

A Complacent Memory? Street Name Changes in Lisbon during the Revolutionary Period

Uma memória complacente? Mudanças toponímicas nas ruas de Lisboa durante o Período Revolucionário

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Abstract: This article analyses the changes made to Lisbon's street names during the revolutionary period in Portugal, spanning April 1974 to November 1975. These changes are framed in the context of memory studies, in order to understand the image of the city which the Toponymy Commission intended to project.

The first section provides an overview of street name changes in Lisbon during Portugal's politically volatile twentieth century. The second sets up the theoretical framework that guides the analysis. The third and central section of this paper focusses on the work of Lisbon's City Hall regarding street name changes in the first year after the Revolution of April 25, 1974. As I will argue, the Toponymy Commission was by no means complacent with the dictatorship. However, far from supporting the revolutionary course of the PREC, their members were rather engaged in maintaining a balance and avoiding ideological struggles, setting a stable foundation for democratic and consensual politics of memory.

Keywords: Toponymy; Memory Studies; Lisbon; Portugal.

Resumo: Este ensaio analisa as mudanças operadas nos nomes das ruas de Lisboa durante o período revolucionário em Portugal, de abril de 1974 a novembro de 1975. Essas mudanças são enquadradas no contexto dos estudos da memória, com o objetivo de compreender a imagem da cidade que a Comissão Municipal de Toponímia pretendia projetar.

A primeira seção apresenta uma visão geral das mudanças nos nomes das ruas em Lisboa durante o conturbado século xx em Portugal; a seção dois estabelece o referencial teórico que orienta a análise. A seção central deste artigo centra-se no trabalho da Câmara Mu-

nicipal de Lisboa no que diz respeito à alteração do nome das ruas no primeiro ano após a Revolução do 25 de Abril. Como demonstrarei, a Comissão de Toponímia não foi de forma alguma complacente com a ditadura. Porém, longe de apoiar a trajetória revolucionária do PREC, seus membros estavam empenhados em manter o equilíbrio e evitar lutas ideológicas, estabelecendo uma base estável para uma política de memória democrática e consensual.

Palavras-chave: Toponímia; Estudos da Memória; Lisboa; Portugal.

INTRODUCTION

In 1994, following the 20th anniversary of the military coup which brought down Portugal's *Estado Novo* (New State) dictatorship, the philosopher José Gil wrote an editorial in the *Público* newspaper responding to a recent television programme, on which one of the former regime's most feared torturers had appeared. Broadcast live on the relatively new SIC network, Óscar Cardoso was interviewed alongside a former political prisoner. He made some controversial and false statements, including a denial that the secret police (the PIDE, or DGS) had ever used torture, a claim which went uncontested on the broadcast. Outcry followed, in which the broadcaster was accused of whitewashing the crimes of the dictatorship. Gil's "The Silence of History" registered protest at the TV broadcast, identifying this as a problem that had its roots in the 'complacency' of the revolutionary period. Those tasked with judging the dictatorship had not done so, he said, and thus shared the responsibility for any subsequent whitewashing. He described their silence as one of the forms of obedience that the *Estado Novo* had instilled in Portuguese society, and asked how a memory should be retrieved which had, up until then, gone unwritten (Gil 1994).

Gil's editorial was written at what was arguably the lowest point in the memory of the dictatorship. Manuel Loff even went as far as to describe Portuguese society at the time as "implicitly or deliberately oblivious [to] the authoritarian experience and its victims" (Loff 2010, 92). What had happened in the 20 years since 25 April 1974, when a group of young military captains, rebelling against a deeply unpopular Colonial War, toppled a dictatorship and initiated a process which would restore democracy to the country after close to half a century of authoritarian rule? The PREC (*Processo Revolucionário em Curso*, or 'ongoing revolutionary process'), the revolutionary drive, which followed the coup, would see a great deal of change occur across the country. There was a vacuum to be filled after leader António de Oliveira Salazar's *União Nacional* party was dissolved, and old power structures to replace. These challenges were taken up actively and enthusiastically: a wide range of political parties emerged, and commissions formed rapidly to challenge and replace the structures which the regime had put in place over its 48 years of rule. In accordance with this revolutionary spirit, the memory of the *Estado Novo* had been rapidly substituted by a democratic memory in the immediate aftermath of the Carnation Revolution.

The PREC's intense political engagement was particularly visible on the streets of Lisbon, and happened almost as soon as the *Estado Novo* lost power: streets were renamed by hand, political murals appeared, and statues were removed, defaced and decapitated. Writing on commemoration, Sanford Levinson describes how "the ability to assign a definitive name is a significant power manifested, as significant power often is, in the most apparently banal of ways" (Levinson 1998, 19). However, this use of power was something many in Lisbon reacted to: the extent to which members of the public attempted to enact change by themselves speaks of the importance that markers of the previous regime had held to them, and shows that they had not seen this power as merely 'banal'. The renaming of streets and removal of statues were displays of a newfound power. This power found its immediate expression in the actions of citizens, but was soon executed through official channels. Yet this period of revolutionary memory change was later described as complacent.

The aim of this article is to focus on the context of revolutionary memory change, in order to understand the sense of forgetting only twenty years after. It analyses the street name changes carried out in Lisbon. The government body in charge of changes to the city's street names was the *Comissão Municipal de Toponímia* (Toponymy Commission). Though this commission had existed during the dictatorship, a new set of guidelines was drawn up to make it more reflective of the revolutionary period, taking into account the will of the population. The article gives an account of the Toponymy Commission's decisions and actions during the PREC, investigating how the changes influenced the memory of the dictatorship and whether the commission was as 'complacent' as Gil would later claim that the actors of this period were. It analyses how radical or compromised the changes were, identifies what the commission chose not to change and details the extent to which these actions and inactions contributed to the silence and forgetting which Gil would identify twenty years later.

STREET NAME CHANGES THROUGHOUT TWENTIETH-CENTURY LISBON

This study will focus on Lisbon, the main site of the 1974 coup, capital of the country and centre of Portuguese politics. Its first meeting after the 25 April revolution took place on 15 November 1974, almost seven months after the military coup which toppled the dictatorship and just over a year after the previous commission had met. As with both previous and following commissions, the meetings took place at the *Paços do Concelho de Lisboa*, Lisbon's City Hall, which houses the *Câmara Municipal de Lisboa* (CML), Lisbon's City Council. Teresa Sancha Pereira's article "A Revolução de Abril na toponímia de Lisboa e nos concelhos limítrofes" provides some details for the composition of the commission: it was led by president Henrique José Monteiro Chaves, a law student and member of the CML Administrative Commission, and four further members: Maria da Conceição Machado, Leonor Pizarro Beleza, Fernando

António Piteira Santos and Fernando Castelo Branco. Castelo Branco was the head of the CML's Committee of Culture, while the remaining three members were not employed by the city council, thus establishing a balance between civilians and council members. It was also an interdisciplinary commission: collectively, the board had experience in teaching, law, politics, journalism and history. It was responsible for all the changes to street names made during the PREC (Pereira 2004, 63).

The Toponymy Commission's agenda had been established a month before, in a CML Administrative Commission meeting on 17 October. Chaves was one of the twelve board members present, and the discussions held during this meeting would form the basis of the Toponymy Commission's objectives. An urgent need was identified for a commission that would deal with the removal of names related to the dictatorship, while 'resisting the emotional climate' of the time. Commission member António Sarmento Lobato Faria stated his fears about the political atmosphere removing historical figures from the streets of Lisbon, which Chaves reassured him would not happen. Furthermore, the members agreed that there would not be a huge number of changes, in order that local councils would not be overburdened with requests. Multiple references were made to the urgency with which such changes were required,¹ with Chaves again giving his assurance that matters would be dealt with rapidly (Câmara Municipal de Lisboa 1974, 29-31). The commission was indeed put swiftly into action – it convened less than a month after this Administrative Commission meeting, and had already decided upon seven street name changes by the end of the year.

The Toponymy Commission's schedule during the PREC did not vary greatly from those beforehand, meeting two or three times per year for sessions lasting around two hours (Câmara Municipal de Lisboa 2000b, 3-18).² The decisions regarding name changes were made official by the CML in the form of an *Editais* (announcement) one or two months later. Joaquim Ângelo Caldeira Rodrigues, as president of the CML's Administrative Commission, signed off on the five *Editais* of the period (Pereira, 63). The first order of business for the 15 November meeting was to lay down a set of directives for the toponymic changes to be made. Six were established:

- 1) The elimination of names that were offensive to the population due to their connection to the former regime;
- 2) The consideration of the problems that any such name changes may cause to local councils or other public services;
- 3) The retention of traditional names;
- 4) The avoidance of names with a political character or influence;
- 5) The avoidance of names detrimental or offensive to current institutions;
- 6) The avoidance of name changes commemorating living people (Pereira, 63-64).

¹ Including a request to change the *Ponte Salazar*, which, though quickly changed, did not fall under the Toponymy Commission's remit, being the name of a bridge, not a street.

² Details of the meetings (before, during and after the PREC) are taken from two (of a total of three) volumes of *Actas* (minutes), published by the *Câmara Municipal de Lisboa* in 2000.

These were based almost entirely upon discussions and objectives drawn up during the Administrative Commission's October meeting: only the sixth directive had not already been established at this meeting, and was one that had been observed since 1910 (see Veloso 2004, 170). In addition to these six directives, it was decided that, given the significance to the public of name changes, the publication of the decisions made by the commission would be followed by a fifteen-day grace period. During this time, individuals or institutions could address complaints, which would be reviewed over another fifteen-day period. An *Edital* would then be published, confirming the changes.³

These six directives placed a focus on what should *not* be changed, and in this sense the commission was much more conservative during the PREC than it was during the First Republic,⁴ when a great number of alterations were made to the street names of Lisbon. The renaming guidelines set out after the 1910 coup make it clear that a great deal of change was intended to be effected on the city, and contrast quite sharply with those drawn up in 1974. In addition to figures connected to the monarchy which had been overthrown, the 1910 guidelines suggested that streets with a religious character should also be considered for renaming. Unlike in 1974, none of the 1910 guidelines concerned what should not be changed.

As a result, street name changes were made very quickly in Lisbon during the First Republic: just a month after the 5 October revolution, an *Edital* was published by the CML (at that point, there was not a separate commission for toponymy) which detailed the first street name changes. *Avenida da República*, *Avenida Cinco de Outubro* and *Avenida Almirante Reis* were clear symbols of a new government: large arteries crossing the centre of the city which replaced the names of figures from the monarchist period with references to the new republic. Some of the decisions from this first meeting were particularly abrupt in their breaking with the past. For example, *Avenida Ressano Garcia* (the former name of *Avenida da República*) and *Avenida António Maria de Avelar* (today's *Avenida Cinco de Outubro*) were named after two figures who had masterminded Lisbon's expansion program, meaning that their names were removed from the neighbourhood they had only recently constructed.

Twelve more renames were published in the 5 November 1910 *Edital* (though not all ended up being put into effect). This meant that a total of fifteen name changes

³ The information presented in this section is taken from the minutes for the Toponymy Commission's meetings. Unfortunately, the minutes do not exist for the CML meetings that confirmed these decisions.

⁴ The First Portuguese Republic lasted from 1910 to 1926, and was bookended by two coups d'état: one which overthrew the constitutional monarchy which had been in place since 1834, and another which led to the *Ditadura Nacional* (National Dictatorship) taking power, which would go on to become the *Estado Novo* in 1933. The First Republic was a complicated period of Portuguese history: 9 presidents and 44 ministers came and went during these 16 years. The fourth president, Sidónio Pais, was extremely divisive, and assassinated less than a year into his term. Following this, the country was plunged into a period of great instability, leading to the 1926 coup. Though the *Estado Novo* held a general ideological disregard for the First Republic, Pais' governing had a great influence on, and was celebrated by, the dictatorship.

were decided upon only a month after the revolution. This is the same number of street name changes the Toponymy Commission decided upon during the 19 months of the PREC, which encompassed five *Editais*. The 1910 *Edital* was not unusual in its scope, and the level of change that the Republican period enacted helps to explain board member Faria's fears of the city's toponymy being completely altered in 1974. However, there was one significant difference between the approaches of the two periods: decisions taken on street names during the Republican period were made by the CML, and therefore directly connected to the political ambitions of that period. As a result, a significant part of Lisbon's traditional toponymy disappeared during this time. The Toponymy Commission during the PREC instead had a mixed character which included civilians and CML employees, and was thus less dependent on the political forces of the time. The decisions made by the commission would have to be ratified by the city council, but the structure of the PREC commission, along with the third of their directives, ensured that the sweeping changes of the Republican period were not repeated (Velo 2004, 170-171).

The Toponymy Commission of Lisbon as an autonomous institution within the city government was created during the *Estado Novo* and heterogeneous in nature: its first meeting, on 27 November 1943, was composed of five members: three members from the CML and two from external organisations (the *Academia das Ciências de Lisboa* and the *Grupo dos Amigos de Lisboa*). Though the nature and balance of the board did not change greatly in the following 31 years, this structure would not entirely separate the naming of streets from the political intentions of the *Estado Novo*. Housing was an important issue from early on: the first years of the regime were marked by ambitious schemes to house the workers of Lisbon, something which the Republican period had failed to address, providing a "visible and significant departure from the state's previous stance on urban issues" (Pinto 2013, 48). With the construction of large new housing estates, the regime was able to mark out a new toponymy for the city, and "the toponymy attributed to the city of the *Estado Novo* helped to consolidate and project the image and the ideology of power" (Calado 1994, 103).

The population of Lisbon grew considerably during this time, from 529,524 in 1925 to 802,230 in 1960 (Baptista and Rodrigues 1996, 50). The *Estado Novo* also continued their building programme throughout the regime's life, and implanted their ideology through it. Much social housing was built, with the houses reflecting the type of 'new man' that Salazar wanted to promote, designed around a rural and nostalgic idea of the Portuguese family. Housing preference was given to traditional families, and strict rules on conduct helped to maintain them. Good conduct and loyalty would reward residents with a better class of social housing, while behaviour considered immoral could mean moving to lower-quality dwellings or being removed from the social housing system altogether (Pinto 2013, 63). The *Estado Novo* likewise promoted its ideology through the names given to the many new streets that these developments brought with them. Some of the new neighbourhoods were simply named numerically (such as *Bairro do Alto da Ajuda* and *Bairro da Calçada dos Mestres*), some were de-

signed to be educational (such as *Bairro Padre Cruz* referencing Portugal's rivers), and some were named after Portugal's colonies (*Bairro das Coloniais*). These represented order, an understanding of and pride in Portugal, and the importance of its colonial possessions: three facets that were important in the early years of the *Estado Novo*.

A strong manifestation of the later ambitions of the *Estado Novo* can be seen in the vast housing projects built on former farmland in Lisbon's north-east, many streets of which were named after cities in the colonies and combatants in the Colonial War. The Colonial War was perhaps the defining feature of this later period of the dictatorship, which Loff describes as a "blind alley for the regime, contaminating every social process in Portugal" and preventing any attempts at modernisation made by Salazar's successor, Marcello Caetano (Loff 2010, 59). Maria Calado, noting how controlled and planned the *Estado Novo's* approach to topography was, described the *Olivais* district, where most of these developments are located, as being close to a cemetery in the way it functions as a space for memory. The street names also feature annotations (such as 'Hero of the Colonial War' or 'Killed Serving Portugal') which fit in with the educational approach to street naming that the *Estado Novo* adopted (Calado 1994, 107). As earlier housing developments had supported the idea of the 'new man', this period of development stressed the importance of the colonies to Portugal's history, and the need to retain them.

Calado's article notes how a city contains a memory (or memories) recorded within its urban form, its buildings and streets. She describes Lisbon as a city that is clear and easy to analyse when looking at its architecture. Though not always consistent, its ruptures and fragmentary nature can always be explained through its history. This means that the memories contained within its urban form or architecture are clearly projected, easy to read. In terms of toponymy, however, Lisbon is much more complex, and projects a narrative that is fragile, not always coherent. Calado notes how toponymy frames and strengthens the idea of a city that each epoch contains. The Lisbon of the *Estado Novo* used toponymy to "consolidate and project the image and the ideology of power" (Calado 1994, 103). Following on from how the *Estado Novo* used toponymy and memory to project power, the next section will employ the concept of collective memory to understand which idea of Lisbon the PREC Toponymy Commission intended to project.

THE TOPONYMY COMMISSION AND COLLECTIVE MEMORY

During the 1920s, Maurice Halbwachs developed the concept of collective memory in *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*, a pioneering work in the study of how societies remember. He describes collective memory as the manner in which "the various groups that compose society are capable at every moment of reconstructing their past" (Halbwachs 1992, 182). Human memory, according to Halbwachs, can only function in a collective context, and this collective memory relates strongly to a group's identity.

Every collective memory depends upon specific groups that are delineated by space and time, and a single event can result in multiple memories: “just as people are members of many different groups at the same time, so the memory of the same fact can be placed within many frameworks, which result from distinct collective memories” (Halbwachs 1992, 52).

Collective memory functions in a contrasting way to history. History seeks to provide a portrayal of past events which is accurate, complete and unbiased, while the collective memory is more ephemeral: it relies on a group memory which employs bias, and “they most frequently distort that past in the act of reconstructing it” (Halbwachs 1992, 182). The division between history and collective memory becomes apparent when a break is made: “collective memory exists only as long as it is part of the living experience of a group or individual, but when that continuity with the past is ruptured, history comes into play” (Boyer 1998, 66).

This collective memory uses what Halbwachs terms the frameworks of social memory to reconstruct, retell and remember a group’s past. In Portugal, events like the assassinations of Ribeiro Santos, José Dias Coelho and Humberto Delgado⁵ by the PIDE had lived largely in the collective memory: censorship in the *Estado Novo*⁶ meant that recognition of these events came mostly in unofficial forms, such as the protests which accompanied Santos’ funeral, or José Afonso’s song “A Morte Saiu à Rua”, which narrated the story of Dias Coelho’s death.⁷ These are examples of Halbwachs’ frameworks of social memory. We can observe the relevance that Santos, Dias Coelho and Delgado had for Portugal in 1974 through the volume of requests for them to be recognised: these three names were regularly suggested to the PREC commission as names for Lisbon’s streets, as will be detailed later in this article. This recognition would ensure that these markers of the collective memory would outlive the group, that they would form part of a history of the time, an official recognition and a concrete representation of a collective memory.

The PREC Toponymy Commission’s task was to reach decisions that would satisfy the desire to rid the streets of traces of the previous regime but not draw a wholly new

⁵ Santos and Dias Coelho had streets named after them during the PREC, as will be discussed later in this paper. Humberto da Silva Delgado, a general, diplomat and political opponent of Salazar, would eventually have multiple places named after him in Lisbon, but none would be implemented during the PREC. He was forced into exile after running against Salazar in the (rigged) election of 1958, and was assassinated in a Spanish border town in 1965.

⁶ Censorship in *Estado Novo* Portugal was a useful tool of repression: though Article 8 of the 1933 constitution established freedom of thought, the same article stated that the exercising of it would be regulated. Despite being ostensibly committed to individual liberty and freedom of expression, “the silencing of dissenting views played a vital role in the regime that Salazar established” (Ribeiro de Meneses 2016, 145).

⁷ This track, released 11 years after Dias Coelho’s assassination, passed by the censors during Caetano’s rule. This relates somewhat to the partial liberalisation which followed Salazar’s rule, but also illustrates Ribeiro de Meneses’ point about the *Estado Novo* operating “a system of repression that was as selective and repressive as it had to be to preserve the peace without provoking scandal - a fine line that was not always kept to” (Ribeiro de Meneses 2016, 145). As if to prove this last point, Afonso’s musical activity would send him to the Caxias prison the next year.

map of the city, as was decided at the CML Administrative Commission's October meeting. As literature on the PREC notes, the Toponymy Commission's task was to "reflect on the new values in question, without the bitter taste of revenge" (Quintino 1994, 122). Its job was to provide a representation of the past which would satisfy both the directives it had established and the will of the citizens.

Of course, any representation of the past carries with it great potential for distortion or misrepresentation. The Toponymy Commission had to find a compromise between the CML's intention for little change and what the citizens desired. The PREC was a fraught time in Portugal's history: though the transition to democracy was successful, it was not inevitable. In 'The Legacy of the Authoritarian Past in Portugal's Democratisation, 1974-6', Pinto identifies the problems of analysing Portugal's transition, noting that it is too often seen through frameworks set by later transition processes, "forgetting the greater degree of uncertainty and the 'extreme conflict path' of a regime change that, according to some authors, 'was not a conscious transition to democracy'" (Pinto 2008, 267). The fact that this time was an ideological struggle is something that should be borne in mind as we analyse the decisions made by the Toponymy Commission more closely, in an attempt to better understand the vision of Lisbon that it intended to project.

GAP MARKER THROUGH A MINE FIELD: THE TOPONYMY COMMISSION DURING THE PREC

The *Comissão Municipal de Toponímia* met five times during the PREC, and made a total of 15 changes to Lisbon's street names. In terms of understanding the vision of Lisbon that they set out to project, it is just as telling to analyse the changes that were not made as those that were. I have taken the first of the commission's directives (the 'elimination of names that were offensive to the population due to their connection to the former regime') to be the most significant in terms of evaluating how radical their changes were. I have therefore classified the suggestions made to the commission in terms of their connection to the dictatorship or their being opposed to it. The classification of certain figures as connected or unconnected to political developments is, of course, not always easy to implement. I have instead taken the view that the general public would have had during the PREC, keeping in mind that the purpose of this study is to analyse how radical or conservative the commission was, and the effect that this has had on the memory of the dictatorship. Though some of the figures may have been involved in the dictatorship or the resistance to it in some way, they are categorised as unconnected if they would not have been perceived as a politically motivated choice for naming or renaming a street.

The commission dealt with a total of 128 suggestions over the course of five meetings between November 1974 and July 1975. Of these, 66 were for new names and 50 for streets to be renamed. 8 new name suggestions and 8 requests for the renaming of

a street did not conform to the directives of the commission and were thus rejected, and there were also some suggestions which would not have been possible for a variety of reasons. Therefore, in terms of 'valid' suggestions, 58 new names and 42 renames were suggested to the commission. The commission decided upon 15 new names and renamed 12 of Lisbon's streets,⁸ leaving a great number of suggestions for which no decision was reached: 43 new names and 30 renaming suggestions were postponed for another meeting, left open pending further public support, or otherwise not decided upon.

Given that the PREC was a time of ideological struggle, I would like to provide a breakdown of the political character of the suggestions made and the commission's decisions on them. Of the 58 valid new names suggested to the commission, 40 were resistance figures or opponents of the dictatorship, 2 were connected to the revolutionary process, 14 were unconnected to either, and 2 are figures on whom I have not been able to find any information. Of the 42 valid renames suggested to the commission, 17 were connected to the dictatorship, 23 were unconnected and 2 were cases of mistaken identity.

Of the 15 new names decided upon by the commission, 10 were resistance figures or opponents of the dictatorship, 2 were connected to the revolutionary process and 3 were unconnected to either. Of the 12 streets renamed, 6 were connected to the dictatorship and 6 were not. For the 8 new name suggestions that the commission rejected, 1 was a resistance figure or opponent of the dictatorship, 6 were unconnected and 1 had already been commemorated. Of the 8 renaming suggestions which were rejected, 7 were unconnected to the dictatorship and 1 was a case of mistaken identity. Of the 43 new names on which the commission did not make a decision, 30 were resistance figures or opponents of the dictatorship, 11 were unconnected and 2 are figures about whom I have not been able to find any information. Of the 30 renaming suggestions on which the commission did not make a decision, 11 were connected to the dictatorship, 17 were unconnected, and 2 were cases of mistaken identities.

A considerable amount of proposals were made that were not put into effect, despite being thought realistic by the commission. We have previously observed that the directives for the commission were geared towards *not* changing names, and we can see here that these directives were adhered to. Of the total valid requests received and discussed in the meetings, the commission only approved around a quarter: earlier fears of a sea change in Lisbon's toponymy were not realised.

From the breakdown of the political nature of the decisions, it becomes clear that there was a good deal of parity between the changes effected and the suggestions made. For new names, the vast majority of the new streets were resistance figures, as were the suggestions. The commission renamed streets connected to the dictatorship at the same rate as those which were unconnected, while the requests made for this slightly

⁸ 15 new names were decided upon by the commission, but as the naming of *Av. General Humberto Delgado* was not carried out, only 14 were effected.

favoured names unconnected to the dictatorship. This suggests, first of all, that the commission was successful in reflecting the mood of the public: in terms of political character, the decisions taken reflected the requests that were made. It also suggests that revanchist tendencies were not overly present in the public, or at least not in those who made suggestions to the Toponymy Commission. This is interesting, as it goes against the image of a public eager to avenge years of a dictatorship's presence on the city streets. While that was certainly a mood present in these requests, it was far from overriding. Indeed, a good many requests were for things that appear, in the context of the time, fairly mundane.

It is clear that there were many more streets on which decisions were not taken than streets for which suggested changes were implemented: around a third of the valid suggestions for renaming streets because of a connection to the dictatorship were taken up, and only 10 of the 40 valid suggestions for commemorating resistance figures or opponents of the dictatorship were effected. Those which were successful had generally received a suitable amount of public support, either as the result of a multitude of requests being made to the commission or there having been support shown outside the meetings. Some of these were not permitted because of authorities other than the Toponymy Commission: the agreement of the Armed Forces was required for decisions which concerned figures such as Amílcar Cabral.⁹ The fact that a good deal of suggestions were not taken up is certainly related to the commission's intention to make few changes. However, there were also inconsistencies in the commission's approach to deciding what was implemented, how this was done, and when certain directives were bypassed.

The first Toponymy Commission meeting brought up some such inconsistencies. Five changes were decided upon during that 15 November 1974 meeting. The commission accepted the first four suggestions for new street names without much apparent discussion, according to the minutes taken: *Rua Alves Redol*, *Avenida das Forças Armadas*, *Avenida General Norton de Matos* and *Calçada Ribeiro Santos*. It is likely that the ease with which these changes were approved was due to where the request for them had come from: Portugal's president, who at the time was Francisco da Costa Gomes, had written to the commission with requests for names which the public would want to be commemorated, and the commission decided upon four (Câmara Municipal de Lisboa 2000b, 3-4). The first three of these decisions replaced names which would have been considered offensive to the population due to their connection to the former regime, as per the first directive. *Rua General Sinel de Cordes* (which became *Rua Alves Redol*) was named after João José Ludovice Sinel de Cordes, a general and politician that was loyal to Salazar. He had a number of streets named after him in and around Lisbon, all of which have since been renamed. *Avenida 28 de Maio* (which became

⁹ Cabral was the founder of the PAIGC (African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde), though he was killed before either country saw independence. Cabral would eventually have a street named after him in 1983, ten years after his death.

Avenida das Forças Armadas) referred to the date of the 1926 coup d'état which ended the First Republic, and made it a fairly obvious candidate for replacement. *Avenida Marechal Carmona* (which became *Avenida General Norton de Matos*) was another clear choice for renaming, as it referred to António Óscar Fragoso Carmona, a key figure in the 1926 coup who went on to spend almost a quarter of a century as the President of Portugal, a largely decorative title during the *Estado Novo*.

However, the street renamed to commemorate Santos, which was originally called *Calçada de Santos*, was a traditional name and, according to the third directive established by the commission ('the retention of traditional names'), should not have been changed. It is unclear exactly which names Costa Gomes had suggested in his letter: it only states in the meeting's minutes that he requested Ribeiro Santos, Alves Redol, Bento Gonçalves (which was not discussed at this meeting) 'and others' (Câmara Municipal de Lisboa 2000b, 3). It also does not state whether he specifically requested that *Calçada de Santos* be changed to commemorate Ribeiro Santos, which would help in understanding the reason for the third directive being disregarded. In any case, this decision shows that the rules which the commission had set out for itself were flexible: *Calçada de Santos* was not connected to the former regime and had been in use for a long time before it was changed to *Calçada Ribeiro Santos*. Ribeiro Santos lived on this street¹⁰ and it was the site of a large-scale protest during his funeral procession in 1972. This protest was repeated on the first anniversary of his funeral, and another took place in the early days of the revolutionary period, on 3 May 1974, where a group took to the street to demand that it be renamed (*Diário de Notícias*, 4 May 1974). It is therefore clear that the commemoration of Santos was important to the public, and that there was an interest in this specific location, but it is nonetheless interesting that the directives set out by the commission were bypassed during the very meeting in which they were outlined.

This was not the only time during the first meeting that the commission disregarded this directive. The fifth name change to have been decided on was *Rua Dr. João Soares*, which came from a letter written on behalf of 'several hundred residents' (Câmara Municipal de Lisboa 200b, 4-5). João Lopes Soares was a politician in the First Republic, opponent of Salazar and founder of the Colégio Moderno, an institution which educated a number of prominent opponents of the regime. He was also the father of Mário Soares, the Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time, who would later serve as Prime Minister and then President of Portugal. As with *Calçada de Santos*, the street which *Rua Dr. João Soares* replaced, *Rua de Malpique*, had no connection to the dictatorship. And again like *Calçada de Santos*, *Rua de Malpique* was closely connected to Soares: he had lived there for a long time, and the Colégio Moderno was (and still is) located there.

A further suggestion made in the second meeting of the PREC period shows that strong public support, such as that found for *Calçada Ribeiro Santos* and *Rua Dr. João*

¹⁰ An address which has been marked by a plaque since the 40th anniversary of his death.

Soares, did not necessarily lead to a name change being successful. On the 20 December meeting, a suggestion from the *Associação de ex-Presos Políticos Anti-Fascistas* was discussed, who asked that *Rua António Maria Cardoso*¹¹ ‘revert to its original name, *Rua da Leva da Morte*’. This street was significant to resistance figures like this group of former political prisoners, as it housed the secret police headquarters (and interrogation chambers). It was also significant to the story of 25 April, as 4 civilians were killed and 45 injured when members of the secret police opened fire on a group of protestors on the evening of the coup.¹² The *Associação de ex-Presos Políticos Anti-Fascistas* were, however, mistaken on the history of the street: *Rua da Leva da Morte* was actually the former name of *Rua Serpa Pinto*, located two streets east of *Rua António Maria Cardoso*, and was named after a 1918 incident in which 6 prisoners and 1 guard were killed in a shootout. The prisoners had rebelled against the government of Sidónio Pais, and *Rua da Leva da Morte* was named in 1924 to commemorate them, then slightly altered (to *Rua 16 de Outubro*, the date of the incident) six months later. In 1937, the street was renamed *Rua Serpa Pinto*, in keeping with the *Estado Novo*’s pattern of renaming streets from the First Republic. This name remains today. *Rua António Maria Cardoso* has also kept its name, which it was given in 1890 to commemorate the (then still-living) naval official and explorer António Maria Cardoso. Though the street would appear a suitable (and popular) candidate for renaming, the notion was ‘taken into account’ by the commission, dependent on a greater show of public support (Câmara Municipal de Lisboa 2000b, 9).

This was not an unusual outcome. As mentioned earlier, a great deal of valid name suggestions was not effected, and a lack of public support was a common reason which the commission gave. This meant that some streets with non-traditional names and connections to the former regime did not receive such strong consideration – consideration that, according to the directives set out, should have been given, as they conformed to the first and third of them.

Rua António Maria Cardoso is one such street. There was quite a show of public support for the changing of its name: the day after the April coup, the name *Avenida dos Mortos pela Pide* (‘Avenue of Those Killed by the Secret Police’) was added to the street, placed over the existing street sign (Público, 25 April 2017).¹³ Murals painted on the wall which faced the former secret police headquarters also drew attention to what had happened there, with one explicitly stating, complete with long streaks of blood, that four *companheiros* had been ‘killed there for freedom on the day of

¹¹ A second request for the renaming of *Rua António Maria Cardoso* was brought up at that meeting, coming from the same citizen who suggested José Dias Coelho be commemorated.

¹² Around an hour later, a police employee leaving the building was also shot and killed, in circumstances which remain unclear. António Lage’s name is often omitted from reports of those killed on that day.

¹³ This also happened a few days later, on *Avenida 28 de Maio* (today’s *Avenida das Forças Armadas*). This street was changed officially only a few months later, at the first Toponymy Commission meeting, while *Rua António Maria Cardoso* remains.

liberation'. None of this meant that a name change was considered, however. When contrasted with the two earlier examples, we can see that there does not appear to have been an exact procedure for the measuring of public support considered sufficient for a name change. In the case of *Calçada Ribeiro Santos*, there had been three large protests in as many years for this street to be renamed, and 'several hundred' citizens requested the renaming of *Rua Malpique*. Nevertheless, both name changes were likely helped by their political connections: then-president Francisco da Costa Gomes had requested the first, and the second was connected to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Furthermore, *Rua António Maria Cardoso* was not the original name of the street – it had been called, with minor variations, *Rua do Postigo do Duque*, *Rua do Pica-deiro* and *Rua do Tesouro Velho* before it was renamed after António Maria Cardoso (Toponímia de Lisboa 2019). It is not therefore especially 'traditional', and certainly less traditional streets had been changed in order to commemorate what had happened on them, and/or because they were deemed offensive.¹⁴ Perhaps the reason for *Rua António Maria Cardoso* remaining unchanged was not that there was insufficient public support for it, but rather that it did not come from the right places. In any case, the commission's approach to renaming, as further examples will show, was uneven.

This uneven way of dealing with the past presents problems for the remembering of the period when viewed in the light of Halbwachs' statement on how groups frequently distort the past in the act of reconstructing it. The 'frameworks of social memory', as he names the markers of events significant to the collective memory, do not all assume equal weight in the retelling and representation of past events. This sheds some light on the case of *Rua António Maria Cardoso*: perhaps it is because *Calçada de Santos* and *Rua de Malpique* were simply more easy to deal with and justify, less complicated or controversial frameworks of social memory. The assassination of Ribeiro Santos was an offence that had been committed by a dictatorship now removed, and with a suitable distance of time. The deaths which occurred on *Rua António Maria Cardoso*, though certainly connected strongly to the *Estado Novo* and its institutions, were committed during the revolutionary period, and the instigators had neither been identified nor punished. In describing how new regimes form a national consciousness based on what they decide to destroy or keep from the preceding regime, Sanford Levinson notes that "organisers of the new regime must decide which, if any, of the heroes of the old regime deserve to continue occupying public space" (Levinson, 10). Gil would later point to the actors of the PREC as having been incapable or unwilling to judge the actors of the dictatorship, and regardless of the justification for not changing its name, the lack of action on *Rua António Maria Cardoso* demonstrates this.

¹⁴ *Rua António Maria Cardoso* can coincidentally be seen as offensive for another reason: Óscar Aníbal Piçarra de Castro Cardoso, who was referred to at the start of this essay, the notorious member of the secret police interviewed on television in 1994. He was in the secret police headquarters during the 25 April coup, and is suspected of being one of the agents who shot into the crowd outside.

Instead, the commission took decisions on removing the clearest connections to the former regime. One such symbol was removed at the second meeting, and shows the commission removing a trace of the dictatorship that clearly reflected current political ambitions. The renaming of *Praça do Ultramar* (*ultramar* denoted an overseas possession, or colony) to *Praça das Novas Nações* (New Nations Square) represented an important symbol of the objectives shared by the Armed Forces, left-wing parties and the general population: granting Portugal's former colonies independence. Indeed, "the overthrow of the dictatorship was inextricably linked to decolonisation" (Ruivo 2015, 182). The lengthy, costly and unsuccessful war then being fought in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique, three of Portugal's five African colonies, gave life to the coup. It is therefore unsurprising that *Praça do Ultramar* was changed so quickly. By that point, only Guinea-Bissau had been recognised as independent, and though Angola, Cape Verde, Mozambique and São Tomé and Príncipe would be independent by the end of 1975, the commission was slightly premature in labelling them new nations. Although it seemed certain that decolonisation would occur after a declaration to that effect by President Spínola in July,¹⁵ the Portuguese government was far from decided on how exactly to go about the process. Nonetheless, *Praça das Novas Nações* was a reflection of the intentions of those in power, and one which was popular: the decolonisation process was deeply connected to the ideological framework of the military coup, and spoke of the dismantling of some of the *Estado Novo's* ideological framework.

Another commemoration made at that second meeting illustrates which memories were more readily afforded public space, when *Rua da Creche* was changed to *Rua José Dias Coelho* (Câmara Municipal de Lisboa 2000b, 8-9), again with a traditional street name being changed. This change commemorated the painter and Communist Party member who was assassinated by the secret police in 1961. This occurred on *Rua da Creche*, an event put into song ("A Morte Saiu à Rua") by José Afonso. Two requests made for Dias Coelho's commemoration were discussed at that meeting, one from a citizen and one from the *Junta de Freguesia* (parish council) of *Alcântara*, where *Rua da Creche* was located, suggesting a strong demand for this change, and a suitable reason for the commission's directives to be disregarded for a third time – *Rua da Creche* was a traditional name which did not bear any connection to the regime, like *Rua de Malpique* and *Calçada de Santos*. Like Ribeiro Santos, José Dias Coelho can be considered an important framework of social memory, and was another example of the commission changing a traditional street name.

A further example of how these frameworks of social memory influenced the actions of the commission can be seen in how the suggestions for commemoration were

¹⁵ António de Spínola preceded Francisco da Costa Gomes as Portugal's president, stepping down in September 1974, little more than four months into the role. One of the characteristics of the PREC was political instability: though Costa Gomes would remain president until democracy was installed, six governments came and went during these 19 months.

skewed to the recent past. Halbwachs defines collective memory as something which fluctuates with time, and which omits certain important details in order to pass on a clear interpretation of the past. Fittingly, we find that more recent events were closer to the forefront of the collective memory in the PREC. This meant that the Santa Maria hijacking of 1961 –which will be detailed shortly– was well-remembered, with multiple requests made to the Toponymy Commission for the renaming of a street commemorating the ship's captain, *Rua João do Nascimento Costa*. However, a much more deadly naval revolt that happened 25 years beforehand went unmentioned during the meetings: on 8 September 1936, mutiny broke out among communist sailors on the Tagus River. The mutineers had aimed to take part in the Spanish Civil War before the Portuguese Navy crushed the revolt, resulting in 12 sailors being killed and a great many more being taken to the dictatorship's *Tarrafal* penal colony on Cape Verde. Likewise, while the secret police's 1972 and 1961 assassinations of Ribeiro Santos and José Dias Coelho were popular suggestions for commemoration, their 1945 assassination of another Communist Party activist, Alfredo Dinis, was not brought up. The history presented through the names of Lisbon's streets is not, therefore, a carefully curated narrative, but one that was borne out of something much more fleeting. The choice of names for commemoration told the story of the dictatorship mostly through its last 15 years, affording these events great significance while forgetting much of what had happened before.

The case of *Rua João do Nascimento Costa* provides further insight into how the commission came to its decisions. João José do Nascimento Costa was the captain of the Santa Maria passenger ship, hijacked in January 1961 by a group of 24 Spanish and Portuguese political exiles who intended to bring international attention to the dictatorships in both countries and possibly even provoke a coup. The attack was quite daring, and caused a fair amount of embarrassment to the Portuguese regime. Costa was killed in the incident, and had a street named after him less than a month later. The renaming of *Rua João do Nascimento Costa* was clearly a subject which had generated some support –both the local council and a private citizen made multiple requests for its changing– and one which the commission thought of as important, having brought it up five times during the final three PREC meetings.

The commission decided to postpone its decision on renaming the street on each occasion, as a study was being undertaken in connection with the *Junta de Freguesia* of *Beato*, the neighbourhood in which the street was located (Câmara Municipal de Lisboa 2000b, 13). It was brought up three meetings later (6 July 1976, after the PREC period), where it was finally decided to change the street to *Rua Manuel Rodrigues da Silva*, commemorating the Communist Party activist who spent 23 years as a political prisoner during the dictatorship (Câmara Municipal de Lisboa 2000b, 25). This was the eighth post-25 April meeting, and the fourth at which *Rua João do Nascimento Costa* had been discussed. Curiously, the name change was not effected, for reasons which remain unclear, as the minutes for the subsequent CML meeting which rejected the request do not exist. The street, despite clear desire from both residents and the parish

council to the contrary, remains unaltered today. *Rua Manuel Rodrigues da Silva* would finally appear twenty years later, in the *Carnide* neighbourhood.

This case deals with a difficult subject, as evidenced by the amount of times it was discussed by the commission. On the one hand, allowing *Rua João do Nascimento Costa* to remain retains some of the dictatorship's ideology. Looked at strictly in terms of the directives that the commission had set itself, it was offensive to some of the population and not traditional, and therefore a suitable candidate for renaming. On the other hand, João José do Nascimento Costa was also a victim of the regime: he died in service, under fire from the regime's opponents. To remove his name would have been problematic, not 'resisting the emotional climate of the time', as the 17 October CML Administrative Commission meeting had stated the decisions of the Toponymy Commission should. Though we can only speculate as to the reasons for it not having gone through, it seems likely that Costa having died in military service influenced the CML's unwillingness to approve the Toponymy Commission's request to remove his name. Nonetheless, when seen in the light of Gil's accusation, this decision speaks volumes: instead of passing judgement on previous commemorations and removing traces of the previous regime, only the clearest markers were removed while more complicated or controversial frameworks of social memory remained in place. Though this was not necessarily a complacent way of dealing with the past, as a lot of thought and discussion clearly went into making the decision to retain *Rua João do Nascimento Costa*, it did not pass judgement on it. This, Gil states, led to the lack of memory experienced in the early 1990s. Remaining in place, the memory of a previous regime was left exposed to distortion, exploitation and appropriation.

CONCLUSION

This paper has analysed the way that Lisbon's street names were dealt with during the PREC. Paul Connerton observes that when new names are given, "those who do the naming are often particularly aware of the memories they wish to impose" (Connerton 2009, 11). What, then, was the memory that the PREC's Toponymy Commission wanted to impose through the street names of Lisbon? Certainly it was not a radical one, as I asked at the beginning of this paper. It is true that the dictatorship's most visible figures were removed and resistance figures appeared in their place. Upon comparing the volume of requests to those put into action, however, their approach was quite conservative. Their choice of names to remove was also largely limited to the most obvious traces of the dictatorship. This was because their approach was not to repeat that of the First Republic: where that regime radically altered the city's naming conventions, this period's was to remove 'names that were offensive to the population due to their connection to the former regime', without changing the city entirely.

Nevertheless, they displayed a reluctance to deal with more difficult topics: the examples of *Rua António Maria Cardoso* and *Rua João do Nascimento Costa* show that

they only told part of the story of the period. As I have shown, the PREC was a rupture in the collective memory, the point at which it became history. The uneven approach of the Toponymy Commission led to a distortion in the memory preserved, as Halbwachs presumed such processes might. Let us return to *Rua António Maria Cardoso*, an important site for memory both during the dictatorship and after it fell. Despite it clearly being a framework of social memory, the street was neither renamed during the PREC nor afterwards. It took quite some civic organisation just for a plaque to be put up to commemorate four of those who were killed there in 1980 (omitting António Lage's name), a plaque which was later vandalised and then removed entirely, before finally being reinstated in 2010 (Público, 2 April 2014). Precious little commemoration has occurred on *Rua António Maria Cardoso*. It provides us with a microcosm of the way that memory was dealt with after the revolution: ten years after Gil wrote his response to an ex-secret police agent attempting to rewrite history on live television, it was announced that the former PIDE headquarters on the street were being turned into luxury apartments. This development ignited a good deal of conversation surrounding how Portugal was dealing with the memory of its dictatorial past, and brought about the group *Não Apaguem a Memória* (Don't Destroy the Memory), who protested over this and other developments.¹⁶ Despite public outcry and the pressure which the group placed on the government, the apartment conversion went ahead.

This approach to the memory of the *Estado Novo* was rooted in that of the PREC period. Describing how new regimes form a national consciousness based on what they decide to destroy or keep from the preceding one, Levinson notes that “[t]hose who overthrow regimes often take as one of their first tasks the physical destruction of symbols—and the latent power possessed by these markers—of those whom they have displaced” (Levinson 1998, 12). During the PREC, the latent power of the dictatorship's markers was frequently retained, not destroyed. A certain degree of neutrality was taken in order not to imprint too strong a political legacy of the current regime, but which did not fully erase the traces of the previous one.

In its approach to the judgement of the dictatorship's legacy, the commission tried to satisfy the will of the public while maintaining a ‘light touch’, an unwillingness to leave too strong a mark which was borne out of the restrictions placed on the commission. This was an attempt to please all parties but, according to Levinson: “it is obvious that there is rarely a placid consensus” for a state to make, and one of the jobs of a new government is to “decide which, if any, of the heroes of the old regime deserve to continue occupying public space” (Levinson 1998, 10). The judgement Levinson demands here is bold, unafraid to provoke controversy or make a statement. The dangers of not doing this are that some of these old heroes might serve as symbols of resistance for those who do not fit into the new order. Gil's text was titled “The Silence of Histo-

¹⁶ Their scope spread across the country, and they placed pressure on local governments to preserve buildings like the Peniche Fortress, which had been used as a political prison during the *Estado Novo* and which today houses the Aljube Museum “Resistance and Freedom”.

ry”, and described how staying silent about the past gave others space to (re)write this history and whitewash the past. The approach to judging the previous regime taken by the Toponymy Commission is an example of how the politics of memory in the aftermath of April 25, 1974, had the opposite effect to that which had been intended. Eliminating the clearest references to the *Estado Novo* without placing clear and unequivocal references to a new democratic order may have helped pave the way for future events like the Óscar Cardoso interview of 1994: Cardoso’s fictionalised and misleading version of the past was the very distortion of memory anticipated by Halbwachs.

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