



Changing Images: politics of memory and depicting others during the democratization



**Patryk
WAWRZYŃSKI Ph.D.c.**
Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń

Changing Images: PoM and depicting others
Porto, 13th June 2013



About the Author

Patryk Wawrzyński is Ph.D. candidate in political science at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Poland. He is mainly interested in investigating the politics of memory and political narratives, but as well he is studying communication, especially non-verbal and intercultural issues. The aim of his current projects is to explore possible sources of the efficacy of politics of memory.

Patryk Wawrzyński published two monographs in Polish: "The Cultural Myth as a constituting factor of international relations", and "President Lech Kaczyński. The Unfinished Narrations".

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The research background:

**Investigating depicting others is a part of research objectives in the project
“Politics of Memory as the Constitutional Factor of New Identity
during the Transition from Authoritarian Regimes”
that has been established at the Nicolaus Copernicus University.**

**We study a degree in which the politics of memory was used during the transition
in six countries: Chile, Estonia, Georgia, Poland, South Africa, and Spain.**

**We investigate two relationships of it:
the state → collective memory,
and the state → the political identity of a society.**

The research background:

Finally we research the politics of memory as a justification of:

- (a) a new political elite's being in Power;**
- (b) a ongoing political of former, authoritarian regime's representatives;**
- (c) a applied way of the settlement of authoritarian apparatus of repressions;**
- (d) social costs of transformation;**
- (e) an adaptation of new standards of civic, political and social life;**
- (f) the democratization as a realization of the inter-generational contract;**
- (g) the historic necessity of the National Unity; and**
- (h) a membership in international organization or a participation in international, economic and political, blocs and groups.**

The role of PoM during the transition:

There are some different ways how the politics of memory may influence social attitudes, behaviors, and values during the democratization:

- (a) imagining new tradition;**
- (b) constructing new interpretations;**
- (c) changing a balance of remembering and forgetting;**
- (d) re-establishing an order of remembrance, and a hierarchy of events;**
- (e) changing an interpretation of an inter-generational agreement;**
- and (f) adapting old narratives.**

All these way may be divided into three main strategies: remembering new stories, remembering old stories, and forgetting.

The role of PoM during the transition:

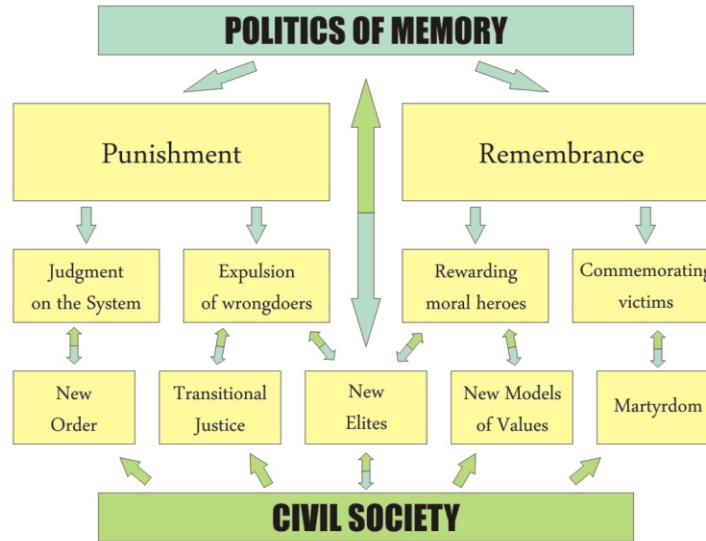


Diagram source: P. Wawrzyński (2013), "Civil Society and Transition: the role of politics of memory in the establishment of a new order" in "Questions of Civil Society. Category, Position, Functionality" ed. by R. Schattkowsky & A. Jarosz, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in print).



Poland's constructing new images:

- 1) The image of Russian/ Soviet atrocities, repressions, and domination;**
- 2) The image of East European community of martyrdom, and post-totalitarian trauma;**
- 3) The image of Western support for pro-democratic struggle, and transformation;**
- 4) The image of the United States as the only guarantor of Polish independence and security.**

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Poland's forgetting images:

1) The image of Polish-Russian/ Soviet brotherhood, and mutual friendship.

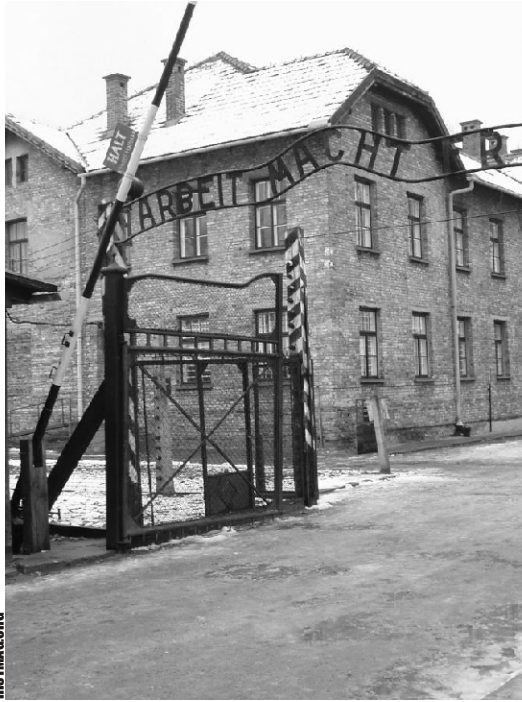
2) The image of mutual friendship with the Developing World, struggling against Western domination.

3) The image of Western states as a threat and fascist imperialists.

4) The image of the United States as the main enemy and the most dangerous imperialist country.

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Poland's forgetting images



Poland's adapting old images:

1) The image of the Second World War as the struggle against German/ Nazi genocidal policy.

2) The image of the Holocaust as the national trauma (with reinterpretation).

3) The image of East European struggle against totalitarian regimes (with reinterpretation).

4) The image of the Western betrayal in 1939, at the beginning of the Second World War.

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South Africa's constructing new images:

1) The image of the Rainbow Nation that includes all racial and ethnic groups in South Africa.

2) The image of the common cultural heritage of all racial and ethnic groups.

3) The image of South African democratization as the final stage of decolonization.

4) The image of peaceful transition, and peaceful co-existence of all racial and ethnic groups.

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WAWRZYŃSKI Ph.D.c.**
Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń

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South Africa's constructing new images



South Africa's forgetting images:

- 1) The image of the Afrikaner/ White people as the only power in the country.**
- 2) The image of crucial divisions between the White and the Black cultures and traditions.**
- 3) The image of South Africa as the last bastion of the White's rule in Africa.**
- 4) The image of the constant conflict between White and Black civilizations.**

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South Africa's adapting old images:

1) The image of the full separation (apartheid) of White and non-White citizens (with reinterpretation).

2) The image of the struggle between pro-democratic opposition and the authoritarian regime (with reinterpretation).

3) The image of the British colonial rule and the decolonization in Africa (with reinterpretation).

4) The image of the Afrikaner 'Die Groot Trek' and the Boer Wars – 'Vryheidsoorloë'.

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Conclusion:

- 1) The politics of memory is a significant factor of the government's influence on the society during the democratization.**
- 2) The re-narrating past may be based on two main strategies: remembering v. forgetting, however remembering includes narrating new stories, and adapting old ones.**
- 3) Polish politics of memory represented the major shift of state's identity, and the process of becoming a Western country.**
- 4) South African politics of memory was focused on preventing a development of interracial conflicts in new democratic conditions.**



Thank You for attention!

patryk.wawrzynski@gmail.com

<http://wawrzynski.wordpress.com>

**Patryk
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Contact: patryk.wawrzynski@gmail.com

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