1. The three most important results of the project and what conclusions can be drawn from them

The postdoctoral research has allowed me to develop new insights in memory politics scholarship. More specifically, my research situates Armenian Genocide recognition within the scholarship on memory laws. The research data indicate several findings: throughout Europe, several right-leaning parties instrumentalize Armenian Genocide memory in order to (1) fuse multiple memories in order to broaden the appeal of specific memory laws; (2) demonize Muslims and Muslim immigrants; (3) alienate Turkey from Europe and European organizations; and (4) legitimize their own interpretations of Europe's political present (and debunk competing accounts). By drawing from Armenian Genocide recognition case studies in Europe (particularly post-Communist Europe), my research broadens the existing scholarship (on memory laws) beyond those related to the Holocaust and Second World War. In undertaking this research, I have introduced or developed the frameworks of memory insertion, memory justification, and memory extrapolation.

While memory insertion can take place from any political actor, the other strategies relate more centrally to the larger goals of those from right-wing populists or the far right – that is, those from political parties often characterized as either extreme or radical right (Art 2011; Mudde 2014). Memory justification occurs when far-right political actors use narratives about the Armenian Genocide to justify alienating Turkey from the EU and NATO. For many European right-leaning MPs, Turkey does not belong in the EU or NATO. While the rhetoric they use often pertains to the human rights abuses of Turkey's leadership and Turkey's long-standing denial of the Armenian Genocide (Dixon 2018; Avedian 2018), the underlying rationale relates to the fact that it is a predominantly Muslim country whose policies influence Europe. In addition, Turkey has used the migration crisis as leverage in its interactions with world leaders, particularly as regards preventing migration from Turkey to Europe (Greenhill 2016; Baldwin-Edwards et al. 2019; Saatçioğlu 2020). This occurrence, too, has mobilized far-right opposition throughout Europe. Through memory justification, Armenian Genocide memory becomes an instrument through which to communicate that Turkey, not acting in accordance with European "values" and "behaviors" (that is, of recognizing the Armenian Genocide), does not belong in Europe or NATO.

Simultaneously, memory justification allows far-right actors to signal moral superiority over other European political officials, who continue to work with Turkey despite its leadership's human rights violations. Memory justification, therefore, creates, at first glance, common cause with more liberal political actors, who also pursue Armenian Genocide recognition on the basis of historical facts and human rights. This strategy highlights the sort of double-talk many populists use when instrumentalizing the Armenian Genocide. Through memory justification, the Armenian Genocide memory becomes an emblematic cause through which right-wing populists/far-right political actors use

emotional appeals to claim moral superiority, project self-images of themselves as human-rights oriented, and claim to be the sole representatives of the nation (Ugur-Cinar and Altınok 2021).

Furthermore, far-right MPs strategically appropriate Armenian Genocide memory in processes I refer to as memory extrapolation. Memory extrapolation occurs when elected officials construct Armenian Genocide narratives to demonize other groups, particularly Muslims or Muslim immigrants. This often acts as a rationale for racist characterizations of Muslims as inherently violent or predatory. In this line, xenophobic populists typically pursue Armenian Genocide recognition to show that Muslims are untrustworthy and undesirable populations (or a 'threat' to European society). Memory extrapolation via Armenian Genocide memory acts as a way for right-leaning political actors to partake of identity politics and create otherness between Muslims and Christian Europeans. In this way, they promote xenophobic policies while, ostensibly, advocating for a human rights and protections (Lingaas 2016). For these actors, the Armenian Genocide is used to show that Muslims and Christians (or Europeans – that is, non-Muslims) cannot not live together harmoniously.

Based on these three strategies, several larger conclusions can be drawn. Just as the dynamics of creating a common 'memory' about the Holocaust have played an important role in efforts to create cohesion in Europe for the last several decades, memory politics about the Armenian Genocide (and its recognition) reflect new dynamics in European integration processes – namely, one in which the increasingly mainstream nativist right seeks to undermine the multiculturalist left (among other actors). In this way, memory laws do not act only as a means to attack past states (Subotic 2019); rather, because different actors across the political spectrum support the same acts, they operate as instruments through which to argue against political opponents' interpretations of the present. In this way, what Koposov (2017) refers to as 'memory wars' take place not only between state-sanctioned interpretations of history but in the construction of individual acts, too.

As a postdoctoral fellow, I collected data in several sites relevant to the Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies. While each case study reveals important regional distinctions and variations in the rhetoric of political actors, these cases (and others) make clear a theme taking shape across Europe. In the existing cases, political actors on both ends of the political spectrum make common cause in pursuing Armenian Genocide recognitions, particularly at the parliamentary level. However, they pursue these initiatives for dramatically different reasons. In this way, as I contend, memory laws make strange bedfellows, who attack one other's interpretations of the political present in their mutual support of the same governmental acts.

2. The project's contribution to the international research frontline

The research attempts to meaningfully develop memory politics scholarship by situating new studies and frameworks at a critical intersection between international relations, international political sociology, and sociology. By doing so, my research not only expands conceptualizations of memory laws research – namely, to include governmental interpretations of historical events related to Armenians and, by extension, Assyrians, Greeks, Roma, Kurds, and many others – but also its practitioners. For example (as articulated in the relevant publications), I try to demonstrate that sociological perspectives enrich memory politics research. To date, sociologists have contributed to several subfields

of memory studies – in particular, collective memory (for example, see the important scholarship of Jeffrey Olick). In my own research, I have tried to make clear that sociologists of constructivism and politics have a great deal to offer and take from the existing memory laws research, particularly in international relations. This will, I hope, help expand the respective fields and contribute to new scholarly frameworks.

3. The contribution of the research to the knowledge of the Baltic Sea Region and Eastern Europe

This research projects helps frame and unpack an increasingly important political phenomenon taking shape throughout the Baltic Sea Region and Eastern Europe – namely, the mainstreaming (as distinct from the emergence) of far-right, xenophobic political discourse; these increasingly mainstream actors posit a version of Europe that not only undermines democratic traditions but also seeks to appropriate and reconfigure the pan-European project itself. Existing research on memory politics has suggested that the creation of a politically sustainable, unified Europe following the Second World War depended, in part, on the collective (or shared) memory of the Holocaust (Sierp 2014) – a project with uneven results, particularly among countries in the Baltic Sea Region and Eastern Europe.

Today, I would contend, memory politics continues to play an integral role in European integration; however, the political actors and their discontents are distinct. In particular, the shift relates to the mainstreaming of far-right political actors, who understand themselves as 'saviours' of Europe and opponents of a pluralistic Europe (Brubaker 2017). They rely heavily on 'memory' (or their distinct interpretations of the past) to legitimize their conceptions of Europe (and delegitimize competing accounts). My research, which extends the important research on memory politics in the context of post-WWII Europe, seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of this shift and its larger regional and global implications.

4. New research questions that the project has led to

Some new research questions that this research has produced include:
  (1) What do the appropriation and instrumentalization of Armenian Genocide memory among far-right actors (among others) tell us about the future of European integration?
  (2) What is most centrally at stake among European political actors in terms of creating a common European 'memory'?
  (3) How has Russia's invasion of Ukraine altered the dynamics of these phenomena?
  (4) What are the cultural and economic implications of this new iteration of 'memory wars' (that is, between actors who contentiously support the same memory laws) across Europe?

5. Dissemination of the results of the project within and outside the research community

During the postdoctoral period, the following publications (in which I featured as sole author or, in one case, first author) circulated:

I.   Book

    (a) *Ethnopolitical Entrepreneurs: Outsiders Inside Armenian Los Angeles*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. *https://www.cornellpress.cornell.edu/book/9781501770340/ethnopolitical-entrepreneurs/*

II.   Articles

    (a) "Memory Politics and Armenian Genocide Recognition in the Czech Republic," *International Political Sociology* (online first). *https://academic.oup.com/ips/article/18/2/olae003/7636627?searchresult=1*

    (b) "Memory Entrepreneurship: Armenian Genocide Recognition in Europe," *International Studies Quarterly* (online first). *https://academic.oup.com/isq/article/68/1/sqad100/7503199?searchresult=1*

    (c) "Diasporic Multiculturalism," *Current Sociology* (online first). *https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/00113921231194090*

    (d) "Generation-based Position Taking: Unpacking Finland's Decision to Join NATO, *Party Politics* (online first).* *https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/13540688231188479*

    (e) "Beyond Brokering for Recruitment: Education Agents in Armenia," *Population, Space and Place* 29.1: e2622, 2023. *https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/psp.2622*

    (f) "'A Community of Values': Unpacking U.S. Intermediation in Latvia's 2022 Holocaust Restitution Law," *European Societies*, 25:5, 753-775, 2023. *https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14616696.2023.2172198*

    (g) "Sweden's 'Complicated' Relationship with Genocide Recognition," *Acta Sociologica*, 66:4, 388-401, 2023. *https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/00016993221141587*

    (h) "Constructivist Memory Politics: Armenian Genocide Recognition in Latvia" *International Affairs,* 99.2: 805-824, 2023. *https://academic.oup.com/ia/article/99/2/805/7034356*

    (i) **"**'My Second Choice was Armenia': Motivations for Diasporic Return Migration among Iranian Armenians to Armenia," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 45 (16): 523-543, 2022 (with James Barry). *https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01419870.2022.2105658*

(j) "'Out-Europeanising' the Competition: Armenian Genocide Recognition in Bulgaria," *Europe-Asia Studies* 74:10, 1895-1914, 2022.**
   https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09668136.2022.2050678

(k) "Institutional Activism and Ethnic Intermediation in Post-Communist Romania," *Nationalities Papers* 50 (3): 554-568, 2022.**
   https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/nationalities-papers/article/institutional-activism-and-ethnic-intermediation-in-postcommunist-romania/409DA9043B58F0BED1AD6888705F15DA

*Research for this article was conducted with support also from ReNEW at the University of Helsinki (https://www.helsinki.fi/en/researchgroups/reimagining-norden-in-an-evolving-world)

**The data were collected and article (largely) completed before postdoc had begun (but published during postdoctoral period).

I also shared some postdoc research findings at the following conference in the United States:

https://reeec.illinois.edu/research/summer-research-laboratory/events-calendar/workshop-lab-programs/arts-heritage-and-0