

Postmemorial Exhibitions: A Design Approach to Negotiate Cultural Trauma Among
Children and Grandchildren of Former War Refugees and Guerrilla Supporters

by

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DEDICATION

To the memory of the children of El Mozote. You are the fireflies illuminating my path.

To the children who were abducted during the war and the mothers who continue searching. There are no words...

To the Memory of Oscar Romero. You once said that the people would learn to smile. This dissertation is my humble contribution towards that future.

To the memory of Toyita. Our conversations at the library made my childhood all the happier. Rest in Peace.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iii
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xi
ABSTRACT	xii
Chapter 1 – Introduction.....	1
1. Problem Space	1
2. Exhibition Design as Mediation of Memory	2
3. Transdisciplinary Approach.....	6
4. Overview of Research Design	8
5. Dissertation Overview	11
Chapter 2 — Conceptual Framework.....	14
1. Introduction.....	14
2. Cultural Trauma and Postmemory	16
3. Memorial Museums.....	21
4. Conclusion.....	28

Chapter 3 – Historical Overview	33
1. Introduction	33
2. Origins (16 century - 1840)	33
3. Early Republican Period (1840-1880)	34
4. The Liberal Republic (1880-1931)	35
5. The Uprising and First Military Regimes (1932-1948)	36
6. Economic Diversification and Resurgence of Social Movements (1948-1962)	37
7. MERCOMUN and War with Honduras (1962-1969)	38
8. Collapse of Military Regime and Rise of Urban Guerrillas (1970-1979)	41
9. Civil War (1980-1992)	42
10 Neoliberal State (1992-2019)	47
Chapter 4 – Methodology	51
1. Introduction	51
2. Research Design	51
3. Research Site	58
4. Subjects	62
5. Methods	68

6. Data Collection.....	75
7. Data Analysis	79
8. Limitations.....	83
Chapter 5 — Solving the Puzzle	85
1. Introduction	85
2. Memory Politics in Postwar El Salvador	86
3. Teachers’ Memories	87
4. The Curricula.....	94
5. Students’ Memories.....	98
6. Interviews with Friends and Family	109
7. Conflicting Memories.....	113
8. Solving the Memory Puzzle	114
9. Conclusion.....	116
Chapter 6 – A Postmemorial Exhibition	122
1. Introduction.....	122
2. The Exhibition	123
3. Insights from the Design Process.....	124

4. Affordances of the Design Process	146
5. Play	151
6. Conclusion.....	159
Chapter 7 — Conclusion	166
1. Introduction	166
2. Intergenerational Dynamics of Memory	167
3. Vehicle of exploration	171
4. Contributions	175
5. Limitations and Future Work	176
6. Closure.....	180
Appendix I - Links between themes, cluster tags, and items	182
References	186

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Session Breakdown	56
Table 2. Interview Protocol	76
Table 3. Sample Matrix for Drawing Conclusions.....	82
Table 4. Links between Themes, Cluster Tags, and Item Tags.....	133
Table 5. First Round of Sketches about the Events Theme.....	139
Table 6. Sample Affinity Wall. Answer to the Question: “What surprised me during my interviews?”	141
Table 7. Exhibition Plan	145
Table 8. Comparison of Donaldo’s Early Sketch of Causes and Dagoberto and Carlos’s final sketch of the Doubts Theme.	147

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Map of El Salvador	52
Figure 2. Section of affinity wall.....	81
Figure 3. Representation of Torture Techniques against Political Prisoners during Civil War. MUNA Exhibition.....	130
Figure 4. Exhibition Floor Plan.....	146

ABSTRACT

The fields of social memory and museum studies share a similar concern for intergenerational dynamics of memory, although the motivations and emphasis of study in each field is different. In museum studies, memorial museums have been noted to promote emotional engagement and critical reflection about mass atrocities. Early evidence from participatory exhibitions in other types of museums suggests that participatory approaches to exhibition design may support the desired outcomes of reflection and emotional impact in memorial museums. However, no studies to date have explored the role of participatory design in shaping communities' memories about the violent past. In addition, the field of social memory studies has focused on understanding the nature of social memories that result from mass atrocities. Some scholars refer to this type of memory as cultural trauma. Cultural trauma is a socially relevant phenomenon because it alters group identity and may either lead to a betterment of living conditions for marginalized populations or their increased oppression depending on how societies negotiate the trauma. Importantly, cultural trauma has been noted to be a long-term phenomenon that affects different generations differently. Unlike psychological, individual trauma, cultural trauma is never solved, but socially negotiated. Moreover, the strategies through which a given generation negotiates cultural trauma may not prove ineffective or irrelevant for succeeding generations. Considering the complex and pervasive nature of this phenomenon, more work is needed to intervene in cultural trauma negotiations that does not attempt to 'solve' such traumas but supports its negotiation.

My dissertation seizes on the unique opportunity of both academic traditions. Merging the insights from studies about studies about cultural trauma and memorial museums, I investigate how participation in the design process of a memorial exhibition shaped the memories of children who were born a decade after the end of the civil war of El Salvador (1980-1992), a historical episode characterized by atrocities perpetrated primarily against civilians.

My research combined ethnographic methods such as participant observation and semi-structured interviews with the implementation of a participatory design project in El Salvador. During the eight months of my fieldwork, I worked with seven children and grandchildren of former guerrilla combatants and war refugees to produce an exhibition concept about their deeply held beliefs and feelings about the war, which they only have experienced through the stories shared with them by friends and family. I refer to my participants' exhibition concept as a postmemorial exhibition. At the theoretical level, the concept of a postmemorial exhibition represents an opportunity to understand the impact of memorial exhibitions in social rather than individual frames of memory. Conversely, at the methodological level, the combined approach of ethnographic methods and participatory design in museums extends the toolkit of scholars of social memory to not only observe but intervene in the field. At stake in these interventions is the opportunity to promote more sympathetic and critical subjects through the process of postmemorial exhibition design, and thus, to contribute to the prevention of future episodes of mass atrocities.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

1. Problem Space

My dissertation project is situated in the context of human rights museology. This is an area within the larger field of museum studies concerned with professional museum practices dedicated to the social memory of mass atrocities (Carter and Orange 2011). These professional practices include, but are not limited to: collection, preservation, access, exhibition design, and scholarly research. Thus, human rights museology deals with a particular kind of museum known as a memorial museum (Williams 2007). In this context, I endeavor to answer three questions:

1. How do intergenerational dynamics of memory operate in the school context?
2. How do students negotiate their memories given the intergenerational dynamics at play in that context?
3. How does participation in the design process of a memorial exhibition mediate students' memories?

I argue that when participatory exhibition design is applied in the context of memorial museums, the design mediates co-designers' memories of past atrocities, also known as cultural trauma or postmemory.¹ Studies of social memory centered on cultural trauma have elaborated on the differences between cultural and psychological trauma and have explored the processes at play to overcome it (Smelser 2004; Alexander 2004). Cultural trauma is a specific kind of social

¹ Cultural trauma and postmemory emanate from a similar concern for understanding the ways in which survivors of mass atrocities, and their descendants, remember the past. These terms are not interchangeable, but in this dissertation, I understand postmemory as a specific kind of cultural trauma that pertains specifically to the children who were born after the episodes of mass atrocities ended. For a more detailed explanation, see the conceptual framework in chapter 2.

memory that deals with historical episodes of mass atrocities, such as genocides, dictatorships, or civil wars (Eltrigham and Maclean 2014; Salvi 2017; Fried-Amilivia 2011). Cultural trauma is a relevant subject of study because it alters people's understandings of who they are as a group² and it is shaped by a shared perception that the group has been subjected to deep suffering (Neal 1998).

2. Exhibition Design as Mediation of Memory

In social memory studies, cultural trauma is understood as social memory about mass atrocities (Alexander 2004). Because of the social constructed-ness of this type of trauma, recent works have attempted to employ action-oriented approaches to deconstruct it; that is, to intervene upon the convoluted space of social memory surrounding mass atrocities in an attempt to promote critical reflection in society as well as justice for the victims (e.g. Voigtlander 2016; Worcman and Garde-Hansen 2016; Bermudez and Argumero Martinez 2018; Godoy 2018). These approaches range from strategies and platforms to enable victims of mass atrocities to express, preserve, and communicate their memories (e.g. Wallace et al. 2014; Voigtlander 2016; Godoy 2018; Worcman and Garde-Hansen 2016), to pedagogic strategies to critically analyze historical narratives about these historical events both in the formal educational setting of schools (e.g. M. J. Bellino 2014; Bermudez 2019; Carretero and Bermudez 2012) and the informal, self-directed context of museums (e.g. Dean 2013; Pinto 2013; Young 1993). These studies, coming from different academic traditions, strongly suggest that design plays a role in

² Cultural trauma theory has primarily focused on geographically bounded communities, primarily the nation, but there many other criteria by which communities can be formed (McMillan and Chavis 1986).

the formation of cultural trauma. Nevertheless, the exact process through which design plays that role is poorly understood.

Indeed, recent studies from the field of participatory design have established a link between a community's participation in design and cultural memory—a type of social memory that pertains to individuals' identity as members of a community or a nation (Iversen and Smith 2012; Sabie, Sabie, and Ahmed 2020; Jones 2016). These studies reveal that participatory design supports the creation of culturally situated technologies that reinforce a community's identity, such as alternative layouts for immigrants' homes (Sabie, Sabie, and Ahmed 2020). However, these works have not specifically concerned themselves with the complexities of cultural trauma, such as the contested politics of social memory in the aftermath of mass atrocities or the intergenerational dynamics at play in this context. In fact, while some participatory design approaches have attempted to promote empathy for individual victims of trauma (Tomlinson 2020; Lee et al. 2019), these frameworks would be insufficient to understand the complex system that cultural trauma represents. Indeed, cultural trauma is more than the mere collection of multiple individual traumas. The mechanisms of operation of both types of trauma differ, and the strategies to solve individual, psychological trauma would not make sense in the context of a cultural one.

Unlike psychological trauma, which individuals can overcome by confronting the feelings and thoughts associated with a traumatic memory (Kolk 2014), cultural trauma is never resolved, but rather transformed and renegotiated across generations (Neal 1998; Smelser 2004; Eyerman 2004). Nevertheless, not all processes of negotiation are equal. In some instances, the strategies to navigate trauma can lead to the oppression of minority groups, whereas in others the

negotiation of cultural trauma can lead to social benefits.³ However, the literature about this phenomenon has focused primarily on explaining how it works rather than how to intervene in the intergenerational negotiation of trauma.

Like with memory studies, inquiries about memorial museums have also been concerned with intergenerational dynamics of memory negotiation regarding historical episodes of mass atrocities. However, while this common interest would suggest that both fields deal with cultural trauma, the relationship between memorial museums and cultural trauma has not really been explored. In fact, some studies about memorial museums use the term *trauma* or *historical trauma*, but they do not engage with the research from memory studies on the topic of cultural trauma. Conversely, in research about memorial museums, there seems to be an unstated assumption that both *mass atrocity* and *trauma* are interchangeable terms. As a result, the relationship between memorial museums and cultural trauma remains poorly understood.⁴

Another key distinction between the studies of cultural trauma and scholarship on memorial museums is that the goal of studying intergenerational dynamics at play is field-specific. If memory studies focuses on exploring the evolution of the negotiation strategies of the trauma from one generation to the next, museum studies aims to develop means to better

³ An example of this is the memory of the civil war in the United States. During the Gilded Age, the memory work in the deep South (e.g., publication of textbooks, implementation of historical societies, institution of the confederacy day) served as a moral framework to justify the Jim Crow era. By contrast, during the 1950s, the memory of the Civil War partly inspired the civil rights movement (Eyeran 2004).

⁴ An exemption to this trend is Pinto's (2013) study about the implications of the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) for museum practice. While Pinto does not draw from cultural trauma theory, she articulates (not just mentions) the notion of "historical trauma." For Pinto, historical trauma is closer to the notion of collected rather than collective memory (Kansteiner 2002). In other words, this study conceives of historical trauma as the sum of multiple individual traumas that originated from the British Colonization of present-day Canada and have been inherited across generations through personal experiences of trauma within the family, such as substance addiction, parental neglect, or intrafamily violence (Pinto 2013).

promote the memories of the violent past from the generation who directly experienced it to the next one, to understand how the new generation navigates this symbolic inheritance, and to create space for intergenerational discussion and reflection about the meaning of this violent past. In fact, there is an activist ethos to the research in this space. At its core, the goal of understanding the intergenerational dynamics of memory is not simply to increase knowledge or to develop policy, but to raise public awareness about past human rights violations through museum practice. One of the most common forms of such practice is exhibition design (Dube 1995).

Community participation in museum exhibition design leads community members, as co-designers, to deeper engagement with the subject matter of the exhibition (Lynch 2011; Morse 2014; Debono 2014). Although this insight comes from studies of other types of museums, there is evidence to support the hypothesis that the findings from these prior works can be extrapolated to memorial museums. Specifically, one study found that the more engaging, and immersive, the experiences in a memorial exhibition, the deeper the reflection and emotional connection visitors felt toward the victims (Crownshaw 2000). This means that there is an opportunity for participatory exhibition design to also enable deeper reflection in the memorial museum context, since this form of design requires sustained engagement with the subject of the design (Knudsen 2016). Fostering deeper reflection and emotional engagement is important in the memorial museum context because it is a form of honoring the victims of mass atrocities and establishing connections between the causes of the atrocities and the challenges of societies in the present (Hughes 2003; Prosise 2003). At stake in promoting critical reflection and emotional engagement, then, is the opportunity to motivate visiting publics to become committed to a more

just society, one where the atrocities of the past will not occur again (Dean 2013; Ibhawoh 2013). In light of this opportunity, my dissertation project endeavors to explore how visitor participation in exhibition design mediates social memories of past atrocities, also known as cultural trauma.

3. Transdisciplinary Approach

To answer this question, a transdisciplinary approach was necessary, one that combined the insights from cultural trauma studies and memorial museums research. Moreover, if one is to explore how participation in an exhibition design process shapes cultural trauma, it is imperative to study cultural trauma among co-designers before, during and after the design process. My dissertation addressed this challenge by studying the memories of a group of adolescents who were born after the civil war of El Salvador (1980-1992). The decision to work with children was made out of necessity. Since the exhibition design process is a time-consuming endeavor, working with adults would have been impractical. The pressures of adult life—such as work, college, and family—would have posed a challenge, one that other researchers in my fieldsite have had to deal with before I did.⁵ Moreover, the selection of children for this study also represented an opportunity to further expand a decades-long tradition from history education about the processes of negotiating memory in the school context (M. Bellino 2017; M. J. Bellino 2014; Bermudez 2019; Stoskopf and Bermudez 2017) by exploring how students' participation in the design of a memorial exhibition shifted their historical understanding about the civil war.

⁵ I am grateful to Lena Voigtlander for sharing with me her insight from her participatory workshops in the region. She published a study about memories of the postwar generation using participatory action research (Voigtlander 2016). Her decision to change her sample from an adult to an adolescent population adhered precisely to the same challenge I just described.

In other words, this project also represented an opportunity to explore the possibility of future transdisciplinary collaborations between scholars of history education and cultural memory.

To answer my primary research question, I drew from participatory design in museums (Taxen 2004) to organize, facilitate, and observe a design workshop that enabled research participants to express, negotiate, and — potentially — evolve in their deeply held feelings and beliefs about the violent past, also known as postmemories (Hirsch 2008, 1992). I refer to this type of exhibition as a postmemorial one. I define a postmemorial exhibition as a type of exhibition in the memorial museum context that is developed by members of the postwar generation with the goal of sharing their memories—or, as my participants phrased it, “their opinion”—with a wider audience.

The articulation of a postmemorial exhibition is both a methodological and a theoretical contribution of my dissertation that extends to works from memory studies, museum studies, and participatory design. At the theoretical level, the postmemorial exhibition is made possible by the transdisciplinary dialogue between memory studies focused on cultural trauma and museum studies centered around memorial museums. Likewise, at the methodological level, the postmemorial exhibition is my interpretation of the method of participatory design in museums (PDM) (Taxen 2004). This method was originally developed by interaction designers to promote public participation at science museums and interactive learning centers. My contribution at the methodological level consists of applying this methodology in the context of human rights museology to study cultural trauma. In so doing, it is my hope to expand the methodological toolkit of cultural trauma theorists.

Although this study occupied one participatory design methodology (namely PDM), it is my hope that others will find in my results inspiration for future exploration of other applications of PD methodologies in the memorial museum context.⁶ Although my pursuit of a postmemorial exhibition was made with middle school students, the methodology could be applied to other contexts. Thus, my intention is not for the methodology to be merely replicated —although I welcome the opportunity. Rather, my aim is for future studies to react, critique, and iterate on my methodology within the field of human rights museology. It is within this field where cultural trauma and design meet, where the opportunity lies to develop a new area of interdisciplinary study: a design approach to the study of cultural trauma.

4. Overview of Research Design

During my fieldwork, I worked at a school in Perquín, a rural municipality in northern El Salvador. Perquín is situated in the northern region of the Salvadoran department of Morazán. Northern Morazán was one of the major theaters of the civil war, and other scholars have already found that the memories of community members were fundamentally shaped by the war (Binford 2016; Voigtlander 2016; Danner 1994). Therefore, this location was a relevant site to study memory.

At this school, I interviewed a group of seven students and four teachers regarding their memories of the war and their strategies to teach this history. Through this initial research, I was

⁶ This is a contribution inspired from research following Taxen's (2004) seminal work on PDM. After him, other researchers attempted to draw further insights of PD into the science museum context, such as exploring the links between design principles to outcomes of the visitors' experience (Skydsgaard, Møller Andersen, and King 2016).

able to understand the generational memory dynamics at play in the school. I found that the students' experience with the memory of the conflict was shaped by two interdependent mechanisms: (1) the teachers' enshrining of lived experience as a primary source of knowledge, and (2) curriculum design. I also found that students did not sit idly by when faced with this fragmented experience, but instead displayed curiosity to learn more. In fact, it was this curiosity that motivated them to join my research project. Furthermore, I found that students expressed two types of grief when interacting with cultural trauma. The first might be described as a personal one, tied to their family histories, and especially to the deaths of close relatives like grandparents. I also identified another kind of grief, which I refer to as historical grief, in which feelings of shock, sadness, and anger were associated with the history of the war as it impacted civilians, especially children. In fact, I learned that my participants felt empathy based on identification with children who were around their age at the time of the war.

My data collection consisted of semi-structured interviews at the beginning and end of my fieldwork and a design workshop. The design workshop ran for sixteen sessions, which took place between the last week of July and the first week of December of 2018. The seven students I had interviewed joined the project. The study was divided into four stages:

1. **Site visits.** On the first phase, participants visited five memorial sites, including three museums, a "theme park," and a monument.
2. **Concept development.** Participants interviewed family members and used several instruments for data organization and classification that enabled them to create their exhibition plan. The plan listed five themes: causes, events, consequences, emotions, and doubts.

3. **Illustration.** Participants went through several rounds of drawing sketches and an exhibition floor plan. The sketches allowed them to explore different strategies to translate their exhibition themes into installations.
4. **Wrap-up.** Participants prepared and delivered a final presentation of the project and shared their impressions of their experience during the workshop.

Workshop sessions typically lasted 90 minutes.⁷ Sessions took place at different locations: at school (after classes were over), in meeting rooms in three different hotels, at a park, and in areas near the memorial sites we visited. With participants' permission, I recorded and took notes of all interviews and workshop sessions.

Data analysis spanned across three nonlinear phases: (1) data condensation, (2) data display, and (3) data analysis (Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña 2014). During the data condensation process, I recruited and paid three research assistants to transcribe the workshop and interview recordings. I then reviewed each transcript, cleaned it, and edited typos. Then, I wrote memos summarizing the contents of all data (Maxwell 2013). Likewise, I also wrote memos to describe the design objects of the workshop, such as affinity walls, concept maps, and sketches. I also used in-vivo and descriptive codes to help me identify patterns in the data (Saldaña 2016). During data display, I created affinity walls (Scupin 1997) and comparative matrices (Feak and Swales 2009; Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña 2014) to identify patterns and establish findings. Finally, during data analysis, I wrote memos to explore the meaning of the

⁷ This is true for 14 out of 16 sessions. In the remaining two, I had suspended the sessions before 30 minutes because I noticed that my participants said they were tired and I could tell from their faces that they were sleep deprived.

data. I then actively contrasted the conclusions of these memos seeking disproving evidence. Finally, I wrote memos of those contrasting exercises. Through the iterative cycle of navigating these stages, my analytic memos eventually moved away from finding patterns in the data to finding themes in my findings and gauging their relationship to existing theories. It was from these memos that I ultimately drew my conclusions for this study.

5. Dissertation Overview

The remainder of the dissertation is divided as follows. In chapter 2, I explain my conceptual framework. Specifically, I discuss the key insights from studies about cultural trauma and memorial museums. In so doing, I note the scope, concerns, and evolution of each line of research and spot gaps in the literature. In the case of studies about cultural trauma, I notice that more work is needed to understand how design intervenes in the dynamics of memory in the school context. In the case of museum studies, I notice that community participation in exhibition design has demonstrated that participation leads to greater reflection about the exhibition's subject matter, but that this insight has not been explored in the context of memorial exhibitions. Later, I present an analytical comparison of the two fields, expanding on their common concern with intergenerational dynamics of negotiation of memories, specifically, memories of mass atrocities. I suggest that while the interest in these dynamics is the point of connection of the two fields, there are plenty of areas where they differ.

In chapter 3, I offer a historical overview of the republic of El Salvador. I center my account on the main economic and political events of each period and highlight key moments of social mobilization. Most of my discussion centers around the period between 1970 and the present. This period can be further divided between 1970 and 1979, when social mobilization

and repression reached a peak and political instability preceded the war (1980-1992), when the war took place, and the binary politics and neoliberal reforms of the postwar period (1992-present). My goal in this chapter is providing the reader with some historical context to better understand my discussion about participants' memories in the following two chapters.

In chapter 4, I introduce my methodology. I justify my decision to work with a hybrid method that combines ethnography and participatory design in museums. I explain how this adaptation was meant to enable community members and museum professionals to collaboratively create exhibitions in science museums and justify its relevance in the memorial museum context. I stress the importance of finding a safe space to set up the design workshop given the sensitive nature of the subject matter of the design.

In chapter 5, I present my findings pertaining to the intergenerational dynamics of memory at school. I argue that there are two interconnected dynamics at play that result in students having a fragmented experience of memory about the war; namely, the enshrining of memory as the primary source of knowledge about the war and the curriculum design. I also highlight my participants' agency in navigating this fragmented memory scape.

In chapter 6, I present my findings pertaining to the design workshop. Here I describe the four mechanisms by which design mediates memory: (1) mutual construction and reflection, (2) classification and development of hierarchies, (3) iterative engagement, and (4) open exploration of exhibition themes. I also highlight the transversal presence of play during the workshop. In fact, I argue that play serves three functions: making light of the design work, self-regulation, and sense-making. I explain how the third function of play, which I also refer to as dark play, is another mediating mechanism. Although dark play was not a phenomenon specific to the design

process, I argue that its presence, sparked by the exploration phase of my data collection, was a central sense-making mechanism for my participants.

Lastly, in chapter 7, I present my conclusions. I argue that participatory exhibition design in the context of a postmemorial exhibition mediated memory by enabling participants to develop active empathy toward the civilian population during the war, explore their own beliefs and emotions with greater depth than the semi-structured interviews alone, and produce some significant changes in participants' experience of cultural trauma. Namely, participants reported an increased interest in learning more about the war after the project ended. While for some, the design process reinforced their prior beliefs about the war, for others it added depth and nuance to their earlier reflections. Then, I explain how my findings also relate to recent scholarly discussions about the political nature of design.

I also acknowledge the limitations of the study; namely, the low external validity given my sample size, a limitation partly shaped by my selection of methods. I also recognize that the significant time investment required to develop a postmemorial exhibition led to some attrition among participants. While no one in the group dropped out, some missed several sessions in the second half of the workshop. I also shared my concerns regarding the limited change in participants' critical outlook of the war. Finally, I suggest that future work could further explore the opportunities to incorporate dark play into memorial exhibition design, as well as strategies to enhance the reflective component of my methodology, such as merging participatory exhibition design and problem-based learning or critical design. Lastly, I suggest that future work could experiment with merging postmemorial exhibitions into the toolkit of history education and explore applying other PD methods into the memorial museum context.

Chapter 2 — Conceptual Framework

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I offer a comparative analysis of the fields of social memory studies focused on cultural trauma and museum studies centered around memorial museums—henceforth, memorial museums research or studies about memorial museums. To this end, I first summarize and discuss prior work about cultural trauma and intergenerational memory. I argue that these works have emphasized the agency of members of the second generation, those born after the conflicting events have ended. By agency, I mean their everyday strategies to make sense of the past in their present, given the informational constraints of their environment. I argue that much work has been done to understand these intergenerational dynamics in the family context, and that while recent studies have brought attention to the role of public memory work by human rights organizations, more work is needed to understand how memories of historically traumatic events are negotiated in the school context.

Next, I analyze studies about memorial museums and the potential affordances of a participatory design process in shaping participants' memories about the violent conflict. To this end, I discuss prior works about memorial museums. I stress how these works have shown several mechanisms by which the experience of visiting memorial exhibitions shape memory; the importance of community participation in crafting exhibitions (although not necessarily memorial ones); and the unique traits of memorial museums as sites for public education, emotional engagement, and reflection. I argue that more work is still needed to understand how

participatory museum exhibitions shape the memories of those born after the episodes of mass atrocities have ended, especially the memories of adolescents.

Finally, I discuss the differences between each discipline. I suggest that both are connected by a common concern about the intergenerational dynamics of memory transmission, but for different purposes. Both disciplines aim to understand how people remember the violent past and how individual and social frames of memory interact in the formation of cultural trauma, although each discipline approaches this concern from different angles. Then, I explain how each discipline is concerned with different modes of experience and I articulate the challenges posed by cultural trauma in different ways. Through this analysis, I identify gaps in each discipline. While cultural trauma theory has shown that design mediates the formation of cultural trauma before and after the design of memorial sites, such as monuments or museum exhibitions, more research is needed to understand the role of the design process itself, as it happens, in shaping cultural trauma. Similarly, memorial museum research has shown that human rights museology—practices such as exhibition design, guided tours, and others—can lead visitors to experience empathy toward victims of mass atrocities. However, it lacks the analytical tools to understand how the emotional engagement and reflection fostered among visitors mediates cultural trauma. Thus, I suggest that a combined approach is needed, one that engages the analytical tools from cultural trauma with insights from memorial museum studies. This articulation is needed to enhance design interventions in cultural trauma studies and with memorial museum scholarship to gauge the impact of co-designing memorial exhibitions in shaping cultural trauma among co-designers.

2. Cultural Trauma and Postmemory

Studies of social memory have sought to understand how collectivities—nations, regions, ethnic groups, or otherwise defined identity groups—are affected by and deal with mass atrocities (e.g., civil wars, genocide, dictatorships, segregation). Under certain circumstances, members of the collectivity that experienced a disruptive event come to recognize themselves as having been subjected to a deep suffering that alters their understanding of who they are as a group, where they all come from, and what it means to belong to the group. These transformations in the narrative of the group and their collective sense of identity go by many names, such as cultural trauma (Alexander 2004), public traumatic memory (Zelizer 2002), or traumatic memory (Fried Amilivia 2016).⁸

Cultural trauma is understood to be a human-made phenomenon because it is not inherently bound to the historical event that a society reimagines through memorialization (e.g. vigils, monuments, memorials) but instead depends on the time elapsed, the interests of the different actors engaged in this memorial labor, and the interests of the multiple generations involved (Fried-Amilivia 2011; Alexander 2004; Wilson 2016). In fact, the notion of cultural trauma is also linked to the concept of postmemory, “a structure of inter- and trans-generational transmission of traumatic knowledge and experience. It is a consequence of traumatic recall but (unlike post-traumatic stress disorder) at a generational remove” (Hirsch 2008, 106). Unlike cultural trauma, which may refer to the memories of socially traumatic events for any generation,

⁸ While the phenomenon has many names, I refer to it as “cultural trauma” henceforth because this term is most widely used.

postmemory specifically refers to such memories by members of the generation that came after such events ended (Hirsch 1992, 2008).

A key observation in cultural trauma theory is that traumas are experienced in a nonlinear and nondeterministic manner. Even if a society reaches the point of not thinking of an event as traumatic for a time, its contentious nature may return as new generations redefine their relationships to the past (Palmberger 2016; Hirsch 2008; Eyerman 2004). This is exemplified in the case of the long-lasting debates related to the meaning of slavery and the African American experience in the United States. The intensity of these debates has evolved, partially dwindling in intensity for a time but later resurfacing at other historical moments (Eyerman 2004).

Cultural trauma has been studied from multiple disciplines such as sociology (Villalón 2017; Olick 2007; Alexander 2004; Smelser 2004; Fried-Amilivia 2011; Marquez 2017), anthropology (D'Orsi 2017), communications (Zelizer 2002), psychology (Lira 2011), literature (Soyinka 2000; Huyssen 2003), and cultural studies (Kansteiner 2004). Research on this subject has its antecedents in the twentieth century. The term was coined in the 1990s (Caruth 1996, 1995; Neal 1998; Laub 1992; Herman 2015 [1992]) by scholars who attempted to bring psychological notions of trauma into conversations with similar scholarship in philosophy and cultural studies. These early writings suggested that social remembering practices seemed to reproduce, at a larger scale, indicators of trauma at the social level, such as a tendency to dwell on the past in a loop and demonstrating deep animosity at each recollection. This early research was later critiqued by its conflation of the psychological and social dimensions of trauma. Allegedly, this conflation occurred because researchers of cultural trauma (e.g. Laub 1992; Caruth 1996; Neal 1998) made claims that metaphorically borrowed insights from psychology

research on individual trauma and applied them to philosophical discussions about collective trauma without attending to the different epistemological underpinnings of each discipline (Kansteiner 2004; Alexander 2004).

These critics' main contribution to cultural trauma has been to bring attention to the need for clearer demarcation of boundaries between individual and collective processes of trauma. After all, societies do not have a direct equivalent to the individual's psyche for processing external stimuli (Huysen 2003; Kansteiner 2004). Indeed, experiences such as class, gender, or sexual orientation shape specific experiences of trauma. However, critics themselves have showcased a rather poor understanding of psychological trauma. Researchers like Kansteiner (2004) and Huysen (2003) have framed individual trauma as a fixed category that can be attributed unproblematically to a discrete set of adverse events. By contrast, the consensus among psychologists is that events are not traumatic in and of themselves. Rather, an event may cause trauma when an individual's psyche becomes overwhelmed. Reaching this situation of emotional overload is not an exclusive result of a triggering adverse event but occurs due to a combination of factors, such as the individual's capacity to withstand and cope with adverse situations (Smelser 2004; Kolk 2014).

In the early 2000s, the concept of cultural trauma was further refined (Alexander 2004; Smelser 2004; Eyerman 2004). Worthy of note among these revisionist efforts is Smelser's (2004) analysis of the connections between psychological and sociological understandings of trauma. His comprehensive analysis of the historical evolution of the notion of trauma in sociology and psychology allowed him to overcome the allegorical allusions of earlier research

and instead be precise in his distinction of the social dimension of trauma. For Smelser, cultural trauma is

a memory accepted and publicly given credence by a relevant membership group and evoking an event or situation which is a) laden with negative affect, b) represented as indelible, and c) regarded as threatening a society's existence or violating one or more of its fundamental cultural presuppositions. (Smelser 2004, 44)

Smelser's key contribution lies in showing that there is a social frame to trauma formation. This idea is reminiscent of the social frames of collective memory that Maurice Halbwachs (1992 [1925]) had introduced decades earlier. However, Smelser also overcomes the French sociologist's assumption that societies are internally homogeneous by emphasizing that trauma is characterized by negative affect and, as a result, internal strife. This premise—that cultural trauma leads to a collective identity crisis and makes memory a source of social confrontation—has been pivotal to studies of cultural trauma in Latin America (e.g. Villalón 2017; D' Orsi 2017; Marquez 2017; Fried-Amilivia 2011; Lira 2011).

Studies about cultural trauma in Latin America have shown that the state-sponsored policies of remembering and forgetting are key to the formation of cultural trauma. These policies of “forgive and forget” are the backdrop against which the memories of the dictatorial regimes of the 1970s and 1980s are far from forgotten but rather transmitted in a fragmentary manner within the family (Lira 2011; Serpente 2011; Fried-Amilivia 2011). For instance, in the case of children of disappeared political dissidents in Uruguay, the parental figures struggled to convey to their children the stories of what happened to their disappeared parents while avoiding further traumatization by conveying too much information. As these children grew up, they

undertook their own efforts to make sense of the past by investigating what happened to their parents (Fried-Amilivia 2011).

The main contribution of the Latin American line of work lies in bringing to the fore the social inequalities that led to the overwhelming event in the first place and pointing at the limitations of human rights to address those social inequalities (D’Orsi 2017; Lira 2011). To achieve these contributions, researchers turned their gaze beyond the inner circle of the family and observed the interactions between these processes of memory mediation and the state-sponsored policies of memorialization through which the post-authoritarian states attempted to legitimize themselves (Serpente 2011; Salvi 2017).⁹ In countries such as Colombia, Chile, Uruguay, and Argentina, the state in the early post-dictatorial phase adopted a policy of silence and blanket amnesties, to which human rights organizations responded with public commemorations, memorial exhibitions, and monuments (Marquez 2017; Hite 2003; Lira 2011; Fried-Amilivia 2011). This research has extensively explored the links between public memorialization efforts and the evolution of social memory across generations. It has not explored the role of the school in the evolution of postmemory, and therefore, of cultural trauma¹⁰: How do intergenerational dynamics of memory operate in the school context? How do students negotiate their memories given the intergenerational dynamics at play in that context?

⁹ Jeffrey Olick (Olick 2007) refers to this set of historically situated memory policies as “the politics of regret.”

¹⁰ I draw a distinction here between cultural trauma theory and history education. The latter field has been exploring the question of students’ historical understanding of the violent past for many years. By contrast, cultural trauma is concerned with social memories of the violent past that are not only cognitive in nature, but also intensely emotional, embodied, and deeply contested in the interpersonal and public spheres (Alexander 2004).

3. Memorial Museums

In recent decades, many museum initiatives have sought to raise awareness about episodes of mass suffering such as genocides, civil wars, or periods of authoritarian rule. Pivotal among these efforts have been the multiple museums devoted to the Holocaust. In fact, the scholarship devoted to the Holocaust is so vast that Holocaust studies are considered a distinct field of the social sciences (Hayes and Roth 2010). Nevertheless, there are other museums devoted to memories of mass suffering—Apartheid in South Africa (Soudien 2006), the civil war in Peru (Ulfe and Rios 2016), and the Kmer Rouge in Cambodia (Hughes 2003)—that have also received scholarly attention in the past two decades. These are known as memorial museums (Williams 2007).

Memorial museums are “dedicated to a historic event commemorating mass suffering of some kind” (Williams 2007, 8). Like Holocaust museums, memorial museums distance themselves from placing emphasis on heroic deeds and the defense of the nation that is common in traditional war museums (e.g. Kavanagh 1988; Lubar 1997). Instead, memorial museums explore the complex relationship between memorialization and critical reflection (e.g. Norden 1993; Charlton 2006; Crownshaw 2000). This is a tense relationship because memorials are “assumed to be safe from ‘history’ because an honest evaluation of the dead is seen as disrespectful. However, in recent times there is an increasing need to coalesce the needs of memorialization and historical analysis, a desire to add both a moral framework to the narration of terrible historical events and more in-depth contextual explanations to commemorative acts” (Williams 2007, 8). Memorial museums have been a subject of study in many different disciplines, including history (Charlton 2006; Ibhawoh 2013; Williams 2011), education

(Soudien 2006), sociology (Jenkins 2007; Simon 2011; Sodaro 2013, 2018), literature (Crownshaw 2000), geography (Hughes 2003), psychology (Phillips 2005; Hamber 2012), information (Carter and Orange 2011), architecture (Lin 2015), semiotics (Violi 2012), philosophy (Pinto 2013), anthropology (Lesley-Rozen 2014), and public humanities (Sevcenko 2010).

In the early 2000s, studies about memorial museums explored the relationship of the museum to trauma at a social level (Brown 2004; Jenkins 2007; Hughes 2003; Kirmayer, Simpson, and Cargo 2003). However, these studies do not engage with literature about cultural trauma. Another set of works has explored the potential of the memorial museum to support social education and reconciliation (Crownshaw 2000; Phillips 2005; Prosis 2003; Reed 2006; Soudien 2006). In the following decade, the research focus shifted toward a concern for understanding the opportunities and limitations of the memorial museum to realize its purported goals of redressal of victims, public education, and prevention of mass atrocities (Lin 2015; Sodaro 2018; Williams 2011; Violi 2012; Sevcenko 2010; Dean 2013). Another subset of this body of work focused on exploring strategies to enhance the memorial museum practice (Carter and Orange 2011; Simon 2011; Lesley-Rozen 2014; Ibhawoh 2013; Pinto 2013).

Other terms to designate memorial museums are human rights museums (Carter and Orange 2011; Ibhawoh 2013), sites of conscience (Sevcenko 2010), trauma sites (Violi 2012), and counter-memorial museums (Sodaro 2013). While these different terms have a common concern with museum representations of past atrocities, they are not interchangeable. The terms *human rights museums* and *sites of consciousness* place the focus on determining which human rights are at stake. These terms emanate from a larger academic tradition that links social

memory processes with transitional justice. The goal in scholarship concerned with transitional justice is to redress victims, hold perpetrators accountable, and promote social reconciliation. A key contribution from this academic tradition has been the articulation of a human rights museology, which consists of professional museum practices dedicated to the subject of human rights. Examples of these practices include academic research, education, collection, and exhibition design (Carter and Orange 2011). However, this work has been critiqued for placing its emphasis on “reconciling society,” while leaving the root causes of the atrocities unaddressed (Olick 2007), and for, mostly inadvertently, framing the complex histories of mass atrocities in terms of innocent victims and perpetrators, with the unintended consequence of downplaying the historical, cultural, and sociopolitical causes of the violence being memorialized (Binford 2016).

Memorial museums come from a different academic tradition: museum studies. Specifically, from scholarship within the discipline concerned with decolonizing museums—whether memorial in nature or not. This tradition has gained preeminence since the 1980s.¹¹ Its intent is to reframe the mission of the museum away from its emphasis in collecting and preserving objects, and closer toward generating social interaction as well as promoting leisure and education (Ronan 2014; C. S. Smith 2006; Dean 2013; MacDonald 2010). As part of this larger trend, the notion of memorial museums emphasizes ethical questions for which there are no easy answers, such as the nature of victims, the circumstances under which mass suffering occurred, the debates surrounding attribution of responsibility, and the relevance of the violent

¹¹ It is worth noting that the concern for decolonization of museums runs parallel with the advent of the so-called “memory boom” (Hyussen 2003) when studies of social memory started to increase.

pasts in the present (Williams 2007, 2011). A pivotal assumption of memorial museums research is that:

The question of what deserves representation, on what scale, and in which locations, is one that will never be decided through some appeal to the historical record, but instead depends on both how it appears and is narrated in collective memory (itself highly influenced by media industries like television and print), and on the power of political and economic will. (Williams 2011, 229)

Finally, trauma sites and counter-memorial museums are subtypes of memorial museums. William (2007) argued that historical sites of mass atrocities and museums dealing with such events should both be termed as memorial because they are devoted to raising public awareness. However, others have argued that historical sites and memorial museums should be distinguished because of the unique mechanism through which the former operates (Violi 2012; Sodaro 2013). Specifically, historical sites of mass atrocities offer an opportunity for visitors' sense-making due to their indexicality. In other words, the fact that historical sites are the very locations where past atrocities occurred makes them interfaces with the violent past (Violi 2012).¹² Finally, counter-memorial museums operate in a similar manner to other memorial museums in that they seek to engender empathy toward the victims of the violent past. However, the goal in counter-memorial museums, such as the Jewish Museum in Berlin, is to mobilize nostalgia to promote Jewish identity rather than critical awareness (Sodaro 2013).

One trait that distinguishes memorial museums from others is the inherent role of memory politics in their representations. Interest groups are always engaged in debates around the work

¹² I am borrowing the term Hedstrom (2002) used to refer to the often assumed but poorly understood relationship between archives and social memory. In my case, however, I am referring to the specific relationship between violent pasts, also known as cultural trauma (Alexander 2004) and memorial museums.

of these museums, whether these groups represent the forces that caused the traumatic even or whether such forces have been overcome. Politics play a role in what is the museum allowed to say and what not. (Williams 2011, 232). Memorial exhibitions aim to allow their audiences to temporarily distance themselves from their everyday lives to help them develop their own thoughts, actions, and attitudes toward social injustices (breach); convey the importance of historical significance of the mass atrocities and personal responsibility that visitors have in preventing new episodes of violence (liminality); and leave the museum conscious that they must be vigilant in their own community (reintegration) (Prosise 2003). At stake in memorial exhibitions is the opportunity for visitors to imagine a future that is shaped in opposition to the mass atrocities on display; in Philips's (2005) words: "what we are urged to remember is bound up with how we are being urged to live. The preferred life has its set of preferred memories. Voluntary or involuntary—that is, encouraged or discouraged—memories always have a future in mind" (p. 35).

The uneasy relationship between critical reflection and memorialization has been a central concern of memorial museum research (Jenkins 2007; Brown 2004; Hughes 2003; Dean 2013; Akcan 2010). "In recent times there is an increasing need to coalesce the needs of memorialization and historical analysis, a desire to add both a moral framework to the narration of terrible historical events and more in-depth contextual explanations to commemorative acts" (Williams 2007, 8). It is the task of museum workers to negotiate this tension and find a balance, although how to achieve such feat is yet to be determined:

The museum is a productive space for thinking, and not only 'acting.' This important difference opens up the space for different critical approaches for human rights museums. We might think of these forms as the distinction

between didactic, cognitive, affective, and associative forms of learning. There is the sense that when any one activity dominates in the museum, it can become problematic. When we recognize that memorial and reflective spaces enable different forms of learning from didactic or informational ones, the need for incorporating a multiplicity of presentation styles becomes evident. (Carter and Orange 2011, 13)

While memorial museums aim to mobilize cultural trauma to prevent mass atrocities from recurring, the relationship between these museums and social memory is still poorly understood.¹³ Case studies have suggested that there are several mechanisms by which the experience of visiting memorial sites mediate cultural trauma: the purposeful curation of objects to support a narrative arc (Soudien 2006; Simon 2011); tour guides' performance such as their personality, body language, and intonation (Reed 2006); interactions with survivors (Charlton 2006); and visitors' engagement through structured interactions such as guest books or live Q&A sessions (Lesley-Rozen 2014). However, this research is primarily focused on the visiting experience rather than the design process of the museum exhibitions. Moreover, these studies have primarily worked with adult populations and have not explored the role of play in memorial museums.

The study of community engagement in museum work is important because prior works have shown that such participation leads to more meaningful visitors' experiences at the exhibition hall, and more fruitful collaborations between community members and museum professionals as design partners (Lynch 2011; Morse 2014; Debono 2014; Hooper-Greenhill 2006; Davidson 2015). In the context of memorial museums, one study suggested that the depth

¹³ I refer to social memory in general—rather than cultural trauma in particular—because I cannot assume that the memory mediated by memorial museums is necessarily, or in all cases, traumatic in the sense discussed earlier in this chapter.

of visitors' reflection about the violent past and their empathy toward the victims is directly correlated to their engagement with the exhibition. Thus, the author proposed pursuing research that moves away from the evidentiary status of museum objects (how authentic objects are and how they are used to "prove" that the events happened), toward enriching an embodied interaction between visitors and museum objects because such interaction would enable multiple and more meaningful interpretations of the past (Crownshaw 2000). Nevertheless, the scope of visitors' participation in these studies have largely focused on premade interactions between visitors and already-prepared museum experiences such as guided tours or stands with objects and images. Museum visitors, especially those for whom the violent past is directly related to their personal or family histories, have yet to engage in the exhibition design process as co-designers. This engagement matters because it may allow for deeper emotional connection and reflection for such visitors about the violent past. Thus, there is an opportunity to explore how participation in exhibition design, rather than museum visiting, shapes visitors' memories. In other words, *how does the participation in the design process of a memorial exhibition mediate students' memories?*

The dearth of research about play in the memorial museum context may be explained by an unstated assumption that play is "for children" and that, given the grim nature of the past being presented, memorial exhibitions are only suitable for adults. Nevertheless, it is also the case that adolescents, not children, are taught about certain instances of the violent past as early as middle school. For instance, in the case of the United States, the subject of the colonization of the Americas and slavery are taught beginning in middle school (Stoskopf and Bermudez 2017; Bermudez and Argumero Martinez 2018). Moreover, it has been shown that play is an important

mechanism of sense-making in adolescence (Henricks 2015). In fact, early evidence suggests that incorporating play in school facilitates the learning process (Conklin 2014; Fine 2014).

While there is a wealth of literature exploring the role of play in the context of children's museums, these institutions focus on pretend play for entertaining and promoting civic values (Schofield-Bodt 1987). However, children's museums do not exhibit historical episodes of mass atrocities and memorial museums do not draw from play in their programming. This absence is significant, considering that a few studies have noticed that, during World War II, children learned to adapt to the harsh realities of the war through play (Glazer 1999; Eisen 1990; Gougoulis 2017). It is possible to suggest, then, that there is a role of play to be explored in the context of memorial museums. In fact, memorial museums could learn from the incorporation of play in middle and high schools, institutions that already consider these individuals mature enough to be exposed to the histories of mass atrocities. In sum, there is an opportunity to understand how play, in the context of memorial exhibitions, might shape the memories of adolescents about past atrocities.

4. Conclusion

Studies about cultural trauma and memorial museums are linked by a common concern about the intergenerational dynamics of memory transmission, but through different modes of experience. In cultural trauma studies the process at play is the negotiation strategies by which each society *imagines* itself to having been subjected to deep suffering.¹⁴ By contrast, museum workers draw from the experiences *lived* by victims to educate younger generations. Through

¹⁴ This is a notion inspired by Anderson's (1983) concept of imagined communities.

this process, the hope of museum workers is that active empathy (Crețan et al. 2018) enables these younger generations to begin to *imagine* themselves as members of a moral community, one committed to ensuring the violent past is not repeated.

Closely linked to the previous issue, both academic disciplines are concerned with the interactions between individual and social frames of memory, but from different angles. In media studies, trauma is a shared, imagined experience. This experience is shaped by the suffering of a smaller set of the population whose experiences are widely circulated through mass media. For instance, the memory of 9/11 may be deemed a cultural trauma even though the people who were killed or injured came close to ten thousand. That is, most of the population in the United States was not harmed by the terrorist attacks. Nevertheless, an individual from California who learned about this incident in the news is partaking in the cultural trauma through the social frame of remembrance, but that frame is shaped by the individual experience of the victim. The relationship between frames in the memorial museum context is reversed. Relatives of victims of the terrorist attacks may share stories about the deceased for the purposes of a memorial exhibition. Later, through the museum exhibition, visitors may develop empathy for the victims of the terrorist attacks, thus shaping their imagined experience of suffering as members of the attacked nation (Sodaro 2018). This premise is rooted in Alison Landsberg's (2004, p. 2) notion of prosthetic memories, "a personal, deeply felt memory of a past event" that an individual did not personally experience. Landsberg conceived of prosthetic memories as a function of exposition to mass media, such as television. However, others have argued that memorial museums are a quintessential technology for prosthetic memory formation because museums

specialize in enabling sensory-rich, personal, and emotional journeys that place visitors in the perspectives of the victims of a traumatic event (Sodaro 2018, 26; Crețan et al. 2018).

The third area of connection between both fields is the concern with the implications of leaving cultural trauma unattended. In cultural trauma theory, the concern is that cultural traumas that remain unresolved can lead to renewed tensions. In this case, inattention does not cause erasure of the memory, but it does create a distorted version of it that leads to social resentment toward those deemed at fault for the atrocities of the past. In the case of memorial museums, the concern is framed in terms of a moral imperative to remember, which posits that failing to raise public awareness about the past leads societies to forget. Forgetting in turn leads to new episodes of mass atrocities. Thus, scholars in both fields conclude that unattended cultural trauma leads to violence, although through different mechanisms.

The fourth area of connection across fields are the stakes of remembering the violent past. In cultural trauma theory, the issue at play is disrupting the sense of belonging. That is, after having survived mass atrocities such as a genocide (Wallace et al. 2014), or the violent repression following a military coup (Lira 2011; Chávez 2008), survivors of the targeted group may come to feel like outcasts in their community.

This analysis reveals an opportunity for a transdisciplinary approach to the study of cultural trauma. Both fields—cultural trauma theory and memorial museum studies—are concerned with the same phenomenon (intergenerational dynamics of negotiation of cultural trauma), and both approach it from opposite but interfacing angles (from the social frame to the individual or vice versa). Similarly, both are concerned with the stakes of cultural trauma potentially leading to violence (either through the spread of essentialist pasts or by scapegoating

the other) and may disrupt society (either by making an outcast of ‘the other’ or by enabling the root causes of violence to resurge by forgetting about them). Finally, their theoretical and methodological affordances are complementary. Cultural trauma theory has a robust tradition of analyzing the mechanisms through which societies negotiate cultural trauma. Moreover, some studies clearly indicate that design plays a role in how societies come to remember mass atrocities —such as memorials, monuments, museum exhibitions, or other cultural forms— both through the public discussions that precede the site creation (e.g. Hite 2003; Achugar 2003; Silber 2011; Worcman and Garde-Hansen 2016) and in the public debates about design decisions of such memorial sites after they have been released to the public (e.g. Ulfe and Rios 2016; Blackmore 2015; Alarcón Medina and Binford 2014; Reed 2006). In other words, the stages before and after the design process of memorial sites are created matter in the negotiation of cultural trauma. Nevertheless, this line of work has yet to explore how the design process shapes cultural trauma while the design process is underway. Similarly, memorial museum research has been developed under an activist ethos that also seeks to intervene in the space of cultural trauma, but its lack of theorization about the social frame shaping these traumas precludes studies in this space from understanding the impact of memorial museum labor beyond the individual memories of community participants. In this regard, a combined approach of both fields may be best suited to understand how researchers can intervene in the space of cultural trauma through design and how human rights museology can support the study of that trauma.

In the next chapter, I outline a study that aims to address this challenge by seeking to understand the role of design in the mediation of trauma. The study constitutes an opportunity to also demonstrate that the analytical frameworks of cultural trauma theory can support the

evaluation of human rights museology. By the same token, the study also demonstrates that action-oriented methodologies of memorial museums mediate the formation of trauma, and in so doing, extend prior insights from cultural trauma theory by illuminating the role of the design process, as it happens, to mediate the negotiation of cultural trauma.

Chapter 3 – Historical Overview

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I offer an overview of the history of El Salvador. My goal is to note the evolution of political and economic configurations of the state and key moments of social mobilization. This narrative contextualizes my discussion about the intergenerational dynamics of memory in a rural school in El Salvador and the role of design in enabling research participants to navigate those dynamics.

2. Origins (16 century - 1840)

El Salvador is the smallest and most densely populated of the continental republics in Latin America. In pre-Columbian times, the region where modern El Salvador is located was inhabited by the Pipils—descendants of the Aztecs—and the Lencas. After the Spanish conquest in the sixteenth century, El Salvador, along with most of present-day Central America, was incorporated into the viceroyalty of New Spain. Specifically, the region became part of the Captaincy General of Guatemala (Cardenal 1989).

In the early nineteenth century, a series of cultural and sociopolitical shifts in the region, and internationally, led to a significant weakening of the colonial power. The Napoleonic wars forced the Borbons to flee Spain, causing a temporary vacuum of power. Although Napoleon's brother was crowned king of Spain in this period, the Iberian metropolis was in effect disconnected from Central America during this period. Similarly, the administrative reforms pursued by the Spanish crown before and after the Napoleonic invasion of the Iberian Peninsula

weakened the power of the *criollos*¹⁵ in their own provinces across the region. Finally, the independence of Mexico, where the viceroyalty of New Spain had its seat, weakened the grip on power of the Spanish crown as well as its investment in the Central American region. In light of these changes, and aiming to consolidate their power, the Central American elites declared independence from Spain in 1821 (Dym 2005).

3. Early Republican Period (1840-1880)

Shortly after its independence, Central America was annexed to the Mexican Empire (1821-1823). However, the annexation abruptly ended with the fall of the empire two years later. At this point, the criollo elites proclaimed the Federation of the United Provinces of Central America. Within fifteen years, the federal republic imploded as a result of insufficient funds to sustain its own administrative apparatus, including a standing army, and the reluctance of the elites within each province to obey the designs of the federal government of Guatemala. In 1840, many years after the federation had ceased to function, El Salvador declared itself a sovereign republic (Lindo-Fuentes 1994).

The period between 1840 and 1880 was marked by a constant confrontation between the criollo elites, divided between the conservatives and the liberals, although the former held the government for most of this period. While the conservatives advocated for the preservation of a structure similar to that of colonial times—church involvement in state politics and religious education as the norm—the liberals advocated for a secular state, freedom of print, and lay

¹⁵ *Criollos* are descendants of the Spanish colonial rules born in the colonies.

education. The conservatives received support from the indigenous and peasant communities because of their support for the church. In practice, however, both groups were elitist in nature and had no counterparts beyond their own class (Gudmundson 1994). The economic model of the conservatives was based on commerce and agricultural exports of indigo and sugar cane (Lindo-Fuentes 1994).

4. The Liberal Republic (1880-1931)

The period between 1880 and 1931, when the liberals held undisputed control of the state, established the groundwork for the oligarchy that dominated the country for most of the twentieth century. The liberals established the legal framework that allowed the emerging coffee oligarchy to seize most communal and barren lands. Increasingly, the ladino and indigenous communities were left only with poor-quality soils for their individuals in subsistence agriculture. To supplement their incomes, the peasantry began working in the large coffee plantations during the harvest (Aida A. Lauria-Santiago 1999).

The first twenty years of the twentieth century was a period of relative political and economic stability. Coffee became the main export of El Salvador, and it enjoyed favorable prices in the international market. In a lesser extent, cotton and sugar were also important sources of revenue for the state through export taxes. Simultaneously, this period became the first time in Republican El Salvador of continued political stability. Between 1903 and 1931, the government shifted hands peacefully through mostly fraudulent elections (Aida A. Lauria-Santiago 1999; T. P. Anderson 1991).

By the early 1920s, however, the living conditions of the indigenous and peasant communities had deteriorated. The decay in lands for subsistence agriculture of the previous

decades meant that peasants and indigenous communities were now dependent on their wages, which at this time were very limited. The government met public demonstrations in the mid-1920s with violent repression, which in turn further incentivized the peasantry to organize and protest more. This period coincided with a creation of the Regional Federation of Workers of El Salvador (RFWES) in 1924 (T. P. Anderson 1991).

5. The Uprising and First Military Regimes (1932-1948)

The Great Depression of 1929 caused a massive drop of the international prices of coffee, which led to massive unemployment, and consequently to a political crisis, in El Salvador. This period coincided with the presidential elections of 1930, the foundation of the Communist Party of El Salvador (PCS) in the same year, and the inauguration of the newly government of Arturo Araujo in January of 1931. The new government met workers' demonstrations with more accentuated repression, which created a spiral of more protests and, consequently, more repression. Amid this turmoil, the Army Forces of El Salvador orchestrated a coup in December of that year. Two weeks later, the municipal and legislative elections were held with the participation of the PCS. The PCS claimed it had been stripped of all its victories and called on its militants, many drawn from the ranks of the RFWES, into an insurrection on January 22 of 1932 (Aldo A. Lauria-Santiago and Gould 2008).

The insurrection was quickly defeated and followed by a brutal repression. Because most of the individuals who partook in the uprising were indigenous, the government began a campaign of rounding up and executing all individuals who had indigenous features, without prior investigation or trial. It has been estimated that more than ten thousand people were killed

in the three weeks following the failed uprising. This massacre was labeled by its survivors as *La Matanza* (The Butchery) (T. P. Anderson 1991; Aldo A. Lauria-Santiago and Gould 2008).

Following the Matanza, and in an attempt to discourage further rebellion, the military government implemented a series of economic reforms aiming to alleviate the economic situation of the peasantry. First it suspended payments on the country's foreign debt and used the saved income to substitute the revenue from taxes on production. Simultaneously, the government lifted taxes on coffee growers, among other measures. These allowed coffee producers to resume production, which decreased the unemployment following the economic depression (Aldo A. Lauria-Santiago and Gould 2008; García Guevara 2007).

The 1930s and 1940s were a time of relative political stability, under a continued military regime, with a social movement that remained in disarray. However, there was a short revival of workers organizing in 1944 when a national strike forced Martinez to resign the presidency and flee the country. In the twelve years following the Matanza, Martinez had lost the support of the economic elites and had become isolated among fellow officers in the army (Monterrosa Cubias 2018). The next four years saw an attempt of a former officer of the Martinez's administration, Osmin Aguirre y Salinas, to retain the authoritarian approach in politics and the support to the coffee-growing elite in the economic sphere (García Guevara 2007).

6. Economic Diversification and Resurgence of Social Movements (1948-1962)

government was toppled in three months (Chávez 2008).

The second factor linked to the political mobilization of 1960, and the reactionary coup of 1961, was the Cuban revolution of 1958. The revolution served as inspiration for the

organizations that demonstrated against the Lemus regime. Simultaneously, when the progressive coup of 1960 occurred, the outgoing Eisenhower administration saw in it a risk of bringing communism from the Caribbean into Central America. Thus, the United States never recognized the civic-military junta installed after the ousting of Lemus. Similarly, the agrarian and now emerging industrialist elites saw in the new government a threat to their interests with measures that include the attempted demilitarization of the National Police and a plan to purge the National Guard (Alvarez and Cortina Orero 2017).

7. MERCOMUN and War with Honduras (1962-1969)

The years between 1962 and 1969 saw an expansion and diversification of the social movement in parallel with an increase of violent repression and the closure of space for dissent. Economically, this period was marked by the expansion and consolidation of the local industry sector and a gradual decline of the agrarian oligarchy. Internationally, this was a period marked by the role of the United States as a key player in national Salvadoran politics. The US policy toward Central America sought to support the national economies in an attempt to increase production, improve living conditions in the region, and deprive the communists from popular support. In this context, the Kennedy and Johnson administrations supported the creation of the Common Central American Market (MERCOMUN) (Gaitán; and Urquiza 2009).¹⁶ The market required the expansion of the national industries of the region, which led to the consolidation of industrialists as leading members of the Salvadoran elites. While MERCOMUN benefited El

¹⁶ In Spanish, *Mercado Comun Centroamericano* (MERCOMUN).

Salvador and Guatemala, other countries in the region—Honduras and Nicaragua—had a less-prepared industrial sector and had difficulty competing with its neighbors. The tensions around the unequal playing field of MERCOMUN were parallel to an economic crisis in both El Salvador and Honduras linked to the high concentration of fertile lands in the hands of the oligarchs (Menjivar Larin 2018).

After 1932, peasants who wanted to own lands for subsistence agriculture fled to Honduras, which is five times larger in territory than El Salvador, and which had a much smaller population. As a result, Salvadoran peasants were able to find for many years unclaimed lands, which they often occupied de facto. However, by 1969, the Honduran government also began to feel the pressure of a landless peasantry who demanded lands for their own subsistence crops. Reluctant to engage in an agrarian reform that would antagonize the oligarchs, the Honduran government expropriated the Salvadoran migrants of their lands and then expelled them. The massive deportations essentially passed the problem of land redistribution to the Salvadoran government, which also decided to scapegoat the situation on its Honduran counterpart. Thus, El Salvador broke diplomatic relations with its neighbor and launched a military invasion. The fervor derived from the ensuing four-day war enabled the governments of both countries to divert the pressure from their domestic problems into a foreign enemy, and then, when a cease fire was declared four days later, both sides could declare themselves heroes (Perez Pineda 2012).

The 1960s also saw a major cultural transformation in El Salvador. This change is tied to the advent of liberation theology in El Salvador and Latin America more broadly. Liberation theology is a doctrine that emerged within the Roman Catholic church starting with the second

Vatican council (1962-1965). The council established that the mission of the Catholic church was to situate the Church in world affairs, and from there spread the gospels, rather than take refuge in the realm of the heavenly. In Latin America, the council of bishops of 1968 in Medellin in Colombia, interpreted the doctrine from the council as a calling Christians to denounce injustices and stand alongside of the poor (González 1999b).

In practice, this doctrine meant that a new generation of priests and catechists began preaching throughout Latin America against the structural injustices such as land concentration in a few hands. In the Salvadoran context, Research from communities in the northern departments of Chalatenango and Morazan have noticed that the church was not unified in this approach and that internal tensions pitted some segments of the church against others (Lara Martinez 2018; Binford 2016; Peterson and Peterson 2008). Regardless of these strife, the progressive segment of the Catholic church had a critical influence in effecting a cultural transformation in the peasantry of the region in favor of structural changes in the country (Montgomery 1982; Bakhtiari 1986).

This generation of progressive catholic priests began working with impoverished communities in El Salvador in the late 1960s, and extended through the 1970s and 1980s (Whitfield 1994; Wright 2015). Although not all religious workers (e.g. priests, catechists, nuns, tc.) from this generation supported the revolutionary movement, the critical awareness that these workers instilled among the peasantry and the urban masses became the bedrock upon which the guerrilla movement expanded its support bases in the second half of the 1970s (Martín Álvarez and Cortina Orero 2014; Cortina Orero 2017). State security forces took quick notices of these

developments and began identifying “communist” priests, nuns, and catechists whom were subsequently arrested, disappeared, tortured, and killed (González 1999a).

8. Collapse of Military Regime and Rise of Urban Guerrillas (1970-1979)

Between 1970 and 1979, the social movement in El Salvador diversified and expanded. While the PCS had been the main left-leaning political party of this period, the contentious decision within its central committee to support the government during the war with Honduras caused an schism within its ranks. Two groups of PCS dissidents quit the party. One of them formed the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FPL) in 1970, and the other formed the People’s Revolutionary Army (ERP) in 1971. Each organization had its own ideas about the right way to achieve the revolution and they operated largely disconnected from each other (Álvarez 2014). In 1975, internal strife within the ERP led to internal purges of some of its members, including the famous intellectual Roque Dalton (Martín Álvarez and Cortina Orero 2014). These purges ended with a group of ERP dissidents forming the National Resistance (RN) (Sancho Castañeda 2016). One year later, in 1976, a group of UES intellectuals participated in Costa Rica in the formation of the Revolutionary Party of Central American Workers (PRTC). The Salvadoran branch of the PRTC would later join the revolutionary war of the 1980s (Cortina Orero 2017; Albarez and Cortina Orero 2017).

In 1979, the PCS was the last organization to join the ranks of political fronts. Throughout the decade, the PCS had joined a national coalition to contend against the military regime in the polls. Although the PCS was banned, it managed to circumvent this hurdle in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s. In essence, communists militants seized legal political parties by

infiltrating them gradually. However, the fraudulent presidential elections of 1972 and 1977 convinced the last skeptics within the PCS leadership that they would not be able to reach power through nonviolent means. In October of 1979, the PCS joined a progressive coalition that supported a reformist government junta emanated from a military coup. However, like the incidents of 1961, the young army officers who materialized the coup were outmaneuvered from positions of power by senior army officers. This shift in the composition of the junta coincided with a reescalation of violent persecution of political dissidents. In protest, the left-leaning civilians within the junta government, including PCS leaders, quit the government. Shortly after that, the PCS founded its armed branch, the Army Forces of Liberation (FAL), and joined the coordination efforts with the other guerrilla forces to form a unified military front (Zinecker 2017).

9. Civil War (1980-1992)

After the PCS withdrew from the junta government, more left-leaning politicians, aligned and non-aligned with the guerrilla fronts, quitted too. The military officers within the junta knew that they needed to have civilians within the administration to retain some semblance of legitimacy. Thus, when the left-leaning politicians left, they invited the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) to the join Junta. The PDC obliged on June 9 (Zinecker 2017; Menjivar Ochoa 2017).

Two weeks later, in January 22, a national coalition of unions, both aligned and non-aligned with the five guerrilla organizations, organized a demonstration to commemorate the 50 years of the 1932 Matanza. It is estimated that 100,000 people attended the event. However, the national guard and the national police massacred the demonstrators, opening fire at the backend

of the march. Two months later, on March 24, the archbishop of San Salvador, Oscar Romero, was assassinated by Roberto D'Abuisson. D'abuisson had been chief of intelligence during the 1970s and, in the days before the assassination, had been publicly smearing Romero on national television. In the three years before his murder, Romero had become a leading voice to call for a negotiated transition that ended the escalation of violence between left-leaning guerrilla groups and the government. Moreover, Romero's Sunday sermons had become the only outlet in the late 1970s where Salvadorans could learn about the human rights violations perpetrated by the government. At this time, the other outlets were under permanent government surveillance and censorship (Wright 2015).

Romero's assassination, and the conservative turn of the Junta, hardened the resolve of the five guerrilla organizations that there would be no negotiated solution to the country's political crisis. In October, the five guerrilla fronts founded its umbrella organization, the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). Finally, in January 10, 1981, the FMLN launched a general offensive in all major towns and cities across the country. This event marked the spread of the war, which had been concentrated to major urban centers in 1980, to the rest of the country (Torres Rivas 2012; Armstrong and Shenk 1982).

The guerrilla army failed in its attempt to take power through their 1981 offensive, but it managed to gain control of some portions of the territory, especially in the northern departments of Chalatenango, Cabañas and Morazán. These three departments border with Honduras to the north. In response, the army launched a counter-offensive. The offensive did not exclusively target the guerrilla army, but instead consisted of a series of large-scale scorched-earth operations. During these operations, the army sought to eliminate the support base of the

guerrilla by literally eliminating any people in the soldiers' path who still inhabited guerrilla-controlled territory. In the context of these operations the army perpetrated the two largest massacres of the war: the massacre at El Mozote in Morazán and the massacre at El Sumpul in Chalatenango (Sprenkels and Melara Minero 2017).

Although the army forces continued their strategy of scorched earth, the frequency and intensity of these operations diminished after 1982. This relative reduction in hostilities was parallel to a reduction in the number of civilian victims. By 1984, the army switched its strategy. In the first four years of the war (1980-1983), the army had relied on regular warfare to combat the insurgents. However, partly because of the pressure of the United States, the Salvadoran army forces began prioritizing blitz operations via helicopter with infantry battalions trained specifically for that purpose. This strategy was facilitated by a change in the foreign policy of the Reagan administration. During his second term in office, Reagan increased military aid to El Salvador. This aid peaked at a rate of one million dollars per day. This significant inflow of cash allowed the army to implement their aerial strategy without budget constraints. In response, the FMLN also switched its military strategy from regular to guerrilla warfare (Jacoby 1986).

The year 1984 was also a turning point in Salvadoran politics. Jose Napoleon Duarte, a historic leader of PDC, won the presidential elections and became president that year. Duarte became the first civilian president elected to office since Arturo Araujo in 1930. However, he and his party retained their alliance with the army forces and the systematic repression against civilians continued. Duarte's administration was characterized by feint attempts to negotiate a peace accord with the FMLN, but no real progress was made in them (Gaitón; and Urquiza 2009).

The insurgency began to plan a new offensive in 1986, which took three years to prepare. In March of 1989, when such preparations were near complete, The PDC lost the presidential election to Alfredo Christiani of the right-wing National Republican Alliance (ARENA). ARENA had been founded in the early 1980s by D'Abuissou. In fact, D'Abuissou himself had ran and lost the presidency against Duarte five years before. Christiani had only been in office five months when the FMLN launched a new offensive in November 11, 1989. Unlike the 1981 offensive, the FMLN was able to reach the capital this time (Whitfield 1994).

The guerrilla army took the populous neighborhoods in the outskirts of the city. Their assumption had been that the masses would rise against the dictator and that the insurrection would be decisive factor to help them topple the government. The guerrilla leaders had also counted on the army forces not launching airstrikes to repel their offensive because the bombs would kill many civilians along with guerrilla combatants. Moreover, because they killings would occur in the capital, the government actions would be visible to the national and international press. The guerrilla leadership was wrong in both accounts. The masses did not rise and the air force did bomb the neighborhoods where the guerrillas were sheltering. In response, the guerrilla army moved to La Escalon. La Escalon was, at this time, the neighborhood where the wealthiest families lived. Once at the rebels occupied these residences, the air forces stopped the bombing. In a matter of days, the guerrilla withdrew back to the hills. The offensive was over. Neither side had won or lost the war (Moreno Mancera 2018).

The outcome of the 1989 offensive was one among a series of succeeding events that facilitated the eventual end of the war. First, the guerrilla offensive from 1989 led leaders in both armies to realize that neither could defeat their rivals in the battlefield. Furthermore, because the

guerrillas managed to temporarily occupy the residencies of top government officers and businessmen, the oligarchs and industrialists lost confidence in the capacity of the governmental army forces to protect them. There also a series of international factors at play. For one, the defeat of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua in the elections from 1990 significantly shifted the operational capability of the guerrillas. Throughout the war, the FMLN had been using Nicaragua as one of their rearguards, something that the incoming right-wing government would not tolerate. Another international event that had ripple effects locally was the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1991. The guerrilla commanders saw in this event an indicator that it would be difficult to find international support to continue the war. Finally, in the context of the 1989 offensive, the army forces ordered the assassination of six Jesuit priests and two of their collaborators. The assassinations took place at the campus of the University of Central America (UCA) where the priests worked. In fact, one of the victims was Ignacio Ellacuria, UCA's principal (Whitfield 1994).

Throughout the civil war, Ellacuria and the other murdered Jesuit priests had been vocal advocates of a negotiated resolution to the war at a time when most politicians advocated for the extermination of the insurgents. Because of this, and because these Jesuit priests were openly critical of the Duarte and Christiani governments, the army and many right-wing politicians regarded the Jesuit priests as guerrilla supporters. Nevertheless, their assassination marked a turning point. The US government, by this time under the Bush sr. administration, began pressing the government into the negotiation table. After two years of negotiations, the government and the FMLN signed a cease fire in December 31, 1991, in New York. It was almost midnight. Two weeks later, on January 16, the peace accords were signed in Mexico City.

As part of the peace accords, the army forces were purged, downsized and ordered back to its barracks; the FMLN became a political party; the State security forces (national police, treasury police, and national guard) were dissolved; and the legislative assembly passed a series of constitutional reforms as part of the accords (Vejar 2012; United Nations Security Council 1993; Ortiz Ruiz 2017).

10 Neoliberal State (1992-2019)

If the 1980s were the moment of significant political changes in the country, the 1990s and early 2000s saw a similar phenomenon in the economic sphere. After the war ended, ARENA remained in power for 17 more years. Christiani was succeeded in the presidency by his party colleagues Armando Calderon Sol (1994-1999), Francisco Flores (1999-2004) and Elias Antonio Saca (2004-2009). The four ARENA administrations implemented a series of structural economic reforms oriented towards establishing a neoliberal State. For instance, the banking system was privatized, as were the national telecommunications company (ANTEL), and the pension system. The government also attempted but failed to privatize the public health care system. This latter reform was aborted because of a massive mobilization in favor of public health. In this period, the balance of power shifted from the industrial to the financial sector, which quickly gained currency after the privatization of the banking system (Villacorta 2010; Villacorta Zuluaga 2011; Velasquez Carrillo 2012). The overarching results of these policies has been an exacerbation of criminal violence and economic insecurity because the country's GDP has grown very little, and the economy remains afloat because of the remittances sent by the Salvadoran community living abroad, primarily in the United States (Ayala, Morales, and Vega 2012).

In the political sphere, this period was marked by the binary opposition of the FMLN and ARENA, which became the two main parties of the political system. It has been suggested that in this period have become symbolic reenactments of the war (Sprenkels 2012, 2011). In this polarized political context, ARENA retained the presidency until 2009, whereas the FMLN became the predominant political force in the metropolitan area of San Salvador and other major urban centers between 1997 and 2015 (Garibay 2005). The FMLN eventually won the presidential elections of 2009 and 2014. Its two administrations were characterized by a more proactive policy of subsidies for the poor (such as providing a free glass of milk and free uniforms for children in the public school system). However, the economic policy of the FMLN administrations generally retained the neoliberal structure of the State. All the privatized sectors of the economy remained in private hands. Furthermore, progressive taxation, which had long been part of the FMLNs economic agenda while in the opposition, was dropped. The most evident case occurred in 2015, when the FMLN government introduced a bill in the legislative assembly to charge a 5% consumption tax on the telephone bill. The government implemented this tax to acquire direly needed cash to fund its security plan (AFP 2015).

Two other areas became prominent for Salvadorans in the postwar period. First, the rise of street gangs and the increase in migration, primarily towards the United States (Rocha 2017). The rise of street gangs was a direct result of the war. During the armed conflict, specially in the period of scorched-ear operations (1980-1984) many people fled the country. Many international refugees went to the United States. In this country, youth who had been recruited by either side, or who had taken no side, ended up in the same cities where the larger diasporic communities had settled: Los Angeles, New York and Chicago. Specially in Los Angeles, some youth of the

Salvadoran diaspora joined the local street gangs. After the war ended, many of those gang members were deported to El Salvador. In the first few years of the postwar, the gangs remained a relatively small urban phenomenon in the poorest neighborhoods of San Salvador and other cities. However, things changed in 2003, when the Flores administration launched an iron fist policy against gangs as part of the electoral campaign of his part to bolster the presidential candidacy of Saca, Flores' would-be successor (Martinez Dabuisson 2019).

During the Saca administration, the iron fist policy of Flores continued. This had long-term detrimental effects to public safety because the government began rounding up members of gangs from diverse areas across the country and jailing them together. Their time in prison allowed the gangs to develop regional and national networks of operation. Their sophistication allowed them to solidify and extend their territorial control (Garcia Pinzon and Rojas Ospina 2020). This issue reached a climax when, for the 2014 election, the investigative press reported that representatives of both ARENA and FMLN had negotiated with the gangs benefits for their imprisoned members and other forms of assistance in exchange for safety assurances to party affiliates to conduct the electoral campaign within gang-controlled territories (Arismendi and Rauda Zablah 2019; Martinez 2020; Cáceres 2020; Martínez d' Aubuisson and Martínez 2016; Martínez and Valencia 2016). The growing importance of gangs in electoral events, among other aspects of life in El Salvador (Salguero 2015; Carballo 2015), indicates that they are becoming powerful political actors (Hernandez Anzora 2015)

The disillusionment the economic and security policies of the FMLN administrations coupled with the citizenry's frustration with the binary politics of ARENA and FMLN, have been linked to the results of the presidential elections of 2019. In March of that year, and for the

first time since the 1992 peace accords, the candidate to win the presidential elections did not belong to either the FMLN or ARENA. Nayib Bukele, a 38-year old, anti-establishment politician and conservative politician, became the new president. Bukele had gained preeminence in national politics because he used to be the mayor of San Salvador under the flag of the FMLN. Among other issues, Bukele criticized his then party colleagues for cases of corruption in the government the administrations' unacknowledged dealings with street gangs. Nevertheless, the press also reported on Bukele's dealings with the gangs during his tenure as mayor of San Salvador (2015-2018) (Martinez 2018). As of July of 2019, and in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bukele enjoyed an approval rating of 80% (Instituto de Opinion Publica 2020).

Chapter 4 – Methodology

Any design process dealing with museums should reflect a concern for more in-depth exploration of the qualities and potentials of exhibited artefacts, as well as a concern for how museums may realize their role as educational institutions in society. (Dindler et al. 2010, 78)

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I describe a hybrid methodology that combines ethnography and participatory design. I explain how this methodology is suited to explore the mediating role of exhibition design in the negotiation of the politically contentious context of cultural trauma. My data collection methods, the semi-structured interviews, and the facilitation and observation of a design workshop allowed me to realize this goal. I also justify my decision to work in a rural school in eastern El Salvador and introduce my research participants. Finally, I acknowledge the limitations of my study: its limited external validity, its protracted timeline, and the drawbacks of this methodology with respect to working with populations with special needs.

2. Research Design

This study consisted of the organization, facilitation, and observation of a participatory design project in Perquín, a rural township in eastern El Salvador (figure 1). At this site, I used snowball and convenience sampling to recruit a team of 5-7 adolescents (12-16 years) to develop a museum exhibit about the history of the civil war in that country (1980-1992) based on

participants' perspectives.¹⁷ Fieldwork took place between May and December of 2018. It was divided into two stages: (1) acclimation and recruitment and (2) exhibition design.

Figure 1. Map of El Salvador



Source: Worldometer (2018). *Political Map of El Salvador*. www.worldometers.info.

The Fieldwork

Stage 1. Acclimation and Recruitment (1 month)

The acclimation and recruitment phase lasted two months (May and June). My original plan was to move directly into Perquín upon landing in El Salvador and begin my fieldwork. However, obtaining IRB approval for my study took longer than anticipated. In my original

¹⁷ This age range is consistent with my research goal because it allows me to work with adolescents who were born at least ten years after the peace accords of 1992, when the civil war ended.

design, I was going to work with adults ages 18-25. My later decision to instead work with adolescents in middle school triggered a more comprehensive IRB review of my dissertation project. Rather than obtaining approval in early April, I didn't receive it until the end of May, after I had already spent one month in the field.

The delayed IRB approval forced me to switch my plans. I visited Perquín once a week that month and arranged for long-term accommodations. I spent the rest of the time in San Salvador, searching for documentation that was not available in the United States and building my contact network for the study. However, I could not start my data collection until the IRB approved my project.

I moved to Perquín the first week of June. I used my first two weeks in the field to become familiar with the school, get to know the students, and identify cultural heritage institutions in the area. I approached the latter organizations, introduced my project, and sought suggestions for other people to interview. Overall, I used this time to develop a “feel” for the research space within the community (Agar 1996).

Phase 2. Exhibit Design (5 months)

I started recruiting students in the second week of June, held my initial interviews with participants in the third week, and began the design workshop in the fourth week. The design workshop lasted until the first week of December.

I modeled the exhibition design phase of my project on the insights of prior experiences in participatory design museums, or PDM (Taxen 2004; Dindler et al. 2010; Roussou, Kavalieratou, and Doulgeridis 2007; Skydsgaard, Møller Andersen, and King 2016). The design workshop met once a week (on average) and was divided into four phases:

1. *Site visits (sessions 1-5)*. We visited the three memorial sites of Northern Morazán (Museum of the Revolution, Guerrilla Camp¹⁸, and El Mozote) and two museums in San Salvador (Museum of Military History and National Museum of Anthropology or MUNA).¹⁹ Although participants had no time limit for their visits, they tended to lose interest in the exhibits after 30 or 60 minutes. When everyone was done with the exhibitions, we gathered in nearby locations (most places had areas for visitors to sit or had parks nearby) to discuss as a group. Our shortest discussion lasted between 30 and 60 minutes, except for one session that lasted just 7 minutes.²⁰ In sessions 8-10 (tables 1 and 2), participants created a series of design objects to help them find patterns in the information gathered from their interviews.²¹ At the end of this phase, participants created an exhibition plan (table 3). This plan included five exhibition themes the students developed collectively over the course of the design workshop: causes, events, consequences, emotions, and doubts.

¹⁸ When I mentioned the Guerrilla Camp, in capital letters, I am referring to this memory site, founded after the war ended. When I mentioned a guerrilla camp with lowercases, I am referring to places where the guerrilla movement set camp during the civil war.

¹⁹ Prior works have shown that there is another memorial museum in San Salvador that would have been interesting to visit: The Museum of Word and Image (MUPI) (Sierra-Becerra 2017; DeLugan 2012). Unfortunately, I was not able to take my participants there for pragmatic reasons. At MUNA, unlike the other memorial sites, the visit was focused on a temporary exhibition developed by MUNA staff in collaboration with victims of human rights violations perpetrated during the war. The exhibition was called “Oblivion is Filled with Memory.” The name was taken from a poem by late Uruguayan writer Mario Benedetti.

²⁰ This brief session took place after the one-day visit to San Salvador, when we visited both the Museum of Military History and MUNA. The trip had lasted 17 hours; this was on a Sunday. The following day, we all went to school and were exhausted. I tried holding the group discussion because there were topics I was unable to cover at the end of the field trip. I quickly realized that my participants were far too exhausted to discuss anything. I suspended the conversation and asked them to take that week off.

²¹ At the request of the IRB, I explained to my participants that the guide was only a reference. They had the option of asking their own questions instead; at least one of them did. However, I also note in chapter 5 that using this guide was one of the participants’ highlights about the workshop.

2. *Illustration (sessions 7-14).* Participants sketched their installations in an iterative cycle. First, each one drew a sketch for each theme in their exhibition plan (sessions 11-12). On a second round of sketching, they selected one theme, studied all the sketches from the first iteration corresponding to that theme, and drew a new concept (sessions 13-14). Participants had the option of either creating a synthesis of previous concepts or choosing a different one. In each case, I asked them to justify their decision in addition to explaining their concept. The sketches of this second round are the final concepts for their installations. At the end of this session, participants drew a floor plan of their exhibition (figure 2). Since we never selected a venue, they drew their floor plan under the assumption that their exhibition would take place in the same meeting room of the hotel where we held that session.
3. *Wrap-up (sessions 15-16).* Participants shared their overall impressions of the workshop and planned their public presentation (session 15). In the last session, they presented their design concept. With my participants' permission, I invited representatives of cultural heritage organizations in the area (including the three memorial sites we visited), a war veterans association, their classmates, their parents, and their teachers. In the end, participants' parents, their teachers, and representatives of two cultural heritage organizations in northern Morazán attended the event. In the two days following the presentation, I held one final set of interviews with the participants.

Table 1. Session Breakdown

Stage	#	Date	Activity	Participants
Site Visits	1	2018-07-22	Visit to the Museum of the Revolution, Living Memory of History (MR)	Dagoberto, Katerin, Robbie, Miguel, Viera, Violeta, Esmeralda, Carlos, Valentin, Donaldo
	2	2018-08-10	Visit to the Guerrilla Camp (GC)	Carlos, Dagoberto, Violeta, Viera, Esmeralda, Donaldo
	3	2018-08-17	Visit to El Mozote (EM)	Esmeralda, Dagoberto, Valentin, Viera, Violeta, Carlos, Donaldo
	4	2018-08-26	Visit to the Museum of Military History (MM)	Katerin, Esmeralda, Dagoberto, Viera, Violeta, Valentin, Carlos, Robbie
	5 ²²		Visit to the National Museum of Anthropology (MUNA)	
Concept Development	6	2018-09-07	Discussing Family History (FH)	Carlos, Esmeralda, Violeta, Donaldo, Viera
	7	2018-09-16	Discussing Participants' Interviews (INT)	Dagoberto, Valentin, Esmeralda, Carlos

²² Sessions 4 and 5 happened on the same day during a one-day trip to San Salvador. Because of this, participants in both sessions were the same.

	8	2018-10-07	Affinity Wall (AW)	Dagoberto, Carlos, Valentin, Donaldo, Esmeralda
	9	2018-10-14	Concept Map (CM)	Carlos, Donaldo, Dagoberto, Valentin, Esmeralda
	10	2018-10-21	Bubble Diagram (BD) and Exhibition Plan (EP)	Violeta, Viera, Donaldo, Esmeralda, Dagoberto, Valentin, Carlos
Illustration	11	2018-10-26	Sketches – Session 1.A	Violeta, Viera, Dagoberto, Valentin, Carlos, Donaldo
	12	2018-11-04	Sketches – Session 1.B	Esmeralda, Donaldo, Dagoberto, Violeta, Viera
	1	2018-11-11	Sketches – Session 2.A	Dagoberto, Valentin, Carlos
	14	2018-11-25	Sketches 2.B and Exhibition Map	Dagoberto, Esmeralda, Carlos, Valentin
Wrap-up	15	2018-11-30	Wrap-up: Evaluation and Preparing Final Presentation	Carlos, Violeta, Viera, Esmeralda, Dagoberto, Valentin
	16	2018-12-02	Final Presentation	Esmeralda, Dagoberto, Valentin, Viera, Violeta, Carlos, Donaldo

Source: Allan Martell

3. Research Site

I conducted my dissertation at a local school in Perquín, a municipality of the northern region of the department of Morazán in El Salvador. Northern Morazán is separated from the rest of the department by the Torola River to the South and it borders Honduras to the north. Morazán East and West borders the departments of La Union and San Miguel respectively. During the civil war of El Salvador, northern Morazán remained a guerrilla-controlled territory. Specifically, northern Morazán remained under control of the ERP, one of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front's (FMLN) five guerrilla organizations (Martín Álvarez and Cortina Orero 2014).

In the context of the general offensive of 1981, all FMLN organizations, the ERP included, launched military operations oriented toward taking major cities and large swaths of territory. This was the moment when the ERP expelled the state security forces from northern Morazán. In response, the army forces launched a series of large-scale scorched-earth operations. Most of these operations were undertaken between 1981 and 1982, but the general approach of scorched earth would be the hallmark of the governmental approach until 1984. In this context of total war, the army forces perpetrated the largest massacre of the entire civil war between December 11 and 13 of 1981 at a hamlet known as El Mozote and its surrounding settlements (Danner 1994). Located just a few kilometers from Perquín, El Mozote remained an important topic in the minds of my participants throughout my fieldwork (Armstrong and Shenk 1982).

These scorched-earth operations caused a massive exodus from the area. People fled either south, scattering across cities and towns throughout El Salvador, or across the border to

Honduras. The latter settled in several refugee camps set up by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Catholic Church with support from local and international nonprofit organizations: Colomoncagua and Mesa Grande. While the refugees at Colomoncagua came primarily from Morazán (Cagan and Cagan 1991), those at Mesa Grande were from the Salvadoran departments of Chalatenango, Cabañas, and Cuscatlan (Lara Martinez 2018, 162-79). At its peak, the Colomoncagua camp held around 8,000 people (Cagan and Cagan 1991; Binford 1997). These refugee camps, including the one in Colomoncagua, operated as concentration camps. The Honduran army surrounded their perimeter, occasionally entering the premises and capturing civilians who were presumed to be guerrilla members. Those taken captive either were found dead years later or disappeared entirely (Brenneman 2013; Landolt 2004).

Between 1988 and 1989, the refugees at Colomoncagua resettled²³. Tired of their dire conditions in Honduras, yearning for their homeland, and worried for their friends and relatives who had remained in El Salvador, the communities resettled in a region in northern Morazán between the municipalities of Meanguera and Jocoaitique. By this point, the governmental army forces and the guerrilla army had shifted their strategy toward one of guerrilla warfare. Scorched-earth operations were over, but the Salvadoran army forces still targeted civilians. In fact, since the former refugees had resettled in guerrilla-controlled territory, the army treated these individuals as guerrilla fighters, occasionally entering the resettled communities and

²³ Refugees did not return to their original hometowns from before the war, but instead resettled back in El Salvador as a community, now united by the shared struggle of survival during their time in Honduras. In this regard, the resettled communities did not really “return home,” but created a home for themselves (Cagan and Cagan 1991).

disappearing or killing some of its inhabitants (Sprenkels and Melara Minero 2017; Cagan and Cagan 1991).

After the guerrilla offensive to San Salvador in 1989 (see previous chapter for details), the community had organized into a cooperative, which adopted the name of Segundo Montes, one of the Jesuit priests murdered at the Central American University (UCA)²⁴. Throughout the 1990s, *Comunidad Segundo Montes* (CSM) retained the organizational form of democratic participation and cooperative production of crops, cattle, and basic goods that had enabled them to survive at Colomoncagua. However, the community experienced internal turmoil in the second half of the decade. Some leaders of CSM were accused of embezzling the money for the productive projects of the cooperative. These tensions were further exacerbated by efforts from the right-wing Salvadoran government of the postwar, which at the last minute rescinded a large contract with CSM to produce shoes for the police. With production already underway, the cooperative was left bankrupt by this move (Binford 2010).

Factions against and in support of the cooperative leaders struggled for control of CSM until the organization dissolved and its members scattered. By 1999, former CSM members organized along neighborhood lines in local directives. No longer retaining the same degree of influence, nor the emphasis on unified production, these local directives retained a participatory approach to advocate for community development within their jurisdictions (Binford 2010). It was in the aftermath of this fractured organizational and postwar context that most of my participants were born.

²⁴ In Spanish, *Universidad Centroamericana* (UCA).

Although Perquín was not part of CSM, the town shares a common history with this community. Perquín was the location of the main guerrilla camp in northern Morazán during the war. During the postwar period (1992-present), Perquín also saw the creation of two historical sites: the Museum of the Revolution, founded by a group of FMLN veterans, and The Guerrilla Camp. While the Museum of the Revolution received support from local museum professionals such as anthropologists and international funding agencies, the Guerrilla Camp was a local and private initiative of a person who had been displaced during the war, which he had created almost entirely with his own funding.²⁵

It was the presence of these two memorial sites that drew me to Perquín. My original plan was to install my design workshop at the Museum of the Revolution. However, I soon realized that I would need an independent setting for the open-ended and participatory exploration of the history of the war that my research project required, a setting where I could also interact with youths on a regular basis. Schools were the best alternative. Ideally, I was hoping to work with schools located in the vicinity of the Museum of the Revolution and the Guerrilla Camp; I wanted my research participants to use those exhibitions as references for their work. Because of this, I ended up working with a school in Perquín, which I will refer to as *Seeds of Hope* (SH).

SH is one of only three private schools in the whole of Morazán, and it has permission from the Ministry of Education to implement its own customized curriculum. The school was founded in 2007 as a private foundation centered on providing high-quality education for the population in the region. The school operates under the Problem-Based Learning paradigm

²⁵ Perquín is also a few kilometers away from the memorial site at El Mozote, which is dedicated to the victims of the massacre perpetrated by the Army Forces in 1981.

(PBL). PBL is an applied educational approach that is focused on facilitating students to inductively expand their knowledge by having them solve a series of carefully planned problems.²⁶

The PBL approach, and the entrepreneurial discourse to education at SH (which I discuss in the next chapter), cannot be decoupled from the neoliberal reforms of the 1990s. In 1998, the Ministry of Education launched an education reform, which reshaped the Salvadoran school system to emphasize individual responsibility and the promotion of “universal” values (DeLugan 2012). In this context, SH teachers, through a PBL approach, sought to empower students to take their education into their own hands, becoming the ones responsible to develop the necessary skills to meet the work demands of northern Morazán upon graduation from high school.

4. Subjects

Participants

Studies about transgenerational dynamics of cultural trauma (Fried-Amilivia 2011; Sosa 2011) have drawn a distinction between the different generations who experienced mass atrocities. Specifically, they have drawn a distinction between those who were old enough to personally remember the military dictatorships, those who were children at the time of those events, and those who were born once the military dictatorships were replaced by democratically elected governments. Likewise, research about memory in El Salvador has primarily focused on

²⁶ PBL is an approach to education developed within the field of medicine. It relies on confronting students with a problem for which there is not one right answer. Students are required to examine the problem and identify the knowledge they already possess regarding the problem and the knowledge they are currently missing. Then, students are expected to acquire this information. In this model, the teacher becomes a facilitator of the students’ self-directed learning experience (Savin-Baden and Major 2004).

the generations who were already adults when the war started or on the children who were born after the war (Sprenkels 2012; Ching 2016; Viterna 2003; Wood 2003). I refer to these as the prewar and postwar generations.²⁷

Some scholars, focusing on the work of heritage institutions in the capital, have argued that memory labor of memorial museums has been instrumental in transmitting the memories of the struggle of social movements to the postwar generation, those who were born after the peace accords or who were too young to hold personal memories about conflict (DeLugan 2012; Sierra-Becerra 2017). Yet no studies have explored how this generation remembers the war. Addressing this gap matters to scholars and practitioners of memory studies and museum studies because one of its central tenets is the intergenerational transmission of memory. My sample was comprised of individuals from the postwar generation: adolescents who were born after the war was finished. Therefore, they have no personal recollections about the civil war. Rather, these individuals have learned about war through their parents, friends, schools, and the media.

Prior research about the memory of the war in El Salvador has suggested a partisan divide around the war (Sprenkels 2012, 2011; Ching 2016; López Bernal 2007). According to these studies, individuals who sympathized with, collaborated with, or fought for the guerrilla army remember the civil war in similar terms to the official discourse of its former commanders. Nevertheless, research about memories of former guerrilla supporters and combatants in El Salvador have also shown some nuances in the discourse among former revolutionaries (Ching

²⁷ My classification is inspired by Palmberger's (2016) categorization of three distinct generations in present-day Bosnia-Herzegovina: those who could remember the formation of Yugoslavia, those who reached adulthood when Yugoslavia collapse, and those who were born during the Bosnia-Herzegovina period.

2016; Wood 2003; Silber 2011). The former combatants—those who were part of the rank-and-file of the guerrilla movement—tend to remember the war as a wasted effort and declare feeling betrayed by their former commanders (Ching 2016). Civilian supporters and sympathizers express disappointment for the new society that never came (Peterson and Peterson 2008). By contrast, former insurgency commanders and ranking officers tend to focus more on the opportunities the war created for the future (Ching 2016).²⁸ Regardless of their rank, former supporters and combatants also remember with nostalgia the dynamic of solidarity in the face of scarcity that was lived during the war (Silber 2011). Based on these insights, I started my fieldwork under the assumption that my participants' memories about the civil war would be marked by their parents' role during the conflict: whether their parents supported the insurgency movement or the government of El Salvador, whether their parents were part of the rank and file or high-ranking officers in either army, or whether their parents chose not to take up arms or support either side.

Recruitment

I used snowball and convenience sampling to recruit a group of seven students to hold my design workshop. To this end, I first began to volunteer at the local school as a teacher in computer programming. I chose this subject because I have experience teaching an introductory-level class about it. My role as a volunteer teacher not only allowed me to enter the school in a position of trust, but also to interact with students on a regular basis.

²⁸ Former commanders of the insurgency movement are more likely to be elected officers in the executive and legislative branches of government (Ching 2016), and former middle-ranked officers are more likely to be elected officers in municipal governments (Wood 2003; Silber 2011).

Two weeks after my public presentation to the school, when I deemed that students had already become accustomed to my presence, I worked with the history teacher and the principal to introduce my project and call for participants. I spoke in front of the multigrade classroom where all middle school students sat. Immediately after I finished my presentation, I was approached by four students who expressed interest in my project. All of them were boys. I knew from studies about group process and participatory design (PD) that the ideal size for a participatory project, such as a design workshop, oscillated between 4 and 8 people. Although the minimum ideal of four students had agreed to participate, I wanted to have a larger number of participants (seven or eight) so that I might still have enough participation even if one or two had to leave the project before we concluded the design workshop. Additionally, I wanted to make sure there would be girls among my participants.

Thus, I wrote notes for all students and their parents to explain my project once again and to call for more participants. I delivered printouts to the students at the end of classes one Monday and explained to interested students the contents of the forms. A couple of days later, still with only four participants in my study, I shared my concerns with the principal. To help me, she walked with me to the middle school classroom, pointed at three girls, called their names, and asked them to join my project. I was worried the students would interpret the principal's assertive tone as a directive. Because of this, I met with each of these students individually and insisted—as I had said when I had made the public call for participants a few days earlier—that participation was voluntary and unrelated to their evaluations or school workload. I openly expressed my concern that they may feel coerced into joining the project, and I assured them that the principal had only made a suggestion rather than a directive. In fact, I had talked with the

principal after the incident and made sure that we were on the same page on that front.

Nevertheless, the three female students the principal had singled out told me they were fine joining the project.

Protection of Human Subjects

This study was conducted with IRB approval (HUM00137984). Because I worked with underage individuals, the IRB required me to go through an exhaustive review process. To ensure the safety of my research participants, the IRB instructed me to first obtain written permission from the principal before starting data collection. I also obtained approval for each of my data collection protocols (participant observation guides and questionnaires for semi-structured interviews).

Once I had completed my pool of interested participants, I gave each of them two written consent forms: one for them to sign, an assent form; and one for their parents, a consent form. Both forms contained the same information: a description of my research project, an outline of the activities they would undertake during the workshop, and a description of participants' rights. I also obtained written consent from participants' parents to go with their children on a fieldtrip to San Salvador. This fieldtrip was a key activity of the design workshop. Although the IRB did not require me to pursue an additional consent protocol, the principal explained that local legislation in El Salvador mandates that teachers obtain parental permission for field trips. The SH principal explained that, should anything happen to students while on the field trip, the school would also be held responsible, and thus insisted that I obtained written permission for this activity when the time came. I obliged. To further build trust and ensure parental support to

the fieldtrip, the consent forms extended the invitation to one parent per participant for the trip²⁹.

One parent accepted the invitation and joined us on the trip.

In addition to the written consent at the beginning of the project, I also sought participants' consent before each session of the design workshop. Every session, I followed an IRB-approved verbal script. This script contained the same information as the written consent forms.

A critical component of the consent protocols, which I made sure to emphasize every time I asked for consent, was that participation in my project was voluntary and separate from their school activities. Because of this, I explicitly stated during my requests for consent that participants had the right to withdraw from the project at any time, without needing to offer any explanations, and that their participation in the workshop, or lack thereof, had no bearing on their academic load or their grades.

I further ensure the protection of my participants by only using pseudonyms for individuals and organizations rather than their actual names. Likewise, I omitted some information that may have been used to identify some participants based on their backgrounds. I also shared the preliminary findings of my study with some participants and asked for their ideas to better present my insights. Occasionally during interviews, some individuals would ask me to pause the recording and explain things that they would like not to be said or be phrased in specific ways. I have thus omitted certain information or phrased it in ways that addressed the participants' concerns.

²⁹ I further assured parents that those who came, along with their children would be provided meals, transportation, and entrance fees to the museums.

5. Methods

The methodology for this study combined two research methods: participatory design in museums (PDM) (Taxen 2004) and ethnography (Dube 1995; Agar 1996). I chose this hybrid approach because it allowed me to leverage the affordances and circumvent the limitations of each method. PDM aims to intervene in the museum through design, but it lacks the analytical tools to account for the context in which the design takes place as well as the effects of the design experience on the social worlds of the co-designers. For my study, the design process took place in a postwar context in a rural community. The co-designers of this study were children born between 12 and 16 years after the peace accords of El Salvador were signed in 1992. This meant that my participants had no personal memories about the events about which they were designing their museum exhibition and were surrounded by adults — both within and without their family circles — who did have such personal memories. Ethnography, on the other hand, aims to make sense of actions and meanings of participants' social worlds. Ethnography lacks, on its own, action-oriented tools to intervene in the field. However, because of its reflective nature that iteratively questions participants' assumptions and beliefs, ethnography tends to skew participants' awareness of and behavior within their worlds (Otto and Smith 2013). Given the limitations of each approach, I combined them with the goal of producing an action-oriented inquiry in which I, as the researcher, intervened in the setting through museum exhibition design and observed the impact of the design process on my participants' social worlds.

Design Workshop: Participatory Design in Museums

The design workshop that I conducted in the field was informed by the method of participatory design in museums (PDM). PDM extrapolates methods from participatory design (PD) (Muller and Khun 1993; Kensing and Blomberg 1998; Greenbaum 1991) for museum exhibition. The goal is to extend prior but non-participatory practices of exhibition design in museums (Caulton 1998). PDM was originally conceived for museums of science. However, since its goal is to mobilize PD to create content for museum exhibitions rather than technology (Roussou, Kavalieratou, and Doulgeridis 2007), it may as well be used for other types of museums such as memorial ones.

In choosing to work in PDM in the contested political space of cultural trauma and memorial museums, I am aligning myself with an academic tradition of PD that defends the role of design as an inherently political project (Irani, Vertesi, and Dourish 2010; Ogbonnaya-Ogburu et al. 2020; Asad 2019). In this line of work, scholars have discussed the role of design in addressing matters of public concern (e.g., Dixon 2020; Le Dantec and DiSalvo 2018; L. J. Bannon and Ehn 2013); in other words, issues that are controversial, that affect a lot of people, and that groups of like-minded individuals seek to act upon. Accomplishing this task often requires that designers work with vulnerable populations, such as migrant youth (Bustamante Duarte et al. 2018) or children (McNally et al. 2017).

Advocates of this strand of PD have critiqued techno-utopian orientations to design that overpromise social democratization and innovation by virtue of implementing design interventions (Bannon, Bardzell, and Bødker 2018). Instead, advocates of design as a political project have argued that the motivations behind any PD initiative are culturally situated (Lindtner and Lin 2017). These calls to bring the political nature of PD to the forefront also stem

from a concern with a gradual “watering-down” of the worker’s empowerment agenda of the 1970s (Gregory 2003), toward a more corporate-driven project that is closer in orientation to non-participatory forms of design, such as user-centered-design (UCD) (R. C. Smith, Bossen, and Kanstrup 2017; Mygind, Hällman, and Bentsen 2015).

In embracing a politically oriented PD intervention, I also seek to expand prior works around the role of cultural memory and design (Sabie, Sabie, and Ahmed 2020; Jones 2016) by engaging with the politically contentious space of cultural trauma. Prior works have largely engaged with social memory as problems to be solved, for instance, by expanding the options of family reminiscence through ubicomp technologies or by enabling migrant families to remember their countries of origin at home. By contrast, I adopt an emerging framework from human-computer interaction (HCI) that aims not to solve but to intervene in complex systems, which sometimes may actually mean not to design technology (Baumer and Silberman 2011). The space of cultural trauma is an example of one such complex system because the social recollections about instances of mass atrocities are more than the sum of the individual traumas in a given society. Instead, cultural trauma causes intergenerational dynamics that can last for centuries, such as the debates around slavery in the United States (Eyerman 2004). Scholars of cultural trauma have noticed that the debates originated in the context of cultural trauma cannot be solved, but they can be negotiated (Neal 1998; Alexander 2004; Huyssen 2003). Taking inspiration from scholarship in memorial museums, I strive to foster an intervention to cultural trauma based on creating a safe space for critical reflection (Crownshaw 2000; Sevcenko 2010) and fostering empathy (Charlton 2006; Soudien 2006) between my research participants and victims of mass atrocities. In this regard, I draw from HCI frameworks (Tomlinson 2020; Lee et

al. 2019) to promote empathy between designers and a wide array of constituents. I also draw from PD insights about collaborating with vulnerable communities through safe spaces for critical reflection (McNally et al. 2017; Skukauskaite, Noske, and Gonzales 2018; Bustamante Duarte et al. 2018). In incorporating these insights from the broader field of HCI and PD into PDM, my goal is to intervene in—but not solve—the politically contested space of cultural trauma with the context of a participatory project to design a memorial exhibition. Prior research led me to believe that this methodological framework would somehow shift the direction of cultural trauma negotiation. However, only by engaging in this project was I able to learn in how exactly did design mediate this type of trauma.

Ethnography

The other methodology that I employed for my study is ethnography. Ethnography is a research methodology that aims to make sense of people's lived experiences within their everyday environments (Agar 1996; Geertz 1988). A fundamental assumption of ethnographic research is that meanings of cultural phenomena do not inherently reside in people's minds but are instead instantiated in social action. Therefore, ethnographers examine cultural phenomena by observing people acting in the world, rather than exclusively focusing on their mental models (Wolcott 2008). The processes of observing and then writing play a mediating role in ethnographic endeavors (Van Maanen 1988). Because observation is so important in ethnographic fieldwork, researchers must account for their positionality as observers. This acknowledgement of positionality matters because it aids readers to disentangle the observers' role as mediators (Behar 1996).

The proposed approach of combining ethnography and PDM is fitting for the research question at the center of this study: how do the design processes of memorial sites shape memory? Choices in exhibition design shape the visiting experience at museums (Soudien 2006; Simon 2011). Moreover, by incorporating insights from other works from PD and the broader field of HCI, I strive to ensure that PDM enables co-designers to think deeply about the subject matter of the design process; namely, a historical instance of mass atrocity. As I will show in the next chapters, a combined approach of ethnography and PDM allowed me to apply the affordances of PD with respect to the design process of a memorial exhibition. At the same time, this mixed methodology allowed me to observe how participants' memories evolved as the design process unfolded. In this regard, my application of PDM was not centered around the outcome of the design, but the process itself. In other words, the design process was a means to my research ends. This methodology required me, as the researcher, to assume a three-fold role as investigator, facilitator, and mediator (R. C. Smith 2013). In fact, because of the role the researcher's positionality plays in making sense of his experiences in the field, stating one's positionality is a best practice that aims to make explicit the perspective from which one is approaching the study (Wolcott 2008).

Positioning Myself

I am a member of the postwar generation of El Salvador. I was born and raised in 1984 in San Salvador, the country's capital. I was six years old when the war ended in 1992. Because of this background, my only personal memories from the war relate to episodic moments, the most important of which was the three-week offensive that the guerrilla army launched on the capital in November 1989. Soon after, my mother received death threats that forced our family to seek

refuge in Guatemala for a few months, but since I was so young, my memories of this incident are more akin to an extended family trip. Thereafter, my personal experiences in remembering the war pertain to periodic conversations with friends and family, as well as my participation in annual commemorations of prominent figures who were assassinated during the conflict. Since I was a sophomore in college, and continuing for a couple of years after college, I produced short radio dramas related to key events of the civil war.

In addition to my generational background, my personal memories of the civil war have been shaped by my education in a Jesuit school and a Jesuit college in San Salvador. My religious identity as a Roman Catholic, self-identified with liberation theology, has also played a part in my personal understanding of the war. My subsequent experience pursuing a master's and a doctoral degree in the United States (US) has further shaped my position with relation to the war because the US played a key role during the armed conflict in El Salvador providing military training, armaments and money to the Salvadoran army forces.

My positionality shapes how I approach this study. I know that staff members of the Museum of the Revolution are members of the prewar generation. Specifically, they are former combatants of the insurgency movement. I have learned from personal experience that some former combatants can see me as a comrade³⁰ because of my self-identification with “the cause,” yet distrust my education in US institutions, distrust my background as “a city boy,” and look down upon me for not having fought during the conflict. As Silber (2011) noted in her study of different communities of ex-combatants and civilian supporters of the insurgency movement, the

³⁰ Actually, the word that former guerrilla members would use is *compa*, short for *compadre* or comrade in English.

forms of organizing and leadership during the civil war are portrayed as the model toward which some sympathizers and ex-combatants wish their communities would strive. In effect, this means these individuals assume that their prior involvement with the guerrilla movement places them at a higher ground than members of subsequent generations, such as myself.

To navigate this potential tension, I positioned myself with key members of this generation. I openly shared my prior experiences of being frowned upon by former ex-combatants with staff members of the Museum of the Revolution, and I explained that my goal with this research was to learn from the community rather than impose my views upon it. I also strived to be an attentive listener to the experiences of other former combatants and sympathizers, such as my participants' parents. However, I also remained aware of the possibility that some of these individuals may attempt to dictate how I should frame the museum exhibit. In fact, when I realized this could be the case at the Museum of the Revolution (the initial site I had chosen for this study), I resolved to hold most sessions of the design workshop away from the memorial sites in the area.

My positionality also shaped my interactions with the younger members of the postwar generation, such as the students whom I recruited for this study. I recruited youth from diverse backgrounds. Therefore, I expected, and did observe, that some felt reticent to promote the memory of the civil war, if not a militant attitude advocating to forget it. By contrast, other youth were committed to remember this event. These attitudes toward remembering or forgetting were correlated with the youth's parents' political affiliations. Children of former combatants or civilian supporters of the revolutionary movement tended to be more interested in remembering the war than those whose parents did not join the revolutionary movement. Because I expected to

find these divisions among my participants, I strived to recruit youth with diverse backgrounds, and I sought to leverage the museum as a forum to support diverse perspectives (Cameron 1971). In practice, this meant that I reminded my participants, every session, that they could agree to disagree, and that our challenge in the workshop was to share our differences in respectful and constructive ways. In so doing, I operated on the assumption that memory and forgetting are mutually constitutive and that a certain degree of both is necessary to achieve the goals of social justice and reconciliation of memory labor (Misztal 2001).

6. Data Collection

During recruitment, data collection consisted of informal conversations, semi-structured interviews (Seidman 2006; Kvale 1996) (table 4), and participant observations (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 2011; Wolcott 2008). Through informal conversations, I developed my network of contacts at the school, and from there I expanded to identify relevant cultural heritage and nonprofit organizations in northern Morazán.

In exchange for the school support with my study, I volunteered as a teacher. The principal introduced me to the students in the first week of June. At this time, she explained that I would not only be teaching, but also conducting a study. I held off on recruitment during the first two weeks in the field so that I could establish rapport with students and let them become accustomed to my presence.

At the end of the second week of June, I began recruitment. The principal's support to my project was instrumental in my recruitment efforts. When I informed her on the third week of June that I was having trouble finding enough participants, she suggested specific students I

could talk to as opposed to the open call for participants that I had done the week before. This strategy worked.

Table 2. Interview Protocol

Date: mm-dd-yyyy		
Time:	Being:	End:
Institution:		
Interviewee's occupation:		
Name: (a)		
Gender:		
Age:		
Interview Questions	Purposes	
Introduction (1 minute) I am Allan Martell, a PhD student and researcher specializing in Information Science at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. I would like to request an interview for my PhD research on collective memory and museum exhibits in El Salvador. I am interviewing potential research participants about their personal perspectives of the civil war in El Salvador: whether and how it matters to remember this event, and whether they would be willing to participate in designing a museum.	To clarify the purpose of my research.	
Consent Protocol (5 – minutes) Thank you for taking the time to talk to me today. About the study: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You'll face no risk other than the regular risks associated with having a conversation, and using a computer.• No right or wrong answers. I want to know about your own perspective about the civil war of El Salvador.• I will be transcribing the interview.• I would like to include some information of this interview for the dissertation I am writing about the role of design in collective remembering. If I use information from this interview, your name will not be mentioned.• The interview will last 20 minutes.• I want to record the conversation. Is that ok for you? My goal for our conversation: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To learn about your thoughts about the meaning of the civil war for Salvadorans today. Your rights: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You may leave the study at any time without needing to justify yourself. Just let me know.• You can choose to skip any and as many questions as you want.	To explain what I mean to do with the data from the interview To ensure the participant agrees to me recording the interview. To provide participant with a general idea of what types of questions she can expect. To ensure the participant is aware of his rights To ensure the participant has understood the	

Do you have any questions for me?	information I have provided thus far: the goal of the interview, my plans for the data, and his rights. To obtain his consent to proceed with the interview.
Background (10 minutes) When were you born? What school are you attending or did attend? What do your parents do for a living?	To learn general information about her To break the ice
Social Context (10 minutes) When did you first learn that there was a civil war? When? When is the subject of the war talked about in your family? When you talk about it, what do your parents say? How do your classmates/friends talk about the war? Is there anybody else with whom you would talk about the civil war? Can you tell me more about it?	To probe participant's memory about specific instances of conversations about the war. To understand the context in which she has learned about the civil war.
Museum of the Revolution (10 minutes) Have you heard about the Museum of the Revolution? Have you been there? When? <i>[If participant has been at the museum]</i> What do you think about the story the museum tells about the civil war? If it were up to you, would you change something about it? What would that be?	To probe participant's memory about the Museum of the Revolution and the story it tells about the war.
Positionality - Reflection (10 minutes) Imagine I am a foreigner who has no idea that there was a war in El Salvador but is curious to learn about it. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you briefly tell me what was the war of El Salvador all about? • How it happened? • How important it is for Salvadorans to remember the civil war? • What do Salvadorans gain from remembering the war <i>[or forgetting if participant claims it's not worth remembering this event]</i>? 	To motivate participant to reflect about what the war means to her.
Gauging Interest (5 minutes) If you were given the chance to participate in the design of a museum exhibit about the war, would you do it?	To determine whether interviewee is interested in participating in the study.

<p><i>[If participant claims the war should be forgotten]</i> And if instead you were given the chance to mount an exhibit explaining all the reasons why the war should be forgotten, would you participate then?</p>	
<p>Closure (1 minute)</p> <p>Is there something else you would like to add?</p> <p>Those were all my questions. Thank you for your time!</p>	<p>I want to give my participant a chance to say anything she wants about the conversation. This question will diminish the risk that I miss relevant information which I may have not considered. Additionally, the question will hint at her that the interview is about to end so that my following statement, thanking her for her time, may seem expected.</p>

(a) Identifying information was kept at a separate location. Participants will be identified with pseudonyms.

Source: (Kvale 1996)

At the beginning of the design process, I asked participants for permission to audio-record their presentations. Moreover, I started all sessions of the design workshop by reminding students of their rights as research participants and asking them to renew their permission for me to record the day's session.

In preparation for the site visits, I asked five probing questions to focus their attention:³¹

- What is the story told at this site?
- Who is this story for?
- How is the story told?
- Why is this story important (or not)?

³¹ The idea of offering guiding questions comes from Wolins, Jensen and Ulzheimer (1992) whereas inspirations for the specific questions are inspired by the factors that guided Violi's (Violi 2012) and Soudien's (2006) close reading of multiple memorial sites. Both authors started with gauging how design decisions convey a story, related its pertinence to a target audience (either explicitly stated in the exhibition floor or assumed by the researches), the resources used to convey the story through exhibition design, and the significance of the story.

- How does this site resemble or differ from the others you have visited in this project?

During the site visits and group discussions that followed, I took notes—also known as jottings (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 2011)—of my observations as participants produced design objects and wrote “scene memos” that helped me identify rich moments (Agar 1996). In other words, I documented my observations about participants’ statements and actions. I also paid attention to occurrences in the field that moved me in the sense of surprise, annoyance, or boredom. In this manner, I kept a record of the role of my own beliefs, values, and research focus in shaping this study. During the stages of concept development and illustration, I took pictures of participants’ design objects and wrote descriptive memos about their design concepts.

7. Data Analysis

Following Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña’s (2014) methods for qualitative data analysis, I divided the analysis process in three steps: *data condensation*, *data display*, and *conclusion drawing*. Data condensation allowed me to propose relationships between variables through visual displays, such as matrices and charts. In the earlier stages of analysis, these displays helped me to identify patterns. In later stages, as I gauged the relationship between these patterns and my research questions, a cross-sectional analysis of my displays allowed me to draw the conclusions of my study. Although I present each step as separate, I performed data condensation and data display concurrently and iteratively, and I arrived at my conclusions gradually through these first two steps. However, I present them here in linear order for the sake of clarity.

1. Data Condensation

I composed scene memos based on my daily experiences. Although I hired three research assistants to help me transcribe my interviews and design workshops, I always read through and cleaned the transcripts. Afterward, I wrote memos summarizing the transcripts. This allowed me to ground myself in my data. Following the insights from Saldaña (2016), I conducted an inductive coding scheme. I used descriptive and in-vivo coding on the summaries of my transcripts and then contrasted those codes against the original transcripts. I wrote analytic memos as I accumulated codes to help me define and understand the discursive spaces at play in the design workshop.

I focused my attention on comparing data across participants, design milestones, and design affordances of products (e.g., affinity walls, exhibition plan, sketches). Furthermore, and based on insights from the literature on memory in El Salvador (Silber 2011; Sprenkels 2011; López Bernal 2007; Binford 2016; Alarcón Medina and Binford 2014), I also paid attention to the possible correlation between the role of my participants' parents during the war—in supporting either side or none during the conflict—and my participants' design products. As I did this, I remained open to refocus my attention on other types of patterns.

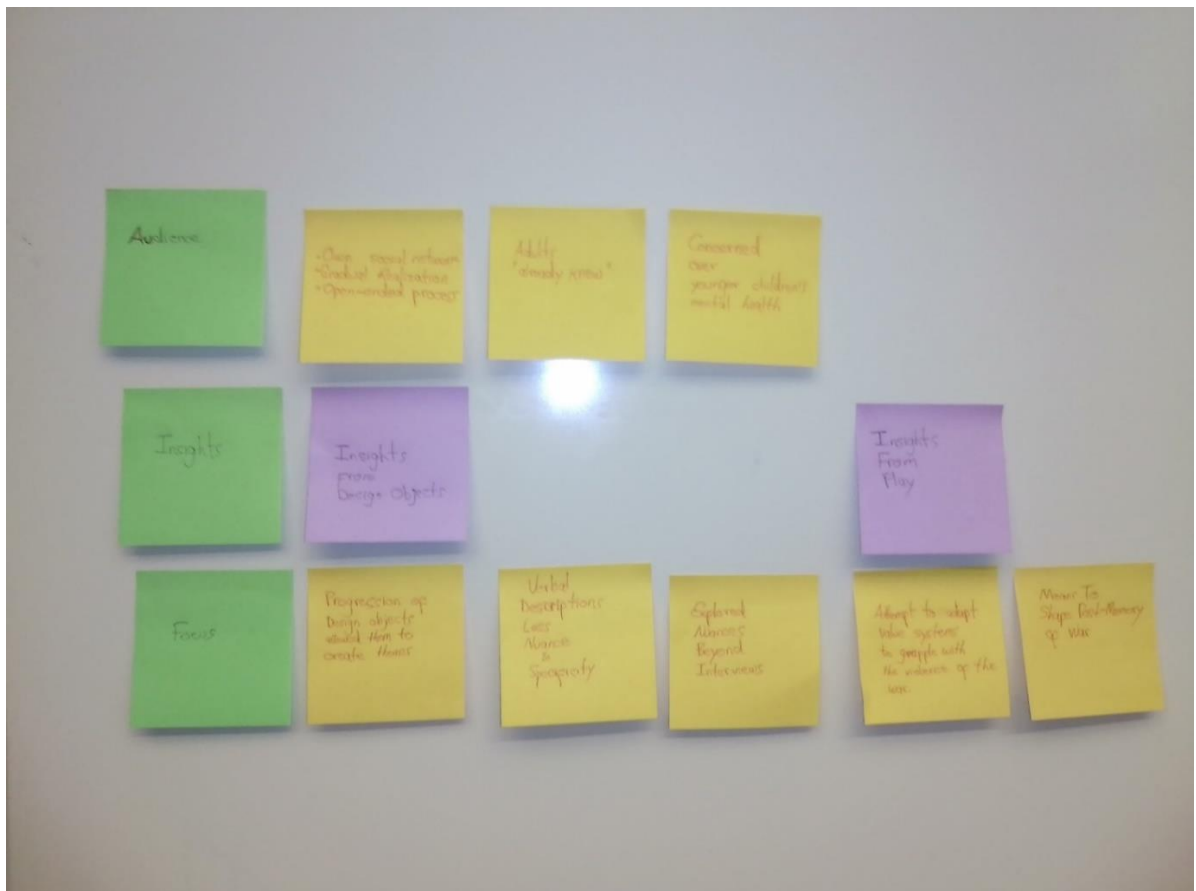
2. Data Display

I created several data displays during the data analysis phase (Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña 2014). Most displays took the form of matrices to compare data. For each display, I wrote analytic memos that allowed me to articulate my findings (Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña 2014).

3. Conclusion Drawing

In order to draw my conclusions, I used a cross-referential analysis of affinity walls (figure 3, table 5) (Scupin 1997) and literature summary matrices (Feak and Swales 2009, 13) to identify the connections between the findings in my data and the gaps in the literature. I then wrote analytic memos to encapsulate the result of my cross-referential analysis. The collection of analytic memos in later stages of the design process served as the starting point to draft the present manuscript.

Figure 2. Section of affinity wall



Source: Allan Martell. I did not have a camera with enough fidelity to capture the entire affinity wall in one photograph. Thus, I converted the matrix on a spreadsheet (table 5)

Table 3. Sample Matrix for Drawing Conclusions

Context	Postmemorial Exhibition										
	Deeply held thoughts and beliefs of children who were born after the war					“Our opinion”: Esmeralda, Donaldo, Dagoberto.					
Relevance	Community engagement with museum work leads to deeper experiences with the subject of the exhibition, more so than with pre-made interactions										
RQs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">How does a participatory design process mediate cultural trauma?How does play shape the participatory design process of a memorial exhibition?										
Insights	Museum Visits					Design Objects			Play		
Site	MR	GC	EM	MUNA	MM						
Audience	Anybody who wants to know	Anybody who wants to know	Anybody who wants to know	Anybody who wants to know	Anybody who wants to know	Open-ended process	Adults “Already know”	Concern over younger children’s mental health			
			“People who are not from the area”		For the army forces themselves	Own social network	Gradual realization				
Focus	Comprehensive story of the war from guerrilla standpoint	Everyday life at guerrilla camps	Suffering of civilians	Suffering of civilians		Progression of design objects allowed them to create themes	Verbal description loss nuance and detail	Explored meaning beyond interviews	Attempt to adapt value systems to existence of atrocities during war	Means to shape postmemory of war	
		Guerrilla armament	One massacre	Entire civil war	“Military campaign”						
		Guerrilla Ingenuity			Monterrosa a hero						
	Never again: Caution against intolerance	Never again: Caution against intolerance	Never again: Caution against intolerance	Never again: Caution against intolerance	Whitewash history to soldiers’ liking						
	Apolitical (nonpartisan)	Apolitical (nonpartisan)									
Style	Mutual Construction and Reflection					Iterative “dialogue” over multiple objects	Open exploration of themes	Inputs from interviews and visits	Lighten the mood	Self-regulation	Dark play

Source: Allan Martell. This matrix is a representation of an affinity wall used to draw the conclusions of chapter 6.

8. Limitations

The field of PDM is relatively new, and design researchers continue to extrapolate PD methodologies from technology design into the realm of museum exhibition design. Moreover, neither ethnography nor PDM are intended to produce knowledge that is generalizable to entire populations. Instead, both methodologies provide insights that speak to larger processes happening beyond specific sites (Wolcott 2008; Agar 1996; Taxen 2004; Dindler et al. 2010). In exploring the role of the process of exhibition design in shaping memories of mass atrocities, this project sought to draw insights about the novel opportunities to intervene in the space of cultural trauma and to expand the methodological toolkit of human rights museology to promote critical reflection and emotional engagement.

Another limitation inherent to this methodology lies in its protracted timeline. The workshop required sixteen two-hour sessions spread across six months (table 1). Regardless of this, participants were unable to implement the production stage because we ran out of time. In fact, toward the end of the project, three participants began missing sessions. Two of them explained in their last interviews that they were tired and thought for a moment about dropping out. This result is consistent with an earlier PDM study to design an online program on art conservation (Roussou, Kavalieratou, and Doulgeridis 2007), which found that the time commitment the process demanded made the methodology unfeasible for regular use within the museum.

Finally, while my results indicate that my research design was effective in identifying the mechanisms through which the design process mediated memory over the design process, I also found some evidence to suggest that my methodology is not fit for people with special needs.

The youngest of my participants, Carlos, a twelve-year old child who experienced parental neglect at home, remained consistently divorced from interactions with the rest of the group. Research in developmental psychology has shown that children who experience parental neglect may develop trauma and that one of the indicators of such trauma is dissociation (Cori 2017). Admittedly, I am not trained in psychology, and thus I am not offering a clinical diagnosis, but I am sharing my conjecture, reinforced by my seven months of interactions with Carlos, that he may have been dissociating. This situation shaped my experience observing and interviewing Carlos's design work because I often felt his design objects were like locked chests for which my methodology was the wrong key.

Chapter 5 — Solving the Puzzle

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I analyze the intergenerational dynamics of memory at play in *Seeds of Hope* (SH), the school where I did my fieldwork. To this end, I present the findings from my semi-structured interviews with teachers and participants, as well as some observations from the design workshop. Although I discuss the workshop more fully in chapter 6, included here are the findings pertaining to participants' postmemory (aka cultural trauma at a generational remove) and their experiences interviewing their parents and neighbors about the history of the war. To start, I introduce the state policy of blanket amnesty and the attempts from civil society to honor the victims of the war.

I first describe the background of the four teachers I interviewed: the principal, the deputy principal, the director of instruction, and the history teacher. I then dive into their memories of the civil war. Thereafter, I discuss the relationship between the pedagogic approach of the school and their transversal and applied learning strategy to teach multiple subjects through projects, including history. I then relate this pedagogical approach to a decision of the school to teach the civil war through special guest-speaker events and the omission of this topic from the school curriculum.

After that, I describe the background and memories of the seven participants of my study. I highlight how my participants' interest in the history of the war defies their teachers' preconceptions about students' alleged rejection of politics. Specifically, I notice how their participation in the design process (such as visiting memorial sites and interviewing friends and

family) shifted their perceptions about the history of the war. To wrap up this chapter, I examine how the memory dynamics at play within the school create a fragmentary experience of the past for students and how students actively seek to piece together that puzzle.

2. Memory Politics in Postwar El Salvador

As explained in chapter 3, where I presented a historical overview of El Salvador, the sociopolitical transition of the postwar period (1992-1995)³² was marked by the passing of an amnesty law. This law prevented for many years the criminal prosecution of individuals for human rights violations.³³ Regardless of this state-mandated impunity, private initiatives of individuals, universities, and human rights organizations allowed the dissemination of information about the civil war—what specialists in transitional justice would call “the right to truth” (Groome 2011).

This memory labor has included the publication of hundreds of book memoirs by former soldiers, army officers, guerrilla commanders, rank and file members of the insurgent army, and politicians across the political spectrum (Ching 2016). These memorialization efforts have also included museum exhibitions (DeLugan 2012; Sierra-Becerra 2017), a national memorial to the civilian victims of the war located in San Salvador, and smaller-scale memorials across the country, such as the memorial to the victims of the El Mozote massacre (Alarcón Medina and Binford 2014) in Morazán and lesser-known memorials across Chalatenango (Silber 2004; Lara

³² The United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) was formed in 1992 to monitor the implementation of the Peace Accords signed that year between the FMLN and the government of El Salvador. The commission closed operations in 1995.

³³ The law, however, was annulled by the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court on July 13, 2016 (*Contrapunto* 2018).

Martinez 2018).³⁴ The state also included the civil war in the school curriculum. Furthermore, studies about history education in El Salvador have noticed that postwar education policies and memory politics shaped the students' experiences of memory by virtue of silencing, through omission, the mass atrocities perpetrated during the war (Gellman 2015; Gellman and Bellino 2019). While recent scholarship has explored the intergenerational dynamics of memory in the school context in Guatemala (M. Bellino 2017), the same has not yet been accomplished in El Salvador; the intergenerational dynamics of memory in the postwar have not yet been studied in the school context.³⁵ This chapter aims to partly remedy this gap by focusing on the intergenerational dynamics at play at SH. To meet this goal, I draw from my observations and interviews at SH. To close the chapter, I will explain how the intergenerational memory dynamics at play in the school expand our understanding about cultural trauma in that context.

3. Teachers' Memories

Profiles

Three of the four teachers I interviewed were born between 1975 and 1982, whereas the remaining one, the history teacher, was born in the 1990s, after the peace accords. This means that three of the teachers are members of the war generation, and only one belongs to the postwar

³⁴ Not all these types of memorialization were sponsored by the state. In fact, most were private initiatives. My point here is that the postwar climate allowed for such forms of public memorialization in ways that were not as common in the early post-dictatorship in the Southern cone, in countries such as Chile, Uruguay or Argentina.

³⁵ Ethnographies of postwar communities in El Salvador have noticed that former guerrilla combatants experience disillusionment when confronted with the promises of a revolution during the 1970s and 1980s and the neoliberal reality after the peace accords (e.g., Wood 2003; Silber 2011). While these studies do mention, tangentially, how the postwar generation remembers differently (meaning with less interest than their parents), these studies have not focused on the school context. Others have talked about civil society efforts to transmit the memory of the war to postwar generations (Hernandez-Rivas 2011; Sierra-Becerra 2017), but these studies focus on the memorial labor as performed by activists rather than the dynamics of memory from the perspective of the targeted youth.

generation. The war-generation teachers worked in administrative positions: Virginia, the school principal; Nestor, the deputy principal; and Irving, the director of instruction. Karen, the one teacher from the postwar generation, taught oral and written expression. This is the subject through which the students learned history, performing arts, and Spanish composition. Among these four teachers, two were too young to have personal memories about the war: one was born shortly before the Peace Accords were signed and the other shortly after.

With the exception of Karen, who was born in the western city of Sonsonate, the teachers had all been born in northern Morazán; that is, in the municipalities that lie between the northern bank of the Torola River and the Honduran border. However, like their students, the teachers come from families who used to live in the region, who were forced to flee as soon as the conflict started, and who lost relatives to the war.

Virginia

Virginia was born in the late 1970s in a remote township at the edge of the border between Honduras and El Salvador. Although Virginia was only five years old in 1980, she vividly remembers the day when the National Guard swept into her hometown asking for the whereabouts of all the catechists.³⁶ Virginia's father was one such individual. However, thanks to a last-minute message from a relative working for the National Guard, her father was able to

³⁶ As explained in the previous two chapters, the church, inspired by a social doctrine that called for a preferential option for the poor, played a critical role in effecting a cultural transformation in how the peasantry conceived of their socioeconomic situation. This change in doctrine, which began in the early 1970s, coincided with the strategy of the insurgents of creating mass political fronts in the same decade. From the perspective of state security forces, this equated with having some segments of the church aligning with the subversives. The strategy of violent repression to quell dissent was thus extended to the catechists, which the National Guard regarded as ring leaders of the guerrilla forces.

escape. Before he did, he also managed to tip off other catechists. Four of the five catechists managed to escape; the guard found and killed the fifth one.

After escaping the National Guard, Virginia and her family became exiled in Nicaragua. At that time, Nicaragua had just begun the Sandinista revolution (1979-1990) and the counter-revolutionary war led by supporters of the deposed dictator. In this context, she fondly and nostalgically remembers the communal system of cooperation that, she affirms, characterized Nicaragua at this time.³⁷

In the meantime, her father went back to El Salvador where he volunteered as a tailor for the insurgency, making guerrilla uniforms. Her older brother joined the guerrilla army; he was killed in 1989 during a guerrilla offensive in San Salvador. Virginia vividly remembers what her father told her mother when informing her about the death of their son. Virginia's voice shatters, almost to the point of tears, as she recalls her father's words: "We are part of the Salvadoran people. We also have to give our share and overcome it." This refers to the death of his son. Virginia's family never found her brother's body.

Nestor and Irving

Like Virginia, Nestor's (1989) and Irving's (1984) families also went into exile. However, unlike the principal, their families went to the refugee camp in Colomoncagua, Honduras. Years later, in 1989, these relatives joined their community's exodus to resettle back in northern Morazán, even though the war was still raging. Irving, who was born in the camps, describes

³⁷ Interestingly, the key tenets of Virginia's portrayal of Sandinista Nicaragua—unity in the face of external aggression and solidarity in the face of scarcity—were the same as those described by participants whose families lived at the refugee camp in Honduras during the civil war.

with nostalgia the solidarity and alternative economy of scale that his community developed while in exile:

Everything was well organized. People worked, worked very hard. But it is not like in this environment in which we live now. Nobody received a salary. Everything was one more earning. How do I say it? What do I call it? I don't know. It was, to say it somehow, everything was cooperative. They grew vegetables, then they distributed the harvest. They produced or they had a farm and they fattened pigs and chickens and distributed the finished products. There was no direct remuneration, but payment in kind.³⁸

Both Irving and Nestor had aunts and uncles who fought for the guerrillas. In Nestor's case, his father became a guerrilla fighter as well, and he was killed in combat in 1991. By contrast, Irving's father was not a guerrilla fighter, but he did join the cooperative that fellow neighbors formed upon resettling in northern Morazán. Irving explains that the Salvadoran army forces treated the resettlements as guerrilla camps. Because of this, the army launched operations to destroy the entrepreneurial efforts of the cooperative, such as their farms and crops. On one such occasion, the army entered a chicken farm and killed all the chickens.

For Irving's father, that military invasion of his community was the last straw. His body could not handle any more. The many years of having been harassed by soldiers took a heavy toll on his body. First, he had experienced the years of military encirclement and incursions by the Honduran army in Colomoncagua. Now, he was experiencing the same kind of harassment, but by the Salvadoran army in Morazán. His body gave way. While the soldiers were still at the farms killing the chickens, Irving's father had a heart attack and died.

³⁸ As mentioned earlier, it is possible to notice a parallel between the nostalgia for the lifestyle of solidarity and unity at the camp. This remained the case even though Irving and Nestor were aware that the camps in many ways functioned as concentration camps. See the sections on historical overview (chapter 3) and the research site description (chapter 4) for further context.

Karen

The experience of Karen's family during the conflict shares the same tenets of forced displacement and struggle to survive, but from a different position. Karen's uncle and grandfather on her mother's side enrolled in the army forces before the war started and spent the time in the western department of Sonsonate. Her mom initially lived in Perquín, where she owned a business. However, Karen explains that the guerrilla army would steal from her mother's store: "We could say that they [the guerrillas] stole because they asked her [for groceries] and there was no monetary compensation."

Later, in 1984, her mother was kidnapped by the guerrillas and taken to Joateca, which at this time had become a guerrilla stronghold. Karen's mother was eventually released, but the two other people who were taken alongside her died in captivity. Karen does not know why the guerrillas killed the other two captives but released her mother. Upon her release, Karen's mother fled to Gotera, Morazán's capital, and then to Sonsonate, to be closer to her father (Karen's grandfather). Later, her mom married a soldier who had been drafted early in the war and who was deployed at the northwestern department of Chalatenango. When Karen was born in 1994, her family was still living there; they moved back to Perquín in 2005.

Patterns

The four teachers agree that remembering is important to avoid repeating the past, but they differ in how to approach remembering. For Irving, the director of instruction, remembering the war is "useful." He and Virginia argue that the war was necessary because, in Irving's words, "the humiliation of the people was too much to bear." Both he and Virginia think that their students should be more aware of what happened back then. Irving believes that "just the fact

that the National Guard is gone made it [the war] worth it.” He is referring to one of the agreements in the peace accords signed by the guerrilla movement and the Salvadoran government. The accords consisted of dissolving the three State security forces that had existed up to that point: national guard, treasury police and national police. These forces were replaced by a civilian police force (United Nations Security Council 1993).

Hatred and Reconciliation

Nestor calls for a history that integrates the perspectives of both warring factions so the country can move forward. He noted that there is an ideological hatred that continues to divide communities in El Salvador, depending on which side of the civil war each person supported. Nestor believes this happens for two main reasons. One is the lack of nonpartisan sources of historical knowledge:

There is no registry, which one can consult, that faithfully tells history. One example is that the majority of books written about the war tell anecdotes, but this is a partial history, because it is already biased. There are few academic studies about the war, and that is a very big void. If I read a book about someone who joined the guerrilla movement, I will have his perspective, I will only have his version of the story. If I read someone who joined the army forces, I will also only have a part of the story. We need a story that is more faithful to what happened, and that tells the facts, beyond the ideological gaze of each side.

The other factor is that the wounds of the war remain wide open, and these wounds, Nestor believes, are connected to the memory of the conflict. He says both remembering and forgetting are important. While remembering can ensure that the past is not repeated, forgetting can help prevent people from becoming stuck in the past and thus enable them to move forward.

Karen’s position toward remembering the conflict is similar, but more confrontational. She asserts her desire for memory to serve as a deterrent for future violence. At the same time,

Karen asserts that the way people remember now is perpetuating conflict. To illustrate her point, she recalls a conversation she had with a fellow classmate during her time in high school:

I believe that history is very important to not repeat these events [the civil war], but not to revive the hatred and discord within people. We had an experience with one of my classmates when I was in high school. He got angry saying that the soldiers were a bunch of dogs, and they [the soldiers] had killed his family, but in the end he does not know if it was them [the soldiers] that killed them [her classmate's family]. So, historical memory is very important, as long as it is exposed to and used with the new generations as a form of remembering things that we don't want to live again, but not to generate discord or quarrels.

Karen explained that most of what she knows from the time of the war comes from her father, an ex-soldier. Her father taught her that only those who had directly witnessed violence firsthand could make statements about that time. Even with such knowledge, Karen insisted that people should be aware that war violence was exerted in equal measure by both sides. She saw this premise as logical because there were two sides fighting, and it should follow from this fact that each side had perpetrated half of all the violence.

Emotions

All teachers had strong emotions associated with the war. For Karen, she felt unjustly mistreated by people who she believes misunderstand the role of the army forces during the war and who “don't realize” that the suffering was evenly perpetrated by both warring factions. Likewise, Karen seems to feel unjustly mistreated by peers like her high school classmate, who think they know “who did what” during the war, when her truth is that nobody can precisely ever know what happened. The fact that her maternal grandparent, her uncle, and her father were in the army is something she wants to feel proud of, and she seems to experience criticism from those who accuse the military as a challenge to her own belief system. These challenges were not

an issue for Nestor, Irving, and Virginia because their memories aligned with the view that the Salvadoran army forces were the aggressors. This perspective is most common among people who identified with the insurgency movement (Voigtlander 2016; Sprenkels 2011, 2012). These strong discrepancies in their memories may explain why teachers do not talk about the war among themselves.

The other teachers showed signs of grief in remembering the war. Virginia openly showed her grief over the death of her brother. In fact, she briefly interrupted this portion of her narrative to cry. Likewise, Irving and Nestor became sad in remembering the deaths of their respective fathers. For Irving, sadness became evident in his momentary pausing, gulping, sighing, and looking at the mountains in the distance when he told his story. For Nestor, his sadness was evident in the lowering of his gaze and pitch as he recalled his father's death.

4. The Curricula

Irving and Nestor explained that SH operates with a special pedagogical model known as problem-based learning (PBL).³⁹

Open-Ended Discussion

Nestor described PBL as an exploratory approach to learning in which the teacher becomes a moderator and senior co-learner to her students. Rather than asking closed-ended questions (e.g., Who were the key leaders of both factions of the war? What year did the war end?), PBL requires the teacher to openly express her positionality regarding a topic and disclose the limits of her knowledge. "The teacher is there partly because she knows a bit more than

³⁹ the field site section in chapter 3 for a description.

students by virtue of her knowledge and experience, but primarily because she is trained to guide the students in their learning.” The teacher’s skill as a mentor is reflected in her open-ended questions, “questions that generate yet more questions” and allow students to position themselves in relation to the topic and reflect upon its relevance to their lives (e.g. What have you heard about the civil war? As you heard these stories, what did you feel? What would it be like for you to live in a country at war? Do you know how many countries are at war at present?).

Applied Learning

Unlike Nestor, Irving does not dive into the strategies for eliciting a reflection of PBL. Rather, he explains that PBL is uniquely fit to northern Morazán due to the entrepreneurial mission of SH to ensure a good education for people in the region. “If we say that the government does not warrant high-quality education, we have started in the wrong place. We have to propose what do we do [about it].” He then asserts that BPL enables SH to fulfill its entrepreneurial educational mission through applied learning. To illustrate his point, he offers the example of a project to create a water collection tank.

Like many communities across Morazán, SH is connected to the local water supply network, but water only runs twice a week. This is a problem because the school has a population of sixty-three people: fifty-three students, seven teachers, and three administrative staff.⁴⁰ This community requires a daily supply of water not only to drink, but also to wash the dishes of the cafeteria and to operate the restrooms. To ensure this daily supply, SH installed a

⁴⁰ These figures correspond to 2018 and are based on my observations of staff and teachers throughout my fieldwork and the total number of students reported by Virginia and Irving.

water collection tank on top of the cafeteria building, which was already in place by the time I arrived in the field. Irving explained that the school used the setup of the tank as a learning opportunity; students were given a base amount of daily water per person and tasked with finding out the population of SH. With this data, students calculated the amount of water required to supply the entire school for a week. This, Irving stated, was a mathematical problem. Then, students had to measure the size of the cafeteria rooftop, calculate the weight of that water, and suggest an ideal measurement for the tank that the roof would be able to bear. Fulfilling this task required students to apply physics. Students then had to write a justification explaining why a tank was an ideal solution for SH rather than a well or some other intervention. To write this document, Irving said with confidence, students had to apply their skills in written expression.

Civil War Omitted

Irving expressed unwavering certainty about the affordance of PBL to transversally cover multiple school subjects. However, he was at a loss when I asked him about incorporating the topic of the civil war into the school curriculum. I told him I learned that the civil war was not included in the curriculum at SH. At this point, Irving switched his statements from active to passive voice. He confidently explained that the curriculum was a work in progress and that the topic of the war would surely be incorporated the following year. However, in a follow-up interview with Virginia, I learned that Irving had privately expressed to her his concern that there was no easy way to incorporate the civil war into the curriculum. As Virginia conveys the story, Irving thought that none of the teachers at SH were prepared to teach this subject. He justified his assessment on the fact that Karen, and the other teachers in the school, had been born after the end of the war. Therefore, they had no personal memories that could inform their lessons.

Moreover, Irving added, schools in San Miguel, where all the teachers had been trained, had no special emphasis on history education, and the Ministry of Education (MINED) offered no helpful resources to support this task.

Virginia handled Irving's concerns by taking matters into her own hands. Before I arrived in the field, Virginia organized and facilitated two guest talks at SH with representatives of the two sides that fought the war. She says she did not coordinate this event with Karen because, as the principal, she "did not have to." The first guest speaker was a driver of one of the vans that takes students back and forth between SH and their homes every day. This person had been a radio operator for the guerrilla army during the war. The other speaker was an ex-soldier of the army forces. In each case, Virginia asked the speakers to talk about their war experiences and to answer students' questions.

Given that Virginia did not coordinate these guest talks with Irving or Karen, her initiative was dependent on her own personal interest in educating her students about the war. It has the advantage of allowing children to interact with people who lived one aspect of the war: combat. However, there are other angles that could be explored, such as the suffering of the victims, the historical causes of the war, or the geopolitical context in which the war took place. Admittedly, one reason Virginia would not engage in the latter two angles is because, as Irving had already explained to me, there are no resources for schoolteachers on these subjects. The fact that this activity is not part of the curriculum also means that students have a one-time opportunity in the school year to learn some information about the war, but teachers have no way to gauge student learning outcomes related to those events.

While it would seem from this narrative that students have very limited opportunities to learn about the history of the war, this does not mean they know nothing about it. In fact, the students I talked with expressed deeply held beliefs and emotions about the war. These perspectives and emotions were shaped by their family histories; specifically, by the ways in which the war affected their families and the ways in which their families spoke, or avoided speaking, about the armed conflict.

5. Students' Memories

Profiles

The students who participated in this study were all born between 2002 and 2006. They all came from families who fled Morazán in the early 1980s due to the war. In most cases, their families went to the refugee camps in Colomoncagua in Honduras. However, there were two students whose families migrated to eastern towns within the country. At the time of my fieldwork, five of the seven participants lived in one of the neighborhoods that were part of Comunidad Segundo Montes (CSM),⁴¹ whereas the remaining two lived in municipalities further north. The accounts students gave about their own stories was shaped by their widely varied willingness to provide details and answer follow-up questions. The following profiles vary in length accordingly.

Valentin

⁴¹ CSM was founded in late 1989 and early 1990. The history of this community and its complex relationship to the insurgency movement has been extensively described by McElhinny (2004) and Binford (2010).

Valentin was born in the early 2000s⁴². His family used to live in Perquín, but at some point early in the war, a bomb fell close to his parents' house and they fled. His family moved to Hato Nuevo, a municipality neighboring San Miguel, the main Salvadoran city to the east. Valentin's parents migrated to the United States in 2003 when he was one year old; he has lived with his maternal grandparents ever since. His parents had two more children after they immigrated. Valentin met his younger brothers once when they visited, but he has never met his parents in person. Due to their immigration status, Valentin's parents are not allowed to travel. Since he was seven, his parents have insisted that he make the journey north with a coyote, but he has always refused. He deems his grandfather and grandmother, ages sixty-nine and sixty-seven respectively, as his actual parents. His grandfather works the land and his grandmother is a housekeeper.

Valentin has occasionally talked about the war with his grandparents:

At home they liked to tell stories and among them there were stories about the war and how they had to move from one place to the next. We mostly talked about why we were in San Miguel if they were originally from Perquín. That is how I learned about it [the war].

These conversations always took place in the afternoon, after his grandfather returned from the fields. His grandfather used to drive a delivery truck, delivering sodas to small stores across Morazán. Many times, as he went about his driving, Valentin's grandfather was caught in the crossfire between the army and the guerrillas. Once, he had to leave the truck behind and throw himself into the ditch to avoid the gunfire.

⁴² Henceforth, I do not mention the year of birth of the other students to avoid repetition and protect their confidentiality. All of them were born between 2002 and 2006.

Valentin is also aware that three additional family members were guerrilla combatants: Rafael, his paternal grandfather; Marcos, his father; and Cesar, his father's brother. Valentin describes Rafael as stern and untalkative and does not keep in touch with him. Valentin also assured me that he is not alone in the estrangement. During the war, Valentin says Rafael accused Cesar of being a spy and thus had him executed. Marcos stopped talking to Rafael for many years after that, although they began to exchange occasional and succinct messages when Valentin turned three. He assures me that he makes both his grandfather and his father favors, by which he means he creates excuses to motivate one to talk to the other. However, he did not give me any examples of such "favors."

Donaldo

Donaldo was born in 2003. He vaguely remembered that his grandfather supported the guerrillas in smuggling guns and was killed during the war. However, he does not know how or when. Donaldo learned there had been a war through his schooling, rather than from his parents. He was the only participant in the study who said at the beginning that he thought the war should be forgotten: "I would like for the war to be forgotten a bit so that we did not remember bad things like El Mozote." However, he still decided to join the project "first to clarify some doubts, but not with much interest. I would still do it because I would like to know more." Donaldo did not say which doubts he would like to dispel, even when I asked him directly about it.

When I asked why he was joining a museum exhibition about the civil war, even though he thought that forgetting was better, he responded that people who remember the war "get the memories of their relatives and a bit of experience, but in a certain sense they don't get anything

out of it [remembering] because it is not good to remember tragedies.” He added that forgetting was a means to “stop suffering.”

At the time of the study, Donaldo was living with both parents in a hamlet on the outskirts of Perquín. His mother was a member of the parent advisory council of SH, and his father was a professor at the Father Segundo Montes Institute of Technology (FSMIT). FSMIT is the only higher education institution in northern Morazán. It offers associate degrees in civil engineering and tourism.

Through conversations with Donaldo’s teachers, I learned that his older brother, Martin, graduated in 2017, the year before my project. The teachers added that Donaldo’s parents tend to compare him to his older brother, which may explain why he had “a rebel attitude.” While Donaldo never mentioned anything similar in our interactions, I did get the impression that his father was indeed strict with him. I saw this during Donaldo’s presentation of his final project at the end of the school year. Donaldo’s father was a member of the five-juror panel. When Donaldo finished his presentation, his father expressed with an impatient tone, “your project does not match the quality of this school.” Donaldo fell silent, lowered his eyes, said nothing, and waited until he was told to make room for the next presenter. I tried talking to him afterward, but he declined and assured me he that he was fine.

Dagoberto

Dagoberto lives with his mother and his grandmother in one of the neighborhoods of the *Comunidad Segundo Montes* (CSM). His dad left them when he was little, and he has never met him. Dagoberto spends his time after school at the grocery store his mother owns. He occasionally tends to the register. Although Dagoberto started his basic education at SH, like the

other participants of this study, he switched to a public school when he was nine; his mom could no longer afford the school fees. Dagoberto experienced bullying at the new school. He described his aggressors as gradually becoming bolder, to the point where they hit him in the face with a bat. After the assault, Dagoberto was transported to a clinic to get stitches. He has also had a couple of fake teeth ever since. Soon after this incident, he returned to SH.

Dagoberto vividly remembers the conversation when he learned that there had been a civil war:

Once I asked my mom what is it that she and her mom [Dagoberto's grandmother] were talking about. She said to me: 'son, some time ago, there was a war in El Salvador, a confrontation between the people.' That's what she said: 'between the people and the State,' she said. At least that is how I understood it. She said that people who already had a lot of power wanted to have yet more, and that people who had very little were enslaved. The former were accustomed to an order where they were always the ones above everyone else, so that if one person had, say, a hectare of land, that land would no longer be of the people, but of the State, that the State would always take everything away. Then I asked, "so which side were we on?" I asked as if I had been alive back then. I did not comprehend things well. Then, she pulled a portrait. My grandfather was in it. My grandfather was wearing a green suit, or so I saw. He had a weapon by his side. 'He is my dad, [Jorge].'⁴³ We never found him,' she said to me. 'He fought for the people, so that everyone had freedom of expression and action. There were many people like this who wanted the same.' That is what I began to understand. Over time, because I was very little then, I began to feel that hatred towards those whom I was told oppressed everyone, who raped children and women alike. That is how my childhood was impacted by that which had happened a long time ago.

In this story, Dagoberto positioned himself, even before he was born, on the side his family was at the time of the war, which was with the insurgency movement. The photograph of

⁴³ This is not the real name of Dagoberto's grandfather and he did not specify the name until a follow-up interview. However, I decided to add his grandfather's pseudonym here to smoothen the rest of the narrative.

Jorge, wearing the olive-green uniform of the guerrilla army, as well as his mother's description of him, not only marked Dagoberto's perception that Jorge was a hero, but also added weight to his mother's description on the army forces—Jorge's antagonists—as evil. This belief coupled with the description of the deeds of the army forces—namely the rape of girls and women—shaped Dagoberto's feelings of hatred toward the soldiers and pride in his grandfather.

Jorge was killed in an ambush early in the war. Dagoberto was born almost two decades after Jorge passed, but it was palpable that Dagoberto felt proud of his grandfathers' memory and nostalgia for having never met him. Twice during my interviews with him, and several times during group discussions, Dagoberto mentioned how Jorge had died protecting his wife, Dagoberto's grandmother. As Dagoberto tells the story, Jorge was escorting his wife to the Honduran border so he could focus on his responsibilities with the guerrilla movement. Both were ambushed along the way by the army forces. Jorge's wife hid inside an abandoned house before the soldiers approached and was thus not detected. Jorge, meanwhile, fought against the soldiers. He was wounded, captured, and taken away. Dagoberto's family never saw Jorge alive again. The reason Dagoberto was born is because Jorge's wife was already pregnant with Dagoberto's mom by the time Jorge was taken. Jorge's body was found years after the war ended, near the area where he and his wife had been ambushed. To be precise, only the lower half of Jorge's body was found. Of the upper part, only the spine remained.⁴⁴

Viera and Violeta

⁴⁴ Dagoberto's family confirmed that the body was Jorge's through DNA testing.

Violeta and Viera are twin sisters. Neither knows in which town they were born. Their accounts are slightly different. Viera knows that her mother supported the guerrillas but does not know in which capacity. By contrast, Violeta clarifies that her mother was a messenger. Their mother spent most of the war at the refugee camp in Colomoncagua, Honduras, where she helped in forwarding messages between the camp and the frontlines in El Salvador.

Viera explains that while their mother sparingly told them some details about their lives during the war, it was their maternal grandmother who described to them what life at the refugee camps was like. Based on her grandmother's recollections, Violeta reflects that her and her sister's lives are much better than the ones their parents had when they were kids. By this, Violeta means that their parents "used to work and did things since they were very little that we don't . . . we only come to the school and we play." She is referring to the fact that her parents had to work from a young age. Had she and Viera been born back then, Violeta is sure that both would have had to work early in life and would therefore have not been able to play as much.

Both sisters tell me that every year in July, their neighborhood celebrates the community's return from the refugee camp in Honduras. In their neighborhood, the resettlement anniversary consists of concerts and games. In the first few years after the community's resettlement, these anniversaries included memorial activities, such as the elders retelling the experience at the refugee camps and the struggle to return to El Salvador.

In more recent years, however, the anniversary has become more and more festive in nature and less of a commemoration.⁴⁵ Because of this, Viera does not understand the difference

⁴⁵ This description of the evolution of commemoration is based on interviews with members of two different local directives from Comunidad Segundo Montes (CSM), as well as representatives.

between the resettlement anniversary and the Saint's Day: "I don't know what is the difference between the Saint's Day and [the commemoration of the] return [from the refugee camps], because they don't do nearly anything related to the return." Violeta notes that there is an activity within the festive commemoration where people remember what it was like to live in the refugee camps and the challenges they had to face before resettling. In fact, Violeta tells me she partook in this event, reading a book of testimonies.

During the interviews, neither sister mentioned their family's experience at the refugee camps. However, they did talk briefly about it during a session of the design workshop (session 6). Their paternal grandfather was not allowed to cross into Honduras, so their grandmother had to go without him. Their grandmother took their mother and aunt with her. At the camp, her grandmother worked at the tailor shop.

Esmeralda

Esmeralda was born in the eastern city of Usulután another department in eastern El Salvador. Her mother and grandmother took refuge in Honduras during the war. When the war ended, they returned to San Fernando, a town on the northern edge of Morazán that borders Honduras. Esmeralda did not grow up with her father; she only knows that he was a commissioner of the police and was killed in 2011 during a raid orchestrated by street gangs. As with Dagoberto, her family's photographs played a role in how she first learned about the war: "There were pictures of the camp, no . . . of the refuge, there in Honduras. So, maybe because I asked what that was out there, they told me that there had been a war and that they had to go to Honduras, because of the war."

Esmeralda is reticent to talk about her father and changes the topic as soon as she is asked about him. Similar to Viera and Violeta, Esmeralda learned that there had been a war when she was four or five years old by listening to family conversations.

Carlos

Carlos was born in the municipality of Jocoaitique in 2006. At the start of the study, both of his parents were working as security guards; his father in San Miguel and his mother in San Salvador. Before moving to San Miguel, his father had been a tour guide at the Guerrilla Camp, one of the five sites we visited as part of the design workshop. Throughout most of my study, Carlos and his two brothers were living on their own, and one of their aunts visited them every now and then. Because their house had no electricity, Carlos was only able to use his phone in school after charging it. In fact, he would sometimes leave classes to text his father. The first time I saw him do this, I called his attention because he had left my class without asking permission. It took me weeks to understand how important this moment of the day was for him because it was his chance to connect with his absent father.

I never met Carlos's mother. Virginia once described her dismissively as an uncaring woman who was rude to her children, but I cannot comment on this assessment because Carlos never talked about her. However, I did meet Carlos's father. On the last day of the academic year, when students came to collect their annual transcripts, Carlos's father was with them. I learned that he had just quit his job as a security guard and had secured new employment in northern Morazán. He switched jobs on purpose so he could be with his children. On this day, Carlos and one of his brothers were smiling with profound joy and would not move from their father's embrace.

Patterns

Students' experiences engaging with the history of the war were different than their professors'. Viera, Violeta, Esmeralda, and Dagoberto expressed having learned about the war when they were four or five while listening to family conversations. These students expressed a desire to share their own perspective about the history of the civil war. They were also aware that their lives were different from their parents because of the war, as Violeta explicitly articulated in comparing her childhood to her parents'. Similarly, Dagoberto, Esmeralda, and Valentin reflected on how hard it must have been for their families to go into exile.

Like their teachers, Violeta, Esmeralda, Dagoberto, and Valentin valued remembering the war to avoid repeating the past. Alternatively, Viera saw the value of memory as an opportunity to create a better future. Carlos added a related nuance to his classmates' position: it is important to decide how much one gets to remember and how.

Throughout the study, Dagoberto and Esmeralda described the civil war in binary terms, signaling the Salvadoran army forces as an enemy to "the people." By contrast, Valentin and Donaldo initially framed the war in terms of moral equivalency. In Donaldo's words, the war happened because there were "two sides that could not agree with each other." This is remarkable considering that some of Donaldo's and Valentin's relatives supported the insurgency.

Donaldo said that his grandfather was killed, but he does not know why he joined and how he was killed. Moreover, Donaldo told me in his exit interview that his paternal grandmother felt strongly that the war was better forgotten and that his grandmother's view had informed his own. This experience contrasts to Dagoberto's proud recollection of his grandfather, who in his telling

died a martyr protecting Dagoberto's grandmother. Dagoberto insisted that his grandfather's sacrifice made his own existence possible. After all, Dagoberto explained, his grandmother was pregnant with his mother at the time of the ambush. Had the army found his grandmother, his mother would have never been born, and by extension, neither would he.

Regardless of their initial ideas about moral equivalence, both Donaldo and Valentin shifted their perspective by the end of the study. Both claimed that the leading cause of the war had been social inequality. Both further explained that interacting with their colleagues, visiting the different museums and historic sites, and working on the exhibition had shifted their perspectives.

Carlos's positionality is different. Barely twelve years old at the time of the study, his recollections about the civil war focused on the weaponry used by the guerrilla movement. This made sense, as weaponry was one of the central themes of the Guerrilla Camp, the site where Carlos had spent many days with his father the year before I arrived in the field.

Throughout the five site visits for this project, my participants assessed the story of the war from the vantage point of those who were children during the war. At El Mozote, the students extensively wondered what it might have been like to be a child during this massacre.⁴⁶ Similarly, after visiting the museum of anthropology, the students reflected on what it might have been like for some of the children who went missing during the war only to suddenly

⁴⁶ The massacre at El Mozote occurred in the context of a military operation that lasted three days. This operation spanned several hamlets in the municipalities of Arambala and Jocoaitique, both in northern Morazán. The largest of these hamlets was known as El Mozote. The main massacre occurred at El Mozote, where 1,000 people were killed. More than half of the victims were children under the age of twelve. As the army made its way in and out of El Mozote, the soldiers killed the inhabitants of the surrounding settlements. People survived in these surrounding hamlets, but there was only one survivor at El Mozote: Rufina Amaya. She died in March of 2007 (Danner 1994).

discover that those who they thought to be their parents were actually the soldiers who had killed their biological families. These reflections suggest that participants experienced empathy based on identification with children who were around their own age at the time of the war.

My students also reflected on the history of the war in relation to the experiences of their parents' generation. For instance, during the visit to the Guerrilla Camp, Esmeralda expressed admiration for the sacrifice that guerrillas had made given the dire conditions of the camps. Similarly, Dagoberto expressed nostalgia for his grandfather during our visit to the Museum of the Revolution. On this occasion, he called my attention to a piece of radio equipment that his grandfather had worn, which is currently on display at the museum, and while I took a picture of this memento, I could hear Dagoberto sigh. I turned to him, and I noticed his yearning look, fixed on the object.

6. Interviews with Friends and Family

During the design workshops, participants devoted two sessions to sharing their experiences regarding their family histories and their interviews with relatives, friends, and neighbors about their experiences during the civil war. These sessions took place in September, after we had concluded the visits to the five memorial sites.⁴⁷ In preparation for these discussions, I had given participants a questionnaire for their reference in case they found it useful to conduct the interviews.⁴⁸ The idea of performing interviews was not my idea, but my

⁴⁷ For details on the process, see the section on research design in my methodology description (chapter 4), specifically table 1.

⁴⁸ Per the IRB instruction, I emphasized when handing them the questionnaires that it was only for reference, and they could rely on it to help them conduct their interviews. Similarly, I encouraged them to record their interviews, with their participants' permission, whenever possible and to take as many notes as they could. All these

participants'. After the last museum visits in San Salvador, they insisted that they wanted to create an exhibition that would go beyond their own families, which was in fact my original plan. Esmeralda argued that she and her teammates wanted to do their own research about how the war affected the civilian population. The others nodded in agreement.

In total, my participants interviewed twenty-one people. The average time of each interview was twenty minutes. The interviewees were split between the two sides of the war: some were refugees in Colomoncagua, while others joined the guerrilla. Among the refugees, some worked in the production workshops (e.g., tailoring or shoemaking), and others worked as teachers. Among the guerrilla members, some worked as radio operators, and others were combatants.⁴⁹

In practice, most of the interviewees were their relatives, and only a few were neighbors outside their family circles. The main difference between the stories they had shared with me in their semi-structured interviews earlier in the project is that their narratives focused on their family history, but also exhibited additional details, which suggests that the experience of talking to other members in the family circle enriched their understanding of their own family history. For instance, Esmeralda told me at this time that her maternal grandfather had been an officer in the governmental Army Forces in the 1970s. However, he deserted to the guerrilla army in

activities were left to participants' discretion. This was necessary, because although my project was action-oriented in nature, I had no framework to train participants in data collection or analysis.

⁴⁹ I am unable to list the precise figures of how many people among my participants' interviewees exercised any given occupation. When I asked them about this information, many said they had not asked or did not know. Since I only have partial data to classify people per occupation and even per location of residence during the war, I prefer to only mention it without offering specific numbers.

1981.⁵⁰ Her grandfather was killed in combat. Time passed, and eventually Esmeralda's grandmother found a new partner who was also living at the refugee camp. From this new partnership, her grandmother became pregnant. When she went into labor, the group of international humanitarian workers at the camp drove her toward Tegucigalpa, the Honduran capital, so she could deliver.⁵¹ Unfortunately, she was stopped for several hours at a highway point in Honduras. Although she eventually made it to the hospital eventually, her baby had already died.

Carlos, Viera, Violeta, Esmeralda, and Dagoberto talked about their family experiences of displacement. Carlos was the only one whose family chose to remain in El Salvador, migrating to the towns south of the Torola River, which remained under government control during the war. By contrast, the others talked about their families going to the refugee camps in Honduras and how the journey there forced their families to split up. A common element in their stories is the fact that some members of the family, always men, were not allowed to cross into Honduran territory. Although my participants did not explain any reasons for this refusal of entry, it is possible that Honduran authorities thought the men in question were guerrilla fighters. Ironically, the result of this refusal was that the people whose entry was denied did in fact join the guerrillas soon after the family separation. One example is Violeta's and Viera's uncle, Joaquin. When

⁵⁰ During the general offensive of 1981, the FMLN publicly called for members of the governmental army forces to switch sides. These calls were broadcasted through Radio Overcome. Very few soldiers heeded this call. Importantly, among the five guerrilla groups of the guerrilla movement, the ERP was the only one that had infiltrated the army with loyal men, who then took the 1981 call to desert as their cue to rejoin their organization. The rationale of ERP leaders was that they could rely on the training provided by the army forces to boost their military capabilities (Hoover Green 2018).

⁵¹ Tegucigalpa is located 264 kilometers (164 miles) east of Colomoncagua. Under the patchy and curvy roads of the region, coupled with the traffic whenever one crosses towns and cities, traveling such a distance can take five to six hours under normal conditions.

Joaquin's family arrived at the border, Joaquin was not allowed to cross. Now separated from his family, his options were limited. He could have returned to his family's home, where he may have been caught in the crossfire, or he could have fled, on his own, to one of the government-controlled refugee camps within El Salvador. Instead he chose to join the insurgency movement. A few years later, Joaquin sneaked into the Colomoncagua camp to visit his parents. Somehow, the Honduran army learned of Joaquin's presence. The soldiers burst into the camp and took him. That was the last time Violeta's and Viera's family ever saw him. He was disappeared.

Through my participants' exchange of experiences, I also learned about the family rituals through which participants learned about the history of the war. For Valentin, talking to his grandfather happened during quiet afternoons at the front of their home. His maternal grandfather sometimes likes to pull out a chair outside and sip coffee. On those days, his grandfather would begin to reminisce about his own experiences during the war, which Valentin would then start asking questions about. However, Valentin did not talk about the war with his parents, who live in the United States. His father, who was a combatant, prefers not to talk about it.

For Carlos, the ritual was witnessing his father work as a tour guide at the Guerrilla Camp, the historical site where his dad used to work. More than having learned about the family history of the war, which Carlos seemed to have trouble articulating, he was familiar with the weapons the guerrilla army used, which were a central part of the displays at the Guerrilla Camp. For Donaldo, I came to realize over time that there was no family ritual to discuss the war. Instead, Donaldo learned from a young age that the war was better undiscussed. He only explained why at the end of the project, when I interviewed him for the last time. He explained that his

grandmother always expressed pain thinking about her husband, Oscar (Donaldo's grandfather). Oscar died during the war, but Donaldo does not know why. His grandmother prefers not to talk about it because doing so brings her pain. Donaldo cares about his grandmother and wants to protect her, so he chooses not to bring it up. Furthermore, seeing how painful the war had been for his grandmother, Donaldo eventually came to believe that perhaps it is best to flip the page and let the pain go.

7. Conflicting Memories

There are marked differences between how the teachers and students remember, the ways in which the teachers describe their students' attitudes toward memory, and the ways students explain their interest in the civil war. SH authorities believe that their students do not take the war seriously. Virginia, the principal, complained that students treated the war like "science fiction." She based this upon the way in which her students reacted to a school trip to El Mozote in 2016. On this occasion, while the tour guide was describing in detail the ways in which the massacre was perpetrated, Virginia explained that students started to make jokes about how the soldiers may have killed children. Rather than listening to the guide and experiencing surprise, Virginia said the kids were making light of the massacre as if it was a joke.

Virginia's complaint that her students do not take the issue of the war seriously relates to the explanation given by Irving, the director of instruction. Irving said that many students have a complete rejection of anything political, which includes anything related to the history of the war. He reasoned that this was merely a reflection of the ways in which their families at home handle politics in general and history specifically. Paradoxically, he also explained that students at SH are likely to know more about the war than students outside of the region because they live

in northern Morazán. By this he meant that the proximity of students to so many people who were combatants, or who went into exile in Honduras, provided more opportunities to learn about the history of the region. My experience listening to my participants' reports on their own interviews suggests that Irving is partially right. All my participants had a clear understanding of the intense emotions that talking about the war stirred in their relatives, whether it be pride, nostalgia, pain, or some other feeling. Furthermore, they all had clear ideas about how the war had affected their family by depriving them of their home and their belongings, costing them relatives (some of whom were either killed or disappeared), and forcing them to choose between either becoming refugees or joining the guerrillas. More importantly, I could see how the deep emotional investment that my participants expressed toward their families' plight during the war, their initiative to interview more people, and the time they were already devoting to the project suggested a strong engagement with the history of the war. Such engagement challenged Irving's and his colleagues' belief that students did not care about the war or treated it, in Virginia's words, like "science fiction."

8. Solving the Memory Puzzle

All seven students were born after the war was over. At the beginning of my fieldwork, their knowledge about the war came primarily from the information they had gathered through family, friends, and the limited information they received at SH through guest talks. As my design project unfolded, participants expanded this knowledge by visiting museums and historical sites and interviewing not only relatives, friends, and neighbors. Valentin, for instance, has been able to talk about the civil war with his maternal grandfather. At the same time, he has also had tense interactions with senior neighbors who have strong opinions about the war, and he

has felt unsafe engaging in conversations with them. This experience of fear partly informed Valentin's initial position that it was better to flip the page of history and move on. Talking about the war, in his experience, could lead to more violence.

Grief also functioned as an emotion that formed students' positionality toward the memory of the war. As Donaldo explained his own story, it was the grief of his grandmother over the death of her husband that influenced Donaldo's belief that the war should be forgotten. However, it was also partly grief that formed Dagoberto's belief that the past should be remembered. Finally, Esmeralda's refusal to talk about her father may also be related to her grief over his death. While her father did not die in the war, he did get to join the police because of his former militancy as a guerrilla member.⁵² This interpretation is consistent with Esmeralda's statement that she joined the research project to better understand the experience of her family.

At the end of the project, Donaldo expressed feeling more confident in talking about the war without making a mistake, although he could not articulate where the fear came from, what kind of mistakes he could make, or the consequences of making such mistakes. Both he and Valentin agreed that the war had been caused by inequality rather than an equal inability of both sides to compromise. Furthermore, both students decided that it was worth remembering the war. Another result of the project was Esmeralda's and Dagoberto's assertion that they were now better able to understand what their families had lived through.

⁵² One of the clauses of the peace accords allowed for both soldiers and guerrillas to join the ranks of a civilian police force, provided that members of either side attended and graduated from the police academy. This option would not have been available to former combatants otherwise (United Nations Security Council 1993).

9. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored the intergenerational dynamics of memory in the school context. Specifically, I have discussed the ways in which teachers and students at a rural school in northern Morazán remember the civil war of El Salvador. I have also shown the importance of students' lived experience in shaping their memories. In the case of the teachers, their personal experiences informed their decisions not to incorporate the subject of the war in the curriculum at SH. They also learned how students acted upon the unique circumstances that the teachers' decisions created to overcome the fragmentary experience of memory in their school.

This study is important because it expands the insights from history education about the challenges of teaching the history of violence in post-conflict contexts (e.g., Bermudez 2019; Gellman and Bellino 2019; Gellman 2015), and it centers the conversation into how children of the second generation, faced with this challenge at school and within their families, negotiate their memories (e.g., Palmberger 2016; Lira 2011; M. Bellino 2017; Hirsch 2008).

Understanding the dynamic of memory formation in school matters because social memories are one factor in shaping people's identity and sense of belonging, or lack thereof, to their community (Galtung 1990; Wineburg 1991). Further, exploring the intergenerational dynamics of memory from the standpoint of children of the next generation matters because they are the ones who are inheriting the conflicts, aspirations, and grievances their parents' generations left behind. What these children do now, when confronted with gaps in the formal education system—in tandem with their experiences of memory at home—is telling not only of the successes and failures of their forebears. but also serves as an invaluable source of insight for researchers, policy makers, educators, and memory workers.

With these considerations in mind, I pursued my fieldwork at SH, a school in northern Morazán, El Salvador. Based on my results, I argue that the intergenerational memory dynamics in which my students are immersed result in a fragmentary experience of memory. For one, the information that students receive through the school is scarce, scattered, and divorced from the rest of their studies. This fragmentary memory dynamic operates under two interconnected mechanisms: (1) enshrining living memory as the primary source of knowledge about the war, and (2) curriculum design, which is grounded in teachers' living memories.

The first mechanism, the enshrining of living memory as a primary source of knowledge, is evidenced by teachers' and students' shared belief that personal memory is *the* source of knowledge about the war. For students, the fact that they were born after the peace accords meant there were aspects of the war that they would be unable to understand. For their teachers, personal experience was deemed as the primary source of knowledge not only due to their own personal convictions, but also for practical reasons. As Virginia and Irving explained, bringing representatives of the two sides to talk with students about the war was a means to overcome the lack of educational resources on the subject and the lack of personal experience of the history teacher. Yet, this overreliance on living memories is limited to the one time during the school year when Virginia invites former soldiers and guerrilla fighters to talk to her students. This approach omits other angles from which the war could be studied. One such angle is the experience of civilians: How did the war affect the civilian population? How did civilians cope? What can students learn about the experience of civilians during the war for their own lives here and now? This was the focus of the MUNA exhibition. Another angle is the broader historical and geopolitical context that surrounded the war: Who were the international players in the civil

war? How did the engagement of international players affect the evolution of the war? What caused the war? To what extent were these causes addressed by the peace accords?

The second mechanism of memory at play at SH is curriculum design. If the memories of those who lived through the war are the only valid sources of knowledge, then those who were born after the civil war are not able to make any claims about the past. In practice, this enshrining of living memories informed Irving's decision to exclude the topic of the war from the curriculum. Virginia's guest talks, on the other hand, were not part of the curriculum. Because of this, the history teacher did not incorporate any follow-up activities in her class. This meant that the guest talks were a one-time experience during the academic year. Moreover, Virginia did not coordinate these guest talks with neither Irving, the director of instruction, nor Karen, the history teacher. This meant that the talks were subject to her personal interest in teaching students about the war. As the principal, she had the authority to organize such events even if Irving or Karen were not informed about or in support of the event. The issue of power dynamics became even more relevant after my study concluded. Virginia left the school in March of 2019; after she left, Karen was named principal. Since Karen was one of the teachers who Virginia said were not interested in covering the civil war in class, it is unlikely that the guest-speaker events will continue. Therefore, unless there is a change of policy at SH, the fragmentary dynamic of memory may devolve into complete silence about the war.

In this context, the PBL approach is insufficient to address the omission of the civil war from the curriculum. This happens because, even with the open-ended approach to discussion and exploration under PBL, teachers still decide which topics students will discuss and explore. Students cannot develop a critical position about the civil war through their formal education if

the topic is not covered in class. Furthermore, even if the war were incorporated into the curriculum, the PBL approach would require that the teacher frame the subject as a problem. Doing this would demand that the teacher become familiar with the nuances, multiple angles, and complexities of the history of the war. This would, at the very least, demand that the history teacher actively research the topic. At this point, the teacher would be confronted with the scarcity of teaching resources pertaining to the civil war.

Despite this fragmentary experience with the history of the war, the seven students with whom I worked actively engaged with that history. The intergenerational dynamics at home, in the form of family rituals—such as witnessing their parents perform memory work or attending family gatherings—allowed students to position themselves in relation to the history of the civil war. This positionality was marked by strongly held feelings and beliefs about the impact of the war in their family histories. Although grief was not explicitly named by any one student, it encompasses the other beliefs and feelings that students did express. For instance, Valentin and Donaldo believed the war was best forgotten. These beliefs were shaped by their family histories, marked by the death of close family members during the war. In the case of Valentin, the pain of knowing that his grandfather killed his own son (Valentin's uncle) influenced his early belief that letting go of the past was necessary. Similarly, Donaldo openly declared at the end of the project that his belief that the war was better forgotten was shaped by his grandmother, who lost her husband (Donaldo's grandfather) during the war. Donaldo learned that not talking about the war was a means to spare his grandmother from pain. Remarkably, both Valentin and Donaldo switched their perspective by the end of the project and expressed interest in continuing to learn more about the war on their own.

Unlike Donaldo and Valentin, the grief that Esmeralda, Violeta, Viera, and Dagoberto experienced expressed itself in the form of nostalgia. They grew up hearing their parents and grandparents talk fondly about the prevalent solidarity at the refugee camps. Furthermore, in the case of Dagoberto and Esmeralda, they expressed a combination of fondness and sadness when talking about their late grandparents. Both students' grandparents died before Dagoberto or Esmeralda were even born. Thus, their grief was not a function of their personal memories, but rather a result of the prevalent view in their families that their late grandparents were heroes. These views shaped Esmeralda's and Dagoberto's belief that remembering the war was necessary.

Students' strongly held feelings and beliefs, in tandem with the fragmentary teaching of history at their school, shaped their desire to learn more about the civil war. In fact, it was this desire to learn more that fueled the participants' decision to join the design workshop and, once there, to insist on doing their own interviews beyond the visits to memorial sites. This result echoes prior studies about intergenerational dynamics of memory, which indicate that children of the second generation actively seek to sort out the puzzle that the violent past represents for them (Lira 2011; Hirsch 2008; Palmberger 2016; Reading 2002). In trying to solve that puzzle, these children are attempting to understand not only the history of their community, but also their own.

In the next chapter, I return to the subject of students' reactions to the fragmented past with which they are faced. I explain how design served as a vehicle through which students sought to fill the gaps of the fragmented information they had obtained from their families and teachers. I also explain how the design process allowed them to probe deeper into their own beliefs and feelings. Then, I note how the iterative and participatory nature of the design process

explains the feelings of empathy they developed toward the suffering of children during the war and anger toward the perpetrators of child abductions and other crimes. Finally, I return to the significance of play in how children make sense of the violent past.

Chapter 6 – A Postmemorial Exhibition

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I analyze the affordances of a participatory design process in shaping participants' postmemories about the civil war. To this end, I discuss the findings of my design workshop to create a postmemorial exhibition. First, I define a postmemorial exhibition as a medium to explore and represent the deeply held thoughts and feelings of people born after historical episodes of mass atrocities; in other words, the cultural trauma of the postwar generation.⁵³

I then describe the insights from the design process. Namely, I indicate how participants engage in generative dialogues during our site visits. This modality of interaction dwindled once they started to create their design objects (e.g., affinity walls, concept maps, sketches). The early stages of the design process allowed participants to create a bigger picture of the plethora of information they had accumulated through their site visits and interviews with friends and family. At this point, participants' primary mode of interaction became the iterative "dialogue" through their design objects. In this phase, participants drew inspiration from the concepts proposed by their peers in previous sessions and repurposed them for their own expressive goals. The last phase of the design workshop involved the sketching exercises. At this stage, participants left behind the trail of information that had allowed them to come up with design themes. Instead, they used their sketches to explore their own salient ideas about the themes of

⁵³ In this chapter, I am using the words postmemory and cultural trauma interchangeably. In truth, I understand postmemory as cultural trauma of the postwar generation; in other words, my participants' way of remembering the war.

their exhibition: causes, events, consequences, emotions, and doubts. Finally, I note the pervasive presence of play during the design workshop. To close the chapter, I conclude that the design process allowed participants to iteratively engage with each other through multiple modalities: dialogue, design objects, and open exploration. Moreover, I note the important role of dark play as a sense-making mechanism by which participants processed their grief related to the war.

2. The Exhibition

Between July and December of 2018, I led a design workshop with a group of seven students to create an exhibition about their memories of the civil war. Although my original goal was to design, produce, and open the exhibition to the public, the situation in the field required me to adapt my plans. My participants and I reached the point of completing an exhibition concept but were unable to produce it because we ran out of time. When classes ended, some of them switched to other schools for the following academic year.

This exhibition concept of the design workshop—henceforth, the exhibition—is similar in scope to the exhibitions found in memorial museums. Indeed, the exhibition showcases participants’ concerns with a difficult past characterized by mass suffering. This exhibition is also linked to a social memory because it is a reflection on the nature of the traumatic past as understood by its designers. Like the memorial exhibition on World War II in Washington, DC (Lubar 1997), the exhibition that resulted from this research is not concerned with history, but memory. However, this exhibition is also different from prior examples from memorial museums in that it represents the postmemories of children who were born long after the civil war had ended, rather than the lived memories of the victims.

Memorial exhibitions are researched, curated, and stewarded by memory workers who are devoted to museum practice, in collaboration with community members. The community partners in memorial museums are commonly people who lived through the events of the violent past and who are sharing their life experiences as source material for the exhibition (Lynch 2011). In some cases, the younger generations also engage in the efforts of memorialization (e.g., Lara Martinez 2018; Hirsch 2008). The exhibition resulting from my study was similar because it was produced by a group of middle school students, ages twelve to sixteen, who volunteered their time for this task after classes or on the weekends. These students were primarily dealing with their own deeply held beliefs and feelings about the past, taking into consideration that they all were born after the peace accords were signed. In fact, participants insisted that the exhibition reflected “their opinion” about events through which they had not explicitly lived. This generational nature of their interpretation was central to how participants framed their narratives. Because of this context, I refer to participants’ work as a postmemorial exhibition.⁵⁴

3. Insights from the Design Process

At three of the five memorial sites we visited, participants noticed that the narratives placed their emphasis on the armaments used during the war. While the Museum of the Revolution and the Guerrilla Camp dealt primarily with the armament of the insurgent army, the Military Museum focused exclusively on the armament used by the governmental army forces.

⁵⁴ My inspiration to propose this term comes from the work of Marianne Hirsch (2008) with children of survivors of the Holocaust, and of Monika Palmberger (2016) with multiple generations of Bosnians, including youth who were born after the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Both authors worked with individuals who were eighteen or older.

During our visit to the Museum of the Revolution, I asked everyone how the exhibitions told the story of the war. Dagoberto answered, “through live testimony with the different viewpoints of each storyteller.” Viera added that there were testimonials and images. Dagoberto also mentioned weapons. Weeks later, while we discussed our impressions about the visit to the Museum of Military History in San Salvador, other students noted the differences between the memorial sites:

Valentin: Because that one [the guerrilla camp] contrasts with this one because at the guerrilla [camp] one could only see things about the guerrillas whereas in this one, one can only see things about the military.

Robbie: Because the guerrilla camps were just holes. There were things inside but it wasn’t half of what there was [at the Military Museum]. (Transcript, Military Museum, session 4)

Similarly, after our visit to the Guerrilla Camp, the second site we visited, participants identified that it was different from the Museum of the Revolution. While the Museum of the Revolution covered a more comprehensive story of the war from the standpoint of the army forces, the Guerrilla Camp focused on showcasing the everyday life of guerrilla members at their camps. For instance, during the discussion, Carlos noted that people could run at the Guerrilla Camp because the exhibition is entirely outdoors. Thus, there is more freedom. He drew a contrast between this setup and the Museum of the Revolution, which was indoors and where people were supposed to be careful with the objects on display. Esmeralda added that the Museum of the Revolution is about “what the guerrilla army did,” whereas the camp “is about how they did it.” By this she meant how the guerrillas managed and how they survived. Dagoberto agreed with her. Then, Viera ventured a theme that encapsulates in her view of the

entire visit: the “museum,” as she called the Guerrilla Camp, “tells the story of the guerrilla as such, of the way they were organized and what they did to survive the war.” I asked how the guerrillas managed. Viera said they “created a communication and health-care system.” The communication system she referred to was Radio Overcome. During our visit, we were shown the system that Radio Overcome had used to avoid being detected by the army forces, which consisted of hooking radio transmitters onto barbed-wire fences. Our tour guide had explained that his strategy enabled the guerrillas to spread the transmission signal without being detected by the radars of the army forces. Similarly, the health-care system to which Viera alluded was the provisional clinic at the camp, which consisted of a hut with hammocks. Wounded combatants would be laid down on the hammocks and administered coconut water through an IV. The coconut water, available from palm trees in the region, functioned as a rehydrating solution, helping stabilize patients until they were ready to fight again or be moved outside of the combat zone.

At El Mozote and MUNA, participants focused more on the suffering of the civilian population. The focus on the suffering of civilians is noteworthy, considering that the MUNA exhibition also aimed to showcase the resiliency of the victims. After this visit, we sat down at a park in the capital in one of the most affluent neighborhoods of the country, near the US embassy. I chose this place because I knew the municipal security guards kept watch 24-7 and thus it would be safer than other parks in the country. In addition, unlike the noisy environment of parks in the city center, always assaulted by the speakers of evangelical pastors or vendors, this park was relatively quiet. I wanted our discussion to transpire in a safe space, one where we could talk at ease. Besides, I had noticed during our visit to MUNA that my participants had

been deeply impressed by the exhibition. Thus, I hoped that an open environment, surrounded by trees, would also allow them to feel emotionally safe.

It was here where I asked participants to describe the story conveyed by the exhibition at MUNA. Valentin said they saw that “the museum was focused on the population: what they suffered, what they lost, and their integrity.” Dagoberto protested that some reference had been made to tactics used by the army forces. Valentin insisted these were torture tactics. “Torture tactics applied on people,” he concluded emphatically. Violeta agreed. Katerin said that the tactics were used to extract information. Viera clarified that the information was being extracted from political prisoners. Violeta and Dagoberto agreed, and Esmeralda added that “they focused on the victims, what happened to them.”

Dagoberto commented on the fact that those children were very close in age to him and his classmates, which was shocking for him. In his words, “above all, it was... traumatic, more than anything. Maybe in thinking that, the fact that children, just like our classmates or ourselves, died and it wasn’t even in a very fast way but in a very painful way for some.” Violeta added that Monterrosa had believed that children had to be killed because they would grow up to become guerrilla fighters. Because of this, the soldiers had had no mercy. Viera followed Dagoberto’s line of reasoning and became lost in thought as she tried to remember the death toll of children killed at the convent. Dagoberto offered the number: 146 bodies. Valentin specified that one 140 were children under the age of twelve. Moreover, he explained that the convent was also the place where the body of a pregnant woman was found with a stone in her womb: “At least in my opinion, she was the one who must have suffered the most, because she was still

conscious when they did this to her. It was the woman who got a grinding stone inserted in her belly.”⁵⁵

Participants identified the mission of all memorial sites, except for the military museum, as promoting historical memory to ensure that the war is never repeated. Nevertheless, they also identified that each museum pursued this mission in different ways. For instance, the Museum of the Revolution was deemed “apolitical” and concerned with honoring the heroes and martyrs of the war.

Dagoberto: Hey, but did you realize something? That when the guide told us that they took no sides with respect to the... that the museum wasn’t...

Robbie: Apolitical, nonpartisan.

Donaldo: No sides.

Dagoberto: Aha. No sides. But when I was looking the third [exhibition] room, there was something there that said that it was a uniform of the enemy and those were soldiers’ clothes.

Katerin: Aha, but that is not talking about a political party. He [the tour guide] was talking about political parties. (Transcript, Museum of the Revolution, Session 1)

Participants also highlighted the unique traits of each museum. For instance, during the visit to the Museum of the Revolution, I asked the students to mention the topics the museum focused on. Esmeralda mentioned Radio Overcome and Violeta added “the heroes and martyrs.” Robbie said that, in truth, the museum was dedicated to “all the people who died.” Violeta then suggested that the museum only mentions some of those who died because far too many did.

⁵⁵ Actually, according to our tour guide, the soldiers put the stone in postmortem.

The narratives from the memorial site at El Mozote and MUNA were both seen as cautionary tales against intolerance. However, the students described at El Mozote as being focused on the massacre from 1981 perpetrated at this hamlet. By contrast, participants noticed that the exhibition at MUNA covered the entire civil war and was produced through a participatory process.⁵⁶ The exhibition at MUNA drew from multiple resources, such as information displays like timelines and charts, installations including a replica of a charred wall representing the aftermath of scorched-earth operations on rural villages, and the thematic assortment of objects like the clothes of people who were killed during military operations or photographs of disappeared children.

I soon realized that this exhibition had marked a turning point for my participants and that they had come out from MUNA with strong emotions. I began to realize this when I asked Dagoberto how he had felt visiting MUNA. He said he felt “intrigued.” Esmeralda said, in surprise, that she was not intrigued but *shocked* and added that she would like to know why Dagoberto was intrigued. Valentin seconded her. Dagoberto explained his belief that “there are more things that are unknown still and I would like to continue learning” about the history of the war. Carlos added that the story of that lady who had several abortions reminded him “of that woman at El Mozote of who had a milling stone placed in her womb.”

The suffering of civilians represented at this exhibition elicited feelings of anger and sadness among participants: (1) anger toward the commanders of the guerrilla army who recruited young children and sent them to fight; (2) anger toward the army forces for the

⁵⁶ The banner at the entrance of the gallery at MUNA described the participatory process with an association of victims from which the exhibition had been created.

disappearances, killings, and kidnappings of children (figure 4); and (3) sadness for the mothers who lost their children and for the kidnapped children because they lost their birth families.

Figure 3. Representation of Torture Techniques against Political Prisoners during Civil War. MUNA Exhibition



Source: Allan Martell

All memorial sites were deemed as places targeting anybody who wanted to know the history of the war, but there were important nuances at El Mozote and the Military Museum. At El Mozote, participants concluded that the interpretation of the site is meant for people from outside northern Morazán because anybody else would already be familiar with the massacre. Similarly, the Military Museum was described as created by and for the army forces; that is, a tool for the army forces to imagine themselves through the lenses of a whitewashed history.

After the visits to the five museums, participants engaged in weekly design activities meant for them to create their exhibition: affinity walls, a concept map, a bubble diagram, an exhibition plan, exploratory sketches, refined sketches, and an exhibition floor map. The

progression of these design objects allowed participants to create the themes in the story of the war as they understood it. These themes became the focus of their sketches. Moreover, these design objects marked a departure from the wealth of information, which I discussed in the previous chapter. For instance, group discussions during site visits followed a pattern of mutual construction and reflection.

Katerin: And not only that. I mean, where we live, I think it's the only museum, because I don't know others, where their point of view is talked about because we went to the other [museum] and it [the war] is not told from *their* perspective.

Dagoberto: Nowhere else.

Violeta: Nowhere else.

Robbie: Nowhere else.

Viera: Yeah. Nowhere else.

Dagoberto: In neither place do they tell the story of just one side.

Robbie: In Perquín, at the Museum of Word and Image, and the one we went to, the...

Viera & Dagoberto: Anthropology.

Robbie: The Anthropology one. In no other museum do they tell the story of the army. Well they tell it, but they don't tell it as they do.

Dagoberto: As the Museum of Military History does.

Robbie: That they were the heroes, but they tell it like very...

Katerin: Like enemies.

Viera: It's because it's memory.

Robbie: No! Not like enemies, but they tell it like "you are the center and this is one side and this is another." They don't tell you that the guerrilla did more or that the army did more, but they tell you everything that happened and how it happened.

Viera: It's mostly about the people.

Violeta: Aha, exactly.

Viera: Aha, the victims.

Robbie: But the Museum of Military History tells what they did, what they think happened or what they want you to know. What happened from their point of view very exact. Mhm, and not from the [civil] war, but from long before.

(Transcript, Military Museum, Session 4)

By studying the progression of the design objects, I was able to identify how the specific information of participants' site visits and interviews gradually allowed them to identify broader thematic areas. For instance, because of their interviews with relatives and neighbors, all participants reflected on the impact the war had in their region and their own experience as interviewers. The affinity walls allowed participants not only to list these experiences, but also to identify common topics to organize their experiences. Through the concept map and the bubble diagram, five of those topics were grouped together:

1. **Loss and Personal Impact.** Participants' curiosity about how the war affected their region and the changes in location and lifestyle that came with the conflict.
2. **Changes.** The impact the war had on the population, such as having to leave their homes and belongings behind and start anew in a different place.
3. **Histories and Memories.** The personal memories of the people who lived through the war, such as the camaraderie at the refugee camps and within the guerrilla ranks; the

hardship of *guindas*;⁵⁷ and the aid received by refugees and human rights violations, such as disappearances and murder of civilians.

4. **Environment.** The circumstances under which participants' interviews took place, such as the hospitality of the interviewees and their experiences using the interview guide I had provided for their reference.
5. **Experiences.** The fun and intrigue that participants felt while performing interviews, which to them was a novel experience.

The topics “loss and personal impact”, and “histories and memories”, were grouped under the label “material consequences,” whereas the topics “environment” and “experiences” were grouped under “psychological consequences.” Additionally, the topic of causes was marked as belonging to both material and psychological consequences (see table 7). Next, when participants created their exhibition map, they opted to consolidate both labels under a single theme named consequences (see exhibition plan in chapter 4).

Table 4. Links between Themes, Cluster Tags, and Item Tags

Sketch Description	Theme	Cluster Tags	Item Tags
“There are three walls. In each wall there is an image with a story, a testimony, a summary. In the first wall there will be the events. Then we move to the	Material Consequences	Loss and Affection	The curiosity of how it (the war) affected them (the interviewees) The change of lifestyle of those affected
		Changes	The impact that memory had on the population

⁵⁷ In Salvadoran slang, a *guinda* refers to the action of suddenly leaving a place in a rush. However, when used in the context of the civil war of the 1980s, *guinda* refers to the collective run for the hills that villagers undertook in reaction to scorched-earth operations launched by the Salvadoran Army Forces (Silber 2011). During the first years of the war (1980-1984), these operations were central to the counterinsurgent strategy of the Salvadoran government—supported and funded by the United States—and thus a constant looming threat in the minds of peasants in guerrilla-controlled regions like Morazán (Ocampo Saravia 2007). The period also coincides with the largest share of civilian murders of the entire war (Sprenkels and Melara Minero 2017, 117). For a detailed description of the communities' experience during a *guinda*, see Bourgois (2001, 5) and Silber (2011, 42).

<p>destruction and then to the suffering.” By events, they mean battles.</p> <p>Destruction: “Here, people were left without a house. They tell that they lost their houses because of the war. Their houses were taken over and used as bases.” Esmeralda adds: “many were burned with bombs and all that.”</p> <p>Suffering. Dead Person. From a story of a man whose grandfather was hanged. Valentin concedes that the image may be disturbing to young children. They switch to a portrait of the deceased while he was still alive.</p>		Environment	The guide Allan A unicorn Bread =)
	Psychological consequences	Experience	It was as much fun as intriguing I felt like this was a new thing because I had never interviewed anybody.
		Histories and Memories	The camaraderie lived Histories of guindas

Source: Allan Martell. Based on design objects created by project participants. The item tags were the individual information items that participants added to the affinity walls and then organized into clusters. To form a cluster, participants group item tags together based on perceived affinity, then discussed a label that would describe the cluster contents. Later, participants created a concept map by placing all cluster tag in a logical sequence, so as to tell a story that related tags with each other. Finally, participants identified segments of the concept map that could become single units of content, drew circles around those segments, and applied a label that best described the contents within each segment. The version of the concept map that was expanded by these labelled segments is the bubble diagram. Finally, the exhibition themes were drawn from the bubble diagram and consolidated in the exhibition plan.

The exhibition plan was also a moment for participants to define their own audience. This was an open-ended process that continued through the remainder of the workshop. In the session where they created their exhibition plan, participants assumed that people who are old enough to remember the war “already knew” what their exhibition was going to cover. This was

participants' justification for considering youth like themselves. In defining an age range for their exhibition, students considered the people in their social network to determine what was appropriate. For instance, in defining the upper limit of their targeted age range, they set it to twenty-four because that was the age of their homeroom teacher at the time of the workshop.

Carlos: Youth my age.

Dagoberto: Yes, youth from twelve to twenty years.

Carlos: Alright, my age.

Allan: Alright. That goes on a post-it.

Dagoberto: Youth from twelve to twenty years.

Violeta: From twelve to twenty years.

Donaldo: We answered a question at once [inaudible].

Dagoberto: In one single post-it let's answer everything and that's it.

[Laughter]

Esmeralda: Where does it say twenty?

Dagoberto: Yes. From twelve to twenty-three.

Donaldo: No, in twenty-four [inaudible].

Carlos: So that the prof. can go there too.

[Laughter]

Allan: Me?

Carlos: No, Prof. Emanuel.

(Transcript, Bubble Diagram and Exhibition Plan, Session 10)

By contrast, the upper limit of participants' age range was originally set to six years. They originally chose this criterion because at one point I had mentioned that six years is the age when

children begin to have conscious memories. However, they switched the age range to twelve after the first sketch session, which was when Esmeralda and Valentin proposed sketches with graphic depictions of violence, such as displaying the mannequin representing a hanged man. Although the image was eventually replaced by something different in the final sketch of the consequences theme, the idea of explicit portrayals of death made participants worry that their exhibition would not be suited for their youngest classmates, those in kindergarten and grades one through six. In reaction to this realization, they opted to set the lower age limit to twelve because that was Carlos's age, who was also the youngest member of the team.

For weeks, I had been worried that participants would want to leave their exhibition plan as meant for a general audience. When they began to contemplate these changes, I grew curious. So, on the last session of shared reflection, before we started preparing the public presentation to conclude our workshop, I asked them about their latest thoughts regarding the audience for their exhibition. Esmeralda began explaining their rationale: "Because we saw now what our exhibition contains and so we are..." She could not finish the thought because Dagoberto interjected: "Allan, just think about us, who are just a bit older. Even some of us started crying after visiting the museum in San Salvador. If some of us cried that day, imagine what would happen with the little children." Valentin exclaimed: "I thought you [his classmates] were saying that children couldn't be let in [the exhibition floor] because they could ruin the things." Violeta, as if explaining a topic for the nth time, replied: "No, we said it for something else." Esmeralda added, "for the mental health of the children." After a brief pause, she continued, but as if she was talking to herself: "I don't know why, but there are many sensitive things that happened during the war. It is not okay to expose children to those kinds of things. We need to wait until

they are a bit older so that they can understand well.” I asked everyone if the mental health of children was something they had thought about. Esmeralda replied: “No. What happened is that first we wanted to have it [a] general [audience], but because we had not contemplated that. Then you said something. I can’t remember, ‘blah, blah, blah.’ But the point is that we later realized that thing about the children at that moment.”

Participants distanced themselves from the nuances and depth of their analysis in earlier sessions of the workshop as they identified patterns in their interview data. This distancing was a design choice of my methodology to help them see the bigger picture. This was necessary for them to come up with themes and a design object. However, an unexpected result was that, as participants began to see this bigger picture, their explanations about the different facets of the war lost nuance and specificity.⁵⁸ I noticed this trend as soon as participants identified the themes for their exhibition, which was the result of their exhibition plan. The next step after developing the plan was to draw sketches to illustrate how they would represent each theme. Participants’ descriptions of their sketches were marked by a lack of nuance and details, unlike the earlier discussions during the design process.

For instance, when participants created their affinity walls, they did mention several events during the war:

Death and Torture. The guards would come, detain people, and then torture and kill them. Just living in northern Morazán was enough to earn the presumption of being a guerrilla fighter.

⁵⁸ I am talking about their utterances, their verbal articulations.

Material Losses. People lost everything because of the war. Some had their houses set on fire or destroyed with grenades or bombs thrown from airplanes.

Travel. People in the region had to be on the move. Men specifically would have to go out to the hills to hide from the national guard.

Roles. At the refugee camps, nobody was left idle. Everyone had a role to play.


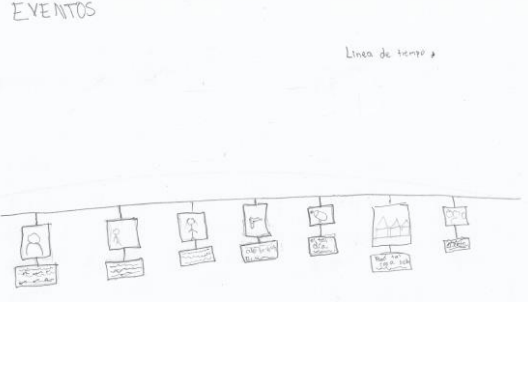
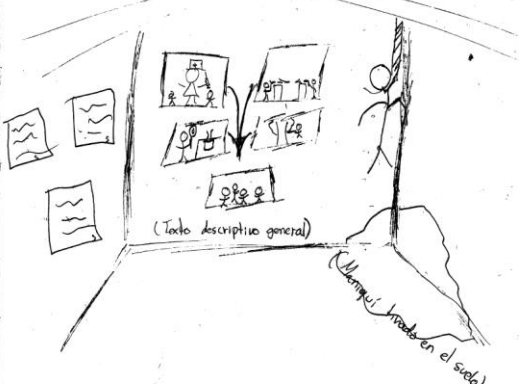
Birth. Women gave birth on the go, or while in the hills.

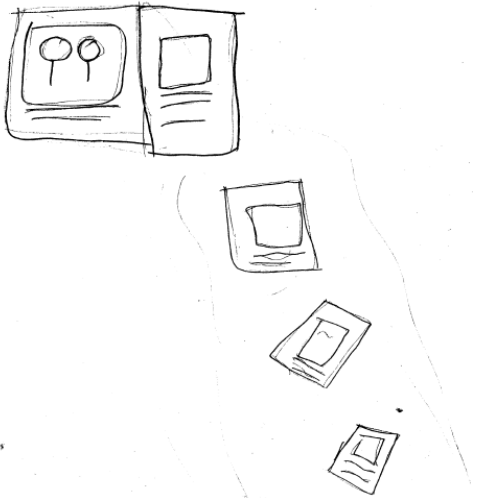

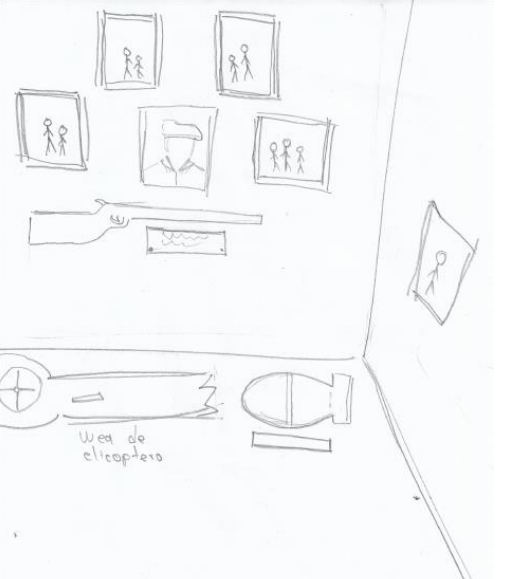
Combatants. Those who stayed in Morazán had to join the insurgency and fight.

Refuge. Those who fled went sought refuge elsewhere. All the people who did this, among my participants' sample of interviewees, went to Colomoncagua.

Later, when participants drew their first round of sketches about events, Valentin's and Carlos's sketch alluded to one event: military repression through the image of a hanged man (see table 8). Similarly, Dagoberto also referred to one single event: destroyed houses showing the aftermath of a scorched-earth operation. However, the sketches by Viera, Esmeralda, Violeta, and Donaldo, though evocative concepts, offered no specific information about the events they were supposed to portray. In fact, when I asked Esmeralda to give me examples of the events she would include in her proposed installation, she replied, "we'll see."

Table 5. First Round of Sketches about the Events Theme

Dagoberto: 11/04	Esmeralda: 11/04	Valentin: 10/26
		
<p>Scorched-earth operations.</p> <p>Ruins of houses.</p> <p>Inspired by wall at MUNA.</p> <p>“How things were left after the scorched-earth operations.” Dagoberto</p>	<p>A string attached on both ends to walls, hanging horizontally.</p> <p>Timeline of the events such as massacres, disappearances, and peace accords.</p> <p>Events presented in sequence.</p> <p>Specific events? “We’ll see.” — Esmeralda</p>	<p>One wall with images.</p> <p>One wall with interview summaries.</p> <p>A hanged man bleeding.</p> <p>Arrows pointing at children. “Everything that happened was for a better El Salvador.” — Valentin</p>

Violeta: 11/04	Viera: 11/04	Donaldo: 11/4
<p>Eventos.</p> 		
<p>Book. Events will be described in sequential order.</p> <p>Torn pages. Forgotten things.</p> <p>Blank pages. “Representation of things that we don’t really know what happened.” — Violeta</p>	<p>The installation would “first be history. Next, it would have excerpts from the interviews, segments of the interviews or something like that. Then, photographs of people who were in the war.” — Viera</p>	<p>“The armament that they changed.”</p> <p>“Specific things like the people who changed certain things or who lost sight of the direction of the war.” — Donaldo</p> <p>Pointy edge at bottom right represents helicopter propeller.</p>

Source: Allan Martell. Based on participants’ sketches in session 10.

This lack of nuance in the descriptions occurred even though participants had all the materials from the previous sessions on display for their reference.⁵⁹ At the beginning of each workshop, we posted the flipcharts with their design objects from previous sessions so they could look at them for inspiration. Moreover, starting in session 9, when participants created their concept maps, I always delivered printouts of typed versions of their previous objects (see table 9).

Table 6. Sample Affinity Wall. Answer to the Question: “What surprised me during my interviews?”

Memories	Change	Organization
I was surprised that some people didn't want to talk.	The change in lifestyle of those affected.	My grandfather transported missiles.
That she [her interviewee] still remembered so many details.	A friend of my interviewee lost everything: 200 cows and acres of land.	The form of organization of both sides.
The pain and resentment with which they tell their experience.		
The resentment of the whole country.		

Source: Allan Martell. Based on participants' affinity walls. I printed out and distributed printouts of these tables for participants' reference.

During their sketching exercises, participants distanced themselves from the design objects that gave rise to the themes and instead focused on the aspects of the story of the civil war that were most salient for them. This creative exploration was in fact made possible thanks

⁵⁹ At the beginning of every session, my participants and I set up the room in such a way that all their previous designs would be posted with tape on the walls of our meeting room. I also gave them typed versions or scans of their design objects.

to participants' distancing from the information in their previous design objects. Moreover, regardless of the degree of specificity in participants' descriptions of their sketches, they did incorporate insights from their site visits and their interviews into their drawings. These insights can be seen in the process that resulted in the final sketch for each of the five themes.

1. **Causes.** Dagoberto drew the final sketch. His drawing focused exclusively on inequality. Inequality was never mentioned in the design objects that gave rise to the causes theme. Instead, the only explicit cause mentioned in the affinity walls was the military draft, but Dagoberto never mentioned or considered it. His sketch drew inspiration from earlier iterations he and Esmeralda had drawn and, to a lesser extent, from sketches Dagoberto and Viera had drawn.
2. **Events.** Carlos drew the final sketch. His drawing was focused on representing the armaments of both sides, which seemed to be inspired by the exhibitions at the Museum of the Revolution, the Guerrilla Camp, and the Military Museum. His sketch drew inspiration from an earlier iteration drawn by Donaldo, which also emphasized armaments. Similar to the causes theme, the design objects that gave rise to the events theme did not refer to armament. Instead, a comparative analysis across different design objects reveals that the events theme was drawn from participants' concern with the multiplicity of opinions of their interviewees, the ideals of the insurgency movement as represented at the Museum of the Revolution, the different roles that interviewees occupied either in the refugee camps or within the guerrilla army, and the international aid that refugees received. The fact that Carlos's father used to be a guide at the Guerrilla Camp, one of the sites which focused its explanation on the armament

of the insurgency movement, may help explain why this topic was so salient to him.

After all, the Guerrilla Camp emphasized the insurgents' armament.

3. **Consequences.** Valentin and Esmeralda drew the final sketch. Their drawing focuses on the destruction and suffering of the population. While Valentin had worked on an earlier iteration with similar ideas, Esmeralda's original sketch had focused on the accomplishments of the war, which she described as greater freedom, more education, and more equality. The final sketch also marked a departure from Valentin's first iteration, which affirmed that the war had been waged to create a better future for the children. This is the theme that most closely reflects the contents that gave rise to it; a comparative analysis of previous design objects indicate that participants had stressed that the war had negatively impacted the population.
4. **Emotions.** Valentin drew the final sketch. He took inspiration from Donaldo's earlier iteration on the same theme, but Valentin repurposed the concept for a different kind of interaction. Donaldo's sketch about emotions shows a tree, under which participants are seated in rows, next to a standing person. The one standing is supposed to be a survivor of the war who is sharing her testimony with the audience. Donaldo explained that he saw this interaction as a live conversation, happening under a tree at the Museum of the Revolution, where he and his teammates had interviewed a guide. By contrast, Valentin imagined that a tree like that one, but not necessarily the same, would be adorned with strings hanging from its branches. From each string, a sign contained a story on one side, and a word representing the emotion of that story on the other. Valentin imagined stories that would reflect the emotions he and his teammates

had felt throughout their site visits: empathy, sadness, and anger. These stories would be excerpts from participants' interviews.

5. **Doubts.** Dagoberto and Carlos drew the final sketch. It shows a wall divided in two sections: doubts from before, and doubts from now. The concept was inspired by one of Donaldo's earlier sketches about events and by Dagoberto and Esmeralda's earlier sketches about doubts. In all three sketches, participants imagined displaying questions representing doubts. Interestingly, while Donaldo's original sketch focused on the doubts he had about the history of the war, Dagoberto's and Carlos's concept represents the doubts that their interviewees asked themselves as the war was raging (doubts from before) and the questions they continue to ask themselves to this day (doubts from now). One of the questions from before was: why were "strangers" taking pictures? This is a question Esmeralda's mother asked herself, as a child refugee, when she noticed that foreigners (staff members of human rights organizations) were taking pictures of children at the camp. The pictures were used for organizational propaganda to raise funds for the refugees, but this is something Esmeralda's mom came to understand this until she was older. Similarly, Carlos's father asks himself to this day why some of his relatives were killed during the war, and why the army forces set fire to an abandoned house in his old neighborhood. It is worth noting that the design objects that gave rise to this theme focused primarily on participants' unanswered questions about the war, not their interviewees'. One explanation for this change is that, when participants wrote their exhibition plan, they

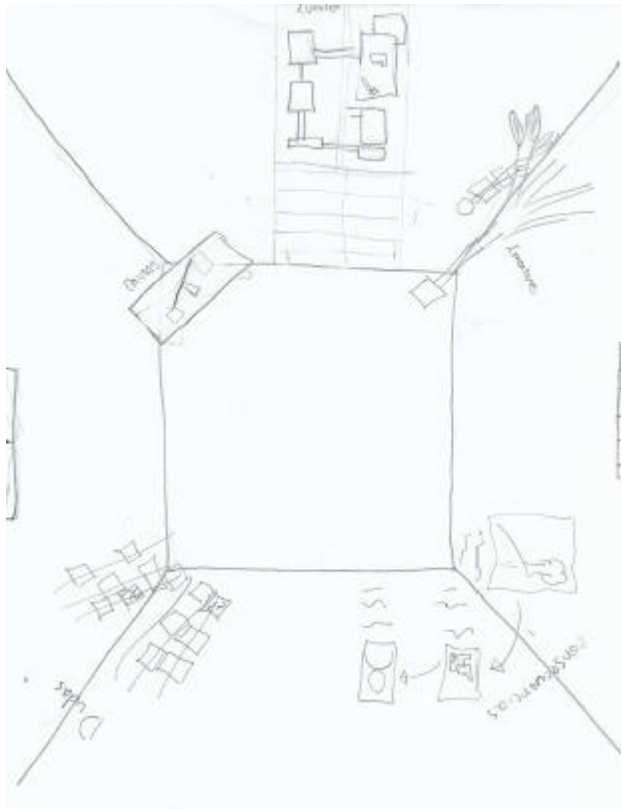
emphasized that they wanted to tell the story not of their own individual families, but that of their region.

Table 7. Exhibition Plan

Audience	Youths aged 12-24
Goal	To expose ideas through the knowledge acquired during interviews and museum visits
Justification	To remember the events of the civil war to have a broader point of view for people who were born after the signature of the peace accords.
Concept	Causes and consequences of the civil war Our learning
Themes	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Causes2. Events3. Consequences4. Emotions5. Doubts

Source: Design Workshop

Figure 4. Exhibition Floor Plan




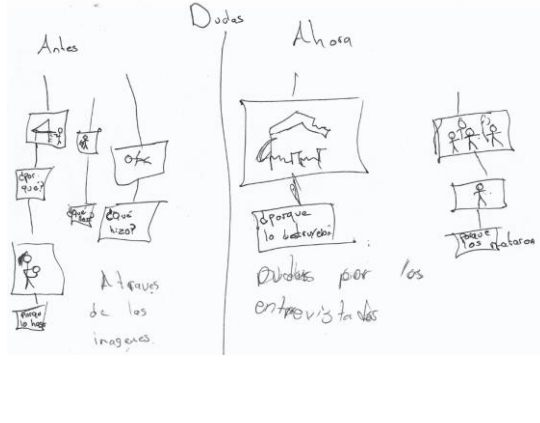
Source: Design Workshop

4. Affordances of the Design Process

Regardless of the scant verbal descriptions after the site visits ended, the design process allowed participants to express further nuances about their shared understanding of the civil war. These nuances were not present in their semi-structured interviews. This depth of meaning was possible in part because the design workshop allowed a structured space in which participants negotiated their understandings of the war among each other. This negotiation did not happen in the form of an explicit dialogue in any one session. Rather, a cross-examination of participants' design objects reveals how they influenced one another. For instance, Donaldo's early sketch of the causes theme displays "a room talking about both sides." The installation is placed on a wall,

divided in two. Each side would display the faces of the leaders of each faction of the war and highlight, at the midpoint of the wall, a list of the conflicts that divided both sides. Donaldo did not specify any differences between the sides on each session, but his idea about illustrating how both sides were juxtaposed marked a transition from his initial interview, where he shared a view of the war akin to what Jelin (2003) referred to as “the two devils.” In other words, he believed both sides were equally bad. Two sessions later, Dagoberto and Carlos repurposed Donaldo’s concept of the divided wall to represent a temporal division in the concerns of those who lived the war. Their sketch about doubts marks a separation not about the different sides in conflict, but about the concerns of the civilian population during and after the armed conflict (see table 10).

Table 8. Comparison of Donaldo’s Early Sketch of Causes and Dagoberto and Carlos’s final sketch of the Doubts Theme.

Donaldo’s Early Sketch on Causes (session 12)	Dagoberto and Carlos’s Sketch on Doubts (session 14)
	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corner. Two walls with images and labels. • Each wall represents a side in the war. • Corner (intersection of walls/sides). Describe the conflicts and differences between sides. • Diagram represents each sides' organizational structure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doubts from before ("antes," left side). • Example: Esmeralda's mom, a child back then, wondered why there were foreigners taking pictures of everyone at the refugee camps. • Doubts from now ("ahora," right side). • Example: Carlos's father still wonders why some of his relatives were killed.
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Source: Allan Martell

This increased depth in their articulations of their memories can also be seen in Esmeralda and Dagoberto's emphasis on inequality as the leading cause of the war. Inequality is one of three other causes of the war that participants discussed during their visit to the Museum of the Revolution and the Guerrilla Camp; the others were repression and land concentration. One explanation for the salience of inequality is that it is more evident for participants in the present day. Except for the army forces, the other security forces that repressed the population during the war (national police, treasury police, and national guard) were dissolved after the peace accords and were replaced with a civilian police force. Moreover, even though the army forces still exist, the institution was downsized and returned to the barracks.⁶⁰ Similarly, land concentration, while still an issue, has a lesser impact on participants' lives because the economy in the postwar

⁶⁰ Although the army forces have been consistently used postwar to bolster the police in anticrime operations, its operation has remained under civilian rule since the end of the war.

quickly evolved from agriculture toward the service and financial sectors (González 1999a; Villacorta 2010; Villacorta Zuluaga 2011).⁶¹

The design process also allowed participants to make sense of multiple aspects of the complex history of the civil war. For instance, during their visit to the Guerrilla Camp, participants noticed the ingenuity of the insurgents to avoid detection, care for their wounded, and protect themselves against air raids. Similarly, at El Mozote, participants reflected on the cruelty of the army forces with the civilian population. However, at the Military Museum, they were confronted with the radically opposed version of history whereby Coronel Domingo Monterrosa was portrayed as a war hero and not as the butcher of El Mozote. Participants' sense-making was made possible through the identification of broader themes and focused reflection of the different design objects and their subsequent feedback sessions.

A key aspect of participants' sense-making process was the opportunity to reflect on their own emotions. While Dagoberto was the only one who explicitly mentioned feeling disappointed after the visit to the Guerrilla Camp, in later sessions his peers expressed ideas that reflect disappointment. Robbie, for instance, mentioned his frustration in affirming that 75% of people from his generation, in his view, had no interest in learning about the civil war. Similarly, after the visit to MUNA, Donaldo adopted a demure tone when he asked himself whether both sides had "fought for an ideal." Finally, also after the visit to MUNA, Katerin voiced her anger at the

⁶¹ Ironically, the civil war accelerated this process of economic transition away from agriculture (González 1999a)s.

cynicism of former guerrilla commanders who had sent children to fight and die but would themselves stay in the rear guard.

There are also signs of hope in the way participants described the story of the war. For instance, after the visit to the Guerrilla Camp, Valentin mentioned that he assumed the sacrifice of the war had been for something. Similarly, when Esmeralda explained her first sketch about the consequences theme, she said the conflict had resulted in some improvements, such as greater equality, more education, and greater freedom.

Although participants did not mention the word grief, they did grieve. The moment this grief became more evident was when Katerin started the conversation about the differences between how she and her peers think about the war compared to how their parents and grandparents do. She reflected on the impossibility of her parents' generation to ever come to grips with the pain associated with losing parents, siblings, or children to the war, and she contrasted that with the experiences of her own generation, for which the war was just a story. Ironically, and somewhat contradicting her own statement, Katerin's demure and irate tone revealed an emotional statement that went far beyond a story that happened to someone else.⁶² Grief encompasses the other emotions that participants explicitly stated such as anger, sadness, and nostalgia:

1. Anger at the cruelty of the soldiers toward civilians.
2. Anger at the cynicism of the guerrilla army for recruiting children and sending them to fight on their behalf.

⁶² I described this scene in greater detail in the previous chapter.

3. Anger toward the way the army forces portrayed Domingo Monterrosa at the Military Museum.
4. Sadness for the mothers who lost their children during scorched-earth operations.
5. Sadness for the children who were killed and the women who were raped and then killed at El Mozote.
6. Sadness for the kidnapped children who were separated from their birth families.
7. Shock at the level of cruelty of the army forces displayed at El Mozote.

Although I also described grief during the interviews (see chapter 4), the instances of grief listed here are different in scope. None of the feelings sparked during the design workshop referred to the loss of relatives or friends. Instead, this grief refers to individuals whom participants never personally met, but who were introduced to them as historical actors during the war. Similar to what Landsberg (2004) and some museum scholars (Crețan et al. 2018; Sodaro 2018) had referred to as prosthetic memory, it thus appears that the grief participants experienced throughout the design workshop was of a historical nature, a grief that made sense to them as members of a larger community of individuals that they had never personally met, but whom they still felt connected to through the museum representations at the memorial sites we visited. In Anderson's (1983) words, the experience of visiting memorial museums allowed participants to imagine themselves as members of a larger community connected by virtue of this historical form of grief.

5. Play

It may seem counterintuitive to think of play when dealing with historical episodes of violence such as genocides, civil wars, or dictatorships, but my participants did engage in play.

In some cases, this play was an attempt on their part to make sense of a difficult past, namely the civil war. These results are consistent with prior works, which show that children make sense of their social worlds through play (Henricks 2015) and that play remains an important source of sense-making in the context of systematic violence (Eisen 1990; Gougoulis 2017). The key difference in my research is that play is happening decades after the violent period has ended and among children who did not live through the atrocities of the war.

Play was not inherent to my design process, but rather a phenomenon that I noticed along the way and that, whenever possible, I tried to let unfold and sometimes joined. An example of this occurred when we were discussing their findings from their interviews with friends and family. I began explaining why I wanted them to bring objects related to their families' experiences during the war. As I was doing this, I mispronounced Viera's name. Everyone made fun of me for that. Dagoberto exclaimed: "No to cocaine. No to cocaine!" Valentin and I reacted with surprise. "What?" both of us asked, almost in unison. Dagoberto continued joking: "Switch it [the imaginary cocaine], what's wrong?" I took the hint. Dagoberto was suggesting, in jest, that I had mispronounced Viera's name wrong because I was drugged. Specifically, he was suggesting that I may be high on cocaine. I was amused by Dagoberto's joke, so I played along. Smiling, I said: "I need to switch providers." Valentin started to imagine what specific kind of cocaine I could be using: "Cocaine made of soy... soy cocaine!" and Esmeralda and I laughed. Carlos got the gist of our joke and chimed in: "Tell him [my imaginary provider] to bring me some too." At this point, I realized that we were running out of time, dropped the smile, and trying to sound a bit more serious, I asked everyone to get back to work.

I believe that instances of play like the example above represent an opportunity to catalyze the energy of new generations in memorial museums and an opportunity for memory workers to situate themselves in children's social worlds. Participants used play in three different ways: (1) to lighten the mood, (2) to self-regulate as a group, and to (3) make sense of what they otherwise could not grapple with.

1. Play to lighten the mood

The most common form of play I saw occurred when my participants wanted to lighten the mood. In other words, they felt the work was unpleasant or felt reluctant to pursue an activity for different reasons. In this circumstance, play allowed them to lighten the mood, helping them move past their misgivings and start on the task at hand. An example of this occurred in the session where participants were making their affinity wall. Halfway through this work, Dagoberto said he did not like his handwriting and that I may not understand what he writes. I glanced at his notes and assured him that I could comprehend his handwriting. I added that I wanted everyone to finish this exercise quickly. Dagoberto replied that the three university degrees I had come in very handy.⁶³ In the same spirit, Valentin said about Dagoberto's handwriting, "one must be a doctor to understand."

2. Play to self-regulate

Participants also used play to warn each other whenever their behavior was becoming disruptive, as a form of self-regulation as a group. This occurred in the same session where they

⁶³ I actually only had two degrees, a BA and an MS, but participants seemed to count the fact that I was studying a PhD as equivalent to me already having the degree. I shared this information before we began one of our sessions because one of them had asked me about my education. This was not the first time they made comments related to the fact that I had college education.

were working on their affinity walls. During the session, one of the probing questions I asked them was what they would like their visitors to take away from their exhibition. Valentin was about to answer to this provocation, but he stopped himself and denied with his head. I encouraged him to share his thoughts. “What I want is impossible,” he affirmed. I asked him to explain. He said he would like people to leave the exhibition feeling good. He imagined a scene in which two veterans of the guerrilla army are remembering, with nostalgia, their experiences during the war: “Like, ‘remember when we were in the hills and there was nothing to eat and we found our way,’ something like that,” he explained. I encouraged him to write his idea down, even if it seemed out of place, unfeasible, or unreachable. I said I still wanted everyone to write down their ideas. Dagoberto replied that he was thinking of unicorns. “Should write the word ‘unicorn’?” he asked me. “Sure, go ahead!” I replied. However, rather than writing the word unicorn, Dagoberto drew one on the flip chart. Then, Dagoberto turned back to me again and said, “you said the first thing that came to mind, and I am now thinking about bread.” Curious and cheerful, Carlos asked Dagoberto if he was thinking of French bread or some other type. For a second, I looked at Carlos wondering if he was hungry. Then I realized that I too was going astray. “Well, the first thing that comes to mind with regard to the questions,” I said while sighing. Valentin interjected: “I told you a while back to hit Dagoberto.”

3. Dark play

The least common, but also the most significant form of play that I observed occurred when my participants were trying to make sense of situations that they were having a hard time

fathoming. I refer to this phenomenon as dark play.⁶⁴ Indeed, dark play was the least common form of play throughout the design workshop, but I also deem it the most significant. The clearest example occurred on the day they drew their first sketches for their exhibition themes. This session took place one month after our visit to MUNA. When they finished with the first round of sketches, I asked them to start with the second round and excused myself. I had brought my scanner to the workshop so I could document their design concepts as soon as possible, and I had installed it at the back of the room.

The scanning took me about five minutes. While I was finishing, I could hear some of them giggling. The tables where they were working were on the opposite end of the room, closer to the entrance door. When I turned back, I noticed that their giggles turned into contained and nervous laughter. They were all standing in a U shape. Behind them, I noticed a figure covered in one of the white mantels, seated. The figure seemed to be shaking. I walked toward this figure as fast as I could. I was worried and a bit angry because I thought someone was being bullied.

As I walked toward the covered shape, I could hear everyone's laughter increasing in volume. I removed the mantel, only to see Esmeralda, tape covering her mouth and binding her arms to the armrests of a red plastic chair. I was on the verge of losing it when I realized that Esmeralda's trembling was due to her laughter. She was laughing so hard that her eyes were watered with tears. I carefully removed the tape from her mouth and her arms. Everyone's laughter reached a climax at this point. When they settled down a bit, I asked them why they had

⁶⁴ I draw inspiration from Lennon and Foley's (2000) dark tourism. However, Lennon and Foley were focused on tourism experiences surrounding death. Unlike memorial museums, which always refer to mass atrocities, dark tourism may also refer to the death of pop-culture icons such as Michael Jackson or Princess Diana.

gagged and blindfolded Esmeralda. Nobody answered. Esmeralda told me it had all just been a joke. I sighed. I was confused but no longer worried because Esmeralda seemed fine. I asked them to please be mindful of how they used the tape because we could run out. Then I told them to go back to their sketches. Later that that day, when participants had already gone back home, I remembered that a similar image of a blindfolded person was on display at the MUNA exhibition. I suspected something important had happened that day but I was not exactly sure why.

I resolved to do some research into children's play as soon as my internet came back (internet connection always went down on the many cloudy and rainy days, and we were in the middle of the rainy season). Days passed. I almost forgot about the incident, but then, the following week, I caught Valentin trying to gag Dagoberto with tape. I asked them what had just happened. Both said it had just been a joke. Some weeks later, shortly before starting the public presentation that concluded our workshop, my students brought back the subject of the gagging with tape. I did not ask them about it; they brought it up. Esmeralda said it was Violeta who had blindfolded her the previous month. Violeta denied it and said it had all been Esmeralda's doing, that she had done it alone. Esmeralda, annoyed that Violeta would not admit her part in the incident, said: "Right. With both hands tied, I somehow put more [tape] in my mouth. Then Dagoberto came up and started to put more [tape] on me and then Violeta came and put a blanket on me." Indignant, Violeta exclaimed: "What a liar!" Valentin intervened to remind everyone that he had also tried gagging Dagoberto. Esmeralda look disapprovingly at Valentin and Dagoberto and exclaimed: "copycats!"

I believe participants' grief helps explain these instances of dark play and their sense-making throughout the design workshop. Play also helps participants to express in the present what they cannot not comprehend about the past. Similar to children living in ghettos during World War II, who enacted through play events that were a reflection of the violence around them such as mass funerals and being tortured by the gestapo (Eisen 1990),⁶⁵ participants were attempting to understand how it was possible that children, such as themselves, could have been killed and kidnapped during the war, and how it was possible that their relatives and neighbors could have been illegally detained and tortured for the mere presumption of being guerrilla members. Thus, these instances of play were participants' attempts to adapt their value systems to comprehend the violent incidents of the civil war. Dark play, in this manner, was a means for them to shape their postmemory of the war, one (although not the only one) through which participants processed their grief.

As I reflected on the pervasive role of play throughout the workshop, I also realized that there was a disconnect between museum workers and my participants in terms of tone. I did not see any instances of my participants being scolded or shamed in any of our visits to memorial sites. However, I did find that the tone adopted by guides at the Museum of the Revolution, El Mozote and the Guerrilla Camp was serious, akin to the mournful state that others referred to as the memorialization function (Violi 2012; Crețan et al. 2018). For instance, when we arrived at El Mozote, a guide from the historical memory association received us and offered to explain the story of the massacre:

This is a sad history. It is not like a place of [unintelligible]. Each plaque that you see here is a family. The amount of people that died here were more than

⁶⁵ Eisen concluded that, through play, children were able to do what parents could not: adapt their value systems to the realities of the ghetto.

one thousand. That is what the forensic experts said, the ones who did the exhumations after the peace accords. Even though those who died were more, but since those others bodies were never found they [the forensic experts] said that they would only [count] the ones they found. That number of people died here were all from the hamlets. Here, what happened was a deceit that the army forces did... (Transcript, El Mozote, Session 3)

This solemn tone, while understandable given the nature of the history being conveyed, should not be the only approach in the toolbox of memory workers when faced with children. The scene I described in the previous chapter, when Virginia scolded her students for making light of the story of El Mozote, also illustrates a disconnect between the serious tone that is best suited for adult audiences and the child-centered strategies developed in other spaces such as children's museums (Hansen et al. 1987; Cohen 1987) and schools (Conklin 2014; Fine 2014). These works have highlighted the generative power of play to enable children to freely explore and make sense of the world, but they have not explored how play supports children's processing of emotionally taxing experiences such as learning about historical episodes of violence. In sum, more work is still needed to incorporate play in memorial museums.

The connections between dark play and design are also a subject worthy of more exploration. There have been suggestions in the Human-Computer Interaction (CHI) community to incorporate play in design (Chirumamilla and Pal 2013; Parker-rees 1997; Sey and Ortoleva 2014a; Jenson, Taylor, and De Castell 2007). At least one of these works touted the potential of play to engage community members as co-designers in the creation of "serious content" (Jenson, Taylor, and De Castell 2007). By "serious" the authors mean content that conveys the complexities of legal requirements for practicing teachers and students in a Canadian province. The subject of play in a postwar context was tangentially suggested in a study about the role of interactive storytelling as a means to promote postwar reconciliation in Liberia (Smyth, Etherton,

and Best 2010). In this study, the authors developed an interactive kiosk capable of recording and playing user-generated stories about the war. To the researchers' surprise, most city-dwellers in Liberia chose to share stories about their present-life, even though the system interface clearly specified the scope of the stories it expected to receive. While these works do offer a glimpse at the relevance for design to intervene in the space of dark play, no works to the best of my knowledge have tried to intervene in the complexities of dark play in a post-conflict context, such as postwar El Salvador.

My findings suggest that such frameworks, whether stemming from more traditional museum interventions or from participatory design, present an opportunity for memory workers to engage in meaningful work with youth, work that would allow these workers to pursue their goals of critical reflection and honoring the victims through mechanisms that better reflect the social worlds of youth.

6. Conclusion

Some works about memorial museums have focused on the politics of memory; that is, the sociopolitical context under which an exhibition is designed and how this context shapes the narrative of the exhibition. Likewise, there is another body of work concerned with the meanings that participants make out of their museum visits, but these meanings are drawn from exhibitions that have already been crafted. Finally, there is yet another body of work that has been concerned with means to make the museum more participatory, which includes engaging community members in exhibition design. However, there is limited research of this kind in the area of memorial museums, and none—to the best of my knowledge—that explores how participation in exhibition design shapes co-designers' social memory. This study has filled this gap by running

and observing a postmemorial exhibition. In so doing, I have endeavored to explore how the experience of participating in an exhibition design project shaped participants' memories of mass atrocities, also known as cultural trauma.

What I found is that the design process provided my participants with three distinct modalities of exploring the meaning of the war: (1) mutual construction and reflection, (2) iterative construction through the crafting of design objects, and (3) open exploration of exhibition themes. The first modality of exploration, mutual construction, and reflection occurred primarily during the visits to the five memorial sites (Museum of the Revolution, Guerrilla Camp, El Mozote, Museum of Military History, and the National Museum of Anthropology). During the group discussions following each visit, participants made sense of the story of the site by an iterative process of sharing an idea and then building onto it until a consensus emerged over the questions under consideration. Examples of these were the idea that the Museum of Military History portrays a whitewashed version of the war that represents how the army forces want to imagine themselves. Similarly, participants used this modality of engagement to determine that El Mozote and MUNA both focused on the suffering of victims. However, participants made the distinction that El Mozote deals with only one moment of the war, whereas MUNA covers the entire civil war. At other times, the construction of meaning happened by challenging each other, as was the case with Esmeralda and Donaldo's proposal of overtly graphic depictions of violence.

I observed the modality of iterative construction through the crafting of design objects during the second half of the workshop, after we had concluded the site visits. At this point, instances of direct engagement for meaning making became less common. Instead, participants'

design concepts drew inspiration from earlier design objects from their peers. Sometimes, participants iterated on the sketches by repurposing earlier concepts from their teammates. This was the case with Donaldo and Valentin. Donaldo first proposed a live interaction with a community member to talk about the emotions people felt during the war. Later, Valentin repurposed the idea as “a tree of emotions.” In this tree, the emotions would not be conveyed by a war survivor (synchronous interaction), but through written excerpts of oral histories about the war (asynchronous interaction).

With the last modality of meaning-making, open exploration, I refer to the process by which participants distanced themselves from the earlier design objects (affinity walls, concept maps, bubble diagrams, and exhibition plans), the ones that gave rise to their exhibition themes, and instead represented the meanings of these themes that were more salient for participants. This was the case with Dagoberto’s sketch about the causes of the war. Inequality had been mentioned during the design workshop as a leading cause of the conflict, but participants had also mentioned land concentration and repression. I have suggested that the latter two causes are not part of participants’ lived experiences due to changes in the country after the peace accords. Because of this, issues such as land concentration and repression are not as salient to them as they may have been for their parents before and during the war.

Consistently throughout the design process, although most clearly during the site visits, participants showed signs of grief. No one explicitly mentioned the word grief to articulate their feelings, yet grief is the emotion that best encompasses the feelings they did express, such as anger, shock, and sadness. Their anger was primarily directed toward the army forces for the atrocities committed against the population and their sadness was directed toward the civilians

who were brutally killed, the mothers whose children were disappeared by the soldiers, and the kidnapped children for the loss of their birth families. These expressions of grief associated with participants' belief that the army forces fought against "the people" and that the guerrilla army was the army of "the people" (see chapter 3 for details) are the measure of participants' postmemories about the civil war. Parallel to participants' grief, I found, rather unexpectedly, that play worked as a coping mechanism, in addition to serving other functions.

Play was not a part of my original conceptual framework, but I saw it consistently throughout the design process. Participants' play served three functions: (1) to lighten the mood of their design work, (2) to self-regulate as a group, and (3) to make sense of the atrocities of the war. The first function of play, lightening the mood, is almost self-explanatory. Participants felt at times concerned or fatigued with the work ahead of them, and play allowed them to find comical release from their situation, and therefore alleviate their own tensions. This was the case, for instance, during the session where they created their affinity walls. On that day, Valentin suggested that one must be a doctor or have three academic degrees to perform the type of analysis to produce an affinity wall. Valentin made this joke at the beginning of the activity, but he and his teammates ended up producing several such walls that same day.

The second function of play, self-regulation as a group, enabled participants to communicate to each other, tacitly, that their behavior was leading the whole group off track. One example was when participants were making the affinity walls to answer to the question of what attracted their attention the most during their interviews. Valentin prompted me, with an "I-told-you-so" attitude, to hit Dagoberto since he was not focusing on the activity and his loud comments were distracting Valentin.

Finally, the third function, making sense of the atrocities of the war, or dark play, is similar to Eisen's account of children-initiated play in one ghetto during the Holocaust. Like the children in the ghettos, my participants engaged in a form of dark play that consisted of enacting specific atrocities—namely gagging and blindfolding each other—for reasons they could not articulate when asked, and which they explained as a wicked thought of the moment. Although this was the least common modality of play, it was also the most significant. Dark play allowed participants to grapple with the atrocities they had seen at different sites, especially at MUNA. In other words, through a pretend scenario that enacted a form of torture, participants were trying to assimilate that such atrocities had been possible. Moreover, this pretend scenario also allowed them to explore, within a safe space, the experience of torture from the perspective of either the perpetrators, the victims, or the bystanders, depending on participants' roles in the scene. Like Eisen, I felt puzzled and concerned when I saw these forms of play, but also like him, I concluded that dark play was a sign of participants' resilience. If participants' laughter—while they engaged in such forms of play—is any indicator, enacting such forms of play did not lead them to experience pain, but excitement. In making sense of atrocities like torture, my participants were processing their historical grief, at least to some degree.

These three modalities of engagement are a significant contribution enabled by my methodological framework, which drew from participatory design frameworks that have been shown to promote empathy (Tomlinson 2020; Lee et al. 2019) and critical reflection among members of vulnerable communities (McNally et al. 2017; Skukauskaite, Noske, and Gonzales 2018; Bustamante Duarte et al. 2018). This framework in turn was inspired by the school of thought within participatory design, which argues that design is a political project that should

intervenes in matters of public concern (e.g., Dixon 2020; Le Dantec and DiSalvo 2018; L. J. Bannon and Ehn 2013). The word “intervene” is important here because many issues of public concern are not solvable, but only subject to intervention. Cultural memory is one such case. As a complex system that is carried on over long periods of time, cultural trauma is subject to periodic negotiation across generations. There is no guarantee that the ways in which a society negotiates a trauma in the present will work for their descendants. Thus, intervening in this space, through design, necessitates safe spaces that enable co-designers to develop empathy and critically reflect on the meaning of the past. The results from my workshop suggest that postmemorial exhibitions are one important step in that direction. In sum, design can be mobilized to support the negotiation of cultural trauma and, in this manner, bolster ongoing efforts in memorial sites to foster post-conflict reconciliation.

My results also present new possibilities to consider the incorporation of play within the realm of memorial museums. Up to this point, play has primarily been used as a pedagogic strategy within children’s museums and museums of science and technology. Dark play is particularly relevant to the context of memorial museums, as the subject of such play is the very essence of the memorial spaces: the histories of mass atrocities and sense-making of younger generations about these events. Similarly, my results suggest that dark play represents another avenue of intervention within the field of design. Similar to the realm of museum studies, research about interactions’ design has used the generative power of play as a pedagogic resource. However, current approaches are centered on the everyday kind of play, like the one in which my participants engage to lighten the mood during our workshop. More work is needed to understand how design could intervene in—but not solve—a context of cultural trauma through a

playful design that is dark in nature; in other words, a kind of design that engages with children-initiated play about historical events of mass atrocities. Such an approach would be consistent with justice-oriented paradigms design (e.g., Asad 2019; Irani, Vertesi, and Dourish 2010; Ogbonnaya-Ogburu et al. 2020), which seek to pursue civic goals such as post-conflict reconciliation.

In the next chapter, I return to the topic of intergenerational dynamics of memory. I discuss how the postmemorial exhibition shaped and was shaped by this exhibition, and why the outcomes of the design process are relevant to cultural trauma theory and memorial museum studies.

Chapter 7 — Conclusion

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I present the general conclusions of my study. First, I discuss my results regarding the generational dynamics of memory, which pertain to participants' experience of memory as shaped by their teacher's approach to history education (e.g. curriculum design, extracurricular activities) and the dynamics within participants' families. I explain how my students actively navigate this fragmented memory space, by virtue of asking questions to their relatives, or seeking alternative avenues to learn about the history of the civil war, my research project included.

Second, and related to the previous point, I explain how the design workshop became a vehicle for participants to satiate their curiosity. Throughout the workshop, participants experienced different forms of grief; one associated to the relatives who were killed during the war, and other tied to civilian victims during the war, such as the women whose babies were killed or kidnapped and the abducted children themselves. Third, I highlight the contributions of my study: 1) expanding the toolkit of human rights museology with the concept of a postmemorial exhibition, which is a social memory technology to assist children in piecing together the fragmented puzzle of memory in postmemorial contexts; 2) making the case for a design approach to the study of cultural trauma. This is a project aligned with justice-oriented design paradigms that aim to intervene, but not necessarily solve, matters of public concern. This project is also an extension of emerging works within the field of Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) to explore the interplay between design and social memory.

Fifth, I explain the limitations of my study. These pertain to the low external validity due to the characteristics of my sample; the signs of attrition, related to the long-term commitment that the design workshop required; and the serendipitous encounter with play, specially, dark play. Finally, in closing, I re-state the main contributions of the study and insist on the opportunity to expand on a research project that seeks to form more empathetic and critical subjects and prevent future episodes of violence.

2. Intergenerational Dynamics of Memory

In this study, have drawn attention to the role of memorial museums in intervening in the politically contested and emotionally laden space of cultural trauma. Specifically, I have sought to draw insights about the potential of a design intervention in supporting the negotiation of cultural trauma among members of the postwar generation in El Salvador. This research is important because it represents an opportunity to advance, through research and design, the project of memorial museums of creating a more peaceful future for younger generations. With this end in mind, I endeavored to answer three research questions:

1. How do intergenerational dynamics of memory operate in the school context?
2. How do students negotiate their memories given the intergenerational dynamics at play in that context?
3. How does participation in the design process of a memorial exhibition mediates students' memories?

With regards to the intergenerational dynamics of memory, I found that *there is a fragmentary experience with social memory at the school*. This experience is fueled by *two interdependent mechanisms*:

1. The enshrining of lived experience as primary source of knowledge, and
2. Curriculum design.

I have explained how teachers' belief that lived experience was the primary source of expertise on the subject shaped their decision to omit the the civil war from their curriculum. Only two out of the four teachers who had a stake in decisions regarding history education had personal memories about the war. Moreover, there were no teaching materials about the history of the war that the school could rely on. To partially remedy this omission, the principal organized, on her own accord, two yearly guest talks. During each event, students had the opportunity to hear the testimonies of former soldiers and guerrilla combatants, respectively. However, these guest talks were the personal initiative of the principal. She did not consult with the history teacher nor the director of instruction. Now that the principal has left the school, it is possible that the guest talks will cease. If this occurs without changes to the curriculum, the fragmented experience of memory at SH could turn into an overt form of silence about the civil war.

The Problem-Based Learning (PBL) approach at SH cannot, on its own, circumvent this institutional silence. Even if students do become protagonists of their learning process through PBL, teachers still decide the topics that students discuss and explore. Students cannot develop a critical stance about a subject that is not even brought up in the first place.

This fragmentation of memory cannot be decoupled from the entrepreneurial approach to education in post war El Salvador. The education reform of 1998, implemented by a conservative administration, re-shaped the Salvadoran school system to emphasize individual responsibility and the promotion of "universal" values (DeLugan 2012). After the education reform of 1994,

some textbooks do mention the civil war, but make no allusion to the patterns of violence against civilians (Gellman and Bellino 2019; Gellman 2015). It is in this context that the private school where I did my fieldwork was created. All members of the school leadership emphasized the importance of taking children's education "in one's own hands" rather than waiting for the State to deliver in high-quality education. This entrepreneurial sentiment was transversal to school activities, including their decision to adopt a PBL methodology for their entire curriculum.

According to proponents of PBL, the methodology can be used for multiple kinds of problems, whether they are "practical" in nature, the kind that engineers are trained to solve; or open-ended ones, the kinds that liberal arts professionals are trained to manage (Savin-Baden and Major 2004). This distinction between solving and managing may be explained by the disciplinary bend of Irving, SH's director of instruction. Irving is a civil engineer. As such, he could easily identify design problems in the school and turn them into PBL projects for their students such evaluating multiple subjects through the multidisciplinary task of designing a water supply system for the school. However, he was at a loss when it came to framing the open-ended "problem" of history education.

Irving's confusion was complicated by the absence of teachers' resources about the civil war. Faced with this dilemma, Irving concluded that the only way in which a teacher could successfully facilitate discussions about the civil war was having personal memories of it. The principal's attempt to solve this dilemma were the guest speaker talks. Although these talks allowed students to receive some information about the war beyond their family circles, the approach remained disconnected from the rest of the curriculum. The result was that students only had access to a version of the story that placed the warring factions in dialogue, but left out

other angles of the war, such as the experience of civilians, the historical causes of the conflict, and the geopolitical context in which the war occurred.

From the students' standpoint, teachers' decisions resulted in a fragmentary experience with the memory of the war. This reality was an extension of the also fragmentary experience of war memory with which students had engaged at home. Yet, those who participated in my project reacted to this fragmented experience proactively. For instance, after completing all site visits, participants insisted on doing their own interviews about the history of the war in their region. They explicitly asked me to not focus their exhibition solely on their family experiences. Even if they ultimately interviewed mostly friends and family, these interviews were an opportunity for them to learn new details about their family histories and to further reflect on each other's experiences as they shared them.

In addition to their curiosity, participants expressed a deep emotional engagement with the memory of the war and a desire to share "their opinion" about it. This engagement took the form of a *personal grief*. That is, grief about the relatives whom they lost during the war. In fact, this emotional connection was at least one of the factors that inspired their curiosity. They wanted to know more about what had happened during the war. In the case of those students whose families openly talked about the war, their curiosity was an attempt to understand the plight that drove their late relatives to fight in the insurgent army. In the case of those whose families opted to promote silence, they were driven by their desire to overcome the silences within their families.

3. Vehicle of exploration

The design process intervened in this fragmentary memory space by serving as a vehicle through which students sought to satisfy their curiosity. Through the design process, participants accessed additional details about the history of the war. One example of this was the students' awe about the ingenuity of guerrilla fighters to avoid detection, care for their wounded and fight the army forces. Moreover, the design process allowed participants to not only add nuance and depth to their understanding about the war (e.g. the suffering of civilians, how the army forces portray themselves), identify patterns of this wealth of information and establish links between them. In so doing, students became able to see a bigger picture about the war.

The design process also allowed participants to experience a different kind of grief, one which I refer to as *historical grief*, because it refers to the experiences of suffering of individuals outside of students' family circles and social networks and instead pertains to individuals whose plight became known to students as part of the historical experience of war as represented by the memorial sites we visited. Example of these unknown individuals include the abducted and women raped during the war. Through grief, participants imagined themselves as part of a larger community of former war refugees, victims and community organizers⁶⁶. This result is reminiscent of the concept of prosthetic memories (Landsberg 2004), which has also been observed in the context of memorial museums (Sodaro 2018; Crețan et al. 2018). However, the

⁶⁶ This idea that individuals imagine themselves as members of larger communities, based on experiences that said individuals did not directly experience, comes from Benedict Anderson. However, Anderson is focused on the impact of information technologies, such as print, in enabling the creation of said communities and his primary community of interest were nations. I am relying on this framework to suggest that grief, itself informed by individuals' exposure to media technologies, became a mechanism for group identity formation. Moreover, I am not concerned with the nation as a group, but the community of former guerrilla supporters and war refugees from northern Morazán.

main difference in my study is that this process of prosthetic identification with a historical episode of mass atrocity occurred in the context of a participatory design process of a postmemorial exhibition and not during a museum visit.

Finally, by the end of the project, students expressed an increased curiosity to know more about the war, and some, like Valentin and Dagoberto, indicated that they now understood better their family histories as well. These outcomes indicate that *the design process allowed participants to, at least partially, overcome their fragmented experiences with the memory of the war that were immersed in their families and at school*. These outcomes were facilitated by *three mechanisms of the design process*:

1. Mutual construction and reflection,
2. Iterative interaction through the progression of the design objects, and
3. Open exploration.

Mutual construction and reflection was the primary mechanism of participants' engagement during our site visits and while discussing their interviewees with friends and family. This mechanism consisted of participants generating shared meanings by taking a seed thought and sequentially explore it through each other's interventions. The second mechanism, iterative interaction through the progression of the design objects, occurred during the sketching phase. It consisted of participants drawing inspiration from their peers' prior concepts, to reframe their representations of their design themes. The third and final mechanism, open exploration, involved participants taking distance from earlier design objects to explore their exhibition themes independently from the ideas represented in prior design objects (e.g. affinity walls,

concept maps, exhibition plan). Through this mechanism, participants focused on their own salient beliefs about the themes they sketched.

These results indicate that the design process can be mobilized to support the negotiation of cultural trauma and in this manner, bolster ongoing efforts in memorial sites to foster post-conflict reconciliation. This important role of design in supporting memory work is one avenue of application for a larger movement in design practice and scholarship that argues that design is a political project called upon to intervene in matters of public concern (e.g. Dixon 2020; L. Bannon, Bardzell, and Bødker 2018; Le Dantec and DiSalvo 2018; L. J. Bannon and Ehn 2013). Cultural trauma, which is a type of social memory about historical episodes of mass atrocities, are one such matter.

As complex systems, cultural trauma is more than the mere sum of individual, psychological traumas. Instead, its recursive and intergenerational nature requires interventions that enable present generations to negotiate their positionality with regards to the violent past. In this process, the word *intervene* rather than *solve* is important. Social memory in general, and cultural trauma in particular, is not a form of instrumental rationality (Phillips 2005). In other words, cultural trauma cannot be fixed because there is no ‘right way’ to remember the violent past. Furthermore, cultural trauma is also multiple, political, and contentious (Olick and Robbins 1998; Olick 2007). This means that there is often not one, but many memories about the same episodes of mass atrocity. These memories are often in competition with each other to become the predominant truth of the group (e.g. Hite 2003; Sprenkels 2012; Stern 2006; Alexander 2004).

Aware of the challenges of working in this complex and contentious space, memorial museums have endeavored to support the negotiation of cultural trauma with the aim of facilitating dialogues about the meaning of the violent past (Williams 2007; Carter and Orange 2011; Dean 2013). In my dissertation, I have sought to intervene in this complex and politically contentious space through design. Specifically, I drew inspiration from a school of thought within participatory design that argues that design is inherently political and that its mission is to intervene in matters of public concern (e.g. L. J. Bannon and Ehn 2013; L. Bannon, Bardzell, and Bødker 2018; Dixon 2020; Le Dantec and DiSalvo 2018). I also assumed the premise that design should not always strive to provide a technological solution, but support interventions that are contextually situated to the matter under consideration (Baumer and Silberman 2011). Finally, aware that the goal of practitioners in memorial museums is to create safe spaces for public reflection (Sevcenko 2010; Williams 2011) and for engendering empathy towards victims (Crețan et al. 2018), I drew from case studies from participatory design about creating safe spaces for vulnerable populations (Bustamante Duarte et al. 2019; McNally et al. 2017; Skukauskaite, Noske, and Gonzales 2018). I then applied these insights to create a design workshop focused on reflecting about the meaning of the violent past with children of the postwar generation in El Salvador. I refer to the result of this methodological exploration as a postmemorial exhibition.

An unforeseen but relevant result of my research was discovering the role of *dark play* as one of students' sense making strategies. I understand dark play as a mechanism through which participants sought to understand that the atrocities of the war had been in fact possible; specifically, the torture of civilians. Dark play consisted of pretend scenarios in which

participants enacted, and therefore explored from a safe space, the experiences of perpetrators, victims, and bystanders. Although dark play had already been observed as a spontaneous phenomenon among children who lived at concentration camps during World War II (Eisen 1990; Gougoulis 2017). My results indicate that dark play also occurs among children of the postmemory generation but still serves the same purpose: as a sense making mechanism for children to grapple with their knowledge about mass atrocities.

4. Contributions

My findings demonstrate that the interdisciplinary perspective combining the analytical insights from cultural trauma theory and the interventions from memorial museum research can provide mutually beneficial outcomes. In the case of my dissertation, my primary contribution is the expansion of the toolkit of human rights museology with concept of a postmemorial museum exhibition. Postmemorial museum exhibitions are relevant to memorial museums because they allow members of the postmemory generation to channel their curiosity to learn more about the past that they experienced as fragmented, and along the way, make sense of their own histories and process their deeply held beliefs and feelings about the atrocities of the past.

My dissertation also extends an emerging body of work that is seeking to explore the connections between multiple forms of memory and design (Jones 2016; Sabie, Sabie, and Ahmed 2020). In my case, this approach emanates from the combination of ethnographic methods with PDM in the memorial museum context. It is my hope that my work will motivate others to experiment with other design methods such as reflective design (Sengers et al. 2005) or design anthropology (Otto and Smith 2013). Cultural trauma theory could certainly benefit from more action-oriented approaches to find ways to stir the intergenerational dynamics of memory

towards a more critical outlook of the past, one that is not based on othering or scapegoating disadvantaged groups. In the European context, this ideal of an informed, nuanced and inclusive memory has been referred to as agonistic (Bull and Hansen 2015).

In sum, my findings demonstrate that design can serve as a mechanism to negotiate cultural trauma. This insight is consistent with works from other fields such as design research (e.g. Clark 2016; Otto and Smith 2013; Kjaersgaard 2013) and participatory design (Muller and Khun 1993) which show that design is a unique way of knowing the world. The unique combination of the memorial museum context, where memory and design meet, is fertile ground to expand emerging studies about the interplay between design and social memory (Jones 2016; Sabie, Sabie, and Ahmed 2020) — but specifically focused on social memories of mass atrocities or cultural trauma. My findings are also consistent with insights from studies in heritage informatics, which show that participatory design can allow researchers to explore the social worlds of adolescents (R. C. Smith 2013; Iversen and Smith 2012). With regards to my findings about dark play, my results are also coherent with research from psychology (Henricks 2015), which have shown that play is a mechanism of sense making, and sociology, which have demonstrated that play is also a form of inquiry about human life (Eichberg 2016).

5. Limitations and Future Work

My study also comes with its own share of limitations and opportunities for future work. For one, while the project resulted in deeply emotional engagement of students with the history of the war, I am skeptical about the extent to which the workshop fostered in them critical reflection. By the end of the project, participants continued to frame the army forces as the enemy and the guerrilla movement as the army of the people. This dichotomous articulation

misses important nuances such as the fact that the Revolutionary People's Army (ERP), the FMLN faction that controlled northern Morazán during the war, perpetrated its own share of atrocities against the civilian population (Binford 1997; United Nations Security Council 1993)⁶⁷. Moreover, the nostalgia with which participants described community organization at the refugee camps in Honduras echoes Silber's (2011) insights from former refugees and guerrilla combatants from a different region in El Salvador: that the suffering and privations of the war are being used as the ideal against which former war refugees and guerrilla supporters measure their lives present.

This is a problem because this nostalgia glosses over some harsh realities of the camps, such as the fact that the ERP used the camps as recruitment grounds, and that there were peer pressures among refugee families to "share the burden" of supplying the guerrilla movement with combatants (Binford 2010). Moreover, a study about State-sponsored memorial museums found that the primary, and always unstated, function of a mythologized past is to legitimize the entities who claim ownership over that past (Sodaro 2018)⁶⁸.

Another limitation of my study is the serendipitous encounter with play. While I was able to recognize and analyze the role play during the design workshop, I did not engage in and take

⁶⁷ The TRC recommended a ten-year ban to several politicians of both sides including top leaders of the ERP (United Nations Security Council 1993). The ban was never implemented. The amnesty law of 1993 would have made such a ban unenforceable.

⁶⁸ Interestingly, an ethnographic study from another region of El Salvador noticed that community-driven memory work also served a legitimizing function, but resulting in a different outcome. This community, like *Comunidad Segundo Montes* (CSM) in Morazán, had been subject to exile and persecution during the war. In their struggle to survive, this community gradually developed a participatory form of democracy (see chapters 3 and 4 for details on CSM). However, the author of this study reached the conclusion that this legitimization function had the effect of producing subjects critical of the State. This occurred because the legitimization that the community experienced due to their memory work, reinforced their convictions of participatory democracy and community-driven socioeconomic development. These values, the author noted, were in opposition to the individualistic values of the neoliberal State of postwar El Salvador (Lara Martinez 2018).

advantage from the creative power of play in my research. In fact, the instances of dark play I observed started when I was distracted. Besides, I am not sure whether dark play can be mobilized for pedagogic purposes or whether it should be. Eisen's seminal study on the subject shows that dark play was a spontaneous phenomenon and quite distinct from the formal events of play organized by the adults in the ghettos. Likewise, scholars of participatory design have defended play as an end in itself (Sey and Ortoleva 2014b), but they have focused on a more traditional, leisure-oriented kind of play. By contrast, dark play represents an ontological challenge: its function is not leisure even if at surface level players seem to be *having fun*. In my study, the function of dark play was enabling youths to grasp the reality of mass atrocities during the war. In other words, the subject of dark play is serious, even though it does not stem from adult-initiated pedagogic activity.

Finally, I had suggested in chapter 4 that perhaps dark play is a mechanism for participants to process their historical grief. However, more work is needed to understand whether this is indeed the case and what processing historical grief means. In other words, is dark play a means to "solve" grief in the sense that psychologists have talked about individual grief, namely, "letting go" of the sadness and anger over the personal memories of having survived mass atrocities? Or perhaps, is dark play a means to "solve" grief in the sense that sociologists have talked about overcoming cultural trauma, namely, to reframe the story of violence that the community suffered and therefore create a renewed social memory? Is dark play a means to deal with both individual grief and cultural trauma? If so, can dark play be reproduced on demand? Should it be? What does dark play want?

There are also opportunities to expand on my finding about the interplay between PBL and curriculum design in shaping a fragmentary experience of memory. This finding is also limited in terms of external validity for several reasons. The school where I did my fieldwork is one of a handful of schools in the department of Morazán that employs PBL as its primary approach to teaching. As a result, I am not sure the extent to which the mechanisms at work in that school (enshrining of lived experience and curriculum design) play a similar role shaping students' experience with cultural trauma or whether there are other, perhaps more important, mechanisms in other schools. This limitation was a demand of the field. I did originally attempt to work with three schools, two of them private, but the authorities in the public institutions were never available, and in one of them, I soon realized that participants were not doing any of the assigned activities. Seeing that my data collection at this other school was going nowhere, I cancelled the design workshop there and desisted from setting up a workshop in the other institution. The limited external validity of my dissertation is also a function of my sample. Future work could work with a larger group of schools, thus further exploring how teachers in other institutions value personal experience and approach curriculum design, and how students navigate the information, or lack thereof, about the violent past that teachers' choices generate.

Future work could also refine the methodological approach of this study by finding ways to reduce attrition. As I noticed on chapter 6, three of the seven participants missed several sessions in the second half of the workshop. They later explained that they had done so because they were tired and considered for a while dropping out. More work is thus needed to streamline the design workshop so that it better adapts to the aspirations and expectations of youths. Another opportunity for methodological refinement lies in investigating the interplay between

postmemorial exhibitions and the formal school curriculum. Other researchers could investigate how the design process shapes students' postmemories in a context in which the workshops are integrated into the school curriculum. How would that mediation differ from my study, in which the design process was independent from the school?

In terms of the limited depth of critical reflection in my study, how can the methodology of exhibition design be expanded upon to increase the depth of critical reflection among co-designers? This would likely require a hybrid approach that combines other methodologies, such as reflective design or PBL. What are the epistemological tensions and opportunities that arise from such methodological dialogues? How would this methodological engagement impact the mechanisms of memory mediation I identified in my study?

6. Closure

In conclusion, I find that the design process does mediate the postmemories of children born after an episode of mass atrocities, namely, the civil war of El Salvador. The design process allowed for insights that were distinct from those identified through other methods such as participant observation and semi-structured interviews. My dissertation, framed within the scope of human rights museology, extends prior knowledge about the dynamics of cultural trauma and the role of memorial museums in shaping memory. Design constitutes a vehicle through which members of the postmemory generation can, at least partially, solve the puzzle of the fragmented memory experiences in which they are immersed in their families and at school. Solving this puzzle matters because it can help educate future generations about the atrocities of the past, honor the victims of past atrocities, and promote critical reflection that draws from the violent past to understand the challenges of the present. Thus, the stakes of research project lie an

opportunity to form more empathetic and critical subjects and thus contribute to the prevention of future episodes of mass atrocities.

Appendix I - Links between themes, cluster tags, and items

Sketch	Theme	Cluster Tags	Item Tags
<p>Tilted scale to represent a broke equilibrium in society from back then (aka inequality)</p> <p>Wall divided in two, where each side corresponds to a faction in the war</p>	Causes	Antecedents	Before the war started, there was a draft. People were required to serve in the army forces.
		Causes	The cause that started everything
<p>“This is the room, where the peace accords were already signed. This is for the exhibition that we will do. These are shreds and other things, such as a moldy knife. This one took it from here. There are also the cartridges and another weapon.” Carlos</p>	Events	Opinions	Good because he told his story Good because his interviewees’ opinions will be known
		Difference of Opinions+	The difference between staying at the refugee camp and staying the country The life before and after it (the war) Difference of opinions To see the opinion of different people To listen to the stories that nowadays continue to affect
		Ideals	To know whether all the sacrifice from back then was worth it nowadays Did they fight for an ideal?
		History	To know about history The stories of the people and how they received aid Human rights violations at the refuge
		Desires	There were people who desired to stay in Honduras
		Roles	Some of the roles that my interviewees had in that moment One person had to function in many roles My grandfather imported goods

Sketch	Theme	Cluster Tags	Item Tags
			Why were there so many nicknames?
		Aid	She had been carried out in a backpack I did not know that my uncle had been saved
<p>“There are three walls. In each wall there is an image with a story, a testimony, a summary. In the first wall there will be the events. Then we move to the destruction and then to the suffering.” By events, they mean combats.</p> <p>Destruction: “Here, people were left without a house. They tell that they lost their houses because of the war. Their houses were taken over and used as bases.” Esmeralda adds: “many were burned with bombs and all that.”</p> <p>Suffering. Dead Person. From a story of a man whose grandfather was hanged. Valentin concedes that image may be disturbing to young children. They switch to a portrait of the deceased while he was still alive.</p>	Material Consequences	Loss and Affectation	The curiosity of how it (the war) affected them (the interviewees) The change of life of those affected
		Changes	The impact that memory had on the population
		Environment	The guide Allan A unicorn Bread =)
	Psychological consequences	Experience	It was as much fun as intriguing I felt like this was a new thing because I had never interviewed anybody.
		Histories and Memories	The camaraderie lived Histories of guindas
		Wellness*	Wellness Aid
<p>A tree of emotions. Crying face.</p> <p>“Instead of telling the story like a real testimony, live, it (the tree) could have the</p>	Emotions	Nervous	Nervous Nervous I deem that I was nervous
		Shared emotions	Empathy Sharing the pain Moved

Sketch	Theme	Cluster Tags	Item Tags
<p>things (stories) that hang from it. The stories could be there. Each string would have a different story. For instance, this is an F for fear. This would be a story of people who were afraid. Here we have stories of people who were afraid. Here we have stories of people who got angry. This one is not happiness, but it is the closest thing. And over here, sad stories from people.” Valentin</p> <p>“The original idea was to put a sign that says ‘tree of memories’ or something like that. Then, these images will have coherence with the texts (labels) and that is why the tree is crying. I mean, those are so that people see the events or things that happened in the war. That generates emotions.” Valentin</p>		Emotion	Empathy The emotion of people when they told their stories
		Sadness	With a lot of nostalgia Sad for remembering Pain in remembering Sadness
		Curiosity	Curiosity to know more Curious
<p>They drew a timeline with images, a series of squares connected with arrows. The illustration is divided in two parts: the doubts that people experienced during the war, and the lingering questions they still have today. The questions are inspired from their interviews.</p> <p>For instance, Carlos drew a destroyed house and a dead man. Questions his dad asked himself to this day:</p>	Doubts	Unanswered questions	Why did my grandfather helped the insurgency movement? What happened to the people who disappeared?
		Doubts	What is the meaning of UNHCR? What does ERP mean? Why did the war happened? Why were children murdered?

Sketch	Theme	Cluster Tags	Item Tags
<p>“why did they destroy the house?” and “why did he have to die?” respectively.</p> <p>Dagoberto’s mom wondered who were the people who were coming to the refugee camp taking pictures of everybody and why they were doing it. His second example refers to disappearances: “for a person who disappeared. Nobody knows what happened to her, where she is.”</p>			
		Learning*	To know more things than those I learn in school

Source: Allan Martell. Based on cross referential analysis of affinity walls, concept map, bubble diagram and sketches

- **Themes:** bubble diagram, exhibition plan
- **Cluster Tags:** affinity wall, concept map, bubble diagram
- **Item tags:** affinity wall
- + **Cluster tag is called “Differences and Opinions” in affinity wall**
- * Item was not included in any theme
- **Material and psychological consequences** were merged as **consequences** in the exhibition plan.

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