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*The Cities of Central and Eastern Europe in the Last Century:
Urban Projects and Developments After 1918*

Edited by
Daniel Dumitran

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Alba Iulia Fortress, the eastern side, showing the Third Gate and, in the background, the Roman Catholic Cathedral of St. Joseph and the Coronation Church (Artur Bach Collection, today in the possession of Alba Iulia City Hall) (Dumitran 2020, fig. 15, p. 256, in this volume).

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Unirii Street, no. 15-17

Tel.: +40-258-811412; Fax: +40-258-806260

E-mail: aua_historia@uab.ro

Web: <http://auash.uab.ro/>

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DECOMMUNIZATION OF SYMBOLIC URBAN SPACE OF UKRAINE'S MEGALOPOLISES: EFFECTIVE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAPACITY BUILDING

NATALIIA ROTAR*

Introduction

Recent research has revealed that a process of decommunization of local communities' symbolic space – a characteristic feature of the elimination of communism – is taking place in all Eastern European countries that are revisiting the totalitarian power structures of the late 1980s. Despite regional variations decommunization practices across Eastern Europe, all such endeavours are aimed at preventing the revenge of anti-democratic forces and the return of totalitarianism; protecting the values and symbols of young, sometimes fragile democracies; restoring historical truths about national heritage; and ensuring society's coherence and consensus by opposing the old regimes.

Decommunization is defined as a system of measures to free all spheres of society from the influence of communist ideology and acts as a governmental tool to overcome the legacy of totalitarianism and create favourable conditions for a state's political modernization. Pursuing a policy of decommunization involves eliminating symbolic elements of communist ideology and visual markers of the totalitarian regime. Its main objective is to create an opportunity for members of society to learn how to cooperate with and tolerate the totalitarian legacy. The toponymic map that surrounds us tells us who we are and where we are heading. The spaces around us, as well as our cultural memories, are reflections of historical, scientific and cultural heritage, and simultaneously they serve as markers of totalitarianism.

The turning point of critical discourse on Ukraine's decommunization took place between the 1980s and 1990s, a period that marked by the collapse of the USSR, after which Ukraine regained its independence (in 1991). The outreach activities of Ukrainian public organizations such as the People's Movement of Ukraine, the All-Ukrainian "Memorial" Society and the Ukrainian-Helsinki Union laid the grounds for society to withdraw communist ideology from the sphere of education post-independence. However, all further attempts to politically conceptualize the decommunization of spatial symbolic

* Professor Nataliia Rotar, Doctor of Political Science, Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University, Chernivtsi, Ukraine, Faculty of History, Political Science and International Studies, Dept. of Political Science and Public Administration; e-mail: n.rotar@chnu.edu.ua.

linkage, initiated by the subsequent presidents of Ukraine – L. Kravchuk (1992), L. Kuchma (2001) and V. Yushchenko (2007) – failed. Their ambitions were unambiguously limited to demolishing the monuments of totalitarianism, but they failed to set out an appropriate timeframe to fulfil this aim; furthermore, government officials ignored their responsibility for legal enforcement in cases of non-compliance.

At the same time, several lines of evidence suggest that a number of Ukrainian enthusiasts aspired to intensify decommunization processes, and made great strides in doing so. For example, on June 30, 2009, one of the Ukrainian nationalist groups demolished a monument to Lenin in Kyiv, for which they were accused of hooliganism. The protesters justified their actions in terms of the need to liberate the capital's symbolic space from the monumental remembrance of people who fought against the manifestations of Ukrainian independence and liquidated Ukrainian cultural public figures. In Kyiv, on July 3, 2009, while defending the accused persons, a Decommunization Committee, including more than 30 NGOs, was established. However, the activities of the Committee did not mark the beginning of the development and implementation of a consistent policy of decommunization in Ukraine. Symbolically, the victory of the Revolution of Dignity values put decommunization at the top the Ukrainian government's agenda.

Legally speaking, we should draw the attention to the fact that on April 9, 2015, the Verkhovna Rada (Supreme Council) of Ukraine adopted four “decommunization laws”: “On access to the Archives of the Repressive Agencies of the Totalitarian Communist Regime of 1917-1991”;¹ “On Condemnation of the Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) regimes, and the Prohibition of their Propaganda Symbols”;² Law “On the Legal Status and Honouring the Memory of Fighters for Ukraine's Independence in the Twentieth Century”;³ and “On Perpetuation of the Victory over Nazism in World War II of 1939-1945”.⁴ These laws came into force on May 21, 2015. The decommunization laws were adopted “to prevent the repetition of crimes of totalitarian regimes

¹ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, “Law of Ukraine. On Access to Archives of Repressive Agencies of Totalitarian Communist Regime of 1917-1991,” № 962-XII (2015), accessed December 25, 2018, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/962-12#Text>.

² Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, “Law of Ukraine. On the Condemnation of the Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) Regimes, and Prohibition of Propaganda of their Symbols,” № 317-VIII (2015), accessed December 14, 2018, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/317-19#Text>.

³ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, “Law of Ukraine. On the Legal Status and Honouring the Memory of Fighters for Ukraine's Independence in the Twentieth Century,” № 314-VIII, accessed December 14, 2018, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/314-19#Text>.

⁴ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, “Law of Ukraine. On Perpetuation of the Victory over Nazism in World War II of 1939-1945,” № 315-VIII, accessed December 14, 2018, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/315-19#Text>.

[or] any discrimination on ethnic, social, class, ethnic, racial or other grounds in the future; [to support] the restoration of historical and social justice, [and to] eliminate threats to the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and national security of Ukraine".⁵

Reality has proven that decommunization for Ukraine is not just a precaution against the restoration of the Soviet communist regime, but a guarantee for Ukraine's prospects for becoming a democratic European member state. Embracing the importance of decommunization processes for Ukraine, V. Viatrovych, the current head of the Ukrainian Institute for National Remembrance, emphasizes:

The process of decommunization is even more than those four laws. Decommunization, in short, is an attempt to overcome the communist, totalitarian legacy, to level its historic significance, to make sure that it is not reproduced and does not affect the present, in the broadest sense of the word. If we talk about the first steps we took in the process of decommunization, they are similar to the steps we took in all other post-communist countries, already successful, in which an integral element of their post-totalitarian transformations was just the processes of overcoming the totalitarian legacy.⁶

This article provides an overview of the main discussions on the decommunization of symbolic space in Ukrainian metropolises such as Kyiv, Kharkiv, Dnipro and Odesa and how it is manifested according to their peculiar political (Kyiv), economic (Kharkiv, Dnipro) or symbolic (Odesa) status. Throughout both the Soviet and pre-Soviet periods of the Ukraine's history, the above-mentioned cities were centres for political, social, economic, and university life; consequently, the Imperial or Soviet powers' focus constantly revolved around them. These cities' established practices for decommunizing their symbolic space act as case studies, highlighting the role and importance of symbolic approaches in consolidating societal consensus around the idea of democracy and Ukraine's aspirations for European integration.

The paper is divided into four sections. The first gives a brief historical overview of decommunization policy in Ukraine. The second defines the methodological and conceptual framework used to survey the effective local government capacity for decommunization processes in Ukrainian cities, and critically reviews the available sources by sketching out the major themes that exist in the literature. The third section highlights a case study of Ukrainian cross-city local government practices, formed during the implementation of the

⁵ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, "Law of Ukraine. On Access to Archives of Repressive Agencies of Totalitarian Communist Regime of 1917-1991," № 962-XII (2015), accessed December 25, 2018, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/962-12#Text>.

⁶ Volodymyr Vyatrovych, "Decommunization: An Important Process, Not Only the Result," *City: History, Culture, Society* 2, no 1 (2017): 101.

active phase of decommunization launched in 2015. Additionally, this section provides empirical support for comparative analysis of the features of the decommunization discourse in Kyiv, Dnipro, Odesa and Kharkiv. Finally, it sheds the light on city residents' attitudes towards the decommunization policy in terms of specific toponymic landscapes. Of particular importance here is French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's theory of the struggle for symbolic power, which is used to frame the practices that became points of tension accompanying the decommunization practices typically applied by the local city authorities.

Finally, the conclusions draw together the outcomes of the research, identifying how competition for control of the memorial symbolic structure and representation of commemorative procedures of interpretation of the past play out in the public spaces of local communities of the Ukrainian cities of Kyiv, Dnipro, Odesa and Kharkiv. It also identifies factors of non(acceptance) of decommunization practices by the local governments.

Data and methods

Based on a common humanities and social sciences research focus, and taking into account the sociopolitical nature of the formation of the symbolic space of the metropolis (M. Halbwachs, P. Bourdieu,⁷ P. Nora⁸), we applied methodological principles of (post)structuralism, interactionism and phenomenology to study the decommunization of urban spaces in Ukraine. The (post)structuralist concepts of ideology, discourse and collective memory elaborated in the early works of M. Azaryahu,⁹ P. Ferguson¹⁰ and K. Palonen¹¹ form the conceptual framework on which our concept of urban toponymic text was based. Proposing a theoretical model of the social functions of geographical names honouring epoch-making public figures or events, Azaryahu shows that in modern cities names not only promote spatial orientation, but also perform symbolic functions, becoming tools of social control and management.¹²

⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1991).

⁸ Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Representations* 26, *Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory* (1989): 7-24.

⁹ Maoz Azaryahu, "Street Names and Political Identity: The Case of East Berlin," *Journal of Contemporary History* 21, 4 (1986): 581-604; Idem, "The Purge of Bismarck and Saladin: The Renaming of Streets in East Berlin and Haifa, a Comparative Study in Culture-Planning," *Poetics Today* 13, 2 (1992): 351-367.

¹⁰ Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, "Reading City Streets," *French Review* 61, 3 (1988): 386-397.

¹¹ Kari Palonen, "Reading Street Names Politically," in K. Palonen, T. Parvikko, ed., *Reading the Political: Exploring the Margins of Politics* (Helsinki, Finland: The Finnish Political Science Association, Tampere, 1993), 103-121.

¹² Maoz Azaryahu, "The Power of Commemorative Street Names," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 14 (1996): 312-313.

The ideas of R. Wagner-Pacifici and V. Schwartz were also of particular importance, in particular their questioning of the origin of memorial devices as “natural” or “independent”, proposing instead that they are “conceived and created by those who wanted to preserve the memory of events and people that others tend to forget”.¹³ Postulating the artificiality of commemorative practices rooted in the social and political contexts of reproduction, the authors explore the intentionality behind creating any form of collective memory based on an act of political will, whether by an individual or a group, that determines what is worthy of commemoration. They define the agents who implement such an individual or group enterprise using the concept of moral entrepreneurs. Competing with each other, moral entrepreneurs create or seek public arenas to support their own interpretations of the historic legacy.

In the case of our study, the public arenas in which such battles over the interpretation of the past take place are the space of local communities, primarily the memorial symbolic structure of the Ukrainian cities of Kyiv, Dnipro, Odesa and Kharkiv, in which there is a competition between actors representing competing commemorative policies. The methodology of (post)structuralism is applied to the study of official dynamics within the toponymic landscape of cities as a text. The pool of sources on which our study is based includes official statistics, official provisions, regulations, and cartographic materials that reflect the dynamics of the spatial policy discourse over the creation of cultural memory and decommunization in Kyiv, Dnipro, Odesa and Kharkiv.

The methodological principles of interactionism, reflected primarily in the concepts of collective memory, were used to study practices of resistance and strategies for the cities' discourses on spatial policy. Applying the key concepts of “symbolic struggle” and “symbolic power” (P. Bourdieu¹⁴) as a reflection of socio-spatial competition “between material practices and the symbolic meanings that social agents attach to their spatial environment”,¹⁵ we conceptualized and analysed those specific forms of political competition for the formation (imposition) of a certain socio-spatial discourse typical for Ukrainian metropolises. The empirical experience of critical toponymic research, the core of which is the concept of “symbolic violence” – a term coined by P. Bourdieu – indicates the contradictory nature of naming practices that work to (create)

¹³ Robin Wagner-Pacifici and Barry Schwartz, “The Vietnam Veterans Memorial: Commemorating a Difficult Past,” *American Journal of Sociology* 97, 2 (1991): 382.

¹⁴ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*.

¹⁵ Tim Richardson and Ole Jensen, “Linking Discourse and Space: Towards a Cultural Sociology of Space in Analysing Spatial Policy Discourses,” *Urban Studies* 40 (2003): 7-22, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00420980220080131>.

inequality in the distribution of power relations and material goods.¹⁶ The use of the category of “symbolic violence” in the study of decommunization practices typical for the local governments of Ukrainian cities made it possible to record the tensions that accompany this process. According to this concept, “everything must be part of an order (apparent and fictional) enhanced by constraints – everything except a residue of disorder and freedom, which is sometimes tolerated, sometimes hunted down with overwhelming repressive force.”¹⁷

It should be emphasized, that H. Lefebvre’s concepts of urban social space, as well as his narrative on the nature of social and spatial relations and the city as a place of articulation of social interests, play an important role in the formation of the methodological principles of interactionism. In this context, Lefebvre has made seminal contributions relevant to the problem under study; in particular, his spatial triad describes the cohesive patterns of urban social space (*representations of space, spaces of representation and spatial practices*). In the same direction, D. Massey makes an ardent argument for invigorating our visualization of space and develops a notion of spatiality as the product of intersecting social relations – as an “articulated moment in social relations networks”.¹⁸ She points out that “in much academic literature and in many political discourses, local place is posited as being so much more meaningful than space”¹⁹ and suggests instead the possibility of a “topoanalysis”: exploring places in the context of the bounded personal and cultural identity of a certain locality. In an observation highly relevant to our study of decommunization, Massey observes that “struggles over place, and the meaningfulness in and of place, return us to the argument ... that in any even minimal recognition of the relational construction of space and of identity, ‘place’ must be a site of negotiation, and that often that will be conflictual negotiation”.²⁰ According to her, the following principles define the discourse

¹⁶ Alderman H. Derek, “Place, Naming, and the Interpretation of Cultural Landscapes,” in B. Graham and P. Howard, ed., *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Press, 2008): 195-213; Reuben S. Rose-Redwood, “From Number to Name: Symbolic Capital, Places of Memory and the Politics of Street Renaming in New York City,” *Social & Cultural Geography* 9 (2008): 431-452.

¹⁷ Maria Ceci Misoczky, Clarice Misoczky de Oliveira, “The City and the Urban as Spaces of Capital and Social Struggle: Notes on Henri Lefebvre’s Enduring Contributions,” *Revista de Administração Pública* 52 (6) (2018): 1015-1031, <https://doi.org/10.1590/0034-761220170122>.

¹⁸ Doreen B. Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 154.

¹⁹ Doreen B. Massey, “Geographies of Responsibility,” *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 86, 1 (2004): 5-18, accessed December 9, 2018, http://oro.open.ac.uk/7224/1/Geographies_of_responsibility_Sept03.pdf.

²⁰ Massey, “Geographies of responsibility,” 6.

over space:

(1) “places are now seen to be connected to each other as points of convergence where materials, symbols, values, interests and power are brought together for use by actors in the making and remaking of those places through their continuous contestation and negotiation”;

(2) “the internal heterogeneity of communities within any location, tolerates internal differences, is open to change and newcomers, and has an outward-looking attitude concerned with developing connections across space”;

(3) “place is predominantly imagined as an enclosed locale with a singular, fixed identity that is internally derived and contrasted against others located ‘outside’ in the empty, abstracted surface space of *res extensa*”; and

4) “there is the specificity of place, which derives from the fact that each place is the focus of a distinct mixture of wider and more local social relations”.²¹

Taking into account all of the evidence on positioning cities’ toponymic landscape as a cultural arena, we applied the methodology of interactionism. This approach enabled us to study the toponymic practices of cities’ local governments: from the perspectives of the dominant ideology; as reflected in the symbolic representation of space; through the symbolic struggle at the level of individual or social groups; and via the media discourse regarding toponymic initiatives in Kyiv, Dnipro, Odesa and Kharkiv.

The methodological principles of the phenomenological approach are embedded in the toponymic landscape of the city, which is positioned as a performance, based on the everyday practices of citizens. We refined the method put forward by Amin and Thrift,²² who observe that “the fabric of space is so diverse that it always has holes and gaps, in which there may be new forms of expression” (performance – author).²³ In this sense, the performance of politicised landscapes is determined not only by the spaces of representation, but also by their social impact. Specifically, in her review of Amin and Thrift’s *Seeing Like a City* (2016), Michele Lancione focuses on the authors’ attempt to delve into fundamental urban questions from a profoundly new perspective concerned with the politics of the city and “the capacity of infrastructural arrangements to bring together all sorts of human and non-human actors in their doings and to generate new urban forms in their becoming.”²⁴ Amin and

²¹ Doreen B. Massey, “Space, Time and Political Responsibility in the Midst of Global Inequality,” *Erdkunde* 60, 2 (2006): 89-95, <https://doi.org/10.3112/erdkunde.2006.02.01>.

²² Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift, *Cities: Reimagining the Urban* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002).

²³ Nigel Thrift, “Performance and...,” *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 35, 11 (2003): 2022.

²⁴ Michele Lancione, “Seeing Like a City, by Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift,” *Society and Space Magazine*, October 17, 2017, accessed February 1, 2021, <https://www.societyandspace.org/articles/>

Thrift put forward the idea that “the competitive advantage of cities stems from the *spatial concentration* of people, firms, and institutions constituting the supply and demand base for growth, efficiency, and innovation”.²⁵ Following this line of thought, the empirical objectives of our study were the findings of sociological surveys, reflecting the everyday practices of decommunization of symbolic space of metropolises in Ukraine.

It was decided that the best approach to investigating the decommunization of urban spaces in Kyiv, Dnipro, Odesa and Kharkiv would be to follow the methodological principles of (post)structuralism, interactionism and phenomenology while conducting comparative studies and developing case studies.

The research aim is to illustrate and develop a theory of the decommunization of symbolic space of cities in Ukraine in the context of effective local government capacity building. In doing so, this study seeks to address the following problems:

(1) the necessity and feasibility of implementing effective practices for pursuing the decommunization policy launched in 2015 by the local governments of Ukrainian cities;

(2) determining the characteristics of the decommunization discourse in Kyiv, Dnipro, Odesa and Kharkiv;

(3) understanding citizens’ attitudes towards how their local government pursues decommunization policy in specific toponymic landscapes.

The study sets out to show that the symbolic urban spaces of Kyiv, Dnipro, Odesa and Kharkiv represent the location of struggles over historic memorial symbols and competing cultural representations, expressed through commemorative policies that aim to control the interpretation and rethinking of the past. The acceptance or non-acceptance of decommunization practices implemented by local governments is an articulation of public activity aimed at transforming or protecting the symbolism in toponym mapping. Our comparative analysis allowed us to clearly define the push and pull factors influencing the level and nature of support for the processes involved in decommunizing the symbolic space of Ukrainian cities.

The main body of existing research on decommunization of symbolic space in post-socialist countries is grounded in the structuralist research tradition, focussing on the study of the ideological implications of national toponymic narratives.²⁶ Our analysis focused on the practice of renaming cities

seeing-like-a-city-by-ash-amin-and-nigel-thrift.

²⁵ Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift, *Seeing Like a City* (Cambridge: Polity 2016), 101.

²⁶ *Decommunization in Bulgaria*, accessed June 20, 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/BULGARIA938.PDF>; Debra W. Stewart and Cynthia V. Stewart, “Lustration in Poland and the Former Czechoslovakia: A Study in Decommunization,” *International Journal of Public*

and streets in the early 1990s, which took place in the wake of democratic transformations and accompanied the collapse of socialist regimes in Eastern Europe.²⁷ I. Borza's work on the problem of decommunization was of great use, providing a comprehensive analysis in the broader context of transitional justice. As she points out, "Decommunization is a process of dealing with the communist legacies in terms of institutions and personnel and it refers to wide ranges of actions carried out either by the state or by individuals in order to achieve justice".²⁸

Staying with the theme of justice, scientific research has articulated the question of why the process of rethinking and re-evaluating Soviet toponymic heritage began in the 1990s, but did not develop further; by 2015, Soviet toponym mapping had ceased for the majority of localities in Ukraine. M. Mälksoo explains the restrained decommunization process in the context of the European integration vector of Ukraine.²⁹ J.-P. Himka identifies the reasons behind the delayed de-Sovietization of Ukraine's symbolic space in the excessive mythologizing of historical events and processes that took place in Ukraine during the twentieth century.³⁰

G. Kasyanov's plausible assumption which seem to be fully borne out by experience. He traces the process of debating, adopting and implementing Ukraine's Memory Laws between 2000 and 2015, suggesting they could be interpreted and as an expression of the political elite's desire to emulate European practices. This raises another problem relating to Ukraine's compliance with European practices: while emulating the European paradigm of decommunization, Ukrainian has weaker traditions regarding pluralism, democracy and the role of civil society in shaping democratic policies. "Therefore, any law that regulates [interpretation and representation] of the past inevitably leads to dictating of the bureaucracy to promote (as a rule temporary) policies favouring specific segments of society in interpretation of

Administration 18, 6 (1995): 879-914; Stephen Holmes, "The End of Decommunization," *European Constitutional Law Review* 33 (1994): 33-36.

²⁷ Waldmann Nancy, "Local Memories Dismantled: Reactions to De-communization in Northern and Western Poland," accessed October 20, 2019, <http://www.cultures-of-history.uni-jena.de/politics/poland/local-memories-dismantled-reactions-to-de-communization-in-northern-and-western-poland/#part5>.

²⁸ Ioana Borza, "Decommunization in Romania: A Case Study of the State Security," *Files Access Law* (2007), accessed October 20, 2019, <http://www.decommunization.org/English/Decommunization2/Romania.htm>.

²⁹ Maria Mälksoo, "Ukraine's Decommunisation Laws: A Hard Case for the EU Policy on Transitional Justice?," *Paper prepared for the EUSA Fifteenth Biennial Conference* (Miami, Florida, USA, May 4-6, 2017).

³⁰ John-Paul Himka, "Interventions: Challenging the Myths of Twentieth-Century Ukrainian History," in M. Lipman and A. Miller, eds., *The Convolutions of Historical Politics* (Budapest, 2012), 211-238.

the past that result in abusing others' rights".³¹ Thus, questions arise as to what the semantic core of decommunization of symbolic urban space should be, what historical time should be chosen as a marker of identity for Ukrainian cities, and what perspective should be presented in their toponymic landscape if it is not to be trapped in time.³²

It should be mentioned that in the wake of decommunization processes in Ukrainian society, experimental data on the de-Sovietization of Ukraine's symbolic urban space was very scarce.³³ Subsequently, only two case studies of Kyiv and Kharkiv have already been delved into:

(1) The discourse around spatial decommunization in Kyiv; this case study enabled us to articulate a triad of alleged metaphors – 'historical nostalgia', 'nationalism' and 'decolonization' – which cover the range from authoritarianism to democracy.³⁴

2) The decommunization of the symbolic space of Kharkiv; the study enhances the institutional capacity of civil society actors, and justifies the embodiment of national-patriotic discourse in the local Soviet landscape and authorities' renaming imitation practices aimed at preserving the existing toponymic space.³⁵

Local government capacity building and public discourse of urban communities
First and foremost, the above-mentioned package of decommunization laws³⁶ became an effective toolkit of the cities' government capacity-building activities which, in April 2015, ushered in a new era by establishing practices that freed their symbolic urban space from the communist legacy. The local governments' top priority was "to take steps to raise public awareness about these crimes and

³¹ Gennady Kasyanov, "Historical Policy and the "Memorial" Laws in Ukraine: The Beginning of the 21st Century," *Historical expertise* 2 (2016): 48.

³² Pertti Joenniemi, "The New Saint Petersburg: Trapped in Time?," *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 28, 5 (2003): 584-586.

³³ Oleksandr Hrytsenko, *Decommunization in Ukraine as a State Policy and as a Socio-Cultural Phenomenon* (Kyiv: I. F. Kuras Institute for Political and Ethno-National Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine; Institute of Cultural Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 2019).

³⁴ Lyudmyla Males, "Decommunization Discourse in the Kyiv," *Sociological Studies* 2, 9 (2016): 16-21; Eadem, "Decommunization of the Capital: Changes in Urbanonymy (Methods and the First Results)," *V. N. Karazin Kharkov National University Bulletin* 36 (2016): 62-68; Eadem, "Social-Political Changes of XX Century at the Map of Modern Capital," *Actual Problems of Sociology, Psychology, Pedagogy* 24(3) (2014): 21-30.

³⁵ Maria Takhtaulova. "Kharkiv Toponymy: Stages of Decommunization," *City: History, Culture, Society* 2, 1 (2017): 142-151.

³⁶ "Law of Ukraine. On Access to Archives of Repressive Agencies ..."; "Law of Ukraine. On the Condemnation of the Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) Regimes ..."; "Law of Ukraine. On the Legal Status and Honouring the Memory of Fighters ..."; "Law of Ukraine. On Perpetuation of the Victory over Nazism ...".

to encourage and support activities of non-governmental organisations engaging in the research and dissemination of information about such crimes.” To support this, the laws decreed that “archived documents relating to the crimes shall not be classified information and shall be disclosed to the public”.³⁷ The decommunization laws stirred rigorous discussions about legal compliance with their symbolic context, as well as the manner of their adoption. Criticisms included the “broad scope” of these laws, as well as their “imprecise definitions, disproportionality of their stipulated sanctions, and ... alleged interference with freedom of speech, freedom of association and freedom of press as set out by the international legal standards.”³⁸

A. Motyl precisely conceptualizes and assesses their legitimacy, arguing that:

the debate over whether these four bills are valid should not be so fraught. One simple way to evaluate their merit is to focus on whether they promote two key values: freedom and justice. If they do, then they make good laws. If they do not, then the laws should be amended or thrown out. And if they make trade-offs between freedom and justice, which is often the case, then that's just life.³⁹

He goes on to defend Ukraine's decommunization laws in the context of provocative monuments and heroes all over the world. In this regard, it is fair to say that the local government bodies of Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odesa and Dnipro had to formulate their respective practices and methods while looking for a compromise between liberty and justice that would make the processes of decommunization of the symbolic urban space worthwhile.

To study how the cities' local governments implemented decommunization in their communities, we should focus on two critical characteristics of this process. Firstly, all the tools to support the process were developed by the Ukrainian Institute for National Remembrance (Memory)⁴⁰ (hereinafter UINR),⁴¹ a central executive body whose activities are directed by

³⁷ Venice Commission Opinion no. 823/2015, ODIHR Opinion no. FOE-UKR/280/2015, *Joint Interim Opinion on the Law of Ukraine on the Condemnation of the Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) Regimes and Prohibition of Propaganda of their Symbols*, accessed December 20, 2018, 10, [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD\(2015\)041-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2015)041-e).

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.

³⁹ Alexander J. Motyl, “Kiev's Purge: Behind the New Legislation to Decommunize Ukraine,” *Foreign Affairs*, April 28, 2015, accessed December 20, 2018, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ukraine/2015-04-28/kievs-purge>.

⁴⁰ The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, “Regulations on the Ukrainian Institute for National Remembrance (Memory). Approved by the resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of November 12, 2014, № 684,” accessed October 2, 2019, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/684-2014-%D0%BF#n11>.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine through the relevant ministries. Secondly, the powers of local governments to rename streets, alleys, avenues, squares, parks, bridges and other urban spaces are not well established or clearly defined by law, in terms of Ukraine's state policy towards the reinforcement of collective memory in symbolic urban spaces. Specific regulations and provisions of the Civil Code of Ukraine regulate municipalities' activities.⁴²

To be more precise, local government powers are regulated by the following laws: "On Local Self-Government in Ukraine";⁴³ "On Geographical Names"⁴⁴ and "On Conferring Legal Entities and Property of the Names (Aliases) Individuals Commemorative Dates, Names and Dates of Historic Events".⁴⁵ They are also governed by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, "On the Statement of the Order of Carrying out Public Discussion During Consideration of Questions on Legal Entities and Property of the Names (Aliases) Individuals Commemorative Dates, Names and Dates of Historic Events".⁴⁶ Within the existing legal framework, the UINR has developed an algorithm for establishing local government capacity before making a final decision on renaming streets, alleys, avenues, squares, parks, bridges and other structures in its jurisdiction.⁴⁷

Although the process of outlawing mythological communist symbolic space within Ukraine was supposed to be completed in the shortest possible period, that period was marked by a partial halting of progress. In fact, between April 21, 2014, when the Law of Ukraine "On the condemnation of the Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) regimes ..." came into force, and

⁴² Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, "The Civil Code of Ukraine. № 435-IV of 16 January 2003," accessed October 2, 2019, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/435-15#Text>.

⁴³ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, "On Local Self-Government in Ukraine. Law of Ukraine № 280/97-BP of May 21, 1997," accessed October 2, 2019, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/280/97-%D0%B2%D1%80#Text>.

⁴⁴ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, "On Geographical Names Law of Ukraine № 2604-IV of May 31, 2005," accessed October 2, 2019, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2604-15#Text>.

⁴⁵ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, "On Assigning to Legal Entities and Objects of Ownership the Names (Pseudonyms) of Individuals, Anniversaries and Holidays, Names and Dates of Historic Events. Law of Ukraine № 4865-VI of May 24, 2012," accessed 2 October 2019, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/4865-17#Text>.

⁴⁶ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, "On the Statement of the Order of Carrying out Public Discussion during Consideration of Questions on Legal Entities and Property of the Names (Aliases) Individuals Commemorative Dates, Names and Dates of Historic Events. Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine № 989 of October 24, 2012," accessed October 2, 2019, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/989-2012-%D0%BF#Text>.

⁴⁷ Ukrainian Institute for National Remembrance, *How to Rename a Street. Legal Bases of Renaming of Streets, Lanes, Avenues, Squares, Parks, Bridges and other Constructions Located in the Territory of Settlements: Symposium* (Lviv: Magazine, 2014).

November 21, 2015, the UINR made a list of 520 people to denounce.⁴⁸ In cases where these names were used for streets or other types of toponym, the name had to be changed.

Our preliminary analysis showed that 39 of the people on this list (7.5% of the total 520 people) were denounced for their notorious activities in Kharkiv; 31 people (5.9%) were condemned in Kyiv; 18 people (3.5%) in Odesa; and 16 (3.1%) in Dnipro (Dnipropetrovsk). If those residing in the broader region around the cities are also counted, there were 10% in Dnipropetrovsk region, 7% in Kharkiv, 5% in Kyiv, and 4% in Odesa. Importantly, 16% of those denounced were Ukrainian Donbas, a group which forms the largest proportion of the total. Since the list of people subject to decommunization laws are not all associated with urban symbolic space, it could be said that these statistics are not completely relevant to the problem under study. By glorifying the names of leading Soviet figures in the urban spaces of Ukrainian cities, the Soviet government mythologized symbolic links between the former Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (UkSSR) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR), using toponym mapping as a tool of symbolic power in order to manipulate the consciousness of the population. The decommunization list included the names of pro-communist participants in the Russian Revolution and Civil War between 1917 and 1921 (50%); politicians and public figures, members of the Communist Party and authority figures at all levels (19%); members of the secret service and the Soviet judiciary (18%); businessmen and entrepreneurs (5%); and cultural figures (4%). In fact, the UINR clearly outlined the semantic paradigm of the local city governments' decommunization practices, vocalising their aspirations to review and then annihilate circulating narratives of the restoration Ukrainian statehood during the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917-1921. They justified their intentions based on the fact that the Ukrainian People's Republic (UPR) and the West Ukrainian People's Republic (WUPR) were not even presented as opposition parties standing against the Bolsheviks and the White movement. In the course of implementing the Law of Ukraine "On the condemnation of the Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) regimes ...", 987 urban-type settlements and 25 districts were renamed; 51,500 toponyms were changed; 300 historic names were restored; and 2,389 monuments and memorials expressing the propaganda of the totalitarian regime (1,320 of them honouring Lenin) were demolished.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Ukrainian Institute for National Remembrance, "List of Persons Subject to the Law on Decommunization," accessed September 17, 2019, <http://www.memory.gov.ua/publication/spisok-osib-yaki-pidpadayut-pid-zakon-pro-dekomunizatsiyu>.

⁴⁹ Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, "Report of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory on the Implementation of State Policy in the Field of Restoration and Preservation of National Memory in 2016," accessed October 2, 2019, <https://old.uinp.gov.ua/sites/default/>

In the renewed attempt to glorify Ukrainian history, the only Ukrainian city to be renamed was Dnipropetrovsk, renamed Dnipro. Before 1926, the city was called Yekaterinoslav in honour of the Russian Empress. However, according to D. Yavornytsky, “the ordinary Russian people hated Tsaritsa Yekaterina ... who turned millions of people into servants”.⁵⁰ In 1926, the city was renamed after the local river (Dnipro) and the Soviet public figure G. Petrovskiy (who used to work for the city’s factories and headed the Bolshevik revolutionary movement throughout 1919-1939; he was also a former Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the Ukrainian SSR).

Under the decommunization laws, municipalities were legally required to rename the urban settlements under their control by November 21, 2015. The procedure for renaming a city involved several stages:

(1) From May 21 to November 21, 2015, public hearings on renaming were to be held by the City Council.

(2) Based on the outcomes of the public hearings, the City Council could decide to restore the settlement’s historic name or provide a new one.

(3) By November 21, 2015, the City Council had to submit all proposals to change the names of settlements to the Verkhovna Rada. If the City Council failed to submit its proposals, the Verkhovna Rada was empowered to make a decision about renaming based on UINR recommendations.

On July 22, 2015, Acting Mayor H. Bulavka signed an order “On holding public hearings on renaming the city of Dnepropetrovsk in the districts of the city”, stipulating that public hearings were to take place within the two weeks from August 13 to 27, 2015. Later, the period was extended to September 22, 2015.⁵¹

Consequently, Dnipropetrovsk local government addressed the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine with a proposal for the legitimate political renaming the city of Dnepropetrovsk (with an e) Dnīpropetrovsk (with an i), changing the etymology of the name. However, this approach did not comply with the policy of decommunization and showed signs of manipulation of the public consciousness of the city’s population. The deadline of November 21, 2015 for submitting proposals having passed, on February 2, 2016, the People’s Deputy of Ukraine, A. Denysenko, submitted a “Draft Resolution on renaming the city of Dnipropetrovsk of Dnipropetrovsk region” which suggested

files/zvit.pdf.

⁵⁰ Dmytro Yavornytsky, *History of the City of Yekaterinoslav* (Dnipropetrovsk: Sich, 1996), 96.

⁵¹ Dnipropetrovsk City Council, “On Modification and Additions to the Order of the Mayor from 07/22/2015 № 432-R ‘On Carrying Out Public Hearings Concerning Renaming of The City of Dnipropetrovsk in Areas of The City. Order of the Mayor № 493-r of August 12, 2015’,” accessed September 17, 2019, <https://dniprorada.gov.ua/uk/Widgets/GetWidgetContent?url=/WebSolution/2/wsGetTextPublicDocument?plD=43495&name=493-%D1%80>.

renaming the city Dnipro. The Committee on State Building, Regional Policy and Local Self-Government, on behalf of the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada, V. Hroysman, considered this draft at the meeting on February 15, 2016 and recommended its submission to the People's Deputies of Ukraine. On May 19, 2016, the Verkhovna Rada adopted the resolution and the city of Dnipropetrovsk was renamed Dnipro.⁵²

The Mayor of Dnipropetrovsk, B. Filatov, immediately addressed an appeal to the Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada, A. Parubiy, asking him not to sign the resolution on renaming the city.⁵³ Subsequently, a group of 48 People's Deputies of Ukraine filed a lawsuit with the Constitutional Court of Ukraine to declare the resolution "On renaming the city of Dnipropetrovsk, Dnipropetrovsk region" of May 19, 2016 (№ 1375-VIII) illegal and to cancel it. However, the resolution on renaming was soon ratified and entered into force, with the People's Deputies' lawsuit thrown out due the fact that the constitutional petition was inconsistent with the requirements stipulated by the Constitution of Ukraine. The ruling declared that "the Constitutional Court of Ukraine does not have jurisdiction over issues raised in a constitutional petition".⁵⁴ Responding to the public's view, Mayor B. Filatov stressed that most Dnipro residents "did not associate the former name with the name of the executioner of the Ukrainian people, Hryhoriy Petrovsky", so he considered the issue of renaming contradictory and untimely.⁵⁵

To conclude, the procedure to transform the symbolic urban space of Dnipropetrovsk by renaming it Dnipro proves that the conventional technology proposed by the UINR resulted in the desired outcomes. However, despite outlawing symbolic totalitarian markers from the shared public space, Dnipro was not able to return to the symbolism of its historical narrative (Sicheslav,

⁵² Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, "On Renaming the City of Dnipropetrovsk of the Dnipropetrovsk Region. Resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine № 1375-VIII of May 19, 2016," accessed September 19, 2019, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1375-19#Text>.

⁵³ Dnipro City Council, "Borys Filatov Appealed to the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada Andriy Parubiy not to Sign the Resolution on Renaming Dnipropetrovs'k (May 2, 2016)," accessed September 19, 2019, <https://dniprorada.gov.ua/uk/articles/item/11870/boris-filatov-zvernuvsja-do-golovi-vr-andrija-parubija-z-prohannjam-ne-pidpisuvati-postanovu-pro-perejmenuvannja-dnipropetrovska>.

⁵⁴ Constitutional Court of Ukraine, "Ruling of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine on Refusal to Open Constitutional Proceedings in the Case on the Constitutional Petition of 48 People's Deputies of Ukraine on Compliance with the Constitution of Ukraine (Constitutionality) of the Resolution of the Verkhovna Rada Of Ukraine 'On Renaming the city of Dnipropetrovs'k Dnipropetrovsk Region' Case № 2-41 / 2. m. Kyiv. October 12, 2016 № 66/2016," accessed September 20, 2019, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/v066u710-16#Text>.

⁵⁵ Dnipro City Council, "The Mayor of Dnipro Commented on Renaming Cities (May 19, 2016)," accessed 21 September 2019, <https://dniprorada.gov.ua/uk/articles/item/11851/mer-dnipra-prokomentuvav-perejmenuvannja-mista>.

Kodak). Equally important is the fact that the process of decommunizing the symbolic spaces of Ukrainian cities became a process of (de)constructing their toponymic landscapes. The defined procedure for renaming streets, alleys, avenues and parks in Ukraine's urban settlements was developed in a manner that allowed the communities to enjoy a degree of freedom and retain the right to decide on the renaming. To comply with the 2015 laws, the City Councils of Kyiv, Kharkiv, Dnipro and Odesa had to reach a decision on renaming by November 21, 2015. If a decision had not been reached or was incomplete, the mayor was obliged to do so by his order within three months (until February 21, 2016). If decommunization processes were still incomplete at this stage, the power to rename was then assigned to the regional state administrations, whose heads were required to sign the relevant orders by June 2016.

The case study involving Kyiv highlights the paramount importance of this city, since the process of decommunizing its symbolic space had the potential to cause conflict “between the functions of Kyiv-capital and Kyiv-city”.⁵⁶ To stave off any collisions and provide expertise on the perpetuation or erasure of the memory of prominent figures and events, as well as the restoration of historic names, an advisory body known as the Commission on Names was established by the Mayor of Kyiv in September 2014. The advisory body comprised scholars, historians, linguists, local historians, ethnographers and architects.⁵⁷

The Chairman of the Commission was required to invite Kyiv City Council (hereinafter KCC) Deputies, media representatives and grassroots organisations to participate in the deliberations. The decisions of the Commission were of a recommendatory nature, to be taken into account in preparing the Mayor of Kyiv's proposal for KCC. Since April 2014, there has been a permanent advisory body within the executive branch of KCC (Kyiv City State Administration) known as the Commemorative Commission,⁵⁸ which has responsibility for scrutinising all issues concerning the honouring and glorification of the memory of prominent figures and events. This Commission considered decommunization policy recommendations for the capital; in particular, it paid attention to the list on the UINR website of monuments and

⁵⁶ Lyudmyla Males, “Decommunization Discourse in the Kyiv,” *Sociological Studies* 9, 2 (2016): 18.

⁵⁷ Kyiv City Council (Kyiv City State Administration), “Regulations on the Names Commission. The Order of the Kyiv Mayor on September 22, 2014 № 259 (As Amended by the Order of the Kyiv Mayor Dated February 18, 2019 № 138) Was Approved,” accessed October 3, 2019, https://dsk.kyivcity.gov.ua/files/2020/1/14/Polozhennia_Komisija_vulyci.pdf.

⁵⁸ Kyiv City Council (Kyiv City State Administration), “Commemorative Commission,” accessed September 20, 2019, <https://dsk.kyivcity.gov.ua/content/komisiya-z-pytan-vstanovlennya-pamyatnyh-znakiv.html>.

memorials to be dismantled in Kyiv.⁵⁹ Of the 105 memorial objects on this list, 84 were memorial plaques, 21 were statues (all of Lenin), 5 were busts, and there was 1 sculptural composition, 1 stele and 1 statue called “The Equestrian”.

Between 2014 and 2019, 24 decisions of Kyiv City Council were adopted and the relevant orders of Kyiv's Mayor V. Klychko on decommunization of the symbolic space were signed (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1 shows how the number of local governments' decisions on decommunization fluctuated over these years, the lion's share of decisions on toponymic mapping matrix of the city being made in 2015-2016. Between 2014 and 2019, 224 street names were decommunized across all districts of the capital: 23 in Holiivskyi district, 33 in Darnytskyi, 15 in Desnianskyi, 22 in Dniprovskyi, 12 in Obolonskyi, 28 in Pecherskyi, seven in Podilskyi, 30 in Solomianskyi, 21 in Sviatoshynskyi and 33 in Shevchenkivskyi.⁶⁰

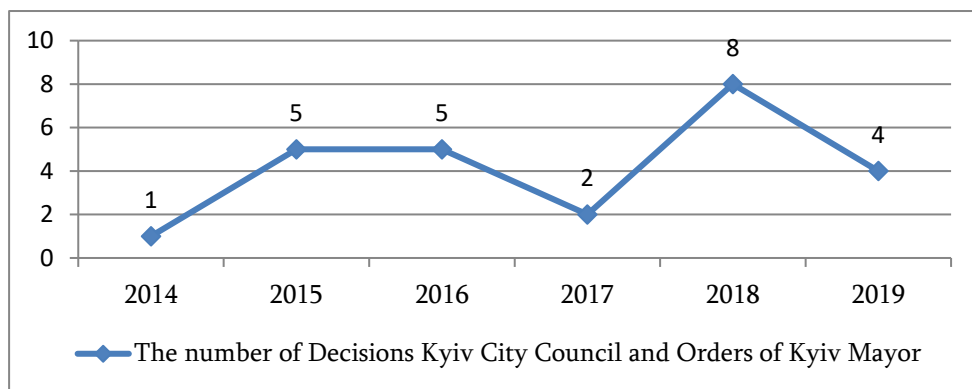


Fig. 1. Dynamics of local government decisions on decommunization of the symbolic urban space of Kyiv 2014-19.

In the process of decommunizing street toponyms, Kyiv City Council – aiming to raise public awareness of Ukrainian history and preserve the Ukrainian collective memory – primarily focused on returning historical values and significance to the city streets. The first decision it adopted by resolution on November 13, 2014, was to rename seven streets: Lewandowska (formerly Onishchenko), Nazariivska (Vetrov), Bulvarno-Kudryavska (Vorovskyi), Dilova

⁵⁹ Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, “List of Monuments of Kyiv To Be Dismantled,” accessed October 3, 2019, <https://old.uinp.gov.ua/publication/perelik-pam-yatnikiv-i-pam-yatnikh-znakiv-m-kieva-shcho-pidlygayut-demontazhu>.

⁶⁰ Department of Public Communications of the Kyiv City Council (Kyiv City State Administration), “The List of Streets in Kyiv That Were Renamed During 2014-2019,” accessed September 20, 2019, <https://dsk.kyivcity.gov.ua/content/pereymenuvannya-vulycdekomunizaciy.html#golos>.

(Dimitrov), Butyshev Lane (Andrew Ivanov), Petropavlovsk (Frunze) and Preobrazhenska (Ivan Klimenko). Secondly, the Council set out to reclaim the symbolic space by honouring Ukrainian politicians and military figures from various historic periods, including Yevhen Konovalets, General Almazov, Ivan Bohun, Petro Doroshenko, Petro Kalnyshevsky and others. Thirdly, the KCC vigorously pursued the toponym remapping by commemorating famous figures of culture, science, sports such as Ivan Mykolaychuk, Valeriy Lobanovsky, Janusz Korczak, Kvitka Cisyk, Dmytro Yavornytsky, Ivan Ohienko, Vsevolod NESTAiko, the academician Yefremov, the Zerov Brothers, Serhiy Paradzhanov and Kateryna Bilokur, among others. Fourthly, the Council pursued a policy of reconciling the city's various religious confessions, integrating them into symbolic urban space by renaming streets after famous church leaders, including Patriarch Volodymyr Romanyuk, Pope John Paul II, Metropolitan Volodymyr Sabodan, Metropolitan Vasyl Lypkivsky, Andriy Sheptytsky and the Metropolitan of Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, Lubomyr Huzar. Although the KCC drew on historical symbolism in the above examples, in many other cases they simply used neutral-sounding names, such as Medonosna (honey), Akatsiyiv (acacia) Lane, Shchaslyvy (happy) and Osynnyi (autumn), along with other innovations. Interestingly, one of the decisions was to rename Ivan Kudri Street after the American politician John McCain, an ardent supporter of the Revolution of Dignity in the Pecherskyi district of the capital.⁶¹

In early August 2016, the representatives of nationalist youth organizations appealed to Kyiv City State Administration to dismantle 86 objects – monuments, memorial plaques, decorative elements of public buildings and metro stations commemorating the Independence Day of Ukraine (August 24) – to avoid cases of spontaneous decommunization in the city.⁶²

Nevertheless, the city authorities' decision to change the names of Moskovsky Avenue and Mykola Vatutin Avenue gained the greatest resonance in the public discourse around the decommunization of Kyiv.⁶³ On August 25, 2015, the UINR addressed an open letter to the Mayor of Kyiv containing an appeal to consider renaming Kyiv streets and alleys named after individuals

⁶¹ Kyiv City Council (Kyiv City State Administration), "On Renaming a Street in Pecherskyi District of Kyiv. Decision No 512/7168 of April 4, 2019," accessed October 3, 2019, https://kyivcity.gov.ua/npa/pro_pereyemuvannya_vulitsi_u_pecherskomu_rayoni_mista_kiyeva_350527/dwkyoyzr0_512-7168/.

⁶² "Klitschko is Required to Decommunize 86 Objects by August 24 – The Motherland, The Arch of Friendship of Peoples, Shchors, Vatutin and Others," *Newsroom*, July 1, 2016, accessed October 3, 2019, <https://novynarnia.com/2016/08/01/vid-klichka-vimagayut-do-24-serpnya-dekomunizuvati-86-ob-yektiv-batktivshhinu-mativ-arku-druzhbi-narodivshhorsa-vatutina-ta-in/>.

⁶³ Kyiv City Council (Kyiv City State Administration), "About Renaming the Avenue in the City of Kyiv. Decision no 419/2641 of June 1, 2017," <https://kmr.gov.ua/sites/default/files/419-2641.pdf>.

guilty of promoting Soviet power, fighting against Ukrainian statehood, or inflicting famines and political repression. The letter also requested that General Vatutin Avenue be renamed Roman Shukhevych Avenue (after the Commander-in-Chief of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army) and Moskovsky Avenue be called Stepan Bandera Avenue. Between March 28 and May 28, 2016, the City Council ran an online public consultation with the residents of the relevant districts on renaming General Vatutin Avenue Roman Shukhevych Avenue in Desniansky and Dniprovsky districts,⁶⁴ and renaming Moskovsky Avenue Stepan Bandera Avenue in Obolonsky and Podilsky districts.⁶⁵ Of the 5,794 respondents to the question of General Vatutin Avenue, 270 suggested other proposals; 3,165 supported the project and 2,627 did not support it. Of the 5,697 who responded regarding Moskovsky Avenue, 226 presented their own proposals, 3,146 supported the renaming project, and 2,548 did not support it.

Kyiv City Council, following the results of the consultation, adopted the proposals to rename these streets on July 7, 2016⁶⁶ and on June 1, 2017.⁶⁷ However, the Jewish Human Rights Group and the Anti-Fascist Human Rights League immediately filed an administrative lawsuit with the KCC, asserting that the Commemoration Commission's decision to consider renaming the streets and its submission of a proposal for the same to the meeting of Deputies of Kyiv City Council was illegal. The lawsuits lasted two-and-a-half years, but eventually the Decision of the Sixth Administrative Court of Appeal came into force on December 9, 2019.⁶⁸ To conclude, the peculiarities of the transformation of Kyiv's symbolic urban space are determined by its status as the capital of the state, and this facilitated local government capacity building under the direct influence of UINR and can be defined as political governance.

In the case of Kharkiv, the decommunization of toponyms took place in several stages, due to the actions of the local (primarily urban) political elite,

⁶⁴ Kyiv City Council (Kyiv City State Administration), "(Completed) Discussion on Renaming General Vatutin Avenue in Desnianskyi and Dniprovskyi Districts to Roman Shukhevych Avenue," accessed August 12, 2019, <https://forum.kyivcity.gov.ua/projects/view.php?P=207>.

⁶⁵ Kyiv City Council (Kyiv City State Administration), "(Completed) Discussion on Renaming Moskovsky Avenue in Obolonsky and Podilsky Districts to Stepan Bandera Avenue," accessed August 12, 2019, <https://forum.kyivcity.gov.ua/projects/view.php?P=210>.

⁶⁶ Kyiv City Council (Kyiv City State Administration), "About Renaming Streets, Avenues and Lanes in the City of Kyiv. Decision no 559/559 of July 7, 2016," accessed October 3, 2019, http://kmr.ligazakon.ua/SITE2/1_docki2.nsf/alldocWWW/A0022DEF33079D2AC225800600687888?OpenDocument.

⁶⁷ Kyiv City Council (Kyiv City State Administration), "About Renaming the Avenue in the City of Kyiv. Decision no 419/2641 of June 1, 2017," accessed June 9, 2019, <https://kmr.gov.ua/sites/default/files/419-2641.pdf>.

⁶⁸ Administrative Court of Appeal, "Sixth Administrative Court of Appeal. Resolution of December 9, 2019, Case no 826/11910/16," accessed June 9, 2019, <https://ips.ligazakon.net/document/SO14692?an=1>.

which chose a strategy of avoiding symbolic struggle over the deconstruction of markers of totalitarianism in the urban space. Despite proactive expert support for the renaming process, launched by public associations such as “Old Kharkiv”, “Kharkiv: new names. Top-200” and Kharkiv Toponymic Group and Research Centres (Centre for Local Lore at V. Karazin Kharkiv National University), the City Council’s Commission on toponymy and protection of the historical and cultural environment failed to reach a consensus on updating the symbolic urban landscape.

The first stage reflects the local government’s initiatives towards enacting decommunization policies. Based on the decision of Kharkiv City Council dated November 20, 2015,⁶⁹ Sovietskaya metro station was renamed Maidan Konstytutsii (Constitution Square). Four parks and squares were renamed: the Square Named After the 10th Anniversary of CUSY (Communist Union of Soviet Youth) became Karyakin Garden; Ilyich Park became Novo-Bavarian Square; Artem Park of Culture and Recreation became Machine Builders’ Park; and the Square of Soviet Ukraine became Traktorozavodsky Square. Within Kharkiv’s street network, 173 elements were renamed. By the order of Kharkiv’s Mayor, Hennadiy Kernes (dated February 2, 2016), 48 streets were renamed and five administrative divisions underwent toponymic adjustment. Of the latter, Dzerzhinsky district became Shevchenkivsky district; Leninsky district became Kholodnohirsky district; and Ordzhonikidze district became Industrial district. October district retained its name, but instead of commemorating the Bolshevik Revolution, the name signifies Defender of Ukraine Day (celebrated on 14 October); similarly, Frunzensky district retained its name, but instead of signifying the Soviet public figure, it honoured the memory of Lt. Timur Mikhailovich Frunze, a fighter pilot of the 161st Fighter Aviation Regiment who died in 1942 defending Ukraine from Nazi invaders.⁷⁰

Based on the above, we conclude that the local authorities and officials preserved the communist legacy in Kharkiv’s symbolic space, tacitly approving it by their decisions. It is noteworthy that seven of the city’s nine administrative units (divisions) were subject to decommunization laws, but only five were “renamed” (and of these only three truly changed their name, the others altering only what the name signified) and only three divisions (Posivkomivska, Profinterna, Kolhospna) effectively built their capacity to

⁶⁹ Kharkiv City Council, “On Renaming the Objects of Toponymy of the City of Kharkiv. Decision of the Kharkiv City Council of the Kharkiv Region of November 20, 2015 no 12/1,” accessed June 9, 2019, <https://www.city.kharkov.ua/uk/document/pro-pereymenuvannya-obektiv-toponimiki-mista-kharkova-48723.html>.

⁷⁰ Kharkiv City Council, “On Renaming the Objects of Toponymy of the City of Kharkiv. Order of the Kharkiv Mayor no 7 of February 2, 2016,” accessed September 3, 2019, <https://Doc.Citynet.Kharkov.Ua/Ru/Profile/Document/View/Id/646779>.

address the problem of renaming streets. These findings confirm that decommunization practices of Kharkiv's local government, in particular with regards to renaming administrative units, testifies to the existence of a symbol fight over the process of de-Sovietization of the symbolic urban space. This was the essence of the second stage of decommunization of Kharkiv toponymic map.

The second stage, triggered by the requirement to completely remove all symbols of totalitarianism from Kharkiv's symbolic space, illustrates how decommunization policies were implemented by regional executive bodies, in particular the Regional State Administration, headed by Governor Igor Rainin. To ensure the implementation in Kharkiv, the Working Group approved the decision to rename the toponyms of Kharkiv.⁷¹ This decision was articulated according to the Law "On the condemnation of the Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) regimes ..." and was congruous with public and scientific proposals, an open letter from the Regional State Administration and the recommendations of the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance.

According to this decision, 52 elements Kharkiv's urban street network and four administrative units were renamed; of the later, Zhovtnevy became Novobavarsky, Kominternovsky became Slobidsky, Frunzensky became Nemyshlyansky, and Chervonozavodsky became Osnovyansky. Five metro stations changed names: Marshal Zhukov became the Palace of Sports; G. Vashchenko Metro Builders became simply Metro Builders; Uprising Square became Defenders of Ukraine Square; Proletarskaya became Industrial Square; and Soviet Army became Army Square. Finally, October Hydro Park became Udyansky Hydro Park. In total, over both stages 268 urbanonyms, seven administrative divisions and six metro stations were renamed (Table 1).

⁷¹ Kharkiv City Council, "About Renaming of Objects of Toponymy of the City of Kharkiv. Decision of the Kharkiv City Council of the Kharkiv Region no 12/1 of November 20, 2015," accessed September 3, 2019, <https://www.city.kharkov.ua/uk/document/pro-pereyemuvannya-obektiv-toponimiki-mista-kharkova-48723.html>; Kharkiv City Council, "On Renaming the Objects of Toponymy of the City of Kharkiv. Order of the Kharkiv Mayor no. 7 of February 2, 2016," accessed September 3, 2019, <https://doc.citynet.kharkov.ua/ru/profile/document/view/id/646779>; Kharkiv Regional State Administration, "On Renaming the Objects of Toponymy of Kharkiv. Order of the Head of the Kharkiv Regional State Administration no 181 of May 17, 2016," accessed September 3, 2019, <https://kharkivoda.gov.ua/content/documents/808/80788/files/160517-01-11-zagal-181-rozp.pdf>.

	Type of urbanonym	Characteristics of urbanonyms according to the local government	Characteristics of urbanonyms according to the regional executive bodies
1.	Historical names	22	12
2.	Microtoponymy	8	-
3.	Geographical names	4	6
4.	Ergonyms	3	-
5.	Neutral-sounding names	9	12
6.	Church/biblical names	6	-
7.	Public figures of science and culture	38	17
8.	Historical figures	2	23
9.	Heroes of modern Ukraine	2	11
10.	The Soviet managers	1	-
11.	Unnamed	3	-
12.	Unknown origin	2	-
13.	Names of symbolic (value)	-	19

Table 1. Local government and regional executive bodies' implementation of urbanonyms in Kharkiv.⁷²

The data in Table 1 highlights the significant differences in how decommunization policies were implemented by Kharkiv's local government and the regional executive bodies. Firstly, local officials favoured the names of public figures associated with culture and science, such as the doctors Lyubov Malaya, Oleksandr Shalimov and Mykola Amosov; the architects Pavel Alyoshin and Oleksiy Dushkin; the historians Marin Drinov and Dmytro Miller; the philologist and ethnographer Izmail Srezniki; and Oscar winner Barbara Karinska (80 urbanonyms). Secondly, the heroes of modern Ukraine are somewhat neglected by local government officials, who only proposed using the names of Major General Igor Momot, Hero of Ukraine Vasyl Melnyikov and the generalized marker "Heroes of the Heavenly Hundred". Thirdly, the regional bodies, in contrast to local ones, integrated names of symbolic value into the symbolic urban space, such as Independence Avenue, Freedom Street and Volunteer Street; as well as historical figures, focusing on twentieth-century independence fighters such as Bolbochan, Mykola Mikhnovsky, Petro Hryhorenko and Vyacheslav Chornovil. Fourthly, toponyms that bring to mind the Cossack period of the Ukrainian history were barely integrated into the

⁷² Compiled using data from Kharkiv Regional State Administration, "On Renaming the Objects of Toponymy of Kharkiv. Order of the Head of the Kharkiv Regional State Administration № 181 of May 17, 2016," accessed September 24, 2019, <https://kharkivoda.gov.ua/content/documents/808/80788/files/16051>.

symbolic landscape of Kharkiv: just a street, a lane and a driveway named after Dmytro Vyshnevetsky. This suggests that Kharkiv's local government implemented decommunization policies in a manner could be described as nostalgic and pragmatic, while the regional executive bodies took a more actively political and pragmatic approach.

In the case of Odesa, similarly to Kharkiv, decommunization policies were also manifested in two stages. The first phase began when the City Historical and Toponymic Commission arranged the hearings for December 4 and 11, 2015. The Commission considered options for renaming objects whose current names were prohibited under Ukrainian law, following the main principle that "the new names should reflect the unique and original history of Odesa; commemorate the names of the people who changed the city [and] worked for its welfare and prosperity."⁷³ Moreover, the next critical step was taken on March 9, 2016, when Odesa's Mayor, G. Trukhanov, convened public hearings.⁷⁴

The Toponymic Commission proposed to change the name of Pionerskaya Street to Frapolli Brothers Street (in honour of the Odesa architects Francesco and Giovanni Frapolli); October Revolution Street to Yukhym Geller Street (after one the athlete); Comintern Street to Petro Leshchenko Street (a pop singer); Petrovsky Street to Fesenko Street (after Yukhym Fesenko, a publisher and honorary citizen of Odesa); Kolhospna Street to Yosyp Tymchenko Street (a mechanic and an inventor); Shchorsa Street to Sviatoslav Rihter Street, and Zatonsky Street to David Oistrakh Street (after the famous musician and conductor). They also suggested new names for nine lanes and one park. The Commission's approach to toponymic mapping can be seen as attempting a synergy between history (with an emphasis on local history) and pragmatic governance. In particular, the proposal recommended renaming three lanes after artists, one after a mid-nineteenth-century Mayor, one after an athlete and two after public figures, as well as returning to two roads to their historical names. The renaming of Second Stakhanov Lane provided a somewhat broader Ukrainian context than just local history. The new name honoured the famous historian Alexander Apollonovich Skalkovsky, one of the founders of the Odesa Society of History and Antiquities and a specialist in the history of Southern Ukraine and the Zaporozhian Sich. In accordance with the decisions of the public hearings, Odesa City Council approved all the Historical

⁷³ Odessa City Council, "The Historical and Toponymic Commission of Odesa Presented Recommendations on Renaming Streets, Alleys and The Park from December 15, 2015," accessed September 24, 2019, <http://old.omr.gov.ua/ru/news/78428/>.

⁷⁴ Odessa City Council, "The Historical and Toponymic Commission of Odesa Presented Recommendations on Renaming Streets, Alleys and The Park from December 15, 2015," accessed September 24, 2019, <http://old.omr.gov.ua/ru/news/78428/>.

and Toponymic Commission's recommendations.⁷⁵

In comparison to the practices of other cities of Ukraine, Odesa's case is exemplary. Firstly, approval was granted for bilingual (Ukrainian and Russian) street names; secondly, it was decided to dismantle the monuments to M. Thomas and V. Lenin in Lenin Komsomol Park, while the park itself had its historical name – Savytsky Park – restored.

Once all possibilities for decommunizing Odesa were exhausted, the Head of Odesa Regional State Administration, M. Saakashvili, signed an order dated May 21, 2016 to remap the toponymy of all settlements in Odesa region. In total, 52 streets, lanes and alleys were renamed.⁷⁶ The remapping spoke to local as well as national history, promoting names such as Heroes of Kruty, Ivan and Yuriy Lyp, Mykola Mikhnovsky, Heavenly Hundred, Ivan Mazepa, Volodymyr Ivasyuk, Andriy Sheptytsky and Roman Shukhevych. In this way, the project molded the discourse of Ukraine's unity and coherence in the urban and regional spaces of Odesa. However, local governments virtually ignored the orders of the Governor of Odesa Regional State Administration and initiated a second public hearing, which took place on August 26, 2016. They listed 58 names of toponymic objects, 12 of which were not suggested being renamed. One notable discussion was over Marshal Zhukov Avenue, which was legally subject to decommunization rules, being named after a senior Soviet military officer. However, Marshal Zhukov was also instrumental in expelling Nazi occupiers from Ukrainian territory, and the Historical and Toponymic Commission, when preparing its proposal for the public hearings, noted that according to Article 1 of the Law, toponyms associated with members of the Resistance and the expulsion of Nazis from Ukraine were not subject to renaming. Numerous citizen appeals were lodged opposing the renaming of this avenue. The same appeal was lodged regarding the street named after the Soviet writer Arkady Gaidar.⁷⁷

Taking into consideration the fact that the decommunization of Odesa's symbolic space has not become legit, the city authorities made great strides in bringing urban place names in line with the Ukrainian law while preserving the

⁷⁵ Odessa City Council, "On Amendments to the Decision of the Odessa City Council of November 9, 2005 № 4858-IV 'On the Names of Streets, Alleys, Avenues, Squares, Parks, Squares, Bridges and Other Structures Located on the Territory of Cities and Odessa. Decision of the Odessa City Council no 638-VII of April 27, 2016'," accessed September 15, 2019, <http://old.omr.gov.ua/ua/acts/council/82993/>.

⁷⁶ Odessa Regional State Administration, "About Renaming of Objects of Toponymy in Settlements of Odessa Region. Order no 303/A-2016 of May 21, 2016," accessed September 15, 2019, <https://omr.gov.ua/ua/acts/mayor/95437/>.

⁷⁷ Odessa City Council, "The List of Proposals for Renaming the Toponymic Objects of Odessa, which Are Submitted for Discussion. August 26, 2016," accessed September 15, 2019, <http://old.omr.gov.ua/ua/announce/86318/>.

historical locus of the city in its toponymy.

In particular, a third public hearing was scheduled for December 16, 2016. However, due to threats and provocations of both right-wing and left-wing radicals, most citizens were not able to get there. Due to gross violations of the procedure of public hearings and physical pressure on those present in the hall, including the use of tear gas, the issue included in the hearing was not discussed, and after a fight, many participants left and the issues were not on the agenda of the hearings.⁷⁸

In the end, Odesa City Council posted a poll on its website regarding the renaming of streets. About 5,000 residents responded: 75% were in favour of preserving the names of streets before May 2016, in compliance with the decision by Governor Mikheil Saakashvili on April 26, 2017 the streets were renamed. Thus, the names of certain streets of the 25th Chapaev division – commemorating Gaidar, Belinsky, Badaev, Tereshkova, Marshal Zhukov, Babushkin – were recommunized. However, the City Council's decision was suspended by Order of the Mayor of Odesa from April 29, 2017.⁷⁹

The struggle over toponyms as integral elements of the political landscape of Odesa serves as an excellent paradigm of how the political urban landscape affects the implementation of decommunization policies, which are primarily a product of legal and political decisions aimed at crystallizing a certain ideology in the symbolic space. The symbolic struggle between the City Council and the Regional State Administration ended with a tacit compromise, recorded in the explanation of the Odesa branch of the State Enterprise "National Information Systems" of the Ministry of Justice, which records the renaming of toponyms in the regional state register and in directories of the State Register of Real Property.⁸⁰ However, this did not mean the end of the symbolic struggle over the ideological relabelling of Odesa.

In Dnipro, we observed a three-level approach to renaming, that is, the changes in the symbolic content of toponyms cohered national, regional and

⁷⁸ Odesa City Council, "Public Hearings on Renaming the Toponyms of Odesa Did Not Take Place Due to Gross Violations," accessed September 24, 2019, <http://old.omr.gov.ua/ua/newst91203/>.

⁷⁹ Odesa City Council, "On Suspension of the Decision of The XV Session of the Odesa City Council of the VII Convocation of April 26, 2017 'On the Names of Streets, Alleys, Avenues, Squares, Parks, Squares and Other Geographical Objects Located in the City of Odesa'. The Order of the Odesa Mayor no. 381 from April 29, 2017," accessed September 24, 2019, <https://omr.gov.ua/ua/acts/mayor/95437/>.

⁸⁰ Ministry of Justice of Ukraine, "Explanation of the Odesa Branch of the State Enterprise "National Information Systems" of the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine on Renaming Some Toponymy Objects in Pursuance of the Law of Ukraine 'On Condemnation of Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) Totalitarian Regimes in Ukraine and Prohibition of Propaganda of Their Symbols', accessed September 24, 2019, <http://old.omr.gov.ua/ua/acts/97667/>.

urban contexts⁸¹ aimed at manifesting the continuity of the Ukrainian historical process, the unity and accord of Ukrainian lands and the urban traditions of Dnipro. As part of the implementation of decommunization policy, Dnipro City Council decided to rename a total of 323 streets and five districts.⁸² Dnipro's local government bodies, while (de)constructing the toponymy of the city, resorted to dedicating toponyms to public figures who changed the history of Ukraine or heroes from the struggle for statehood, such as Nestor Makhno, Pylyp Orlyk, Mykhailo Hrushevsky, Volodymyr Monomakh, Petro Kalnyshevsky, Bohdan Khmelnytsky, Princess Olha, Simon Petliura, Roman Shukhevych, Yevhen Konovalets, Pavlo Polubotko, Roman Mstislavovych and Danylo Halytsky. They also referred to historical events or groups, such as the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen, the Heroes of Kruty or Kobzarskaya.

It is worth noting that the greatest controversies were generated by the cases of mid-twentieth-century figures whose historical contributions to the struggle for Ukrainian statehood were denied. Instead, both local government bodies and the Dnipro's population actively supported toponyms reflecting the current stage of the Ukrainian struggle in the east of the country (Volonterska Street, Park of Heroes, Park of Memory and Reconciliation and Oleksandr Chernikov Street). Thus, decommunization, by outlawing Soviet figures (such as Roman Shukhevych or Yevhen Konovalets) from the narratives of urban history, was perceived as an instrument of destruction of the past (destruction of memory), while decommunization through the inclusion of modern historical processes in the narratives of urban history, on the contrary, was seen by citizens as creating new artefacts of Ukrainian history.

According to Roediger and DeSoto, the concept of collective memory is useful for understanding the perspectives of other groups, whether of a nation or of a political party or another social entity, and to understand a country's memories is to grasp something essential about its national identity and stance.⁸³

In terms of our study, the decommunization of the symbolic urban space of Ukrainian cities provoked complex and ambiguous public reactions and intense discussion, not only on the subject of Soviet toponymic mapping,⁸⁴ but also on the alternatives suggested to replace it. The sharpest controversy arose

⁸¹ Svitlana Svitlenko, "Toponymic Reform in the City of Dnepropetrovsk 2015-2016: Experience and Results," *Dnieper Prydniprovya Historical and Local Lore Research* 14 (2016): 95-108.

⁸² "Renaming of streets and places of the Dnipro 2015-2016," *Dnipro*, accessed May 24, 2019, <http://rename.dp.ua/#/>.

⁸³ Henry L. Roediger and Andrew DeSoto, "The Power of Collective Memory. What Do Large Groups of People Remember and Forget?," *Scientific American*, June 28, 2016, accessed October 12, 2019, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-power-of-collective-memory/>.

⁸⁴ Charles B. Peterson, "The Nature of Soviet Place-Names," *A Journal of Onomastics* 25, 1 (1977): 15-24.

around the idea of returning pre-revolutionary names, which preserved historical memory and, moreover, represented imperial symbolism. It should be noted that all four metropolises were once well-known economic, cultural and educational centres of the former Russian Empire. Therefore, restoring historical names sometimes meant integrating imperial discourse into the symbolic space of independent Ukraine. In this regard, Mykola Riabchuk rightly remarks that “Communism as a political ideology has long been neither a threat nor a temptation for modern Ukrainians, but only a cover for Russian imperial hegemony”.⁸⁵

This experiment adds to a growing corpus of research showing that the representatives of local government and state authority bodies, historians, regional ethnographers, toponymists, local political party branches, public organizations, civil society institutions and also the cities' residents, having contributed to public discussions and votes, took highly subjective positions in the discourse around decommunization. The most influential agency of powerful social actors in this discourse and its communication was UINR, which used a variety of formats of public discussions as a toolkit for evaluating historical events that affect the present-day reality (Table 2).

	Propaganda and commemoration	2016	2017	2018	2019
1.	Scientific conferences, roundtables and seminars	19	14	20	17
2.	Public forums, historical sites exhibitions, public discussions, presentations	20	50	70	48
3.	Photo-documentary exhibitions and expositions	11	7	11	9
4.	Exhibitions (banners, posters and billboards) in the regions	2	7	11	10
5.	Published books, brochures, educational materials (number of copies)	9 (16,100)	6 (24,300)	22 (41,000)	17 (28,500)
6.	Distributed information materials (leaflets)	136	140	496	165
7.	Propaganda and outreach materials on the UINR website	470	944	950	545

Table 2: Targeted communication methods applied by UNIR between 2015 and 2019.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Mykola Riabchuk. “Decommunization or Decolonization? What Did the Debate on the ‘Decommunization’ Laws Revealed?,” *Scientific Notes of the I. F. Kuras Institute for Political and Ethno-National Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine* 82, 2 (2018): 112.

⁸⁶ Compiled by: Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, “Report of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory on the Implementation of State Policy in the Field of Restoration and

Table 2 highlights the wide range of communication techniques employed by the UINR;⁸⁷ however the actual number of regional activities, although growing over the study period, remained low. In our opinion, the refocussing of outreach activities towards regional audiences, including the inhabitants of Ukrainian cities, would contribute to an increase in public support for decommunization processes.

Among the propaganda campaigns held in the regions, one of the most resonant was the roundtable discussion on “Decommunization Processes in the Lower Danube Euroregion: Tools, Experience, Consequences” (Odesa, 2017), in which Cosmin Budeancă, the Director General of Communist Crimes and the Memory of Romanian Exile (IICCMER), participated. He commented on local decommunization practices around Ukraine and noted that in Romania, the issue of banning communist symbols, dismantling monuments and changing toponyms provoked no discussion, as it was in effect a joint decision by Romanian society and the public authorities.⁸⁸ Apart from the UINR, the actors of the discourse on decommunization in Ukrainian cities resorted to developing four models of the relevant discourse. The first model, applied in in all four cities, is the use of *case-law or litigation* – as seen in the case of Kyiv and the decision to rename General Vatutin Avenue Roman Shukhevych Avenue. The consequences were unambiguous, and the court’s decision recognized the legitimacy of banning communist legacy.

The second model – the *‘open letter’ model* – focuses on the involvement of public scientific and expert discussion to address the issue of decommunization at the international level.⁸⁹ A significant example of this is

Preservation of National Memory in 2016,” accessed 2 October 2019, <https://old.uinp.gov.ua/sites/default/files/zvit.pdf>; Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, “Report of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory on the Implementation of State Policy in the Field of Restoration and Preservation of National Memory in 2017,” accessed 2 October 2019, https://old.uinp.gov.ua/sites/default/files/zvit_golovi_ukrayinskogo_institutu_nacionalnoyi_pamyati_2017.pdf; Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, “Report of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory on the Implementation of State Policy in the Field of Restoration and Preservation of National Memory in 2018,” accessed 2 October 2019, https://old.uinp.gov.ua/sites/default/files/zvit_golovi_2018.pdf; Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, “Report of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory on the Implementation of State Policy in the Field of Restoration and Preservation of National Memory in 2019,” accessed 9 March 2020, <https://uinp.gov.ua/pro-instytut/zvity/zvit-za-2019-rik>.

⁸⁷ Bogdan Korolenko et al, “Decommunization of Names of Settlements and Districts of Ukraine: Bases, Process, Results,” *City: History, Culture, Society* 2, 1 (2017): 134-141.

⁸⁸ Tatiana Pastushenko, “Roundtable ‘Decommunization Processes in the Countries of the Lower Danube Euroregion: Means, Experience, Consequences,’” *Ukrainian Historical Journal* 3 (2017): 224.

⁸⁹ “Open Letter from Scholars and Experts on Ukraine Re. the So-Called “Anti-Communist Law,” *Krytyka*, 9 April, 2015, accessed 17 September 2019, <https://m.krytyka.com/en/articles/open->

the open letter penned by 72 experts to the then President of Ukraine, P. Poroshenko, and the Chairman of Ukraine's Verkhovna Rada, V. Hroysman. The letter's authors stressed the need for close scrutiny before adopting the laws, warning that:

Their content and spirit contradicts one of the most fundamental political rights: the right to freedom of speech. Their adoption would raise serious questions about Ukraine's commitment to the principles of the Council of Europe and the OSCE, along with a number of treaties and solemn declarations adopted since Ukraine regained its independence in 1991. ... We also are troubled by the fact that the laws passed without serious debate, without dissenting votes and with large numbers of deputies declining to take part.⁹⁰

However, the vigorous constructive expert discussions were held beyond the borders of Ukraine, while internal discussion was limited to a few publications. Furthermore, the head of the UINR, Volodymyr Viatrovych, responded quite critically to the open letter. He emphasized that it

does not analyse the circumstances under which the Ukrainian Parliament approved the 'decommunization package', nor does it analyse the international and internal Ukrainian context. The letter does not mention that similar laws were adopted by other Eastern European countries in order to overcome the totalitarian legacy of Communism. These steps were an integral element of democratic transformations, along with reforms in the economic and political realms.⁹¹

The third model – *the Deputy's address* – was practiced by 46 People's Deputies of Ukraine when they addressed the Constitutional Court of Ukraine to demand that the Law "On the condemnation of the Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) regimes ..." should comply with the Constitution of Ukraine. The Constitutional Court's decision of July 16, 2019 approved this law as constitutionally legitimate. Of particular importance was the inclusion a clause noting that the symbols of the communist regime are widely used in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine by armed formations of the Russian Federation. New symbolic urban space is currently being created, maintained, financed and controlled by these illegal armed formations, which is why they pose a real threat to the sovereignty of Ukraine, its territorial integrity and its democratic constitutional order. Therefore, the ban on the use of symbols of totalitarian regimes provided by the aforementioned law pursues a legitimate goal and, in particular, is aimed at preventing external aggression and further

letter-scholars-and-experts-ukraine-re-so-called-anti-communist-law.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Volodymyr Viatrovych, "'Decommunization' and Academic Discussion," *Krytyka*, 25 May, 2015, accessed September 17, 2019, <https://krytyka.com/en/solutions/opinions/decommunization-and-academic-discussion>.

occupation of Ukrainian territory, ensuring the protection of human rights.⁹²

The fourth model – *recommunization* – was developed by the local government of Kharkiv, when Deputies of the Kharkiv City Council supported the decision to restore the name of Petro Hryhorenko Avenue to the street named after Soviet Marshal Georgy Zhukov. In our opinion, the appearance of this model was a reaction to statements by the Speaker of the Ukrainian Parliament, Dmytro Razumkov, who claimed that the issue of decommunization in Ukraine should be resolved in local referendums through which the people could make a declaration of intent to eradicate Soviet totalitarian heritage.⁹³

To some extent, the possibility of testing these models of the discourse of decommunization in Ukrainian society is associated with the peculiarities of socio-demographic characteristics of Ukrainian cities (Fig. 2).

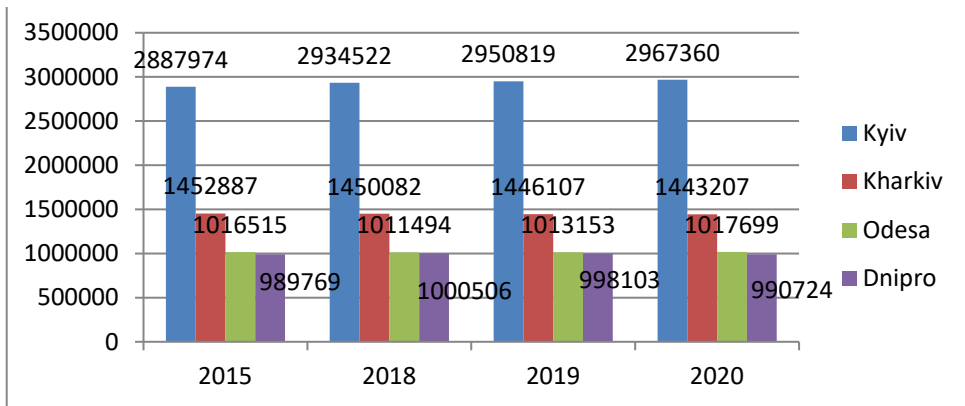


Fig 2. Population dynamics in the largest cities of Ukraine between 2015 and 2020.⁹⁴

⁹² Constitutional Court of Ukraine, “Judgment of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine in the Case on the Constitutional Petition of 46 People’s Deputies of Ukraine on the Compliance of the Constitution of Ukraine (Constitutionality) with the Law of Ukraine ‘On the Condemnation of the Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) Regimes, and Prohibition of Propaganda of their Symbols’ 24/2018 (1919/17) of July 16, 2019 № 9-r / 2019,” accessed 17 September 2019, http://ccu.gov.ua/sites/default/files/docs/9_p_2019.pdf.

⁹³ “According to the Former Adviser Zelensky, the Decision to Decommunize the Settlements Should Be Made Directly by their Residents,” *Mirror of the Week*, July 15, 2019, accessed September 17, 2019, https://dt.ua/POLITICS/razumkov-zayaviv-pro-neobhidnist-peredachipitan-dekomunizaciyi-na-miscevi-referendumi-317419_.html.

⁹⁴ Compiled by: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, *The current population of Ukraine on January 1, 2015* (Kyiv: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2015), 6, 44, 81, 93; State Statistics Service of Ukraine, *Number of Existing Population of Ukraine as of January 1, 2020. Statistical Publication* (Kyiv: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020), 17, 54, 66, 84.

As shown in Fig. 2, between 2015 and 2020, Kyiv has seen steady population growth, while Odesa's population dipped between 2015 and 2018, but has been growing steadily since then; Kharkiv's population has steadily declined, while Dnipro's has fluctuated. To compare the efficacy of local government capacity in the decommunization of these cities' symbolic spaces, it is necessary to further break down the urban population according to two parameters: the share of the population aged over 60 and its ethnic composition.

It should be stressed that an aging population significantly affects how the symbolic urban space is perceived and whether changes to that space are supported or rejected locally; in other words, age is an important parameter when considering subjective responses to the discourse of decommunization. The share of the population over 60 in Kyiv is 21.1%; in Kharkiv 22.7%; in Odesa 23.3%; and in Dnipro 24.2%.⁹⁵ On the one hand, the recorded quantitative difference may seem insignificant (2.2% between the extreme indicators), but in Kyiv the share of the population over 60 is just over 1 in 5, while in the Dnipro they make up a quarter of the total population.

As for ethnicity within the cities, the only official data is the last All-Ukrainian census which took place in 2001 and, of course, does not fully reflect the realities of today. According to the census, the share of Ukrainians in the population of Kyiv is 82.23% (Russians 13.14%); in Kharkiv 60.99% (Russians 34.25%); in Dnipro 72.55% (Russians 23.51%); in Odesa 61.66% (Russians 28.89%).⁹⁶ Due to a number of political events that took place in Ukraine after 2001, the national identity of a considerable part of the population of the Ukrainian cities shifted, leading to a quantitative increase in ethnic Ukrainians. However, official statistics describing this are not available.

Sociological research on public support for decommunization suggests that in regions of Ukraine that host large cities – Central (Kyiv), South (Odesa) and East (Kharkiv, Dnipro) – the prevailing attitudes towards decommunization tend to be somewhat less positive than the national average, with the differences more pronounced in the East and South. A poll conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation indicated that overall, 32% of Ukrainians felt positively about the decision to ban communist symbols, and only slightly more felt negatively about it (34%), while about a quarter of citizens were indifferent. Attitudes in Western and Central regions were more positive than the national average (45% and 33% respectively), the South and East were more negative (22% and 24%, respectively). Regarding the renaming of settlements and streets commemorating Communist figures, 30% of

⁹⁵ State Statistics Service of Ukraine, *Resident Population of Ukraine by Sex and Age on January 1, 2020. Statistical Publication* (Kyiv: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020), 251, 260, 308, 326.

⁹⁶ State Statistics Service of Ukraine, "Population Distribution by Nationality and Native Language," accessed September 12, 2019, <http://www.ukrcensus.gov.ua/>.

Ukrainians approved, while 44% disapproved, with positive attitudes towards renaming toponyms only prevailing in the West (44% for, 30% against); approval rates were only 23%, 22% and 29% in the East, South and Centre respectively. Regarding the condemnation of the USSR as a totalitarian regime, 34% of Ukrainians support this; broken down by region, support stands at 35% in Central Ukraine and 24% in the East and South. 21% of respondents across all regions were indifferent to the subject.

Conclusions

Our in-depth analysis of local government capacity with regard to the decommunization of urban spaces in Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odesa and Dnipro illustrates how, since 2015, these cities have become public arenas for conflicting interpretations of Ukraine's communist legacy. Their symbolic memorial structure describes a competition between actors who represent competing commemorative policies. The practices of local government in each of the cities have taken on a distinctive character. In particular, in Kyiv, local government policies are defined as political, which relates to its status as the capital of Ukraine. This status subjugated the symbolic space of local history and the retrospective reversal of historical names.

The local governments of Odesa and Kharkiv implemented their decommunization policies with the involvement of political, pragmatic (Kharkiv) and historical (Odesa) practices of urban toponymy and collective memory. The core of Dnipro's decommunization policy was based in historical practice. At the same time, the local governments of all four cities were the focus of political competition ("symbolic struggle") for the right to form and assert the idea of legitimate order in the urban symbolic space. Pursuing Ukraine's decommunization policy with elements of symbolic violence, local governments fuelled the social tensions that accompanied the implementation of their policies. In our opinion, the push and pull factors that make it possible to compete for the memorial symbolic structure of Ukrainian cities are the socio-demographic and ethnic makeup of the population, as well as the insufficiently clear outline of the "return to the past" declared by the UINR. For all four cities, reversals in the decommunization process provided a space for dialogue and a chance for the city's communities to understand its imperial past, for which they were partially prepared.

These findings provide a potential mechanism for discourse around decommunization in Kyiv, Dnipro, Odesa and Kharkiv. They illustrate the peculiarities of the presentation of commemorative procedures and the interpretation of the communist legacy in each of the four cities' urban spaces, and led us to define four performative models of discourse: case-law or litigation; open letters; a Deputy's address; and recomunization. Importantly, the last model was only implemented in Kharkiv.

Additional cross-city evidence supporting the four-model theory of decommunization discourse shows that our findings have further implications. All four models were applied to involve urban residents in the implementation of decommunization of the toponymic landscape, yet participants were cast in only two statuses – either supporters or opponents of decommunization. This dichotomy of positions made it difficult to perceive the essence of the decommunization policies, to comprehend its symbolic markers and to shape 'otherness' on decommunized symbolic maps of Ukrainian urban centres. It is vital to encourage government authorities to follow a multiperspective approach to Ukraine's history that allows a shared vision of its past in order to promote social cohesion, peace and democracy, whilst building the capacity of individual cities. How to do so is a worthwhile topic for future research.