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Building(s in) Nationhood:
Sites of Memory in Moscow, Russia

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the development and consolidation of post-Soviet Russian nationhood through sites in Moscow, the political capital of Russia. The sites studied are the following: the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, Victory Park, and the Statue of St Vladimir. This research adopts the concept of sites of memory (more commonly known as *les lieux de mémoire*) to analyze the historical and symbolic significance of these locations. This research analyzes the sites of memory under the scope of one specific version of Russian nationhood that was identified in post-Soviet academic discourse, namely the (re) union of Eastern Slavic nations (which include Belarus and Ukraine), with a particular focus on Eastern Christian Orthodoxy. Drawing from the analyses of the sites of memory, this research examines the role of religion in the nationhood-building efforts and consolidation in the Russian Federation.

On December 31, 2014, Russian President Vladimir Putin delivered his annual New Year address, in which he reflected on the past year and voiced his hopes for the upcoming year: "Love for one's Motherland is one of the most powerful and enlightening feelings. It has found its reflection in our fraternal aid to the residents of Crimea and Sevastopol, after they made the firm decision to return to their native home. This event will remain a landmark in national history."[1]

This statement marked the end of a turbulent year with the annexation of Crimea serving as a turning point in post-Soviet international relations with the West. The annexation was condemned by the international community; members of the European Parliament criticized the annexation of Crimea and subsequent referendum as illegal and illegitimate, and the United States, European Union, and several other countries imposed sanctions against Russia.[2] Although the Western media highlighted the increase in Putin's approval ratings after the annexation as a reason for the action, their focus overlooked the importance of the annexation of Crimea for nation building and nationalism. This "love for one's Motherland" was present not only in Putin's New Year's address, but also in Russian ideas of nationhood immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union.[3]

Nationhood and nation building can manifest in many ways, including physical monuments and sites. It was not a coincidence that Putin delivered his New Year speech against the backdrop of the Red Square—the heart of Moscow and the center of political power in Russia. Public monuments and sites serve as powerful symbols and purveyors of messages. My work investigates the consolidation of post-Soviet Russian nationhood through specific sites in Moscow by combining the literatures about sites of memory (*les lieux de mémoire*) and about geography.[1]

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This work will use a constructivist approach to nationalism since the two terms often overlap. This paper assumes that nationalism and the idea of the "nation" is constructed.[4] In the Russian case, this is particularly important because the country has experienced major transitions in the last two centuries as it evolved from the Russian Empire to Soviet Russia and finally to the current Russian Federation. Both transitions required efforts by the state to define its identity. In the immediate post-Soviet period, Vera Tolz identified five main versions of post-Soviet nationhood in intellectual discourse.[25] This research will pay particular attention to the idea of Russia

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1   Moscow was chosen instead of another Russian city such as St Petersburg, which was the capital of Russia between 1712-1918, since Moscow was the capital of the USSR and is currently the capital of the country. The choice of Moscow follows Forest and Johnson's (2002) argument that changes in the urban landscape of core cities happen earlier and more radically (p. 527).

2   In Tolz's article "Forging the Nation: National Identity and Nation Building in Post-Communist Rus-

as "a nation of Eastern Slavs, united by common origin and culture."[6] This version of nationhood emphasizes the importance of Christian Orthodoxy as well as the innate connection to Belarus and Ukraine, the latter which has become crucial in the diplomatic relations between Russia and the West.

This study will draw from Pierre Nora's sites of memory. The sites of memory replace the real environment of memory (les milieux de mémoire) to consecrate a memory in a modern society in which the conditions for that memory no longer exist. For example, since the real environment of Tsarist Russia no longer exists, sites of memory that represent the Tsarist regime attempt to recreate it. Scholars studying sites of memory argue that this phenomenon arises from the onset of the Industrial Revolution, the loss of traditional peasant culture, and globalization.[7] Sites of memory often consecrate defining events in the history of a nation.[8] The manipulation of memory remains at the discretion of the political officials who install (and in some cases, reinvent) the sites of memory. Sites of memory and cultural memory are inherently paradoxical: to remember requires forgetting since memory often arises from selective memory.[9] A prominent Russian example of selective memory is the common reference to World War II as the 'Great Patriotic War' (*великая отечественная война*) instead of 'Second World War' (*вторая мировая война*). More than just a linguistic difference, the two names signify different time periods. World War II refers to the period between 1939 and 1945; the Soviet term Great Patriotic War refers to the period between 1941 and 1945, which ignores the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939 between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. The interest of this study lies, however, in the physical manifestations of selective memory in monuments and sites.

The use of space in Moscow has been analyzed already. Robert Argenbright focuses on the initial post-Soviet transition and the development of public space for civil society in Moscow. Alexander Kalyukin and Thomas Borén use Gorky Park as an example of the influence of consumerism over public life.[10] Nurit Schliefman focuses on Victory Park in relation to collective memory and its role in the consolidation of a national identity.[11]

Schleifman discusses the history of the park from its conception to its construction in the early 1990s and notes that the structure and layout of the parks relate to collective memory. Schleifman notes also that "the problem of Russian identity is still vacillating among many controversial symbols."[12] This suggests that the symbolic meaning behind Victory Park has changed and may change again.

Svetlana Boym dedicates a chapter of her book *The Future of Nostalgia* to Moscow and the reconstruction of Cathedral of Christ the Savior.[13] Boym argues that monuments are symbols of memory and exist in constant flux. This study will adopt this argument, which other scholars such as Benjamin Forest and Juliet Johnson have overlooked. In Boym's work, nostalgia serves a similar function to collective memory. She argues that "[p]laces are contexts for remembrances and debates about the future, not symbols of memory or nostalgia."[14] Her observations conclude that post-Soviet Moscow is nostalgic for the Soviet era and, at times, the Tsarist era. This work will deviate from the established scholarship because although it will examine the Soviet era, it will focus primarily on the return to Tsarist Russian values.

Benjamin Forest and Juliet Johnson also focus on national identity in post-Soviet Moscow through the "critical juncture" between 1991 and 1999.[15] They argue that the "critical juncture" required the newly formed Russian Federation to redefine itself. They highlight the struggle for the control of this redefinition by three main elites: Moscow Mayor Yurii Luzhkov, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF), and the Russian President at the time Boris Yeltsin.[16] Forest and Johnson discuss three different types of national identities: the ethnic ideal, the imperial ideal, and the civic ideal.[17] Forest and Johnson conclude that the elites were able to influence the direction of the new Russian identity. The authors focus on four main case studies: Victory Park (*Park Pobedy*), the Lenin Mausoleum, Exhibition of the Achievements of National Economy (*VDNKh*), and the Park of Arts (*Park Iskusstv*). They categorize the case studies as either co-opted/glorified, disavowed, or contested.[3] Since their work was published in 2002, Forest and Johnson only briefly discuss Vladimir Putin.

Furthermore, even as Forest and Johnson expanded on the topic of space in post-communist countries, they noted that a vast literature on the role of monuments in nation building exists in the disciplines of geography, history, and sociology, but has been overlooked in political science.[18] Moreover, Forest and Johnson's work has been cited largely by other scholars as a model for studying urban space in other cities or states.[19]

The present study fills the gap in political-science literature on the significance of monuments. While this study builds off Forest and Johnson's work, it differs from their work in its theoretical framework.[20] Although the years between 1991 and 1999 were a crucial time for formation of the new Russian identity by the elites of that era, the present study focuses on the consolidation of Russian identity and the changes that have occurred from the 1990s to 2016. Although the categories that Forest and Johnson offer are useful, they do not fit with this work since their definition of "contested sites" is limited to "objects of political conflict."[21] While political conflict could include a variety of participants, Forest and Johnson's work focuses on the political elite and the conflicts among them. Forest and Johnson focus on the interests of the elites throughout their discussion on the monuments in Moscow. This paper hopes to analyze the semiotics of sites of memory with particular attention to Tsarist values: Autocracy, Orthodoxy, and People. While Forest and Johnson's work focuses primarily on the Soviet era and onward, this work refers to Tsarist Russia. In addition, Forest and Johnson focus on the immediate post-Soviet transition between 1991 and 1999, but this study focuses on the years 1991 to 2016. It would be difficult to discuss Russia without a mention of the 2014 annexation of Crimea. Although it may have appeared that Russia's national identity was consolidated in the early 2000s, the annexation of Crimea reflects the Russian national identity and is an important development of this identity.

The sites chosen for this study are the Cathedral of Christ the Savior (*Храм Христа Спасителя*), Victory Park (*Парк Победы*), and the Statue of St. Vladimir (*Памятник Владимиру Великому*). All three monuments were either constructed or completed in the post-Soviet period with some state intervention. This study will provide the essential historical background for each site and will analyze how the construction and structure physically and symbolically represent an effort by the state to return to pre-Soviet values.

THE RESURRECTION OF A MARTYR: CATHEDRAL OF CHRIST THE SAVIOR (*ХРАМ*

ХРИСТА СПАСИТЕЛЯ)
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
After the victory of the Patriotic War of 1812, Tsar Alexander I decreed the construction of a cathedral in honor of Christ the Savior for the Russian peoples' salvation from the Napoleonic forces. Although the capital of the Russian Empire was Saint Petersburg, the church was to be built in Moscow. The capture of Moscow by the Napoleonic forces had proved unsuccessful since the city was desolate, with two-thirds of its buildings ruined in the Fire of Moscow on September 12, 1812.[22] Napoleonic forces retreated a month after the capture of Moscow. The Tsar and the people believed that the fire and the French capture of Moscow were the result of the collective sins of Russians, including the Western reformations by Peter the Great in the sixteenth century.[23]

The first architect chosen for the cathedral was Aleksandr Vitberg, an architect of Swedish descent.[24] Vitberg had planned for a cathedral standing 230 meters high with a dome of 50 meters, which was taller than St. Peters Cathedral by almost 100 meters.[25] The cathedral was to be built on Sparrow Hills, which was eight miles from the Kremlin.[26] Vitberg's vision broke with traditional Russian Orthodox architecture, and instead he tried to dedicate the cathedral to the three branches of Christianity.[27] Vitberg's design incorporated a vertical three-part structure, contradicting the traditional model, representing Christ's nativity, transfiguration, and resurrection.[28] In Vitberg's design, the lower level of the church represented the soldiers lost in the Patriotic War. This was a more liberal view of the individual, especially for a country in which the emancipation of serfs would occur only in 1861.[29] The overall architecture of the cathedral had little Russian influence and instead combined classicism and romanticism.[30] Vitberg's vision, however, never materialized and effectively ended with the death of Tsar Alexander I in 1825.[31]

Tsar Nicholas I, unlike his predecessor Alexander I, wanted to orient the cathedral's meaning toward a national Russian one, rather than an international (Eurocentric) one.[32] Thus Nicholas I employed a new architect, Konstantin Ton. Ton had previously worked at the Imperial Academy of Arts for Architecture and introduced courses on icon painting and Russian architecture, and he was one of the main figures of the 'Russian Revival' (or Russo-Byzantine) style.[33] Ton's cathedral also had a new location: Volkhonka Street, close to the Kremlin and bordering the Moskva River. The Convent of St Alexius the Man of God, however, already occupied the proposed location. Although the convent was built in

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sia", she identifies five different forms of post-Russian nationhood as: (1) "union identity: the Russians define as an imperial people"; (2) "Russians as a nation of all eastern Slavs united, by common origin and culture"; (3) "Russians as a community of Russian speakers, regardless of ethnic origin"; (4) "Russians defined racially"; (5) "a civic Russian (rossiiskaya) nation" (995-996). In her subsequent work, "Conflicting "Homeland Myths" and Nation-State building in Post-communist Russia", Tolz narrows the forms of nationhood to: (1) "restoration of [the Soviet] union"; (2) a union of East Slavs; (3) Russia as a federation "excluding some areas where non Russian ethnic groups constitute a majority" (p. 268).

3   These terms are defined by Forest and Johnson as the following: "Co-opted/Glorified monuments are maintained or further exulted. Disavowed sites are literally or symbolically erased from the landscape either

through active destruction or through neglect by the state. Contested monuments remain the objects of political conflict, neither clearly glorified nor disavowed" (Forest and Johnson, "Unravelling the Threads of History", 525).

1360, making it one of Moscow's oldest buildings, it was moved in 1837.[34] Sidorov notes that "the convent's demolition to clear space for the cathedral provides an example of pre-Soviet manipulation of sacred places."[35]

The construction of Ton's vision spanned forty-five years, from 1838 to 1882, and the cathedral was consecrated in 1883. The decor on the exterior and interior of the cathedral put Biblical imagery together with events of the Russian past.[36] As Sidorov describes:

> The sculpture of the main western façade symbolically depicted Russian troops under protection of heavenly forces. The southern façade, facing the direction of the decisive battles of 1812, depicted events of direct relevance to that war. The eastern façade, facing the Kremlin, showed Russian national saints, protectors of the country, while saints who spread Christianity were dominant in the northern façade (Kirichenko 1992: 74–75). The cathedral was an unprecedented synthesis of religious and national-historical themes, and of architecture, sculpture, and paintings.[37]

This is an example of how physical space is used to communicate a message: the idea of Holy Rus'. The juxtaposition of a contemporary event, the Great Patriotic War of 1812, and the imagery of national saints—which cannot be discussed without mentioning St. Vladimir, who converted Rus' to Christianity—reinforced the idea that contemporary Russia was still the ancient Holy Rus'.

After the Russian Revolution of 1917, the cathedral alongside other property of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) was confiscated by the Bolsheviks on December 11 of the same year.[38] Under Stalin's rule the cathedral was demolished on December 5, 1931.[39] The Palace of Soviets, dedicated to the triumph of communism, was supposed to replace the Cathedral. The Palace was never built, however, due to War World II as well the fact that the location on the bank of the river would not be able to support the proposed structure.[40] The pit left by the cathedral was eventually replaced with the Moskva Pool.[41]

RECONSTRUCTION: EXPEDIENCY, COMMEMORATION OF TSARIST GLORY, AND THE REVIVAL OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

In the period prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, primarily after the introduction of *glasnost'* and *perestroika*, a discourse began on the importance of Russian Orthodoxy in the USSR. Both liberal and conservative circles characterized the destruction of the cathedral as a victim of the Soviet regime.[42] The cathedral, however, was not reconstructed.

After the collapse, the state was able to implement its new vision onto the architectural landscape of Russia and, more specifically, of Moscow. The decision to reconstruct the cathedral was announced on September 16, 1994, by Moscow Mayor Yurii Luzhkov and Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus' Alexei II in major newspapers.[43] The church was to be completed by 1997 to celebrate the 850th-year anniversary of Moscow.[44] Although the actual sum for the reconstruction remains unknown, Luzhkov and Patriarch Alexei announced that it would cost USD 150 million.[45] The cathedral was completed by 1997, and it was consecrated on August 19, 2000.[46]

Although the cathedral was a replica of Ton's cathedral, the new cathedral differed in many ways. Some additions were made, such as the dining hall and the garage in the basement, and a lobby in the church, which would be used for sales and future exhibitions. The new cathedral omitted a space for a female convent.[47] The deviations from the original cathedral also signified deviation from traditional Orthodox architecture, which represented the importance of the appearance of religiosity rather than actual adherence to religious traditions.

Throughout the construction of the cathedral, efficiency often surpassed quality. For example, the original paintings inside the cathedral had taken around twenty-five years, yet the paintings in the new cathedral took only a year. The painting of the icons for the interior of the cathedral was entrusted to Luzhkov's friend, the sculptor Zurab Tsereteli (who also worked on Victory Park). The iconography painted by Tsereteli and his fellow artists were not frescos, but instead were painted in the style of Socialist Realism since all of the artists had been trained in Soviet art schools.[48] Furthermore, since the original frescos had been destroyed, the painters relied on black-and-white photographs. In addition, the new paintings were made with acrylic paints, while the originals had been created with oil paints.[49]

Furthermore, the western facade of the cathedral, traditionally the most important facade in Orthodox architecture, differed from the original.[50] On the original cathedral, the western facade featured a medallion of Christ the Savior surrounded by St. Alexander Nevsky, St. Elizabeth, St. Nicholas, and St Nicholas of Pskov.[51] The arches featured white marble sculpture of angels such as archangel Gabriel and Uriel. On the western facade of the new cathedral, the marble statues that once surrounded the arches of the cathedral were replaced with bronze statues, and bronze was often replaced with plastic (see Figure 1). Gold, despite a donation of one hundred kilograms of gold by Alexander Smolensky, was often substituted with "titanium nitrate sprayed with gold lacquer."[52] Gold was particularly significant as it served as a "symbol

of divine light" in old Russian Orthodox churches.[53] The substitution of gold with gold-lacquered titanium nitrate and bronze with plastic highlights the importance of appearance rather than facade. The overall spirit of reconstruction suggests the use of religion as a means to an end.

The contemporary Cathedral of Christ the Savior serves as a site of memory that commemorates two fateful events of Russian history: the victory of the Patriotic War of 1812 and the destruction of Ton's cathedral by the Bolsheviks that struck "into the very heart of Orthodox religiosity by demolishing what the people regarded as their main cathedral."[54] The first event, the victory over the Napoleonic invasion, is represented in the reconstruction that represents the old cathedral, which was a monument to 1812. The cathedral also serves as a physical manifestation of the glorification and return of the Tsarist past. The original cathedral was a monument to the Tsar's power and represented Nicolas I's values of "Autocracy, Orthodoxy, People," which essentially stipulated that to be Orthodox was an integral part of being Russian. It also served as a testimony to the Tsar's power and a symbol of Nicholas I's new vision of Russian nationhood that centered around Russia, unlike that of his predecessor. The reconstruction of the Cathedral represents the reconstruction of the image of the Tsar, who was disposed of by the Soviet authorities, in the cultural memory of Russia.

Memory, as mentioned earlier, can be manipulated or changed through what is remembered and, paradoxically, what is repressed. In this case, the reconstruction of this cathedral is a physical reinstatement of an important memory of Tsarist history that was forgotten by the people of the Soviet Union. The focus on the Tsarist past attempts to highlight and romanticize that period of history without what Haskins refers to as a "sober appraisal" of the failures of that past, such as the loss of the Russo-Japanese War in the early twentieth century.[55] Thus, the reconstruction serves as a physical connection of the romanticized Russian Empire to the Russian Federation.

The second event that the reconstruction commemorates is the 'martyrdom' of the original Cathedral during the Soviet era. The modern Cathedral serves as a physical way to signify that the Soviet era is over by reversing the Soviet authorities' decision to demolish it. After the Bolsheviks came to power, the Soviet Union became an atheist state. Despite this, the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) was one of the only pre-Soviet institutions to survive the Soviet Union.[56] The reconstruction of the Cathedral plays into the popular memory of the Cathedral as a martyr of the Soviet regime. The reconstruction,

thus, was symbolic as a response to the trauma that the ROC suffered at the hands of the Soviet powers. The reconstruction, or rather resurrection, of the Cathedral represented the reinstatement of the Russian Orthodox Church's importance in the newly formed Russian Federation.

In the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union and therefore the Soviet nationhood and identity, it is not a surprise that politicians looked to the ROC as one of the bases of post-Soviet Russian nationhood. Although the reconstruction of this site of memory was for the entire nation, Forest and Johnson succinctly highlight the main political elites involved: Moscow Mayor Yurii Luzhkov and Boris Yeltsin. Luzhkov presided over the reconstruction in ways such as overseeing the blueprints, using the project to stabilize and consolidate his power.[57] Similar to Luzhkov, Yeltsin used the Cathedral as a tool to consolidate his own power. A pro-Orthodox stance for Yeltsin was also important in the 1996 federal elections for defeating the Communist Party, which at the time was still considered a threat.[58] The Communist Party was leading in opinion polls, and the Cathedral symbolized the return of traditional Russian values under Yeltsin's leadership. This was further emphasized by Luzhkov's efforts to portray the construction of the Cathedral as a symbol of "Russia's Renaissance."[59] Regarding the Cathedral, Yeltsin stated that "it is a Russian national sacred place and must be reborn. With it, it will be easier to find the path to social accord, the creation of goodness, and a life in which there will be less room for sin."[60] The rhetoric of rebirth and revival that surrounded the reconstruction of the Cathedral emphasized the importance of religion in the cultural memory that both Luzhkov and Yeltsin aimed to create.

Although both Yeltsin and Luzhkov supported the reconstruction of the Cathedral, albeit with Luzhkov's role being particularly significant, it should be noted that Russia had already adopted the 1993 constitution by the time of the constructions. Under the 1993 constitution, Article 14 §1 states that the "Russian Federation is a secular state. No religion can be established as a mandatory or state religion."[61] The newly formed Russian Federation was secular, but the involvement of politicians from both the federal and municipal levels in the reconstruction of the Cathedral was indicative of the increased future role of religion, specifically Russian Orthodoxy, in the state.

Although Sidorov concludes that the new Cathedral has been highly localized rather than nationalized, the punk rock group Pussy Riot's performance at the Cathedral and the subsequent controversy and international attention has elevated and consolidated the Cathedral as

a national monument.[62] On February 21, 2012, the group performed their song "Holy Mother, Take Putin Away" to the tune of a traditional Orthodox hymn in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior.[63] Members of the group wore balaclavas while dancing and lip-syncing to the song in the Cathedral. They were arrested afterwards. Pussy Riot became an international cause célèbre when three members of the group, Maria Alyokhin, Yekaterina Samutsevich, and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, were convicted of hooliganism and sentenced to two years in prison by a Moscow judge, Marina Syrova.[64]

The members of Pussy Riot used this performance to protest against the reelection of Putin in the 2012 Federal Elections as well as the Church's support of Putin. Pussy Riot's work also included a feminist critique of role of women in Russia and the involvement of the Patriarch and the state. This is again significant, as this site functioned as the site of the female Convent of St. Alexius prior to Ton's original Cathedral. Thus, the Cathedral of Christ the Savior became an important location as a purveyor of their message. Pussy Riot's performance serves as an example of how the public has taken the space and used it, despite the efforts by those who installed it, to create a new message.

While the original Cathedral stood as a monument to the Tsar's power, this reconstruction stands as a monument to the Russian Federation's power in the deconstruction of the Soviet identity. The new Cathedral serves as a site of memory for the Patriotic War of 1812 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and the monumental nature of the Cathedral thus signifies the triumphant return of Russia.

A MONUMENTAL ACHIEVEMENT:
VICTORY PARK (ПАРК ПОБЕДЫ)
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
While the original Cathedral of Christ the Savior was built to celebrate the victory of the Patriotic War of 1812, Victory Park was built to celebrate the victory of the великая отечественная война (Great Patriotic War). The construction of Victory Park was first proposed in 1947, and a cornerstone was laid later in that same year. The construction of the park, however, failed to materialize during Stalin's lifetime.

After the appointment of Khrushchev, the project was reviewed again. In 1956, under the recommendation of Politburo member and former Marshal of the Soviet Union Georgii Zhukov, a new commission was created to draft plans for the tentative park to be approved by the Central Committee's Secretariat. The proposal was approved by the USSR Council of Ministers and the Central Committee in 1957. The proposed park was to be constructed by the fifteenth anniversary of the victory in 1960. A contest, which was originally scheduled to be held from October 1957 to April 1958, was held in 1958 with approximately 150 submitted proposals. The proposals, however, were found to be insufficient, and thus, in 1959, the project was entrusted to the architect Yevgeny Vutechich. Although Vutechich submitted a proposal in 1960, the project never materialized before his death in 1974.[65]

The idea of the project was revived by the Party Committee of Moscow City in 1975. Under Brezhnev's administration, a contest was held and N. V. Tomsky, L. G. Goloubosky, A. P. Korabel'nikov, and Yu. K. Korolev were the winners in 1976. One aspect of the proposed project was the Great Patriotic War Museum, which was to stand close to the center of the park. Due to the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games, however, the project was relegated to the periphery.[66]

In 1986, under Gorbachev's leadership, the Central Committee announced a Union-wide contest for the main monument of the park. A total of 384 projects were displayed and subsequently visited by the public. The sculptor Vladimir Klykov's project was heavily influenced by Russian Orthodox Christian architecture. Although the project was rejected, it created interest and dialogue among the public and critics since the Soviet Union was officially an atheist state and home to many groups that were not historically Russian Orthodox Christians.[67]

In 1987, a new contest was held for the design of the main monument. By 1989, the winners V. Klykov and T. Nekrasov were announced. It was also decided that the park would be completed by May 1990 and that the museum from the 1976 plans would be completed by 1993. The USSR, however, dissolved in 1991. Nevertheless, the new administration proceeded with the construction of the park. Moscow Mayor Yurii Luzhkov collaborated with the sculptor Zurab Tsereteli to plan the park. Although it was largely based on the 1978 plans, the proposed park was to include the additions of a (Russian Orthodox) church, mosque, and synagogue. Victory Park was open in 1995 (although Victory Day had been celebrated in the park two years earlier).[68] Both Yeltsin and Luzhkov were present for the official opening of the park on Victory Day of 1995.

SYMBOLIC VICTORY: AN ANALYSIS
Although the site took almost half a century to complete from the first cornerstone, the completion itself signifies the importance of World War II, but more specifically, the Great Patriotic War in the memory of the Soviet Union and the (then newly formed) Russian Federation. While World War Two refers to the period between 1939 and 1945, the Soviet term Great Patriotic War refers to the period between 1941 and 1945. The focus on the Great Patriotic War, similar to WWII, commemorates and propagates the victory of the war in the cultural memory of Russians, but the focus on 1941 (and onward) erases the events that occurred before 1941. One of the biggest events that is erased in the memory of the Great Patriotic War is the Nonaggression Pact between Nazi Germany and the USSR. The victory of the Great Patriotic War focuses only on the defeat of the Nazis and fascism at the hands of the Red Army while failing to include the previous cooperation between the USSR and Nazi Germany. The distinction between terminologies, WWII and the Great Patriotic War, highlights that memory consists of what is remembered and repressed.

Forest and Johnson, however, argue that Victory Park is a "co-opted/glorified" site, which has been re-appropriated by political leaders to highlight the victory as a distinctly Russian victory, and the park "emphasize[s] the "best" of Russia's ethic and imperial past while downplaying Russia's troubled Soviet era domestic heritage."[69] Schleifman argues that "[Victory Park's] structure is the collective memory" and represents the synthesis of different memory groups.[70] Although Schleifman argues that the park is a result of different memory groups which "strove to restore Russia's glorious past, whether as Imperial Orthodox, Red Communist, or a liberal Westernized state," the Imperial Orthodox past has been significant. While the Communist past would have been easy to revive in the immediate post-Soviet era and the liberal ideals of Westernized states was a direction that the Russian Federation had looked to, the Imperial Orthodox past required more effort since Tsarist Russia had largely been erased from the cultural memory of Russia, and Orthodoxy had been replaced with state atheism.[71] While it is evident that Victory Park serves as a site of memory for the victory of the Great Patriotic War, the victory has been characterized as distinctly Russian by using Imperial Orthodox imagery.

The location of the park is connected to memory of the Russian Empire. Unlike the Cathedral of Christ the Savior or the Statue of St. Vladimir, which are in the historical center of Moscow near the Kremlin, Victory Park is on Poklonnaya Hill in the southwest periphery of Moscow. After the victory of the Patriotic War of 1812, an arch was built to commemorate the twenty-seventh victory of the battle of Borodino on Kutuzovsky Road.[72] As Schleifman notes, "the battle of Borodino entered the Russian memory as a heroic victory, and Poklonnaia gora with its immediate surroundings became associated with it."[73] Poklonnaya Hill, therefore, became a symbol of victory over the Napoleonic forces. The decision to build Victory Park on Poklonnaya Hill created a connection between the Patriotic War and the Great Patriotic War, and thus it became the signifier of the victory over Western, foreign aggression.

Victory Park itself covers 135 hectares and as of 2016 contains sixteen monuments and sites.[74] The first completed part of the museum was the Central Museum of the Great Patriotic War. The museum originated from the 1978 plans by Tomsky, Goloubovsky, Korabel'nikov, and Korolev. The museum was built in the shape of a semi-circle and stands behind the focal point of the park, the *Monument of Victory*. The *Monument of Victory* is an obelisk that is 141.8 meters tall to represent the 1418 days of the Great Patriotic War.[75] Forest and Johnson describe the monument as an obelisk with "a huge dragon covered with swastikas, curled beneath a towering obelisk adorned with Nike, the goddess of victory, engages in mortal struggle with a statue of St. George on horseback."[76] The imagery on the statue symbolizes the triumph over Nazi—and, more importantly, western—aggression. This victory was important to emphasize especially in the aftermath of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the subsequent chaos.

Religion also played a role in this park, as a church, a mosque, and a synagogue were built within its parameters. Although the proposal for a park with Russian architectural motif, put forward by V. Klykov in 1987, was originally met with controversy, one of the first buildings built was the Church of St. George.[77] Schleifman argues that the church was built as a response to popular demand and fit into the Russian tradition of constructing churches in honor of victories. Later on, since the new Russian Federation strived to be a democracy, a subsequent mosque and synagogue were added.[78]

Although the park contained three sites dedicated to the three main religions in Russia, the source of the funding makes it clear that the Russian Orthodox faith takes precedence above the rest. While the church's construction was funded by the government, the mosque was an effort on the part of both the Government of Moscow and the Ecclesiastical Board of Moslems of the Central European Region of Russia, and the construction of the synagogue was funded by the Russian Jewish Congress.[79] The locations of the church, mosque, and synagogue are also significant. The cathedral is located in the southwest of the park close to the entrance on Kutuzovsky Street, while the synagogue and the mosque are in the east near Minskaya Street. The church is also closer to the *Monument of Victory*, which stands in the center of the park. The proximity to the center of the park and the source of its funds demonstrate the relative importance of Russian Orthodoxy, whereas Islam and Judaism occupy the geo-

graphic periphery of the park, as well as the periphery of Post-Soviet Russian nationhood.

Another monument within the park that includes an Imperial Orthodox motif is *The Defenders of Russian Land*. Erected in 1995, the monument depicts three soldiers: one Ancient, one Tsarist, and one modern.[80] The exclusion of a Soviet soldier effectively ignores Russia's Soviet past. The inclusion of the Ancient and Tsarist soldier establishes a connection to Tsarist history and the ancient Kievan Rus past, both of which are connected to Russian Orthodox Church, again emphasizing the importance of Orthodoxy.

The presence of religious sites within the park characterizes it as distinctly Russian, separating it from Soviet history, since the Soviet Union was an atheist state. The use of religion also signifies a return to the Tsarist value of Orthodoxy. Thus, the inclusion of religion in the large and family-friendly park dedicated to the victory that was often lauded as the single greatest accomplishment of the Soviet Union (even greater than the Communist Revolution) serves to reinvent the victory as a Russian one in the cultural memory.

Since 2001 and 2002, when the works by Forest and Johnson and Schleifman were published, more monuments have been added to the park even though the source of the memory, the Great Patriotic War, becomes more distant.[81] Thus, Victory Park, and its developments up until the end of 2016, highlight its continuous role as a site of memory.

The continual additions of monuments in the park emphasize the importance of this event in the collective memory and identity of the Russian Federation. The park contains sixteen monuments, six of which were built after 2000. The monument *In the struggle against fascism we were together* introduced a Soviet element to the park. The monument depicts two Red Army soldiers waving the Soviet flag victoriously. One soldier stands on top of a defeated eagle with a swastika on it, representing the victory over Nazi Germany. The statue stands upon a pedestal that has the names of former Soviet cities engraved in it, such as Minsk, Odessa, and Yerevan. Although the monument added a Soviet element to the park, the statue was created in response to a WWII Soviet monument that was blown up in Georgia in 2009.[82] Putin directly addressed the demolition of the Georgian statue

at the unveiling of the new monument: "This caused a harsh rejection and resentment in the world, and above all, in Georgia. And this is understandable since people cannot be with those who destroy memory. Memory of the people. Especially the memory of our own heroes."[83] Furthermore, Putin stated that the statue "is a tribute to the immortal achievement of our people."[84] The Georgian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Nino Kalandadze criticized the statue as an "attempt to convince the public that Georgia allegedly did not appreciate those who died during World War II."[85]

The monument, *In the struggle against fascism*, is an anomaly amongst the other monuments due to its Soviet imagery. The monument, however, is a physical embodiment of Putin's dominance in the Caucasus. Although the statue is dedicated to the Great Patriotic War and fits into the theme of Victory Park, it should also be noted that this was built shortly after the Russo-Georgian War in 2008.[4] Thus, it is unlikely that the chosen location for the statue was a coincidence: it resides on Poklonnaya Hill, the site that celebrates victory over foreign aggression.

Victory Park is an example of how the meaning behind a site of memory can evolve. The main memory of victory remains, but the depiction of the victory has changed. In Tsarist Russia, the park served as site of memory for the victory of the Patriotic War; while in the Russian Federation, it serves as the site of memory for the victory of the Great Patriotic War, which has also been largely reframed as a Russian victory with Imperial Orthodox motif. The post-1990s additions to the park represent an effort to continuously keep the memory of the victory alive. It represents the continuous effort to preserve a memory that is becoming ever distant. The use of religion, particularly Russian orthodoxy, echoes the Tsarist value of Orthodoxy, present in the memory of Poklonnaya Hill. Victory Park serves as a site of memory for the 'glorious' Russian past.

A TALE OF TWO VLADIMIRS: THE STATUE OF ST. VLADIMIR (ПАМЯТНИК ВЛАДИМИРУ ВЕЛИКОМУ)
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

On November 4, 2016, the Statue of St. Vladimir was unveiled on Borovitskaya Square near the Kremlin. The statue received international attention since St. Vladimir was

the Grand Prince of Kievan Rus (present-day Kiev) from 969 to his death in 1015 and the figure that converted his subjects to Christianity on August 1, 988.[5] BBC published an article, "Putin unveils 'provocative' Moscow statue of St. Vladimir," and the New York Times published "A New Vladimir Overlooking Moscow," in which the author, Neil MacFarquhar commented that the new statue is a part of "what might be call[ed] the Statue Wars."[86]

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

As of the end of 2016, no academic work on the Statue of St. Vladimir in Moscow exists, but this research aims to provide some understanding of it.[6] The statue serves three functions: it establishes the importance of Russian Orthodoxy, it is a monument to Putin, and it serves as a site of memory for the fateful event of the Christianization of Kievan Rus (which also consolidates the importance of Russian Orthodoxy).

At the most superficial level, the sheer height of the statue, which stands at 16 meters, conveys the importance of Russian Orthodoxy. The statue was proposed in 2015, the millennial anniversary of the death of St. Vladimir.[87] The original design proposed a 25-meter tall statue on Sparrow Hills––one of the highest hills in Moscow. The statue was to overlook the city, but due to concerns about the levelling of the hill, the statue was moved to less than 100 meters away from the Kremlin in Borovitskaya Square. The distance, or lack thereof, between the statue and Kremlin establishes a close physical connection between the church and state. The connection to the ancient ruler of Kiev with the current government attempts to legitimize the new government as distinctly 'Russian' while erasing the Soviet atheist past. The emphasis on the relationship between the church with roots from Kiev and state helps consolidate Russian nationhood as a union of East Slavs who share a common religion. This connection also highlights Putin's connection to the fateful events of the Kievan Rus past.

The monument also serves as a monument to Putin. The juxtaposition of Putin and St. Vladimir is best exemplified in a photograph, released by the Kremlin, of Putin standing in front of the Statue of St. Vladimir (figure 7). The photograph of Putin explicitly shows one Vladimir vis-à-vis another Vladimir. Visual imagery is important to the construction of Putin's persona, and, more importantly, his cult of personality. It is, therefore, important to briefly discuss the history of the 'imaging' of Putin in the popular Russian imagination. As MacDon-

ald, Hughes, and Dodds note:

> Geopolitics has to some extent becomes a question of how particular episodes become figures in visual culture […] geopolitical truths are established, and geopolitical realities enacted through a process of visual demonstration.[88]

Tempest notes that in authoritarian regimes:

> The ruler's physical self embodies the authority of the state […] [and] the ruler's physiognomic traits and physiologic characteristics become universal objects of signification, […] that represent not just his own virtues and talents but those of the political system over which presides, the ideology he professes and even the policies he enacts.[89]

Tempest also argues that the imagery of Putin as the embodiment of masculinity worked particularly well in a post-Soviet Russia since the state lost its *raison d'être*, and Putin represented Russia as it would like to imagine itself as: athletic, healthy, and proud.[90] Thus, the juxtaposition of Putin with St. Vladimir not only emphasizes the importance of Russian Orthodoxy in the Russian Federation, but it also emphasizes that, like St. Vladimir, Putin plays a key role in the development of Russia as a powerful leader.

Furthermore, although the base of the statue is engraved with the phrase "*Holy Prince Vladimir the Baptist*," the only word that is completely visible in the photograph is "Vladimir." Even the name of the statue (*The Statue of St. Vladimir or Statue of Vladimir the Great*, if directly translated from Russian) and the text at the base of the statue (*Holy Prince Vladimir the Baptist*) makes it unclear to which Vladimir the statue refers. Through the image of the two figures together, it allows an explicit comparison between the two. The comparison, in the most reductive version, is that between two great leaders, one historical and one present. The comparison is interesting since St. Vladimir had converted to Christianity as a tool to consolidate power and unify the different groups of Rus.[91] As Machiavelli noted: "A prince should appear merciful, faithful, kind, religious, upright, but should be flexible enough to make use of the opposite qualities when it is necessary."[92] Putin too has used Russian Orthodoxy to consolidate his power. Fagan notes, "Putin taps the nominally orthodox majority's confidence in the

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[4]   Regarding the Russo-Georgian War, the National Security Advisor of the Carter administration Zbigniew Brzezinski, stated that Putin's actions were "following a course that is horrifying similar to that taken by Stalin and Hitler in the 1930" (Tempest, "The Charismatic Body Politics," 103). This will only focus on Putin's perception within Russia. This should be noted, however, as an example of re-Sovietization in the region. Although that is one of the forms of nationhood examined by Vera Tolz ("Forging the Nation"), this research argues that the main one being propelled by Putin's Russia is a nation of East Slavs.

[5]   St. Vladimir is known as St. Volodymyr in Ukrainian. Since this research focuses on Russia and at times uses Russian language sources, the Russian version of his name is used; Kubiïovych, Volodymyr, and Danylo Husar Struk. 1984. Encyclopedia of Ukraine. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984): 643.

[6]   There is a statue of St. Vladimir in Kiev from 1853.

church for how own image of permanence and security.[93] Religion in the Russian Federation, and especially in Putin's Russia, has become increasingly important. Patriarch Kirill, for example, is often seen at official engagements, including the unveiling of this statue.

Since religion is an important part of the East Slavic identity, the focus on religion draws attention to the contentious issue of an 'ancestral' land. The claim to this 'ancestral' land manifested in the annexation of Crimea. Although Tempest argues that "his last full year as a charismatic was in 2010," Putin's approval ratings have improved significantly after the annexation of Crimea in early 2014. According to the Levada Center, Putin's lowest approval rating was in November 2013 at 61 percent (the last time his approval ratings were as low was in June 2000, which was around the onset of the Second Chechen War).[94] By June 2014, Putin's approval rating had increased to 86 percent.[95] Putin's aggressive foreign policy, especially after the annexation of Crimea, conveys his role in the popular imagination as a "tough guy" who stands up to Western "liberal-fascist" enemies who are allegedly trying to weaken Russia at home and abroad."[96] The annexation of Crimea can be seen as a territorial claim to an 'ancestral' land and an assertion of political power.

Moscow's territorial claim to Kiev and Ukraine was evident during Putin's short, but significant speech at the opening ceremony:

Your Holiness, Muscovites, friends, welcome and congratulations on the opening of the monument to Holy Great Prince Vladimir, Equal of the Apostles. This is a major, significant event both for Moscow and the entire country and for all Russian compatriots. It is symbolic that the opening is being held on Unity Day here, in central Moscow, by the walls of the ancient Kremlin, the very heart of Russia. The new monument is a tribute to our prominent ancestor, an especially revered saint, national leader and warrior, and the spiritual founder of the Russian state. Prince Vladimir went down in history as a unifier and defender of Russian lands, and a far-sighted politician who created the foundations of a strong, unified, centralized state, which eventually united different peoples, languages, cultures and religions into one big family. His epoch was full of achievements, and the Baptism of Rus was of course the most important, defining and essential of them. This choice was the common spiritual source for the peoples of Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, and laid

the foundations of our moral standards and value priorities which continue to define our lives to this day. It is this solid moral foundation, unity and solidarity that helped our ancestors overcome difficulties, live and achieve victories to the glory of the Fatherland, strengthening its power and greatness from one generation to the next. And our duty today is to work together to confront modern challenges and threats, while relying on spiritual covenants and the invaluable traditions of unity and harmony, and to preserve the continuity of our thousand-year history as we move forward.[97]

The mention of Belarus and Ukraine emphasizes that these three East Slavic countries share a common history. The connection among the three countries is used to foster post-Soviet Russian nationhood as a union of East Slavs. Although Putin recognized that St. Vladimir's conversion of Kievan Rus to Christianity is shared amongst Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine, Putin's Russian-centric and territorial rhetoric throughout the majority of the speech is evident through his references to St. Vladimir as the "founder of the Russian state" and the "unifier and defender of Russian lands." Through the previous statements as well as his goal "to preserve the continuity of our thousand-year history," Putin highlights Russia as the successor and preserver of East Slavic traditions, namely Russian Christian Orthodoxy. Putin's use of "thousand-year history" ignores the period of state atheism in the Soviet Union and creates a direct connection between Kievan Rus to Tsarist Russia to the Russian Federation.

The statue of St. Vladimir next to the heart of Russian politics asserts Russia's territorial claim over Ukraine and reappropriates the memory of the Christianization of Kievan Rus on August 1, 988, as a Russian memory.[98] The juxtaposition of Vladimir Putin with St. Vladimir attempts to immortalize Putin in the cultural memory by installing a statue dedicated to a saint and leader with the same name. The use of St. Vladimir is controversial, especially after the annexation of Crimea, as St. Vladimir was the Grand Prince of Kievan Rus' which is present-day Kiev. This can be seen as a further claim on Kiev and Ukraine, which fits into the idea of Russian nationhood as being the "triune of Orthodox Russian nation."[99]

Furthermore, regarding unity, it should be noted that the date of the unveiling of the statue was Unity Day (День народного единства), a holiday first introduced by Putin in 2005. Putin delivered a speech in which he explained his decision to make Unity Day

a holiday:

While this is a new state holiday, its meaning and value have deep spiritual and historical roots. Almost four centuries ago, at the beginning of November 1612, Kuzma Minin and Prince Pozharskii led their home guard army to liberate Moscow from foreign invaders. This marked the end of the Time of Troubles in Russia, and of civil strife and conflicts connected with that period. This was a victory of patriotic forces, a victory for the project to strengthen the state by uniting, centralizing and joining forces. These heroic events mark the beginning of the spiritual revival of the Fatherland and the creation of a great and sovereign power.[100]

Unity Day, thus, celebrates the Tsarist, not Soviet, victory over foreign aggression. The emphasis on Tsarist Russia allows an explicit religious component to be introduced that would not be possible with a Soviet victory (although Victory Park has been rebranded with religious symbolism). It also ties Putin and his government to the victory of 1612 despite a Soviet intermission between Tsarist Russia and the Russian Federation. Thus, it is symbolic that the statue to St. Vladimir and to Putin was unveiled on a day dedicated to the "spiritual revival of the Fatherland" and the "creation of a great and sovereign power."

Almost every aspect of this monument has political and religious significance. This has created a site of memory that represents the Christianization of Rus, the 'innate' connection between the East Slavic countries, and the greatness of Russian leaders, in the past and present. The statues also glorify the Tsarist value of orthodoxy by its physicality and symbolism. However, the site of memory ignores the fact that these East Slavic states are independent sovereign states and projects nostalgia for the unity of the East Slavic countries.

CONCLUSION: ACROSS MONUMENTS

Sites of memory arise from the destruction of the real environments to which these memories belong. After the Russian Revolution, the Bolsheviks disposed of the Tsarist values and the new regime effectively destroyed the political environment of the Tsarist regime. One of the only pre-Soviet institutions to survive the Soviet Union was the Russian Orthodox Church. Thus, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, elements of Russian Orthodoxy were used in sites of memory to try to bring back the Tsarist environment, which

was lost to the revolution, as a tool to establish and consolidate the Russian identity. The sites analyzed in this research are related to Russian Orthodoxy and represent the reconstruction of Russian Orthodoxy in Russia. The attempt at the restoration of Russian Orthodoxy as an ancient tradition has also brought up the contentious issue of the origins of Russia. This has led to territorial claims over Kiev and Ukraine as a whole. The three sites of memory discussed in the present study: Cathedral of Christ the Savior, Victory Park, and the Statue of St. Vladimir.

The reconstruction of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior represented one of the first steps of reinstating Russian Orthodoxy into the Russian Federation. The Cathedral has become a site of memory for the victory of 1812 and the victory of the Russian state over the Soviet Union. The scale of the reconstruction also glorifies the return of the Russian state and religion along with the Tsarist values of 'autocracy, orthodoxy, people.' The performance by the controversial *cause célèbre* Pussy Riot in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior reflects how the Cathedral symbolizes both the Russian church and state since Pussy Riot's performance was essentially a political protest.

The construction of Victory Park, despite almost a fifty-year delay, emphasizes the importance of the creation of a site of memory for the victory of the Great Patriotic War. The park demonstrates how a fateful event from the Soviet Union could be reframed as 'Russian' with the addition of religious sites and monuments. The new additions to the park demonstrate the importance of this site of memory and how 'new' sites of memory can be added to continue the narrative of victory in the Russian cultural memory.

The statue of St. Vladimir, which is the only monument in this study that was fully constructed after Putin's rise to power, demonstrates the multifaceted role of religion in the Russian Federation. The juxtaposition of Vladimir Putin and St. Vladimir creates the connection between the two leaders. The implications of the connection are that, first and foremost, Putin is continuing the work and tradition of St. Vladimir, and that there is an inherent connection between Russia and Ukraine through St. Vladimir and Christian Orthodoxy. The statue of St. Vladimir serves as a physical assertion of a territorial claim to Ukraine by the placement of a statue of the Grand Prince of Kievan Rus in the Russian capital. This territorial claim, although present in the discourse on nationhood from the 1990s, has become particularly important in light of the an-

nexation of Crimea.

Through the study of the triad of sites of memory in Moscow, the development of a Russian nationhood and identity as a union of East Slavs connected by Russian Orthodoxy can be observed. Although other forms of nationhood have been identified in intellectual discourse in the late 1990s, Putin's Russia has been overwhelmingly oriented towards Russian Orthodoxy. This orientation is evident in political discourse and has also imprinted itself into the architectural landscape of Moscow.

Although this present study focuses on the role of sites of memory in the consolidation of a Post-Soviet Russian nationhood in Moscow, this research aims to highlight the overarching importance of public space—of sites of memory in political discourse. The state of Russian politics is often hard to gauge, and this study aimed to show an aspect of contemporary Russian politics (specifically nationalism and nationhood) through the state's use of public space. Public space and its use by both the state and the people is often overlooked in political discourse, despite it being arguably one of the most direct ways citizens come into contact with the state. This study specifically focuses on Russia, but public space exists in virtually all states.

FURTHER RESEARCH

Since my research only focuses on Moscow, further research is recommended in sites of memory in cities across the Russian Federation. The recent transfer of St. Isaac Cathedral in Saint Petersburg from the state to the Russian Orthodox Church, for example, has led to protests by citizens.[101] Saint Petersburg was also the former capital of the Russian Empire, so it would be a point of interest to research how Tsarist remnants have been reappropriated. Another point of interest is Kazan, the capital of the Muslim-dominant Republic of Tatarstan—it would also be important to research to see if Moscow's vision of East Slavic and Russian Orthodox Christian nationhood has affected the monuments in the city. Cities in Siberia and the Russian Far East (where the population density is also significantly lower) should also be researched to see whether or not sites of memory in cities in the periphery of Moscow are within Moscow's interest to influence.

Only three sites of memory were analyzed in this essay, but as of 2013, more than 180,000 monuments exist in Russia. This is an increase from the 46,000 that existed in 1990 and a study can be con-

ducted to analyze this increase and trends in the new monuments if applicable.[102]

Figure 1: The locations of the sites of memory: (1) Cathedral of Christ the Saviour; (2) Victory Park; (3) Statue of St. Vladimir

Figure 2: The modern Cathedral of Christ the Saviour (photo by author)

Figure 3: Map of monuments and sites in Victory Park. Numbers correspond to Figure 4.

Figure 4

Figure 5

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