Chapter 6
Interpreting Sites of Historical Rupture in Post-Soviet Urban Space: The Case of Tallinn, Estonia

Maarja Saar

The feeling of post-socialist space (Lasnamäe) (Photo by Maarja Saar)

M. Saar (✉)
Tallinn University, Tallinn, Estonia

Södertörn University, Huddinge, Sweden
e-mail: maarjasaar@gmail.com

Abstract This chapter analyses how sites of traumatic memory are managed by institutional policies as well as different social groups. I draw on recent discourse in memory studies which suggests that memory is fluid, multidimensional, changeable and fragmentary. Based on this, sites of memory are never produced exclusively by institutional discourses or nationalising policies: they are also constantly reinterpreted by different social groups. As the meanings of landscape change in time, memorial landscapes can also become vernacular—and vice versa. Landscapes can often possess both of these qualities. Vernacularisation and symbolisation become especially meaningful with generational shifts, since the meaning of historical rupture changes radically for the younger generation that never experienced the rupture directly. The case study for this chapter is Lasnamäe, an urban district in the Estonian capital of Tallinn. Since independence, the district has been largely represented by institutional and media discourses as "Russian". I analyse how two different generational cohorts view the area, and how they appropriate the dominant discourse for their needs. While the older generation generally sees the area as representing the Soviet period, it also considers Lasnamäe "placeless". The younger generation challenges the discourse of Russianness, stressing instead personal memories linked to the area. The analysis demonstrates how the nationalising discourse deals with a historical rupture—that is, the end of the Soviet period—by turning Lasnamäe into a site of oppression, whereas two generations of Estonian-speakers have subsequently added new layers of meaning.

Keywords Vernacular landscapes • Memoryscapes • National identity • Landscape perceptions • Public discourse • Collective memory • Forgetting

6.1   Introduction

Envisioning a common past might well be one of the most important parts of successful nation creation. However, other means are also used in order to ensure the marriage between territory and the nation, such as a common language and legal framework. Narratives of common ancestry that depend on a partial and selective framing of history are vital for fostering a sense of unity among the members of a nation state. The past then should be seen as selectively appropriated, remembered or forgotten (Wulf 2000). Certain events from the past are not mentioned, whereas others are over stressed. Usually events involving great success become icons, matters of national pride. Smith (2001) has called these the golden times of the nation. According to him every nation has had some period when it was seen as wealthy and flourishing. In contrast to these times, there are always events that are either forgotten or simply become part of the nation's collective trauma. It is in the interest of the nation state to present its history as continuous (Anderson 1991)—therefore all the events that might interfere with such an attempt are either silenced or cast as abnormal. These episodes then come to be seen as historical ruptures. Often such ruptures are employed as a way of creating a more unified nation:

these periods become marked as evil, and are used to denote a common enemy (Triandafyllidou 1998). For the othering process to be complete these ruptures need to be visualised. Landscapes are an ideal means for such visualisation. Various possibilities exist: memorials for the dead, monuments for the heroes of war, street naming and so on (Hoelsher and Alderman 2004; Rose-Redwood 2008). These landscapes then become visual signs of traumatic history, representing also the courage and persistence of the nation state and its members.

Here I am focusing on a specific form of *memoryscape*: landscapes of historical rupture. These differ from other memoryscapes because of their strong connection to mainly negative meanings. These landscapes have been connected with certain periods in history which are seen as interruptions of the normal order. Hence these interruptions often acquire traumatic meaning which landscapes of historical rupture allow people to visualise. These landscapes offer people the possibility to mourn the past, but at the same time are also constant reminders of misdeeds and past suffering. However, as previously mentioned, these landscapes also have the potential to bring a nation together, for they establish a common enemy. Therefore these, more than other sites, might evoke strong personal reactions, as they are connected to traumatic memories. Different groups might not agree on the historical periods that can be perceived as ruptures. Mainly however, scholars note differences in the perception of ruptures between ethnic groups. If memory writing is seen as carried out by the elite for ensuring its dominance, it still allows for acknowledgment of variations in the historical interpretations between different ethnic groups as these groups might have different elites. Therefore, studying ethnic differences in remembering does not necessitate abandonment of a discourse where memory is seen as merely institutional and monolithic. However, it becomes difficult to analyse the variations in historical interpretations between other than ethnic groups within this framework. In this chapter I aim to address this gap, by focusing on how different generations engage with remembering. Not only might different groups struggle over what is to be mourned, but they might also struggle over which landscapes are used for remembering the rupture. There might be a lack of shared vision concerning which sites would be appropriate because of their connotation with a traumatic past, especially as we are talking about negative meanings that are attached to certain landscapes. Therefore some people, being connected to these landscapes, might struggle over such meanings. In addition to this, as Stangl (2008) has noted, there are always two opposite processes going on in connection to memoryscapes— remembering and forgetting. These two processes are also in the centre of this chapter, illustrated especially in connection with different generations: who is aiming to forget and who is aiming to remember, and why? Currently the literature engaging with memoryscapes has several shortages, which I believe this chapter can help to address. First, so far literature has focused mainly on monumental spaces, leaving aside the ways in which everyday landscapes might be connected to historical meanings (Azaryahu and Kellerman 1999; Stangl 2008). There have been some studies that intend to cover this gap, see for instance Alderman's (2000) study on street naming, but overall memory politics remains something understood mostly as functioning through the usage of monuments and memorials. Second,

there is a visible shortage in the literature on the perceptions of lay people. Memory is seen as uniform and constructed by those in power for sustaining their dominance. Although several scholars (Legg 2005; Reading 2011; Jenks 2008; Till 2012) have criticised previous research for over-emphasising elite perspectives, the ways in which lay people understand and interpret memoryscapes have not been well studied yet. By elite perspective, scholars here refer to the imaginaries created by those in power. For instance Reading (2011) notes that there seems to be a habit of seeing memoryscapes as something that have been solely created by the elite. In the light of this I argue that in order to fully understand how landscapes are embedded with historic meanings, we need to look further than institutional discourse. As we do this, we might also start seeing the difference between various discourses.

This chapter then will focus on the ways in which both elite and lay people interpret landscapes of rupture. It will illustrate how various meanings are challenged and reinterpreted, and how landscapes are emptied of meaning. The landscape I am interested in is a post-Soviet block district in the Estonian capital, Tallinn. Lasnamäe is the biggest district of Tallinn, housing a considerable proportion of its Russian-speaking population (65 %). This chapter then first analyses how Lasnamäe was connected with the Soviet period, symbolising historical rupture. For this I draw on previous research, including several books as well as media analysis that covers the period starting from Estonia's re-independence. The chapter also uses interviews (28) with Estonian-speakers in the area, to analyse how they relate to the image of Lasnamäe as a landscape of historical rupture.

6.2 Memory Writing: Remembering and Forgetting

Ever since Nora's influential work (1989) memory studies have been mushrooming. Nora himself took a somewhat tragic attitude towards sites of memory, stating that these are settings where those in power can seal their dominance. Several researchers have followed his example, going as far as claiming that memoryscapes are mere institutionalised landscapes of forgetting, replacing distinct, politically usable past with placeless, commodified history and vague dissatisfied nostalgia (Connerton 1989; Boyer 1994). Memoryscapes then are seen as far from lay people and the meanings important to them, they rather become means through which dominance is reinsured. They become sites used for political power games, sites emptied of meaning. The meaning of memoryscapes becomes mere commodity, something that is used for practical purposes by the elite to sustain its power (see Rose-Redwood 2008). Memory writing then becomes something that is enacted by those in power, whereas subalterns are left out of the process (McDonald 2010). Recently, however, more and more scholars have understood the necessity of paying attention to other groups beside elites (Dwyer and Alderman 2008; Forest and Johnson 2011). It is understood that memory politics is not only a matter for elites, but that lay people are also active participants in remembering and forgetting. Increasingly, memory writing is seen as something that has been carried out by all members

of a society and not only those in power. Whereas those in dominant positions certainly have more possibilities for introducing their agendas, the versions of history represented by them are reinterpreted by other groups in the society. This has been brought out by Wulf (2000) who has questioned the presence of monolithic collective memory. Assman (2010) has stated that memories can be fragmentary and multidimensional, serving different interests and purposes while being important for various groups. Therefore, often different groups struggle over writing history and several versions of it are available. This all applies also to memoryscapes—they have different meanings for different groups (see Rothenberg 2010). The meanings offered by those in power are reinterpreted by subalterns who sometimes struggle to offer their version of history. Till (2005) has noted that memories are always something more than mere authored representations of the past because individuals and social groups interpret them affectively. They are not mere rationalised and institutionalised settings for power reproduction, but sites that people connect with emotionally. Therefore struggles taking place between different groups over these landscapes often take on a very personal turn.

As we discuss the struggles of memoryscapes, which involve different groups in society, our attention is being led to the fact that we cannot merely talk about these sites as static and stable. If we acknowledge the presence of struggles and different meanings, it is much more appropriate to rather talk about remembering and forgetting as processes. Even Nora in 1989 acknowledged that memoryscapes are constantly changing—sites of memory exist because of their capacity for metamorphosis, an endless recycling of their meaning and unpredictable proliferation. Similarly, memoryscapes need to be seen as in a process of becoming (Lowenthal 1975). Stangl (2008) has suggested distinguishing between two processes: vernacularisation and memorialisation. I find these terms highly useful. Vernacularisation hence refers to the process whereby the connection between historical memories and landscapes gets dissolved. Memorialisation on the other hand refers to the process whereby landscapes get embedded with historic meaning. However there is a slight difference in how I am using the terms compared to Stangl (2008). He has understood vernacular spaces as spaces used mainly for everyday settings and sees the monumental as the opposite of the vernacular, something that is mainly symbolic and is not actively used for daily purposes. I however do not contrast daily use and historic meaning in such a way. For me it seems useful to acknowledge that many landscapes can be both actively used on daily basis as well as strongly connected with historical memories. Vernacular spaces for me therefore refer to spaces that are not connected to historical memories.

When discussing struggles over memoryscapes, especially the case of landscapes of historical rupture, scholars have often used the Holocaust and the spaces connected to this as an example (Jenks 2008). Lately, this has started to change as more and more research is done in connection to memory, politics and the communist past (Danzer 2009; Light and Young 2010; Sakaja and Stanic 2011). These topics are vital for understanding the identity struggles going on in Eastern Europe (Brubaker 1992). Topics such as re-imagining the past and recreating national history have been key for the successful building of new states in many of

these societies. This has included of course also questions regarding communism and dealing with its legacy. Memoryscapes have proven to be in an important position in the national politics in former Eastern block (Forest and Johnson 2002; Light and Young 2010). Topics such as renaming the streets have been used to show how the states have tried to re-imagine their spaces and create a split between the period of communism and post-communism (Farrar 2011). One important topic currently not covered is how states have dealt with landscapes that cannot be erased so easily. In several Eastern European states there are many districts created during the communist period that make forgetting more difficult due to the visual eminence of these building blocks. Also Lasnamäe, the particular example used in this article, is rather visible in Tallinn's cityscape—making it hard to forget about the Soviet past. However, before going more into detail about my specific case, I will describe my dataset and methodology.

6.3 Data and Methods

In this chapter I am using two kinds of data sources: media analysis and interviews. Preliminary media analysis was carried out in 2007 together with my colleague Rasmus Kask. For media analysis we used articles from three different periods (1975–1981, 1986–1986 and 2001–2010) and daily newspapers in Estonian (*Päevaleht*, *Postimees*, *Noorte Hääl* and *Rahva Hääl*). Newspapers were chosen accordingly: *Noorte Hääl* and *Rahva Hääl* were the only daily newspapers until 1990. In the beginning of the 1990s also *Päevaleht* (now *Eesti Päevaleht*) began to appear in print. Currently *Eesti Päevaleht* and *Postimees* are the only general daily publications in Estonia. For the earlier publications paper versions were reviewed, whereas for the later ones an online search engine was used. This also allowed us to include the popular Internet source news portal http://www.delfi.ee. Internet searches were carried out using "Lasnamäe" as a keyword in the search engine between the years 2000 and 2010. All together there were about 400 articles which mentioned Lasnamäe in their text and which were included in the content analysis. Twenty of these were subsequently chosen for closer analysis. This selection was based on both the size and the content of the articles—only those that had Lasnamäe as its main topic were analysed more closely. In addition to media, I have also included to the context part one popular song, sung during Estonian re-independence demonstrations, as an example of the mentality surrounding the district.

First interviews were carried out in 2008, when 12 interviews were conducted. A second set of interviews was finalised in 2009, when 16 interviews were carried out. Both times snowball sampling was used to find interviewees (Heckathorn 2002). In the beginning I used my acquaintances for interviews and then they recruited future subjects among their contacts. An average interview usually lasted for 1 h and was semi-structured. There were 15 females and 13 males among the interviewees and 12 members of the older generation and 16 members of the younger generation. Generation, as Mannheim (1952) has stated, is a birth cohort with a similar social

background, born in the same region, with shared formative experiences during their adolescence and a strong signifying point of identification. In my case the older generation (born in 1950–1960s) and younger generation (born in 1980–1990s) differ because of the conditions they grew up in: the older generation has an experience of the Soviet era, but the younger generation was mainly socialised in an independent Estonia. While doing my interviews I discovered that this experience was significant in influencing people's perceptions of Lasnamäe. For instance, when I asked about the image Lasnamäe has for them, the younger generation almost always mentioned the issue of having a great majority of Russian-speakers in the district, whereas for the older generation this played little role.

My methodology was guided by constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz 2000). I have followed several steps characteristic to the traditional grounded theory method—theoretical sampling, coding methods—starting off with line by line coding, categorising the codes and finally looking for links between the key categories and connecting them with the wider discourse in the society. In addition I gathered my data and analysed it concurrently, meaning that the results were continuously controlled by the new data (Glaser and Strauss 1967). I started off with a general theoretical background, but throughout the analysis process, my theoretical focus changed considerably. Lastly, one of my main aims was to offer some new theoretical insights, by making new connections with both published former literature and my own existing material. My analysis departs from traditional grounded theory, when it comes to my epistemological and ontological understandings, as I believe that my analysis is connected with the temporal, cultural and structural context (Charmaz 2000), and therefore situational. Hence, I try to be sensitive to both my own values, ideologies and beliefs as well as these of my participants.

In order to analyse media, I also included content analysis as a way of categorising all the articles on Lasnamäe and choosing the more substantial ones for discourse analysis (Fairclough 2005). I mainly focused on three aspects of the articles—what is being said (also between the lines), what is not being said and what does the writer expect us to know. This allowed me to track the silent ideologies represented in the articles as well as the official standpoints. Now, I will continue by giving an overview of media discourse on Lasnamäe.

6.4 Recreating Collective Identity and National Landscapes in Estonia

Like many other Eastern European states, Estonia decided to opt for the nation-state model in the early 1990s. In the Estonian case this meant a strong emphasis on ancestry and language, for instance only those whose ancestors were citizens before 1940 were given citizenship, leaving the majority of Russian-speakers stateless (Hallik 2002, 2010). The previous is only one example of how the modern state was reconnected with the pre-war era and first independence period (1918–1940).

The Soviet period then became a rupture of Estonian national era (Kattago 2009; Raun 2009) whereas the first independence period was represented as a golden era (Hughes 2007), depicted in history books and novels. According to Feldman (2001) the Soviet period is seen as culturally alien and Estonia is currently trying to purify itself from the traits of it. However, by using the Soviet period as a constitutive other, Estonian identity is still directly dependent on it. Wulf and Grönholm (2010) have noted that the reconstructed Estonian history of the 1990s was a direct response to the earlier Soviet construction of the past. As Vihalemm and Kalmus (2008) have mentioned, among some groups such as Russian-speakers and older (over 60) rather deprived groups, nostalgia for the Soviet period is traceable.

Using the Soviet period as a constitutive outside led to the demonisation of all the elements connected to it. Kattago (2009) has noted that Soviet rupture entitled deportations, destruction of farms, collectivisation and Russification along with dramatic industrialisation and urbanisation. In addition collectivism, labour unions, leftist politics and the Russian language became perceived negatively. The first time of independence, on the contrary, symbolised a period of harmonious society characterised by country life, thatched roof farms, small villages and intact families. Kõresaar (2005) has explained that the pre-war peasant farm in the rural countryside came to signify childhood security, social ties and community, whereas Soviet time corresponded to uncertainty, broken social ties and rupture. In connection to that, an idea also emerged in the public discourse about which spaces are Estonian and which Soviet: kolkhozes, industrial landscapes and blockhouses were considered Soviet, whereas idyllic rural farmhouses became Estonian: such imaginary could be found for instance in the history books, but also when looking at the postcards meant to represent Estonia (Wulf 2000). That also corresponded to the ethnic composition of the areas, as most of the Russian speakers lived in towns, such spatial representations allowed to remove Russians from collective identity (Ojamäe and Paadam 2011). In addition, areas that were perceived as Russian became anti-dote of Estonianess and represented roughness and criminalization (Järve et al. 2000).

6.5   Lasnamäe's Role in Reconstructing Estonian-ness: Creating the Space of the Other

In the centre of my study is Lasnamäe, an apartment-block district of Tallinn—the capital of Estonia. With its 112,000 inhabitants, Lasnamäe is the biggest district in Tallinn, housing the majority of the capital's Russian-speakers. About 65 % of its inhabitants are Russian-speakers, whereas the national average is around 30 % (Statistics Estonia 2012). Lasnamäe was built between 1976 and 1990 and as the last Soviet-style apartment block district built in Tallinn, it is visually the most homogeneous and consists mainly of nine-storey buildings. I will start with the historical overview of its symbolism and later, in the next section, review how the media deals with Lasnamäe.

Initially, Soviet apartment blocks were not perceived negatively by Estonians. Mustamäe, the first block building estate, was welcomed by many who received apartments there. New flats were seen as a sign of progress, offering many conveniences, such as warm water and central heating, which were unavailable before (Kurg 2007). According to Sarapik (2011), during its construction, Mustamäe was characterised by an optimistic and positive attitude. The image of Lasnamäe however was never so positive. Viires (2003) has called Lasnamäe a huge centre of immigrants and Nerman (1998) has noted that very few Estonians had a chance to get a free apartment in Lasnamäe. New apartments were mainly given to Russian blue-collar immigrants who moved to Tallinn in search of work (Rouppila and Kährik 2002). Whereas the official discourse represented immigration as the result of labour shortage, it was perceived by Estonians as an attempt to transform Estonians into a minority in Estonia (Kurg 2007). Because of this Lasnamäe was seen as an oppressive colony by Estonians (Nerman 1998).

Because of these negative connotations, it is not surprising that Lasnamäe became one of the symbols of the independence movement. Perhaps one of the best examples of the importance of Lasnamäe during the 1990s is a song called *Stop Lasnamäe*. The lyrics of the song encouraged people to fight for freedom, casting also a dark picture of the evils of the Soviet period. Lasnamäe worked well as a symbol of Soviet rupture because of its sheer size (housing 25 % of Tallinn's population) and its visual prominence. Moreover, as Lasnamäe housed a high number of Russians and was a location for the metal processing factory named Dvigatel, the board of which was tightly controlled by the central Soviet government, the connection between the Soviet era and Lasnamäe became even more solid. Dvigatel was also seen as one of the organisers of the anti-independence movement, therefore casting an even darker shadow over Lasnamäe. Lasnamäe thus became a representation of a particular period of historical rupture: Soviet oppression.

In what follows I will quote one verse from a popular song of that time. The song was sung as part of the Singing Revolution. The Singing Revolution consisted of a mass demonstration, whereby national songs were sung for the purpose of protesting against the Soviet order:

> Look all is alien, is this home? In the middle of windy streets drifting is an aimless migrant. Look, in his eyes is emptines she does not feel nor see. Let's cry all now down the valley with all our strength Stop Lasnamäe!

In the song Lasnamäe is connected with several negative symbols of the Soviet era, such as migrants, detachment and a feeling of alienation. The song helps to outline how Lasnamäe became the spatial marker of colonisation, never allowing one to forget the historic trauma. Moreover, in one of the later verses of the song, Lasnamäe is called "the tumor of the land", which even more clearly brings out its connotation with rupture. However not only does Lasnamäe illustrate the misfortune of the past, but it also signifies the ongoing presence of migrants, stating therefore that colonisation is not yet over. Migrants are referred to as being unable to connect with the land and to understand the true essence of Estonian-ness, they are treated

as mere occupiers, and not residents. Later the image of Russian-speakers worsened even further. Järve et al. (2000) have noted that Russians were perceived as rough and aggressive in contrast to the calmer mentality of Estonians. Therefore one can say that not only were Russians perceived as alien to the land that they were inhabiting, but they were also criminalised.

The prior discussion demonstrates a current lack in the memory literature and the need for understanding memoryscapes in terms wider than simply everyday life in a certain period. Lasnamäe, as it was used during the independence movement, can surely be partly seen as a monumental landscape, with its visual grandiosity and strong ideological meaning, but by marking it solely as such, we lose something in its meaning. Surely Lasnamäe can be conceived at the same time as a living space, denoting the living style during the Soviet period (rootless) as defined by the song. Seeing Lasnamäe in terms of such a dichotomy, however, still ignores its significance as the marker of a historical other. Being faced with the fact that removing Lasnamäe, as was done with the Soviet monuments and street names, is not possible, it was instead represented as a negative other, helping to unify Estonians in front of a common enemy: Russia. Therefore, I would not call the practices monumentalisation, but rather would name them memorialisation. Next, I will continue by analysing how Lasnamäe was dealt with in public discourse after independence was announced, using the media as an example.

6.6   Continuous Othering: Lasnamäe's Image in the Media

As described before, already at the end of the 1980s Lasnamäe became a place that was filled with immigrants and therefore turned into a somewhat alien place for Estonian-speakers. Based on the public discourse, Lasnamäe can hardly be seen as homey and safe environment. Perhaps one of the strongest images that the media has attached to Lasnamäe is the one of a sleeping community. The district is described as a place where one does not spend any more free time than necessary (EPL 18. 07. 2007). We can see how Lasnamäe is opposed to feelings of attachment and feelings of home. It rather becomes an environment where everyone likes to be anonymous and is removed from one another. Based on this quote Lasnamäe becomes almost like a monument emptied of meaning and life, it has its physical grandiose appearance, yet it lacks any further significance. The image of sleeping district may still be used to mourn the past. Farrar (2011) in his article has a discussion over the landscapes of temporality—landscapes built for temporal needs and temporal population. I suggest that also Lasnamäe was perceived as such already when built. Russians moving there were expected to move back to where they came from when the independence was re-established. Therefore, Lasnamäe's image as a sleeping community, which never actually becomes home, could refer to the temporality of the Soviet period. Also the district elder saying: "We must change Lasnamäe from Soviet sleeping district to comfortable district whose inhabitants

have European mentality" (Delfi 02.09. 2009) confirms the connection between the Soviet period and the district. Not only does the elder regard Lasnamäe as a Soviet place, furthermore he opposes it to a European (Western) mentality and thus denotes that Lasnamäe is still much more in the past than in the future. Lasnamäe signifies where we are coming from and now we must change it in order it to fit where we want to go to. Thus Lasnamäe is often presented by the media as a memoryscape either by connecting it with the Soviet past or the presence of Russians today.

In addition to being regarded as a sleeping community by the media, Lasnamäe also became connected with criminality. As already mentioned, Russian-speakers in general were considered rough and aggressive and therefore Lasnamäe started to be perceived as a dangerous area. The media has had a big role in promoting this image. Starting from 1993 regular reports about the criminality of the area started to appear in press. One journalist summarised the image of the district as follows:

> Lasnamäe is a shoddy place, a ghetto where one gets beaten up all the time—that might be a vulgar generalisation to the district. Lasnamäe is a slum that is constantly in police news. It is a place where unknown man is shooting Lidia and drunken Editha is threatening Aavo with air gun. (*EPL* 29.10 2005)

The journalist refers skillfully to the frequent crime reports published by the media. Lasnamäe according to her is connected to low class—drinking habits, random crimes and rowdiness—both being the opposite of middle class image of the safe and homely environment. Although this quote does not directly connect Lasnamäe's criminal image with the great percentage of Russian-speakers in the district, this idea is always in the background. Few journalists actually mention it directly, probably due to the fact that it might be perceived as ethnocentric and not proper for the public media. However there are some articles that still do make a direct connection.

> In Lasnamäe and Eastern Estonia people live their own life, watch PBK [Russian TV channel], read MK Estonija [Russian media], go to their own markets, own schools and factories and do not want to study geography in Estonian. (*Eesti Ekspress* 23 11 2005)

The journalist is describing Lasnamäe and Eastern Estonia almost as though they were worlds totally separate from the rest of Estonia. These are the spaces, where the Soviet Union is still alive and moreover, Russia has taken over the power. Although in the legal framework of Estonian space, things still work differently in these spaces. People do not have contact with the Estonian state: rather, they have created for themselves a parallel world. Then the question emerges, where do the 30 % of Estonians fit in this picture? Maybe, as referred above, they are just going to the district to sleep, because they do not feel any other attachment to the place. Maybe, as described by the other article, Estonians are leaving the district and those who are staying are becoming like "the last Mohawks", according to the article. Therefore, one can say that Russian-speakers are seen as taking over the control of these spaces. Furthermore Lasnamäe is also seen as a main supporter of the Russo-friendly party [Keskerakond] in Tallinn. Several articles have made a connection between the party and the district, using statements such as "if we did not have Lasnamäe, the party would not be a problem". We can thus see that media has

connected Lasnamäe with many negative traits, such as criminality, alienness and lack of "homeliness". Now I will continue analysing how two generations perceive the district.

6.7 Memorialisation and Vernacularisation Hand in Hand: Local Inhabitants in Lasnamäe

As noted earlier, memory is never unified, but rather fragmentary and changing. Therefore we cannot really talk about a single public discourse when discussing Lasnamäe. Although the media might present a certain image of the district, this image is still reinterpreted by the public. Hence, now I will focus on the various interpretations that locals have of the district. In addition, I will show how both processes, forgetting and remembering, are active as locals try to connect to the district. This section can be divided into two parts: first, I will describe the attitudes of the older generation (those born in the 1950s and 1960s); second, the discourse among younger generation (1980s and 1990s).

One of the narratives, often told by the older generation about Lasnamäe, was the one of functionality, meaning the evaluation of the district was based purely on rational calculations.

> I take it as a good place for living where I can work throughout the day and do not need to worry about warm water and a warm room. I am happy with the option where I have rational living arrangement. I do not consider this as home, since I come from countryside and now what are the pluses of living in the countryside. For me home is a place where the forest is close by, where one can walk on the grass bare foot and where one can generally feel free. (male, 56)

For this person Lasnamäe is a bedroom district as described by the media. He considers this a place that needs minimal care and gives him the possibility to focus on his work. As he himself puts it—it is a rational place for living. He however does not call it home—Lasnamäe for him is merely a place where he goes at night. He somewhat opposes Lasnamäe to the countryside, remarking that the countryside is something where he can really feel at home. He however is not overly concerned about not feeling at home in Lasnamäe, but he prefers to invest his feelings in somewhere else. Further on, several people described their relationship with Lasnamäe as the one of conciliation. One of the examples of such conciliation is the following quote:

> We got an apartment in [19]85 and we were really happy. We have not wanted to move away. I am a conservative person; we have no money. One has to see the good side of Lasnamäe. I am not keen on changing things, maybe somebody else would say that it is a nightmare and would leave immediately, but why do they live here then? It means they tolerate the situation. (female, 55)

In this quote the woman is describing how her feelings towards Lasnamäe have changed. In 1985 getting a new apartment with all the conveniences was a source of

satisfaction for many who moved to Lasnamäe. However, as the initial excitement disappeared, several inhabitants started to be more and more displeased. This female respondent illustrates one's struggles of accepting the area and becoming in terms with it because one has no means to move away. It also portrays how the meanings of the landscape can change as the time evolves and ideology changes. For the interviewee, in the beginning, living in Lasnamäe was rather perceived in positive terms, however these days the district is seen as something that one has to accept as an inevitable consequence of having no money to move away. In her quote she is aware of the negative image that Lasnamäe has, referring to the other's who see it as a nightmare, and still explaining that she has slightly more positive feelings about the district.

There were other examples where interviewees acknowledged the connection between ideology and district.

> Something is changing, but slowly. Lasnamäe stopped with regaining the independence [interviewee is referring to the fact that there were very few new developments in Lasnamäe in 1990s]. Now they are doing something, but there is little money. It is the district of strangers, Russian-speakers dominate. They are voiceless when it comes to our government. (female, 52)

This interviewee not only connects Lasnamäe with alienness and refers to how the change of ideology left Lasnamäe decaying, but she also associates Lasnamäe with Russians. According to her the government has deserted Lasnamäe because it is perceived as of secondary importance due to its inhabitants being mainly Russian-speakers. According to her Lasnamäe is officially managed by simply ignoring its existence. There is no negative signification, but rather simple avoidance of having to deal with what is perceived as the problem, the problem of minority the least. The district then becomes deserted, reminding even more its belonging to the past. Seeing Lasnamäe as signifying the past was even more strongly exemplified through comparing the district with the West:

> When you go to Sweden or elsewhere there are also new buildings but materials are different, they look clean, but it is a mark of the era. (male, 55) These houses are not as beautiful than in Spain, the United Kingdom. These are usually bold boxes. But how do you make them more beautiful?—You cannot. (female, 63)

These two interviewees were not the only ones comparing Lasnamäe with the respective housing areas in the West. This illustrates how Lasnamäe is seen as contrasting to the districts in the West. Lasnamäe becomes a symbol of Soviet ideology and era, it is memorialised as something that belongs to the past, the example of how things once were. However, Lasnamäe does not fit into the future and to Estonia's general direction towards west. The comparison, furthermore, exemplifies the harm the Soviet period has done and is like a silent mourning of what could have been. In short, for the older generation Lasnamäe still carries a Soviet ideology and therefore it is not perceived as home. The district rather becomes a memorial and at the same time a not-homely place where one just has to get by. Its meaning for the older generation is the ideological meaning, not the meanings deriving from emotional connection with the area. In comparison, for the younger

generation the link between Soviet Union and Lasnamäe was rather fuzzy if not existent. One can say that those who are now over 35 years old still reflect upon the connection, since they were already old enough before Estonia regained its independence to understand and be influenced by the Soviet ideology. Those in their twenties however draw few connections between the Union and Lasnamäe. Rather for the younger generation Lasnamäe is connected to Russians. Quotes such as "The feeling of Lasnamäe is when you hear only Russian" and "Lasnamäe is a Russian district" exemplify this link. Lasnamäe is memorialised but through other connection—Lasnamäe becomes to symbolise the presence of Russian population in the state—Lasnamäe becomes the area of the other.

> When I take the bus I have a feeling that there are even more Russian-speakers than before. In the bus there are many Russian youth gangs, they have a different mentality and I am annoyed by it. They yell in the bus, listen to music from mobile so that all the other people in the bus have to hear this. I would like to be by myself and ride peacefully. If I did not live in Lasnamäe I would not have to put up with Russians so much. (female, 26)

Lasnamäe, for this interviewee, means having to have contact "with the other", witnessing the results of Soviet period. Lasnamäe therefore for her is an alien space, like an inside colony of Russians in Estonia: the past is still present. Lasnamäe cannot even be memorialised, because its history has not become history yet, its history is also its present. So in a way, the image of Russianness also vernacularises the area, it does not characterise Lasnamäe as some symbol of the past, but rather illustrates current habits and manners of Russians therefore becoming part of memory politics as a vernacular landscape.

Also youth was aware of the negative image of the district. Several had adapted the public idea of countryside and private house as Estonian:

> I think, that at the certain age you do not want to live in Lasnamäe anymore, you want a garden and a house. All my classmates have moved away, for some reason Tiskre is a preferred place. Everybody is speaking how they want to leave the first opportunity. I do not know any Estonian who would want to stay there. (female, 24)

Unlike for the older generation, they usually do not have a direct experience living in the countryside, therefore private house is more like an unattainable dream—the ideal life of Estonian. Along with this picture of Estonian-ness several interviewees had felt ashamed that they had to live in Lasnamäe and had had to defend the district in front of others.

When for some Lasnamäe was a period of life to be forgotten then others had very positive images of their childhood. Childhood in Lasnamäe was often described as something exotic and special that not everybody could have. This exemplifies how Lasnamäe's public image as other was used in order to re-imagine the area as positively different. Lasnamäe was vernacularised through youth's childhood images and direct experiences.

> I moved away four years ago but it is still home and when I come here, I still have a longing for home. Now and then I wish to be back because all good childhood memories are here. Often I find myself in tune with other people from Lasnamäe. (female, 23)

This quote illustrates how the interviewee herself finds Lasnamäe special and the people there different, "her kind of people", with whom she can have contact. This specialty is however personal and Lasnamäe brings up strong emotional memories. Whereas embedded with meanings, the district becomes a background for everyday memories.

Some of the interviewees were also actively contesting the public negative image about Lasnamäe as criminal. There was an attempt to reconstruct the district as Estonian by challenging both the image of criminality and Russian-ness.

> I have lived in Lasnamäe for 15 years and in this time I have never encountered drug addicts with needles or other criminals who were chasing me. Lasnamäe is a similar region like all bedroom communities in Tallinn. All that happens in the east can happen also in other places. So all the stories about Lasnamäe as a paradise of Russians and drug addicts where one would not even send his enemy do not hold water. (male, 20)

This interviewee uses his experience as an insider to contest the public image. He refers to the public image as misguided and wants locals to gain bigger role in the image making. The aim of the quote is to contest Lasnamäe as different and therefore vernacularise the district. Some others compared Lasnamäe with other block building districts and claimed that Lasnamäe is no different from those.

Consequently one can say that among youth both tendencies—to vernacularise and to memorialise—were present. However there was stronger tendency towards seeing the district as everyday setting rather than historical monument. Moreover, the district when perceived as different was mainly connected with Russian-ness in a way that was referring to the ongoing presence of Russians, thus it presented the everyday habits of Russian population. Whence active in nation and meaning making, the district was still vernacularised. Among the older generation there were also some tendencies in vernacularising the district, however there was strong emphasis on seeing Lasnamäe as a memoryscape. Since they had direct experience with Soviet ideology and no childhood memories, it was easier for them to see the district as rather alien and as a living memory.

6.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I have approached landscapes of historic rupture using a process based view. Rather than distinguishing between vernacular spaces and memoryscapes, I acknowledged that often the border between these two is not so strict. I then prefer to talk about vernacularisation, emptying of historic meaning, and memorialisation, embedding landscapes with historic meaning. Such a process based view, in my opinion, is a perfect antidote for the current overemphasis on elite perspectives. As we take a more process based view, we have more space to acknowledge multiple agendas that surround both the act of remembering as well as memoryscapes. Here, I have focused on one particular type of memoryscape—a landscape of historic rupture. I have first outlined how this landscape, a post-Soviet block building district, was connected to historic rupture, then illustrated how it was

memorialised. I have paid attention to how institutional discourse used the district to visualise painful past memories and to unify the nation. Then, however, I went on to analyse how the landscape of historic rupture was interpreted by the locals living in the area. This allowed me to bring out the conflicting narratives and meanings, to show the complexities of remembering.

One of the main contributions made by this chapter is outlining the importance of generation in remembering and understanding memoryscapes. I focused on two different generations and their understandings of Lasnamäe. The first generation, those born in 1950 and 1960, had direct experience of the particular rupture and for them the landscape was connected to the period of Soviet Union. The other generation, those born in 1980 and 1990, however had mainly indirect experience, meaning their knowledge of the era game from sources such as their parents, history books etc. This, as I show, plays an important role in the ways the landscapes of rupture are being read. For the older generation Lasnamäe was very much still connected to the Soviet period. They shared the mentalities from 1990s which made a direct link between Lasnamäe and Russification. For several of the members of the older generation, Lasnamäe was something temporal, something that represented the part of history that needed to be erased, that was unnatural. One can therefore say that older generation was still actively helping to memorialise the area. For the younger generation however Lasnamäe was often connected to their own childhood memories. Having been all raised in Lasnamäe, they had personal connections with area that seemed much more important than historic meanings attached to the place. Such personal connections helped to vernacularise the area for them. Such personal experiences however still might have fostered the alienation of Estonian-speakers from the area as well. Several of the members of the younger generation had made the connection between Russian-speakers and the area. For them this was the place inside Estonia, where Russian-speakers were in power. Whereas the connection between historic rupture and the area was unmade, a new connection was created. Lasnamäe now for them came to denote the current rupturing of the society— it became the area of the other. This shows how the process of remembering is complicated and goes beyond institutional field. The younger generation is creating its own narrative of the area—embedding the meaning in the area that in the future might create a new possibility for memorialisation. For them then Lasnamäe might come to denote quite different era, an era of independence that yet also brought out new problems—the problem of two different language groups in Estonian society. These young people, forced to grow up in the place dominated by Russian-speakers, might have their own historic trauma.

Hence this chapter shows that especially when we are talking about generational differences in the perception of memoryscapes, adapting a process based view is vital. We however are not only talking about the processes of vernacularisation and memorialisation, but we are also talking about different memories that get embedded. Whereas landscapes might still be connected with historical memories, the memories itself might change. Different social groups in society have meanings that are important to them and therefore the reading of memoryscapes has to be versatile.

References

Alderman D (2000) A street to fit for a King: naming places and commemoration in the American South. Prof Geogr 52:672–684

Anderson B (1991) Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism. Verso, London

Assmann A (2010) From collective violence to a common future: four models for dealing with a traumatic past. In: Goncalves da Silva H (ed) Conflict, memory transfers and the reshaping of Europe. Cambridge Scholars Publ, Newcastle upon Tyne, pp 8–23

Azaryahu M, Kellerman A (1999) Symbolic places of national history and revival: a study in Zionist mythical geography. Trans Inst Br Geogr 24:109–123

Boyer M (1994) The city of collective memory: its historical imagery and architectural entertainments. MIT Press, Cambridge

Brubaker R (1992) Citizenship struggles in Soviet successor states. Int Migr Rev 262:269–292

Charmaz K (2000) Grounded theory: objectivist and constructivist methods. In: Gubrium J, Holstein J (eds) Handbook of qualitative research. Sage, Thousand Oaks, pp 509–535

Connerton P (1989) How societies remember. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

Danzer A (2009) Battlefields of ethnic symbols. Public space and post-Soviet identity formation from a minority perspective. Eur Asia Stud 619:1557–1577

Dwyer O, Alderman D (2008) Memorial landscapes: analytic questions and metaphors. GeoJournal 73:165–178

Fairclough N (2005) Critical discourse analysis in transdisciplinary research. In: Wodak R, Chilton P (eds) New agenda in (critical) discourse analysis. John Benjamins B. V, Amsterdam, pp 53–70

Farrar M (2011) Amnesia, nostalgia, and the politics of place memory. Polit Res Q 64:723–735

Feldman M (2001) European integration and the discourse of national identity in Estonia. National Identities 31:5–21

Forest B, Johnson J (2002) Unraveling the threads of history: Soviet-era monuments and post-Soviet national identity in Moscow. Ann Assoc Am Geogr 923:524–547

Forest B, Johnson J (2011) Monumental politics: regime type and public memory in post-communist states. Post Sov Aff 273:269–288

Glaser B, Strauss A (1967) The discovery of grounded theory: strategies for qualitative research. Aldine Transaction, New Brunswick, Chicago

Hallik K (2002) Nationalising policies and integration challenges. In: Heidmets M, Lauristin M (eds) The challenge of the Russian minority. Tartu University Press, Tartu, pp 65–88

Hallik K (2010) Koos pole lihtne aga eraldi ei saa. Tallinna Ülikool, Tallinn

Heckathorn D (2002) Respondent-driven sampling II: deriving valid estimates from chain-referral samples of hidden populations. Soc Probl 49:11–34

Hoelscher S, Alderman DH (2004) Memory and place: geographies of a critical relationship. Soc Cult Geogr 5(3):347–355

Hughes C (2007) The influence of ethnicity and nationalism on Soviet and Post-Soviet urbanization in Tallinn, Estonia and Kazan, Russia (Senior Honors Project). Available from Digital Commons @ Macalester. http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/geography_honors

Järve M, Kamdron T, Papp Ü (2000) Too black a scenario. In: Kovala U, Vainikkala E (eds) Reading cultural difference: the reception of a short story in six European countries. Jyväskylän yliopisto, Jyväskylä

Jenks H (2008) Urban space, ethnic community, and national belonging: the political landscape of memory in Little Tokyo. GeoJournal 73:231–244

Kattago S (2009) War memorials and the politics of memory: the Soviet war memorial in Tallinn. Constellations 161:150–165

Kõresaar E (2005) Elu Ideoloogiad. Kollektiivne mälu ja autobiograafiline mineviku tolgendus eestlaste elulugedes. Eesti Rahva Muuseum, Tartu

Kurg A (2007) Opposites attract? The residential areas in Aaviku and Lasnamäe. Estonian Art 201:23–30

Legg S (2005) Contesting and surviving memory: space, nation, and nostalgia in Les Lieux de Memoire. Environ Plan D 23:481–504

Light D, Young C (2010) Political identity, public memory and urban space: a case study of Parcul Carol I, Bucharest from 1906 to the present. Eur Asia Stud 629:1453–1478

Lowenthal D (1975) Past time, present place: landscape and memory. Geogr Rev 65:1–36

Mannheim K (1952) The problem of generations: essays on the sociology of knowledge. RKP, London

McDonald M (2010) Lest we forget: the politics of memory and Australian military intervention. Int Polit Sociol 4:287–302

Nerman R (1998) Lasnamäe ajalugu. Eesti Entsüklopeediakirjastus, Tallinn

Nora P (1989) Between memory and history: Les lieux de memoire. Representations 26:7–24

Ojamäe L, Paadam K (2011) Housing conditions and neighborhood satisfaction. In: Vetik R, Helemäe J (eds) The Russian second generation in Tallinn and Kohtla-Järve: the TIES study in Estonia. Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, pp 144–164

Raun U (2009) Estonia after 1991. Identity and integration. East Eur Polit Soc 234:526–534

Reading A (2011) Memory and identity. Eur J Cult Stud 14:379–394

Rose-Redwood R (2008) From number to name: symbolic capital, places of memory, and the politics of street renaming in New York City. Soc Cult Geogr 9:431–52

Rothenberg M (2010) Multidirectional memory: remembering the Holocaust in the age of decolonisation. Stanford University Press, Stanford

Rouppila S, Kährik A (2002) Socio-economic residential differentiation in post-socialist Tallinn. J Hous Built Environ 18:49–79

Sakaja L, Stanic J (2011) Other(ing), self(portraying), negotiating: the spatial codification of values in Zagreb's city text. Cult Geogr 184:495–516

Sarapik V (2011) Autumn in a new residential area. Interlitteraria 162:502–519

Smith A (2001) Nations and history. In: Guiberneau M, Hutchinson J (eds) Understanding nationalism. Cambridge Polity Press, Cambridge, pp 23–45

Stangl P (2008) The vernacular and the monumental: memory and landscape in post-war Berlin. GeoJournal 73:245–253

Statistics Estonia (2012) PHC 2011: 157 native languages spoken in Estonia. http://www.stat.ee/64629/. Accessed 26 Apr 2014

Till K (2005) The new Berlin: memory, politics, place. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis

Till K (2012) Wounded cities: memory-work and a place-based ethics of care. Polit Geogr 31:3–14

Triandafyllidou A (1998) National identity and the other. Ethn Racial Stud 214:593–612

Vihalemm T, Kalmus V (2008) Mental structures in transition culture: differentiating patterns of identities and values in Estonia. East Eur Polit Soc 224:901–927

Viires P (2003) Mustamäe metamorphoses. In: Sarapik V, Tüür K (eds) Koht ja paik/place and location. Eesti Kunstiakadeemia, Tallinn, pp 395–403

Wulf M (2000) Theory building: dynamics of collective memory in Estonia. Uppsala University Department of East European Studies Working Paper 54. http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1936714. Accessed 26 Apr 2014

Wulf M, Grönholm P (2010) Generating meaning across generations: the role of historians in the codification of history in Soviet and post-Soviet Estonia. J Balt Stud 413(3):351–382