage is malleable but it may also resistant reinterpretation - its meanings are both very changeable and conservative.
- There is a tendency for heritage to be influenced by and contribute to essentialising discourses.
- Heritage can have a negative role in post-conflict societies because of how it is linked to specific groups.
- Heritage must be understood as a medium of claims.
- There is great fluidity between tangible and intangible aspects of heritage and its meanings.

## Within post conflict we find:

- A need to legitimate previous actions and to support the rights of certain groups, and a search for support for claims on reparation,
- A tendency to present simplistic and partial versions of events, including historical ones,
- A tendency to construction notions of victims, including heritage,
- The formulation of new ownership claims (including with regard to deep time),
- Competition for international attention,
- The construction of symbols and iconic events/places

# Heritage reconstruction should:

- avoid practices that allow the reconstruction of cultural heritage to become the focus for continuation of conflict by another means;
- maintain an emphasis on authenticity without marginalising local populations during the reconstruction process;
- exhibit a high degree of financial scrutiny of donors and external funding sources to avoid the alienation of groups or development of undesirable symbolic attachment or creating a sense of exclusive ownership;
- ensure that cultural heritage is disassociated from issues of establishing truth and claims;
- commit to long term engagement with and monitoring of cultural heritage reconstruction projects to ensure greater integration of reconstructed sites with locales and communities;
- - make transparent the political and social aims of reconstruction projects and the meanings that are being promoted through the sites.

# Recommendations?

- Warnings                       $> <$                       Guidelines
- Reflections                       $> <$                       Statements
- Qualitative                       $> <$                       Quantitative
- Ambiguous, where there is no room for ambiguity (e.g. authenticity concept)
- Non-partial, not political when what is said may be interpreted politically (e.g. Bosnia)



# Steps towards impact?

First – list of recommendations/reflections

- as part of report
- = lack of clarity about how instrumentalized
- = general, non-specific
- = Dissemination of recommendations without any targets

Second – Targeting recommendations/reflections towards:

- i) The ‘Tools’ – law, experts, architectural thinking, media
- ii) The stakeholders Unesco, World Bank, Icomos

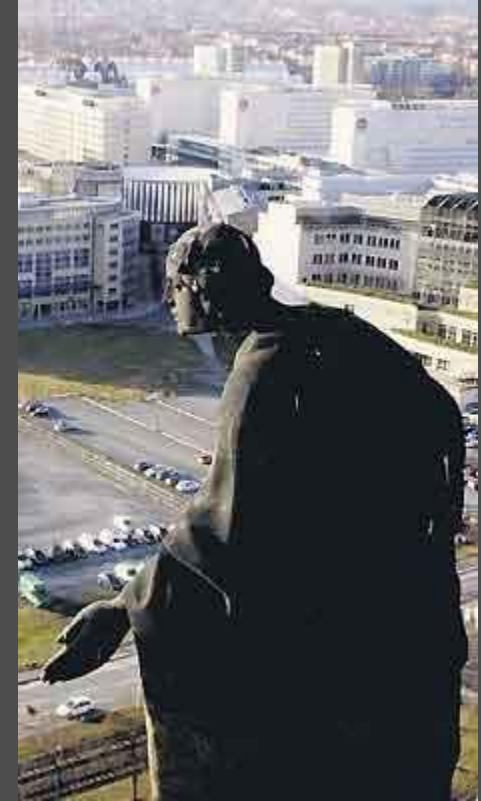
Reconstruction of heritage –  
Regaining a space, creating symbolic landscapes and iconic markers



Dresden 1945



Dresden 1955



Dresden 2005