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Mirosław Michał Sadowski*

City as a Locus of Collective Memory. Streets, Monuments and Human Rights

Abstract: Major events, important historic and contemporary figures are vital for the creation of national identity, and thus often become immortalised in public spaces in the form of streets and monuments – places of memory. But what happens when these places are reminders of a corrupt memory, a past that many would rather forget? Should they be removed, as if the people and the events they commemorate never existed, never took place, or should they be kept as sites of conscience, present-day reminders of a painful past? What may be their new role in the cityscape? And, ultimately, who has the right to be remembered, and who has the right to be forgotten within a city's network? The purpose of this paper is to answer these questions on the basis of the recent changes in post-communist and post-colonial countries, using these investigations to ponder the question of the right to memory.

Keywords: law and urbanism, city, monuments, street names, collective memory, national identity

> *"The past is everywhere and it is nowhere. We seem at times overwhelmed by the oceanic feeling of a limitless archive, of which the city is the most physical example and the 'memory' of our computers is the most ethereal yet the most trusted, and at others afflicted by a fear that the material traces of the past might be swept away, taking memory with them. Wiping, computer failure, demolition, redevelopment: all seem interchangeable threats. Meanwhile, as if in compensation, 'musealisation', even 'self-musealisation', extends collecting activities to almost any kind of object and any kind of recorded memory. Memory is both burden and liberation"* (Crinson, 2005:xi).

"The city does not tell its past, but contains it like the lines of a hand, written in the corners of streets [...] every segment marked in turn with scratches, indentations, scrolls" (Calvino, 1995:11). This article proposes, in a way, to imagine replacing 'the city' in this quotation with 'the law' and examine how the present-day

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city becomes a locus of collective memory, a place where collective memory is made and unmade not only in a variety of ways in social-cultural and regulatory discourses and decisions, but in the particular situatedness of urban sites – its streets and monuments.

Plato in *The Republic* imagines the ideal law as a city and the ideal city as law. The link between the city and the law in the Western *psyche* is particularly prevalent and its memory has stayed with us through modernity and so-called post-modernity. Urbanism often enacts commemoration or monumentalization, rendering the city into a site of the making and the unmaking of memory. Modernist architecture and planning even proposed the erasing of memory at the site of the modern city, while modern law instituted its civic faith in the collective memory of itself (its rule of law, as opposed to the rule of Nature or God). Often, in a rather anthropomorphic sense, the city is said to 'have' or 'be' a memory.

In fact, the city is imagined to be an almost limitless archive of memories to which different (legitimized or not) parties turn, in complex and often contested manners, in order to make or challenge collective urban memorialization and identification (through redevelopment, conservation, heritage, listing, museumification, or nostalgia tourism). We find ourselves today at the intersection of multiple forces, revisiting in a variety of ways the institution of urban memories and collective identities, whether by turning cities into 'commemoration' industries, or into political and cultural processes of 'forgetting' or, even, turning the local laws into 'memory laws' as such.

Given the worldwide intense urbanization, collective memory (and collective identity) together increasingly become one urban memory and the role of the city as a collective memorial 'hub' is an area of study that is revisited in, for example, geography and memory studies. In this paper I aim to examine how the contemporary city is a place of struggles over collective identities through the juridical making and unmaking of law and memory. Our memorial regulation, commemorative identity-building and urban planning decisions are, among else, rendered visible or invisible *spatially* in the city as a celebrated (and heavily politicized and juridified) site of making and unmaking, controlling and resisting memory.

I hope to provide an interdisciplinary analysis of the complex intersections between law-making and memory-making (and their intersections) within the understudied (in legal studies) setting of the urban environment, focusing on two areas, which, while seemingly innocuous, are both heavily juridified and politicised: monuments and streets. First, however, I would like to provide a theoretical background for later analysis.

Part One

Cultural Trauma, Lieux de Mémoire, Mnemotopoi and the City

As brilliantly noted in the opening citation by Mark Crinson, we are living in times of the hypertrophy of memory – and it should come as no surprise that the increased interest in what we remember and how we forget has in turn resulted in the hypertrophy of concepts created to describe memory-related phenomena. They range from the more established, such as collective memory, cultural trauma, *lieux de mémoire,* or myth (Kansteiner, 2002:181) to more recent ones, such as mnemotope, memory work, memory entrepreneurship, memory projects, autobiographical memory, historical memory, prosthetic memory, postmemory, cosmopolitan memory, recovered memory, somatic memory, cultural memory, visual memory, etc. (Conway, 2010:445).

The length of this paper does not allow for an examination of all these terms, so I would like to focus on the three most related to the question of intersections between law, memory and the city – urban memory, *lieux de mémoire* and the closely related *mnemotopoi* – and another pertinent to the issue of contested places of memory, cultural trauma.

The concept of cultural trauma is closely related to that of collective memory, i.e. a social memory, one which is not created individually, but within a group, with one person having a wide array of collective memories functioning on different levels – as each and every one of us is at the same time a part of a family, a class, a city, a nation – and today also of the global community. Collective memories can be and are influenced by a number of factors, in particular by governments, both on the local and the national level, as I will demonstrate using the example of streets and monuments further on in the paper.[1]

The particular type of collective memory existing within the city has been recognised as urban memory. It provides the "means of accessing how various strata of society and different communities construct the metropolitan world" (Srinivas, 2001:xxv) – the cities – which are regarded as "powerful symbols and repositories of memory" (Rose-Redwood et al., 2008:162). Buildings, monuments and streets – through these physical elements a city remembers, creating the identity of its citizens (Crinson, xiii:2005). They all play major roles within the city – urban memory refers to the metropolis as a geographical place and at the same time a "collection of objects and practices that enable recollections of the past and that

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1 For an in-depth analysis of the idea of collective memory see Sadowski (2017).

embody the past through traces of the city's sequential building and rebuilding" (Crinson, 2005:xii).

Three stages have been observed in a city's memory: traditional, whereby monuments had the role of the remainders of the past; urbanistic, whereby the city became a memorial by itself; and modernist, whereby memory was supposed to be erased from the metropolis (Crinson, 2005:xii-xiv). I would propose a fourth phase to describe the present-day city: post-modernist, whereby a variety of convoluted memories are carried by the physical elements of the city, pulling the collective memories and identities of its citizens into the past and into the future at the same time, perhaps anchoring them permanently in the present.

Cultural trauma, on the other hand, is defined as a situation whereby "members of a collective feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever, and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways" (Alexander, 2004:1). This phenomenon results in "a tear in the social fabric" (Eyerman, 2001:2), becoming "an empirical, scientific concept, suggesting new meaningful and casual relationships between previously unrelated events, structures, perceptions and actions" (Alexander, 2004:1). Experiencing cultural trauma can be described as a process "that defines a painful injury to the collectivity, establishes the victim, attributes responsibility, and distributes the ideal and material consequences" (Alexander, 2004:22).

It can be crucial in establishing the uniqueness of the group – cultural trauma can reform a people's cultural identity, rework their collective memory (Eyerman, 2001:1), and reinterpret their past "as a means towards reconciling present/future needs" (Eyerman, 2001:4) – as Jefferey C. Alexander notes, "it is by constructing cultural traumas that social groups, national societies, and sometimes even entire civilisations not only cognitively identify the existence and the source of human suffering but 'take on board' some significant responsibility for it" (Alexander, 2004:1). However, it can only be resolved both "by setting things right in the world [and] by setting things right in the self" (Alexander, 2004:5), i. e. the moment "when the memory comes" (Friedlander in Alexander, 2004:5).

Not every 'horrendous event' can be recognised as cultural trauma. In order for that to happen, "a social crisis must become a cultural crisis," as "trauma is the result of this acute discomfort entering into the core of the collectivity's sense of its own identity," and not only "the result of a group experiencing pain" (Alexander, 2004:10). Numerous examples include slavery in the USA, the Holocaust, or the Spanish Civil War (see Alexander, 2004; Eyerman 2001). In this paper I would like to focus on the times of communism and colonialism in various countries, which have often been immortalised as *lieux de mémoire* and *mnemtopoi* in

the form of monuments and street names, thus carrying the trauma of the past into the present.

The concept of *lieux de mémoire*, or places of memory, stems from the ideas of Maurice Halbwachs, and has been conceived by Pierre Nora. A *lieu de mémoire* may be defined as a "'significant object, material or ideal, which the will of the people, or the work of time turns into a symbolic element of memorial heritage of a community" (Nora, 1992:20).

As Sara Delva observes, both components of the term are equally important to its comprehension. *Lieu* can mean any place – topographic, monumental, symbolic, or functional (Delva, 2017:16) – where a group's symbolism is 'crystallised' (Delva, 2017:18). Memory is understood as Halbwachsian collective memory (Delva, 2017:17), which Nora sees as "a representation of a lost past which has to be reclaimed and reactivated" (Ben Ammar, 2014:16).

The idea of *lieux de mémoire* ceased being just a theoretical concept some time ago, at least in France, where it entered not only *Le Grand Robert*, the renowned dictionary of French language, but also the French law, used to describe what constitutes cultural heritage worth protecting but does not fall into the category of a historic monument (Valensi, 1995:1272).

Places of memory show the dual relationship any object of collective memory has with its surroundings: on the one hand, our memory is 'framed' by special elements; on the other, our memory can shape the spaces we see, think about, or where we live (Truc, 2011:148). While places change in reality, they do not always change within the collective memory simultaneously, their past selves living on in the minds of people (Truc, 2011:149) – a typical example of such a situation is Jerusalem, a city whose collective image has been shaped for Christians by texts written almost two thousand years ago (Truc, 2011:149). As a result

> "Jerusalem is no longer a city in concrete terms, destroyed and rebuilt over the ages, but [...] 'an eternal city', 'a symbolic place, a celestial allegory'. [...] And unlike the real Jerusalem, this symbolic Jerusalem is immutable and unchanging, for 'while stones can be carried away, it is much harder to alter the relationship established between those stones and human beings'" (Truc, 2011:149).

The case of Jerusalem can be applied to many other *lieux de mémoire*, particularly in the present-day, when the mass media create a mental image much more powerful than that shaped by the Bible (Truc, 2011:151). Auschwitz, Ground Zero, Buckingham Palace – all of these places of memory look different in reality than in our minds, because the "mental representation is fixed and linked to the memory of a particular event, [and] it cannot coincide with the material reality of the place, which has changed since then" (Truc, 2011:151–152). Moreover, any city has certain *lieux de mémoire* which remain unchanged in the minds of its

long-term citizens, regardless of how these places may change over time (which is particularly visible in the use of old names of streets, squares, even department stores) (Banaś, 2019).

While certain significant places indeed turn into *lieux de mémoire*, others become disconnected with collective memories. As Kenneth E. Foote explains, there are four possible scenarios for potential places of memory: *sanctification*, when places are transformed into monuments, symbols "intended to remind future generations of a virtue or sacrifice or to warn them of events to be avoided, where commemorative rituals are held", e. g. war monuments or cemeteries (Foote, 2003:8–16); *designation*, when a site exists, but no rituals take place there, e. g. commemorative plaques or gardens (Foote, 2003:16–22); *rectification*, when "a tragedy site is put right and used again," e. g. Atocha Station in Madrid, or the London Underground (Foote, 2003:23–24); and *obliteration*, when places are forcefully erased from collective memory, not simply "returned to use but more commonly removed from use, [or] put to a wholly different use" (Foote, 2003:24–27), e. g. mass graves and concentration camps in former Yugoslavia (Truc, 2011:153).

Despite the fact that all the places listed above can be treated as *lieux de mémoire* in the broad sense, just the 'sanctified' ones are places of memory *per se*, as only they provide the necessary link between the past and the present in the form of commemorative rituals. They usually take the form of monuments. But streets may also be treated as *lieux de mémoire*, in a way by proxy – they carry the 'sanctified' message for the present and future generations in their name.

I would argue, however, that the idea which better explains the way in which streets relate with memory is *mnemotopos*, or mnemotope. A concept similar to that of a *lieu de mémoire,* albeit not as commonly used, *mnemotopos* is something which "manifests the presence of the past, the conscious or unconscious memory traces of a more or less distant period in the life of a culture" (Purdy, 2002:94). A mnemotope may have a symbolic, functional, or a material aspect, and along with its main function of making the past present, it can also influence collective and individual memory, convey power, or be therapeutic. It is "something-what-works" (Rozczynialska, 2017:9). *Mnemotopoi* do not necessarily have to exist in a space, but when they do, they help "re-territorialise identity" (Bednarek, 2018:5). Streets are particularly interesting examples of menmotopes, because while they exist within the city, the memory of the past which they carry within their name symbolically links the present to the yesteryear, while functionally conveying the intended message of a local or central government.[2] Ultimately, whether we cat-

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2 The focus of this paper are those street names which convey a certain message, not those which have abstract or generic names, or do not have names at all.

egorise monuments and streets as *lieux de mémoire* or *mnemotopoi*, these places of memory remain some of the most innocuous yet powerful ways of shaping our collective memories – and thus influencing our identity.

Part Two

Interactions between Places of Memory and Identity

The relationship between streets and monuments and the collective identity is particular, since it exists within the urban environment. They both are "cultural productions of the past," which "employ the agency of display to create an interpretive interface that mediates and thereby transforms that which is shown into a vision of history" (Azaryahu & Foote, 2008:179). Through this transformation, they influence our collective memories – and our identity. Because, as Tim Edensor notes after Massey, "the identity of places is bound up with the histories that are narrated about them, 'how those histories are told, and which history turns out to be dominant'" (Edensor, 1997:176).

The monuments' part in the process is unique. As places of memory, they may be regarded as "permanent markers of memory and history [...] both iconically and indexically, i. e. they can evoke feelings through their materiality and form as well as symbolize social narratives of events and sacrifices retold in public rituals" (Rowlands and Tilley, 2009:500) resisting memory "as much as they celebrate it" (Rowlands and Tilley, 2009:500), at the same time serving as reminders of the past, moving "us to dwell on its significance and our loss" (Lowenthal, 2015).

True 'microcosms' (Rowlands and Tilley, 2009:506) within the city, monuments "act as stages or backdrops in framing myths of national identity" (Rowlands and Tilley, 2009:501), playing a key role in the "persistence and direction of social memory," giving us inspiration for the future by glorifying past achievements (McDowell, 2008:45). They also are "frames for the inscription and reproduction of social values," and may "be means of forgetting and reworking social relations" (Rowlands and Tilley, 2009:511). Monuments are fundamental elements of public memory, stabilising the past and "fixing history" (Rowlands and Tilley, 2009:500). They cannot be assimilated, as they belong neither to the past, nor to the present (Rowlands and Tilley, 2009:500), constituted of "the cultural spaces and processes through which a society understands, interprets and negotiates myths about its past; through those processes, dominant cultural understandings of a 'nation' or 'people' may be formed" (Forest et al., 2004:358).

It has to be underlined that these processes are always associated "with material culture, most obviously in the form of public architecture, archives, museums and monuments, and with more everyday forms" (Rowlands and Tilley, 2009:501). This material aspect of a monument often plays multiple roles, masking "the material-social relations under girding its production by focusing the eye on the aesthetic independent of the less-visible ideas (social, economic, and cultural power relations) underlying the representation" (Johnson, 2005:173). However, it is within those ideas, even if they are "contested and contradictory, that the meaning of memory spaces are embedded" (Johnson, 2005:173).

In certain cases, memory is 'inexorably' attached to a particular place (e. g. 9/11 and Grand Zero), but there exists a general relationship between monuments and memory, as "buildings, monuments, plaques, museums and gardens of remembrance, incite our memories and reinforce our attachment to particular places" (McDowell, 2008:40). People themselves crave the feeling which emanates from various places of memory, the connection with the past, "a legacy that is long, honourable, distinguished, manifesting continuity or reversion to first principles, revering ancestral precepts yet harmonizing with the present's best impulses" (Lowenthal, 2015:40).

The public memory is clearly shaped by those in the public sphere, because "heritage is a highly politicized process that is subject to contestation and bound up in the construction, reconstruction and deconstruction of memory and identity" (McDowell, 2008:43). It has even been observed that monuments allow us to 'improve' the past (Lowenthal, 2015:502), because "heritage 'is not given; it is made'," as the "notions of power are central to the construction of heritage, and consequently identity" (McDowell, 2008:43). The governments' underlying motive behind the protection of historic monuments and the creation of other sites of memory is a wish that they play the role of the "static and permanent reminders of the past concretized in the present [...] represent[ing] hegemonic values that cultivate notions of national identity and frame ideas and histories of the nation" (McDowell, 2008:44–45).

However, it has to be remarked that there cannot be one universal public memory, as

"local, national and even international officials, politicians and other elites may have very different ideas of what places of memory mean, what forms they should take, what pasts should be remembered (and in whose name) and what symbolic meanings these places should communicate to a larger audience (other officials, locals, nationals or tourists). They may have different agendas for these places, and may compete with each other for control over monument sites, leading to ideological conflict or incoherence" (Forest et al., 2004:362).

The diversity of the public memory is particularly visible in the case of a political or social transformation – the understanding of certain places of memory changes, along with the public memory, as "place-making and memory processes are significant spatial practices through which the national past is reconstructed and through which [...] change may be negotiated" (Forest et al., 2004:358). The associations with many historic monuments shift, as they become symbols of *ancien regime*, or of the revolution. Examples of such cases will be analysed in the following part of the paper.

These transitional changes may have a restorative effect on the society on the one hand, since the "critical discussion about the multiple meanings of the forms, functions and locations of public places of memory, as well as the pasts to be remembered, may be a process through which past injustices can be confronted to work through cultural trauma" (Forest et al., 2004:360), but on the other hand they may "result in a crisis of memory and representation, and a questioning of normative 'regimes of place'" (Forest et al., 2004:360). Ultimately, after a transition, a society's public memory is created via the process "of bricolage, whereby citizens and social groups use 'a pastiche of materials at hand to create a coherent narrative of tradition, memory, and history'" (Forest et al., 2004:360–361). As I will show, in some cases the result is far from coherent.

However, I would like to focus on the intersections between streets, collective memory, and identity first. As it has been noted, "commemorative street names refer to both national and local narratives of history and may be woven into narratives of the city" (Azaryahu & Foote, 2008:183) – as a result, collective memory becomes "embodied in bricks and mortar, carved out in air and space" (Worpole & Greenhalgh, 1999:30). Thus, the whole metropolis is transformed "into a virtual political setting" (Azaryahu, 1996:311).

What distinguishes streets from monuments or remembrance plaques is that they are seemingly innocuous – we all use street names, often without thinking who or which past they are commemorating. At the same time, while streets may not convey "pathos, are not laden with sentimentality, and are not charged with the sacred" (Azaryahu, 1996:321), their power lies precisely in their invisibility. They play both a symbolic and a practical role within a metropolis (Azaryahu, 1996:312), helping us find our way around, while conveying the intended version of the past onto those simply walking up and down a street, thus 'incorporating' the official collective memories "into spheres of social life which seem to be totally detached from political contexts or communal obligations, and to be integrated into intimate realms of human interactions and activities" (Azaryahu, 1996:321), indissolubly linking the city to the past.

What they share with monuments (and heritage museums), however, is that streets have been recognised as both evincing "a particular version of history"

and "participants in the ongoing cultural production of a shared past," while at the same time concretizing "hegemonic structures of power and authority" (Azaryahu, 1996:312).

It needs to be stressed that due to its broad implications, the process of naming a street is not a simple act of administrative law, but an "expression of power," a result of many divergent interests (Azaryahu, 1996:313). There exist a number of high-profile examples when a change of the already existing street name was used as a power tool (Azaryahu, 1996:317), whether on a local or international level – most recently in the case of Prague, whose city council changed the name of the square whereby the Russian Embassy is located to one commemorating a murdered dissident (Muller, 2020), followed by a removal of a statue of a Soviet general by the municipal authorities, which prompted a diplomatic rebuke by Russia, with the country said to be opening an investigation "into the suspected public desecration of symbols of Russia's military glory" (Balmforth & Hovet, 2020), in turn resulting in Prague city officials receiving police protection due to concerns for their life (Mackinnon, 2020).

Such moves result in "the artificially fabricated unity between history [...] and location" being created, with the street name's connotations forever operating "between its being a historical reference and its operation as a spatial designation" (Azaryahu, 1996:322). Thus, the past is not only commemorated and naturalised into the city's tissue (Azaryahu, 1996:319–320), but truly becomes the question of the present.

What needs to be remarked on before I move to the key part of my paper, is that streets and monuments, along with other means of commemoration within a city are *loci* of memory in a double sense: in the official way, from the above, as discussed earlier; but also from below, with people living their lives every day on the streets of a metropolis, on its squares with various monuments, thus creating their own collective memories attached to the city.

As Michael Hebbert observes, "national commemoration in street and pub names is woven into the soap operas of everyday life, private lives are played out in the rhetorical spaces of public symbolism" (Hebbert, 2005:592). In some instances the public perception shifts and begins to demand a change as to what these names commemorate – even though it may seem the events leading to such a shift took place a long time beforehand – often turning 21st century cities back into the battleground of collective memories, just as they were in the 19th and 20th century.

Part Three

Decommunizing and Decolonizing the Cityscape in the Present-Day

Due to their streets, monuments, and other elements of their landscape, cities intersect with memories in a myriad of ways – while the two "seemingly conjugate material and abstract entities—the former appearing concrete and fixed, the latter chimerical and fugitive," in reality the metropoles are "in a constant process of renewal, ceaselessly changing what they inscribe and erase, create and contest" (O'Rawe & Phelan, 2016:2). Moreover, since "social remembering is organised around places and objects built into the landscape" (Edensor, 1997:178), we deliberately 'infuse' our cities with places of memory highlighting a particular version of the past (Lowenthal, 2015:502–503). Exactly what past is recognised is not decided randomly but comes "directly from people's commemorative decisions and actions as embedded within and constrained by particular socio-spatial conditions" (Rose-Redwood et al., 2008: 161). Taking the form of law, these highly political actions (Crinson, 2005:xvi), which have been called "instrumental in substantiating the ruling socio-political order and its particular 'theory of the world'" (Azaryahu, 1996:312), result in the creation of official 'memoryscapes' which "act as stages or backdrops in framing myths of national identity" (Rowlands & Tilley, 2009:501), being "selective aids" (Ladd, 1997:11) in the *de facto* 'making' heritage and our identity (McDowell, 2008:43).

In this part of the paper I focus on the most recent wave of such legal decisions regarding decommunization and decolonization in various countries around the world and shifts of collective memory which followed – because, as it has been remarked, despite the amount of time which has passed since the transitions, "the question of dealing with difficult heritage and memories of war still haunts cities in post-Communist countries in Eastern Europe and cities in post-colonial contexts" (Ristic, 2018:2). While cities are, of course, incredibly diverse spaces, with a myriad of divergent collective memories, similar processes, successful to a varying degree, attempting to unify what people remember and what they forget may be observed in various places around the world, thus warranting a closer, if by its nature generalising, investigation.

When a transition from one regime to another takes place, the changes sooner or later also affect cities, which then "act as material and metaphysical metaphors for nations and regions emerging from conflict. As contested sites, they are repositories of memory; urban archives of violent histories" (O'Rawe and Phelan, 2016:2). Thus, places of memory located within the cities are also

affected. Looking prospectively, Kenneth E. Foote distinguishes three groups of such spaces: the sites affected by internal violence, places of struggle between the governments and their people, which have the potential of becoming new places of national remembrance and reconciliation (2003:353–354); the contested and forgotten places, such as cemeteries and monuments dedicated to the former regime and/or to a foreign power (2003:354–356); and places which emerge only after the regime change, for example political prisons or secret police headquarters (2003:356–357).

I propose looking retrospectively, into 'occupationscapes' (Carr, 2014:10), i. e. elements of 'difficult heritage', those places of memory taking us back into the past, being painful reminders of what happened and at the same time "an integral component of collective memory and identity of modern nations" (Ristic, 2018:2). They fall in a way into Foote's second category, the monuments and streets dedicated to the 'liberators' who, in the case of Central Europe and post-colonial countries were in fact perpetrators. Changing or removing 'occupationscapes' often results in strained relations with other countries, such as Russia in the case of the former, and a respective former colonial power in the case of the latter. The changes are also usually contested by some parts of the population.

Why introduce these changes now? As Katharyne Mitchell remarks, "each age attempts to refashion and remake memory to serve its own contemporary purposes" (Mitchell, 2003:443). It seems that post-communist and post-colonial nations have decided to revisit the politics of memory adopted after their transitions in the second decade of the 21st century. Moreover, Mark Crinson observes three reasons influencing the present-day modifications to the cityscape: "a sense of democratic participation in public space while that space becomes increasingly privatised and commercial; a lack of aesthetic consensus; and a sense of shame about colonial pasts, military adventures and other such previously commemorated events" (2005:xvii). I would add an additional factor, exasperation.

While the most obvious changes take place immediately after a transition – in Bucharest one hundred and twenty-two street names were changed in 1990 and only seven in 1997 (Anheier & Isar, 2011:333) – after a longer period of time a need for a deeper cleanse seems to grow within the society. Both in the case of Central Europe and of post-colonial countries, as the fall of the Berlin Wall in the case of the former and independence in the case of the latter move further into the past, monuments and street names referring to the old regime play the role of irritating remainders of the already half-forgotten past and bring back painful memories; hence the growing will for change.

In Central Europe four countries have been introducing particularly broad decommunizing changes to their cityscapes in the past decade, albeit on a different scale: Hungary and North Macedonia most notably locally, in Budapest

and Skopje, respectively, Poland and Ukraine globally, in the whole country. The four countries, just like the majority of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) after the Autumn of Nations, engaged to varying degrees in the decommunization "iconoclasm" (Foote et al., 2000:301), regarded as a necessary process for their "return to nationhood" after almost forty-five years of Soviet influence (Palonen, 538:2013). Internationalization of the cityscape, along with the return of pre-communist glorious pasts (Young & Kaczmarek, 2008:54) and commemoration of new heroes were the typical means of decommunization of the CEE 'occupationscapes'.

Hungary saw a number of modifications to its cityscapes take place in the 1990s, with many street names in the capital changed by 1993 (Palonen, 2008: 223) and the Memento Park, an open-air museum outside of Budapest, where many of the decommissioned statues are now housed (Viejo-Rose, 2011:469), created. However, the number of changes introduced declined as the years went by.[3] The situation shifted when Fidesz came to power, first in the years 1998–2002 and then for the second time in 2010. Viktor Orbán's conservative, illiberal party made restoring the Hungarian national pride one of their top priorities (Traub, 2015).

Both waves of decommunization introduced by Orbán, while affecting the whole country (with new monuments erected and city centres renovated in the provinces), focused in particular on the nation's capital, Budapest (Palonen, 2013:538), clearly with the idea of recreating the city regarded as cosmopolitan and liberal, in contrast to the conservative countryside (Palonen, 2013:540), so that intertwined together they could fit the new official Hungarian discourse.

During their first term in government, Fidesz's policy led to the creation of three major developments, each changing Budapest's cityscape in its own way: the House of Terror, a museum conveying the history of communist oppression in Hungary (Palonen, 2013:541–542); the new National Theatre to replace the one built in the 1960s, now designed in a way to foster Hungarian national identity (Palonen, 2013:545–548); and the Millennial Park, an exhibition space created around the idea of celebrating 'true' Hungarian values in a detachment from the liberal capital (Palonen, 2013:542–545).

Orbán's second administration continued where it left off. A number of Budapest's street names were changed as early as in 2011 (Palonen, 2013:549), including such inconspicuous ones as the *Moszkva tér* (Moscow square), which returned to its pre-war name (Palonen, 2013:545). In 2011 the government further began the reconstruction of one of the most important places for the Hungarian national identity, the Kossuth square in front of the Parliament building.

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3 For a detailed list see Foote et al., 2000:310–311.

The idea was to return the square to its appearance from 1944 (Hajdu, 2014:49). This allowed the government to choose which statues introduced to the square in the sixty-seven-year period since could stay, and which had to go. The monument of the victims of the 1956 revolution remained in place, however that of the president of the first Hungarian republic, Mihály Károlyi, was removed (Hajdu, 2014:50), and another of Attila József, a 20th century poet, was moved (Vera, 2014) to give way to the reconstructed statue of Hungary's 19th century prime minister count Gyula Andrássy, which had stood on this place before being destroyed by the communist regime (Székely, 2016).

One of the most peculiar modifications was the removal of the statue of Imre Nagy, the Hungarian communist prime minister who was executed for his support of the 1956 revolution (Hopkins, 2019). Nagy is seen by many Hungarians as a hero and Viktor Orbán's speech after his reburial in 1989 opened his pathway to politics (Walker, 2019). Nonetheless, a monument dedicated to a communist did not fit the government's plan of the Kossuth square being a place of memory of cosmic significance and thus the statue was moved to the nearby Freedom square, another particular part of Budapest's cityscape, which I analyse below. In its place, a reconstructed monument to the victims of the 1919 Hungarian communist republic was placed (Vass, 2019). Another new monument, dedicated to the legacy of the Trianon Treaty, which resulted in Hungary losing two-thirds of its territory after WWI, was also built in the vicinity of the Parliament (Thorpe, 2020).

With all of these changes taking place in front of the Hungarian Parliament, it may come as a surprise that the nearby Szabadság tér (Freedom square) still houses the monument to the "liberation" by the Red Army, standing at the place of the original Trianon monument (Woods, 2019). Interestingly, the statue is protected by a bilateral agreement between Hungary and Russia, and the Orbán government, while otherwise eager to decommunize the capital, in this case chooses to protect its foreign relations instead (Eckholm, 2014). To mitigate its influence, however, a monument of Ronald Reagan walking towards the Soviet Army statue was added to the square in 2011, Imre Nagy's monument now stands in its corner, and a bust of Miklós Horthy, the controversial head of Hungary during the interwar period (and later, until 1944) sits at the entrance to the church located in the square (Eckholm, 2014). A year after, in 2014, the square saw the addition of another controversial monument, dedicated to all of the victims of the German occupation, which is seen by some as an attempt at whitewashing the Hungarian role in WWII (Traub, 2015). More recently, in 2020, the square saw the addition of yet another statue perceived as 'anti-communist', that of George H. W. Bush (Kaszás, 2020), further strengthening the government's narrative of Hungary's past.

The second wave of decommunization introduced by Fidesz in the 21st century clearly aims at the reconstruction of what is left of Budapest's 'occupationscape' and turning it into a cityscape fit to accommodate and carry the newly-(re)minted collective memories. Is it a viable strategy? A particular focus on the capital city may seem as not enough to ultimately purge the country from the ghosts of the communist past, however, given Budapest's broad exposure in the media and its unique place in the Hungarian psyche, it might help shifting the country's national identity in the direction desired by its government.

Poland, another Central European country riding the second wave of decommunization, adopted a different strategy than Hungary, one encompassing the whole country. At first, a large number of changes in Poland took place right after the transition, in the 1990s (Young and Kaczmarek, 2008), followed by a more vigorous decommunization beginning in 2007 (Drozdewski, 2017:76), during the first Law and Justice (PiS) government, and becoming more institutionalised in the times of the party's second administration, after 2015.

In 2007, the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) used the constitutional and penal code ban on communist and Nazi symbols to improve the decommunization process (Drozdewski, 2017:76). Its recent second wave, however, took the form of several acts devoted to the issue on various levels of Polish society, with a special bill focusing on the Polish cityscapes – the *Law on the ban of propagating communism or other totalitarian regimes through the names of organizational entities, auxiliary municipal entities, buildings, objects and the apparatus of public utility and monuments.*[4]

This long named, but overall short law (only six articles after two amendments introduced to present day) prohibits any name or monument from functioning in the public space if they refer in any way to the communist regime, its functionaries or events connected to it. The law orders the local authorities to change the relevant names and remove the pertinent monuments within a year, otherwise delegating the competence to the government-nominated head of the province (*wojewoda*), who could administer a change after an opinion provided by the Institute of National Remembrance. The few exceptions regarding monuments include those located on cemeteries, in museums, created for artistic purposes, hidden from the public eye or on the list of protected cultural heritage.

The Institute soon created a list of 943 street names to be changed in Poland, however, in certain instances local communities were able to convince the IPN that a particular name should be kept (Dubicki, 2018:146–147). Nevertheless, the

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4 Dz.U. 2016 poz. 744 Ustawa z dnia 1 kwietnia 2016 r. o zakazie propagowania komunizmu lub innego ustroju totalitarnego przez nazwy jednostek organizacyjnych, jednostek pomocniczych gminy, budowli, obiektów i urządzeń użyteczności publicznej oraz pomniki.

implementation of the law did not always go smoothly. In some instances, the street names were actually changed; in others the name remained the same, but its provenance was simply changed (as in the case of Łódź, where the Victory Square, whose name referred to the end of WWII, remained, but now is a reference to the 1920 Polish victory over the Soviet Russia) (Dubicki, 2018:147–148); but quite often the local authorities remained inert, not implementing any changes.

This apathy allowed the government to implement its own policy of commemoration through the decisions of the aforementioned heads of the provinces, favouring the members of anti-communist resistance post-1945, the so-called Cursed Soldiers, as well as the local, national, and international anti-communist oppositionists, and contemporary politicians who died in the 2010 Smolensk plane catastrophe, most notably the then-president Lech Kaczyński (Dubicki, 2018:147–148). The latter element of policy was met with particular resistance in the city councils ruled by the government's opposition, resulting in a "quasi-guerrilla war" between various levels of authorities (Dubicki, 2018:148). Also, in some cases issues arose with regards to the figures who, while members of the communist regime, were regarded positively by the locals (Dubicki, 2018:149).

When an agreement could not be reached, local authorities often chose to appeal the decisions of the heads of the provinces to the administrative courts, with a number of cases ultimately decided by the Supreme Administrative Court in Warsaw (NSA). Despite the fact that they seemed to be called to become 'judges of history', the NSA usually based its rulings not on their own historical investigations, but on the procedural issues surrounding the heads of the provinces' decisions, most notably insufficient proof that the person or event in question were symbols of communism (Gazeta Prawna, 2019a). However, in a high-profile case regarding a communist seen by many as a regional hero, the NSA decided to judge him on the basis of being a high-profile communist party member, having joined it twice of his free will after being removed at one point. Ultimately, the Court found him susceptible to removal as a patron and the new name of the square in question remained, commemorating the presidential couple who died in the Smolensk catastrophe (Gazeta Prawna, 2019b).

The removal of monuments proved to be a generally less controversial, but slower process, due to the larger costs surrounding their move (Polsat News, 2019) and is carried out to this day (Polskie Radio 24, 2020). However, since the monuments in question were in most cases expressions of gratitude to the Red Army for the "liberation" of Poland (Rybczyński, 2019), their removal resulted in heated opposition of the Russian Foreign Ministry (TVN 24, 2017), which habitually accuses Poland of breaking the 1994 Agreement on Burial Sites and Places of Memory of Victims of Wars and Aggressions (Russian Embassy, 2020). Even though the accusations are untrue, since said agreement only protects cemeteries

and other places of burial (Permanent Mission, 2018), which are clearly exempt from the 2016 decommunization law, Russia, recognising the shift taking place in the Polish cityscape, and thus the country's collective memory, remains adamant in defending its own version of the past.

The second wave of decommunization initiated by the Polish government is, along with the Ukrainian one analysed below, among the boldest attempts to restructure a country's collective memory undertaken in the past decade. Encompassing the whole country, from its capital to small towns, it attempts to free the national identity from the ghosts of communist past by reconstructing the Polish cityscapes. The changes actually taking place may seem superficial (Kozubal, 2019), yet most of the communist legacy has ultimately disappeared for good. It has to be noted that, while the current government is using the changes to foster its own narrative about the past, unlike its predecessors it understands the vital role street names and monuments play in local communities (TVP Info, 2019). Moreover, the decommunization process spurred wide debates on many levels of society, including the judiciary, which have a positive effect in educating the society (Czermiński, 2019), at the same time encouraging the coming to terms with the past, perhaps finally leaving it behind and refocusing Poland on the future.

Ukraine, the third Central and Eastern European country I venture to analyse in this paper, is a particularly interesting example of a state changing its cityscapes. A post-communist, post-Soviet country, it began not only decommunization, but also, at the same time, decolonization (Törnquist-Plewa & Yurchuk, 2019:702), ultimately severing its ties with the Russian culture encroaching Ukraine in the past.

Decolonization of the cityscape has been seen as one of the determinants of a true independence from the former empire (Azaryahu, 1996:324). It thus comes as no surprise that Ukraine began its second wave of decommunization after the pro-European protests of Euromaidan (Myshlovska, 2019:373). Before delving into this question further, however, it is important to note that in some ways the second wave can be regarded as either a first, or a third attempt at decommunizing the country.

After the Soviet Union collapsed, there came a first wave of changes, with many an effort to remove the monuments and change the names of the streets and cities referring to the previous regime; however, the modifications affected mostly the Western provinces (Kozyrska, 2016:131), with Lenin statues symbolically disappearing from the three biggest cities there (Myshlovska, 2019:383). At the same time, the west of the country saw a spur of commemoration of Ukrainian WWII organisations, OUN, and UPA (Myshlovska, 2019:385), regarded as criminal by Poles and Jews, but as vital in fighting for an independent Ukraine in this country (Nuzov, 2017:146).

The second attempt at decommunization came after the Orange Revolution of 2004 (Nuzov, 2017:133). On the one hand, the mid-2000s saw the Great Famine (Holodomor) recognised as genocide committed by the Soviets against Ukrainians (Nuzov, 2017: 133), the Ukrainian National Institute of Memory (UINM) was created (Törnquist-Plewa & Yurchuk, 2019:704), and other symbolic measures were undertaken (Myshlovska, 2019:390) in the goal of delegitimizing "the Soviet past at the national level" (Myshlovska, 2019:389). On the other hand, this period saw further recognition of the OUN and UPA organisations, with a statue of one of their leaders appearing in one of the western cities (Kozyrska, 2016:132).

Major decommunization, more in line with the other countries of the region, came only after the 2013 protests saw the Kyiv statue of Lenin removed, with 504 other following suit in the following year (Kozyrska, 2016:132–133). These spontaneous changes, seen as necessary for shifting the whole society away from the Soviet past, were soon institutionalised and in 2015 four laws attempting to decommunize various aspects of the country were passed (Kozyrska, 2016:133), with the goal of laying ground for a new, non-Soviet, but also non-Russian Ukrainian identity (Nuzov, 2017:148).

Of particular interest to the question of Ukrainian cityscapes is one of these laws, the *Law on the condemnation of the Communist and National-Socialist (Nazi) regimes and prohibition of propaganda of their symbols* (Kozyrska, 2016:134). Regarding the past visible in the cityscape as a danger to the national identity (Törnquist-Plewa & Yurchuk, 2019:707), the law recognised both regimes as criminal and forbade the use of their symbols apart from research or museum purposes (Kozyrska, 2016:134), ultimately giving local governments a specific period of time to deal with the question of modifying the names of streets and cities, as well as removing the statues (Kozyrska, 2016:135).

The changes did not come easily in a large number of cases and provoked a wide debate in the country (Nuzov, 2017:149), with many local authorities resistant to the changes,[5] and the UINM stepping in with suggestions of modifications (Kozyrska, 2016:135–138). Ultimately, 47 % of the changes were implemented by 2016, with about 900 statues of Lenin remaining in place, albeit mostly in the areas not controlled by the government (Kozyrska, 2016:139–140). The process saw further recognition of OUN and UPA, regarding them as fighters for an independent Ukraine (Nuzov, 2017:149) – with the Kyiv Moscow boulevard renamed after one of their leaders (Kozyrska, 2016:141) – alongside those who died during the Maidan protest used as new symbols (Nuzov, 2017:149).

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5 For a study of the reality of changes on the example of one town, see Nekoliak, 2019:46–56.

Ukraine's 'hybrid' (Törnquist-Plewa & Yurchuk, 2019:710) decommunization/ decolonization presents a particular problem many post-colonial countries face: what past, i. e. which collective memories, to focus on when building a new narrative to replace the one imposed by the old colonial power. The Ukrainian government's choice of such controversial figures as fathers of independence, along with the lack of support of many citizens for the changes, seems not only to leave no place for a discussion about them (Nuzov, 2017:152), but also potentially drastically limits the Ukrainian identity. Whether this bold attempt at simplifying the past will lead to conflict, to a coexistence of various collective memories and narratives at the same time, or ultimately create an actual change in the perceptions of the past remains to be seen. One thing has changed for sure – the Ukrainian 'occupationscapes' are – in general – no more, with the cityscapes altered on a number of levels.

The last CEE country to be analysed in this paper is North Macedonia, which, like Ukraine, underwent a hybrid process of decommunization/decolonization, but, like Hungary, one focusing on its capital, Skopje. In 2010 the Macedonian government presented 'Skopje 2014', its plan of a complete reconstruction of the country's capital, in the form of a video. As it soon came to light, parts of the project were already in execution for several months, however, the project was kept a complete secret (Mattioli, 2014:81).

Skopje is a city which has seen five hundred years of Ottoman rule (Janev, 2016:112) and then much of its pre-war Yugoslav heritage destroyed in the 1963 earthquake (Nikolovska, 2018:126), resulting in a reconstruction in the brutalist style (Nikolovska, 2018:121). The government's plan was centred around the idea of Skopje's Europeanization through the city's decolonization and decommunization by remodelling the Ottoman and brutalist public spaces, respectively (Nikolovska, 2018:121), all with the goal of reasserting the Macedonian national identity (Janev, 2016:111), establishing "the continuity of the nationalist historical narrative", (Janev, 2016:113) and creating a "'buffer zone' between the collective memories of younger generations and those of their ancestors" (Nikolovska, 2018:137).

Baroque and neo-classism, virtually absent from Skopje's cityscape, along with references to antiquity (Janev, 2016:113), were chosen to replace the city's 'occupationscape' (Janev, 2016:112). New buildings, governmental as well as cultural, bridges, fountains, a triumphant arch and a large number of monuments (Poposki & Todorova, 2016:100) – including the centrally located 'Warrior on the Horse', or Alexander the Great – were planned (Nikolovska, 2018:127–128), along with the new façades to some of the brutalist buildings, even those built in a style clearly referencing Macedonian architectural particularities (Janev, 2016:121), reconstruction of some of Yugoslav, anti-Ottoman heritage (Mattioli, 2014:77),

and the removal or hiding of the communist-era statues behind new structures (Poposki & Todorova, 2016:102).

The 'Skopje 2014' plan was not realised without controversies. Putting aside the fact that it was not completed by 2014 (Esther, 2020), its high costs (Mattioli, 2014:74), and lack of actual competition for its design (Nikolovska, 2018:135), the very concept of the project was protested soon after its reveal, at the same time when the government was pitching it to the broader public during the Europe Day celebrations of 2010 (Mattioli, 2014:69–76). Other protests followed in the next years (Janev, 2016:122), with worries of the destruction of the local identity and the city's image (Nikolovska, 2018:137), which became compared to a theme park (Nikolovska, 2018:136), as well as the accusations of low artistic standards and government's overreach (Nikolovska, 2018:142) raised by concerned academics. The authorities, however, responded by launching their own media campaign in support of the project (Mattioli, 2014:69).

It further has to be noted that this policy of promoting Macedonian nationalism stands at odds with the city's mixed ethnicity, with around 67 % of Macedonians living alongside 20 % of Albanians, and others, including Roma, Serbs, Turks, and Bosniaks (Poposki & Todorova, 2016:98–99). The 'Skopje 2014' changes only reinforced the ethnic segregation along the banks of the river flowing though the city, into the Macedonian-European city centre and Albanian-Ottoman old town (Poposki & Todorova, 2016:99). Today, both the shopkeepers and the clients of the Old Bazaar located in the old town are mostly Albanian (Janev, 2016:128), while the city centre was regarded as a cosmopolitan, Western-style cityscape even before the 'Skopje 2014' realisation (Mattioli, 2014:71). Ultimately, Skopje changed completely (Janev, 2016:120) with the '2014' project described as "a somewhat belated continuation of post-1989 trends in Central Europe of erasing material and symbolic traces of the communist past, coupled with an obsession with memorialising and commemorating, as well as producing alternative versions of history" (Poposki & Todorova, 2016:102). In spite of the aforementioned criticism by intellectuals, the new Skopje seems to resonate well within the Macedonian public, particularly the younger generation, who acknowledge the feelings of national pride awakened by the city's new image (Nikolovska, 2018:138–142).

Nota bene, the Skopje 2014 project was never fully completed – after the new government was formed in 2017 it abandoned further reconstruction of the capital, the costs of which had by then largely exceeded the initial projections (Santora, 2018). However, while often disintegrating (Magleshov, 2020), the majority of Skopje's makeover remains in place (Marusic, 2020), continuously influencing Macedonian national identity.

Macedonia's policy of decommunization/decolonization is unique among the other countries undergoing the second wave of changes in the past decade. The

country's government managed to create and to some extent implement a large-scale project with a clear vision of the capital as the heart of the country, a locus of national collective memory. Whether the Europeanization of the cityscape resulted in the Europeanization of the people's minds is debatable, however it needs to be noted that the past decade saw Macedonia make a number of steps towards Europe and the broadly understood West, recently becoming a NATO member (NATO, 2020). Hopefully the positive effects of the Skopje remodelling will outweigh the negative ones also in the years to come.

The final country I would like to analyse in this chapter is South Africa. While clearly not located in CEE, it serves as a particularly interesting comparison with the post-communist states, as the South African transition took place only five years after the Autumn of Nations. While South Africa is not yet in the socio-political place as to introduce a broad-scale decolonization, the exasperation of the new, post-apartheid generations with the national memory policies grows (Holmes & Loehwing, 2016:1222), similarly to the irritation of post-communist societies which ultimately grew tired of living in a cityscape still occupied by remnants of a painful past.

In the past century, South Africa has seen two different official policies of memory. During the times of apartheid, the government fostered the monologic commemoration, centred around the idea of promoting one unified past, with the sole purpose of legitimizing and propping the colonial rule of the white minority in the country (Holmes & Loehwing, 2016:1211). During that time, a large number of monuments asserting Afrikaner and British nationalism were constructed (although the latter's' symbolic was less blatant) (Holmes & Loehwing, 2016:1211). Of particular importance are the impressive 1940s Voortrekker Monument, visible from the country's parliament in Pretoria, memorialising the Great Trek,[6] and monuments of Cecil John Rhodes, constructed in various places around the country, with a particularly grandiose one located in Cape Town (Holmes & Loehwing, 2016:1212). The effects of monolithic commemoration are visible up to this day, with Rhodes omnipresence being a particularly disturbing ghost of colonialism (Holmes & Loehwing, 2016:1208).

After 1994, in accordance with the spirit of national reconciliation, a different strategy was adopted, one of multiplicative commemoration. Centred around the idea of not removal, but a recontextualization of various monuments, for example by adding cultural objects of local ethnic majority to colonial places of memory (Holmes & Loehwing, 2016:1215), as well as creating new memorials focused on reconciliation, such as the Apartheid Museum or the Robben Island Museum

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6 For an in-depth analysis see Crampton, 2001:221–246.

(Holmes & Loehwing, 2016:1215–1216), and by giving voice to the counter-memories and counter-histories of the past, such as the Pretoria's Monument to the Women of South Africa (Holmes & Loehwing, 2016:1217).

The issues surrounding the multiplicative commemoration policy, most notably the lack of decolonization and the "radical inclusion without also mandating dialogue across difference" (Holmes & Loehwing, 2016:1218), have resulted in a growing irritation among many South Africans and a growing wish for broader changes to the country's cityscapes. Over the years, a myriad of ideas was offered, such as the changing of the names of some of the country's main cities, which was not realised (Crampton, 2001:222), or the memorialisation of the recently excavated slave burial sites, which resulted in the creation of a dedicated memorial and a museum in Cape Town (Jonker & Till, 2009:324–325), and raising the sensitivity to the issue, with University of Cape Town (UCT) taking particular care to acknowledge the "landscape of slavery" its present is built on (Barnard-Naudé, 2017:21–23).

The past years saw a number of more drastic actions undertaken to decolonize the cityscape. At UCT, a student movement #RhodesMustFall succeeded in the removal of the statue from campus, clearly noting that the "rejection of Rhodes is a rejection of the negotiated settlement that gave rise to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission" and calling for a second wave of the transition (Holmes & Loehwing, 2016:1220–1221). Their actions resulted in protests (and counter-protests) regarding various monuments perceived as colonial around the country (Holmes & Loehwing, 2016:1221). In Durban, two controversies surrounding the cityscape arose: first, regarding the changing of the street names found to be referring to the colonial past, with some of the citizens perceiving it as a loss of history and not being convinced of the suitability of the new patrons (Bass & Houghton, 2018:415–421); another concerning the elephant statues, which, while at first commissioned by the local authorities, were then forbidden from entering the cityscape due to political issues. Durban's citizens, however, came to regard the statues as vital elements of their identity and successfully pressured the municipality to introduce them into the cityscape (Bass & Houghton, 2018:421–424).

The case of South Africa complements the issues surrounding the decommunization/decolonization of the Central and Eastern European cityscape well. In spite of the historical, social, and political differences, just as CEE, South Africa finds itself in need of changes to its places of memory. While, unlike in Europe, the modifications to the politics of memory come from below, not from the central government, it can only be assumed that the growing social exasperation will result in enough pressure to change the official memory policy.

Interestingly, it seems that exasperation with the rejected past being present within the city is a much more powerful driving factor than shame. In the case

of former colonial powers, changes either do not take place despite protests, e. g. with regards to the persistent Rhodes monument at Oxford University, with the decision on its removal permanently postponed (Race, 2021), or are singular events, as in the case of renaming a street in Montreal (Anhoury, 2019). The Black Lives Matter movement's 2020 protests accelerated changes taking place in Western countries' cityscapes, but so far have not yet resulted in a more coherent approach to their all-encompassing decolonization. Nevertheless, despite many issues surrounding them, the ongoing changes to various cities' memory landscapes – and discussions about these changes – all attest to the fact that, in the 21st century, the city still remains a locus of collective memory.

Part Four

The Cityscape between the Right to be Forgotten and the Right to be Remembered

Before reaching the conclusion of this paper I devote this short, final chapter to the question of the right to memory within the cityscape. What happens on the socio-legal level when a monument is removed, a street name is changed, or another person/event need to be commemorated? What is the place of the right to be forgotten and the right to be remembered in such instances?

The right to memory is a human right recently distinguished by researchers, defined as "an acknowledgement of the otherness of the past made present and future through various symbolic and cultural acts, gestures, utterances and expressions" (Reading, 2011:380). While explicitly absent from international conventions (Reading, 2011:380), the right to memory – which, looking at the issues surrounding decommunization and decolonization uncovered in the previous part of the paper, I would propose to be understood as a Janus, two-faced right, actually composed of two opposite rights, the right to remember and be remembered and the right to forget and be forgotten – may be traced to a number of provisions of international and national law.

Beginning with the Peace of Westphalia, which contained an amnesty clause promising the "perpetual Oblivion, Amnesty, or Pardon of all that has been committed since the beginning of these Troubles" (Della Morte, 2014:428), to the 2007 Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Reading, 2011:386), to the present-day transitions from one system to the other (Reading, 2011:380), where on the one hand amnesty may be offered to the members of the old regime (Kaiser, 2008:179), while its victims are bound to be commemorated (Huyssen, 2003:101),

and thus remembered for perpetuity, the right to memory in either or both forms can often be found lingering in the shadows of legal provisions. After all, law "is a major discourse providing a framework for the discursive creation of collective memories of nations and groups" (Reading, 2011:385).

As the previous chapters of this article have demonstrated, another such framework is the city. Thus, when one framework – the law – imposes changes onto the other – the cityscape – various forces of collective memories are in play. While one side of the right to memory may be executed, another can be infringed. This is particularly visible in the analysed cases of Poland, Ukraine, and to an extent South Africa: heroes of the previous regime, which for some have the right to be remembered and commemorated, are pushed into oblivion and replaced with new ones. Two countries not mentioned earlier have to be remarked upon at this point: Spain, where two conflicting rights to be remembered clash in the cityscape, and Argentina, where the fight to be remembered is taking place at the same time as the exercise of the right to be forgotten. While this is not the place to provide a deep, wide-ranging analysis of their official memory policies, Spain and Argentina merit a brief mention as not only examples of the two faces of the right to memory, but also as countries which embarked on the second wave of changes after a longer period of time since their transition, further confirming my earlier thesis of exasperation with persistent 'occupationscapes' being one of the main driving forces behind changes to the official collective memories.

Spain is a country with a particular cityscape when it comes to collective memories. Statues of General Franco may have been disappearing over the years from the public space (Viejo-Rose, 2011:469), but the memorial landscape is still shaped by his memory policy of commemorating only one side of the Spanish Civil War – as the notable *El Pais*' cartoon wittingly remarked "they removed the statues of the dictator so that it would be less noticeable that he was still there..." (Viejo-Rose, 2011:470). Decades after the death of Franco, the families of republicans still have to fight so that their right to remember – and to have their relatives remembered by the state – may be exercised, while the Francoists enjoy the right for their actions to be forgotten granted by the 1977 amnesty (Viejo-Rose, 2011:473–474). In spite of a number of changes to the country's memorial policy after the adoption of the 2007 *Law of Historical Memory*, such as the exhumation of General Franco from his grandiose mausoleum (Faber, 2018), the processes of remembrance, as well as the country's cityscape, have become transformed into "a political act" (Viejo-Rose, 2011:477). They will remain this way until various instances of the right to memory can be reconciled in some way.

In Argentina, the issues regarding the right to memory are in a way similar to those in Spain. Families of those who were "disappeared" by the regime have organised into two groups, both responding to different sides of the right to

memory. The first one, Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, used to meet week after week, year after year (Kaiser, 2008:170) at one of the main squares of Buenos Aires in order to remind "the paralysed society" about the atrocities of the government, using a variety of shocking techniques (Kaiser, 2008:175). The second organization, HIJOS, comprised of the children of those oppressed by the regime (Kaiser, 2008:178), challenged the Argentinian amnesty law by denying the torturers their right to be forgotten, organizing *escraches*, various campaigns informing the general public who the oppressors are and where they live (Kaiser, 2008:179). The ceaseless fight of the two groups to exercise the right of their family members to be remembered even after the regime fell comes as no surprise, since one of Argentina's democratically elected presidents proposed that ESMA, a notorious place of torture, be demolished (Huyssen, 2003:100) – ultimately it was transformed into a memory park thanks to the support of its survivors, NGOs and the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo and Hijos organizations (Viejo-Rose, 2011: 477). Today, along with the spatial Monument to the Victims of the State Terror (Huyssen, 2003:100–105), it puts the Buenos Aires' cityscape truly in between the right to be forgotten and the right to be remembered.

When it comes to the right to memory in the context of cityscape, one more concept needs to be remarked upon: the rights of monuments. Proposed recently in academia, it stipulates that a large number of national and international laws protecting the monuments give them a range of rights analogous to human rights (Gissen, 2017:71–72). Being tangible, monuments would have: the right to be free from international stakes; the right to be both local and global; the right to be free from aestheticized spectacle; the right to evolve; the right to decay; the right to their own histories; the right to be temporarily devalued; the right to direct military strategy; and the right of their replicas to their own histories (Gissen, 2017:75).

In spite of focusing predominantly on historic monuments, this stimulating theoretical argument makes one wonder whether the different objects populating our cities' memoryscapes – monuments and street names – do not have the right to persevere and be reminders of the painful past in the future. Perhaps if not all, then at least some of these snapshots from the bygone era should remain in the public space, which can always be transformed and reconfigured: Budapest's Red Army Memorial towards which Ronald Reagan in the form of a statue is casually strolling, now joined by a nearby monument of his Vice President, speaks volumes – and it has much more meaning than it would if the Memorial was absent and forgotten. However, this is a dilemma which every society needs to resolve by itself, with constructive dialogue, a proper debate, and an understanding of the various faces of the right to memory.

Conclusion

The city truly is a locus of collective memory – but also a locus of law, a space where the two perpetually intersect, on a number of different levels. As the analysed cases demonstrate, only Poland, Ukraine and, to an extent, Spain, adopted legal acts specifically devoted to the altering of their memoryscapes nationwide. In other countries, the changes result from either acts of municipal governments or administrative decisions, or from a more localised focus of the national government. Nevertheless, it is the law which shapes the cityscape, and the memory policies it implements are in turn shaped by what is happening on the streets and squares of the cities. Playing the role of a neutral arbiter, laws governing the cityscape may hide the politics – and politicians – lurking in the shadows behind their conceptualization, but, as the various second waves of decommunization/ decolonization only confirm, wherever the past is present, so are the memories that come along with it, attached to the monuments and street names for better or worse. After all, these "ordinary places" are whereby "extraordinary events" take place, at the same time as them being "extraordinary places" where "ordinary events" happen (Irazábal, 2008:4), leaving a trail of collective memories behind.

In this article I went from theory to practice and back again, analysing a number of cases, mostly, but not only limited to, European ones, nonetheless being able to draw parallels between regions, cultures, and continents. The repetition of similar scenarios in various contexts only proves that even in a globalized and digitalized society, where the "discussions about how to remember the past have morphed into an international debate about human rights, restitution and justice" (Huyssen, 2003:95), the questions of commemoration and of the right to memory remain vital for local and national identity first, before being an element of humanity's heritage as a whole.

Since the time of ancient Athens and then Rome, the "public space is a prerequisite for the expression, representation, preservation, and/or enhancement of democracy" (Irazábal, 2008:1). And the public space would be empty without many different narratives, even if they are conflicting. In the present-day postmodernist city, these narratives will always be politicised, often through law, but as long as they do not become completely hijacked and employed for nefarious reasons, the cacophony of collective reminiscences, not collective amnesia, is the way forward for the city as a concept. "Urban air makes you free" – and this is what ultimately makes the city a locus of collective memory.

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