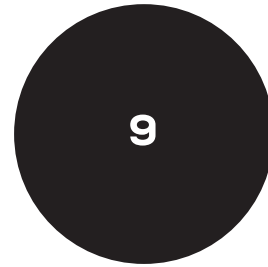




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The Stadium as a Witness. A Story of a Changing Monument

This monumental building was built to perpetuate the 10th anniversary of the introduction of communism in Poland, but since the end of the 1980s it played a shameful role as Europe's largest bazaar.¹

Discussing the Stadium, Bazaars and Post-Socialism

In this article we discuss the National Stadium in Warsaw and its earlier incarnation, the 10th Anniversary Stadium, as a monument of transition: a place where conflicts present in society might resurface, becoming more pronounced and visible. We look at the case of the Stadium because of its symbolic meaning, both before 1989 and today. Another reason to analyse this object is the transformation of this space and the remaking of the whole area that has taken place during the last 25 years. We were also interested in iconoclastic gestures, and so the demolition of the Decenary Stadium² in 2010 was a case in point: a telling example of what happened in public space in post-socialist Poland.

We used ethnographic methods to uncover the multiple and sometimes conflicting visions of this place, collecting narratives about the Stadium and analysing how it functioned in the public discourse.³ People we interviewed belonged to two main groups. First of all, we interviewed people for whom the Stadium and the bazaar were of great importance, a part of their everyday lives. Some of those people had relatives working at the Stadium, some lived nearby and treated the bazaar as an everyday shopping place. We also supported our analysis with interviews conducted in 2009-10 with activists engaged in projects connected to the Stadium, just after the closing of the old Decenary Stadium. We focused specifically on the time of transition, when the bazaar was operating in the Stadium. The creation of bazaars is a phenomenon characteristic of post-socialist



The "Europe Bazaar" seen from above with the central part called *Korona (Crown)* (source)

transformation.⁴ The existence of the Stadium-Bazaar⁵ was recent enough for people to have vivid memories of it, yet the space has already been remade, and therefore functions in a new way. Moreover, we looked at the experiences of activists, people who engaged in different activities in the Stadium and had a different approach to the place from the average visitor. They took a stand in the discussion around the demolition of the old Stadium, engaged in commemorating and re-creating it, and also created an image of the Stadium that attracted others.

A portion of the activities surrounding the Stadium-Bazaar was connected to multicultural projects because of the high number of foreigners working in the *Jarmark Europa*⁶, and so we also take a closer look at this issue. We use the metaphor of visibility/invisibility to show the changes taking place in the Stadium, as these themes emerge from our research and observations. Invisibility ruled over this space, starting with the Decenary Stadium-turned-Bazaar, which housed trade, but also foreignness, illegality, and fakes. The place was “invisible”, in a sense - even though it was so close to the centre of Warsaw. It was a separate space, ruled by its own laws and modes of operating.⁷ Phenomena impossible elsewhere could take place in the Europa Bazaar, otherwise invisible groups could act freely within that space. In this way, the Stadium enabled the existence of “multicultural Warsaw”, and helped the Vietnamese, Ukrainians, Russians, Belorussians, Nigerians, Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Laotians, Koreans, Bulgarians, and many other immigrant groups, find their own place in the city.⁸

Although it is an important context for this article, *transition* is also a very debatable term, one that has elicited many heated discussions within academic circles. Even though it is popularly used by journalists, it has also become the subject of strong critique, mostly by scholars connected to post-socialist studies. The objection expressed most frequently by researchers is connected to the wide connotations of the term *transition*. The sole word *transition* suggests that the process described by it is unilinear and has a clear end. An object or, in this case, a state, can undergo transition and as a result change from one condition to another. The change is perceived as complete and all-encompassing. When used in the context of post-socialist states, transition can therefore be understood as a particular process of *catching up* with states that did not experience the socialist regime. An extreme reading of this term could therefore suggest that post-socialist countries are remarkably similar to Western countries - the only difference would

be their socialist history and the time still needed to catch up with the capitalist part of the world. Critical views of the term transition also suggest a shift in perspective on post-socialism. As Michał Buchowski argues, the dominant perspective both reduces the present differences between Western and post-socialist states and orientalizes the latter.⁹ One of the possible solutions would be to use a new language¹⁰, a language that could be filled with meanings devoid of former connotations. Alternatively, we can stick to the old terms but use them with caution, aware of their underlying implications. In this article we intend to do the latter. We therefore use the term *transition*, but wish to distance ourselves from the narrow meaning it sometimes takes on.

As Schlögel argues, bazaars always emerge “where a context that has been torn apart must be remade”, and are undeniably connected to processes of transition in the post-socialist countries, as a “paradigmatic form of post-socialist cities”. He goes even further and argues that transformation itself can be defined in terms of the existence or non-existence of the bazaar: “where it has disappeared, the process is complete, while wherever it still exists, it is still needed”.¹¹ The Stadium-Bazaar, a paradigmatic form of post-socialist cities, loaded with symbolic meanings based on its history and localization, as argued by Schlögel, also reflected particular processes connected to the Polish transition time.

At the time of transition, Warsaw was subject to numerous changes. One of them, as Szcześniak notices, was a shift in the approach to consumer goods.¹² When the Polish market became open for foreign brands, Polish people came to experience the availability and variety of goods. With original brands being brought on to the market, the issue of fakes arose. In 1993, a ban on imitating original goods was implemented, and the newly-passed law defined “a fake” as a category of commodity.¹³ At the same time, media began to educate consumers on how to distinguish the fake from the original. The status of the commodities changed: as consumers became educated in the ways of the market, fake products went from being completely transparent to being visible.

A similar process influenced the choice of places people shopped in. The landscape



Opening of the 10th Anniversary Stadium (source)

of buying has changed: the popularity of shopping malls has risen, while the status of bazaars changed, similarly to the status of the goods that one could buy there. As stated by Sulima, shopping in bazaars is dictated by *occasion buying*.¹⁴ Consumers are able to see the goods, compare prices, and choose the best offer. They are not limited by the brand. Availability, usability, and price are the sole factors taken into account. The space of the bazaars is chaotic, argues Sulima, pointing out the Stadium-Bazaar as an example.¹⁵ The chaos and lack of clear organization is opposed, in his article, to well-organized shopping malls. The latter are easily accessible due to their clear arrangement, and maps available at almost every corner. Customers in shopping malls are guided, while people buying in the bazaar have to follow their luck, diving into the disorder of the place. While we find the general theses about how the two shopping spaces are ruled by different practices very revealing, we do not agree with the claim of a lack of clear organization in the bazaar, as we found that people's experiences of this space were different.

The History of the Stadium, or What Rose on the Ruins

Jarmark Europa, a huge bazaar situated in the heart of Warsaw, was always teeming with life. Buyers knew very well that to get what they wanted, they needed to come early, as the place became deserted around two in the afternoon. The market opened long before sunrise for wholesale trade, later switching to retail. It was a colourful and chaotic place that emerged in 1989 on the grounds of the 10th Anniversary Stadium as the biggest bazaar in this part of Europe. Traders from all over the world sold *everything* there, in densely set up makeshift stalls made of corrugated iron.¹⁶ Booths were filled with inexpensive garments "made in China", counterfeited designer perfumes, fancy Russian winter coats, as well as pirated DVDs and second-hand electronics; fast-food bars with *chińszczyzna*¹⁷ mixed with stalls selling hamburgers or Turkish kebabs. In between all of these, Romanian beggars and fortune-tellers, vendors with puppies and other pet animals for sale, and hundreds of customers looking for an *okazja*: an opportunity to buy something cheap.¹⁸ Although the official name of the bazaar was "Europe" (*Europa*), many sellers working there were from outside Europe. No one seemed to pay any attention to the name, which fell into disuse overtime, and was replaced by the popular term *Stadion*.

In the middle of the bazaar there was an alley of bars, popularly referred to as the “Vietnamese Alley”, where one could find what can be called authentic Vietnamese cuisine, made by and for the Vietnamese community. This inconspicuous bystreet, where almost no one spoke Polish, became famous for its food and atmosphere at the time of the closing of the upper part of the bazaar in 2008.¹⁹ The other, lower part of the bazaar with the alley was still functioning until the summer of 2010.²⁰ By then, the construction of the new National Stadium, a whole new facility to be built in the place of the 10th Anniversary Stadium, was in full swing. The new sports arena was set to be completed before the UEFA European Football Championships held in Poland and Ukraine in 2012.



Moving through the bazaar alleys in a crowd of customers (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

The closing of the Europa Bazaar after almost 20 years of its existence, along with the announcement of the plans to build a new stadium, triggered a lively response from various social actors. Although it would be an overstatement to say that a conflict erupted, it is fully justified to say that the idea was highly discussed. Positive comments came from municipal officials and the ruling party, as well as from a number of citizens – city inhabitants, football fans and others, who wished for the national capital to look “more representative”.²¹ Indeed, the late *Stadion*²² was not considered to be a nice place. The facilities and grounds of the once glorious 10th Anniversary Stadium, which started to fall into ruin as early as the 1980s, were covered with provisional shacks and stalls, with no heating or sanitary system. The overcrowded bazaar produced tons of garbage, which as many of our interviewees claimed, “infected”, not only the Stadium itself, but also the nearby stations of suburban trains and long-distance buses. Some even say that it influenced the image and the standard of living of the entire Praga Południe district. According to these people, the Stadium made it look uncivilized, dirty, and chaotic – especially in comparison with the clean-cut Saska Kępa, the neighbouring residential area with a pre-war history, which has been rapidly gentrifying since the early 2000s. Clearing out this chaotic manifestation of transition-time entrepreneurship not only changed the appearance of the Stadium’s surroundings – the Washington Roundabout, Zieleniecka Alley, Poniatowski Bridge, and Zamoyski Street – but also brought more money and “development” to the district. South

Praga, once considered to be the most dangerous part of the city, began to transform.²³ The prices of flats began to rise, forcing many low-income families to move out. Moreover, hundreds of immigrants from Vietnam, the former USSR, the Balkans, and other places, for whom the Europe Bazaar was the main, if not the only, source of income, lost interest in living in the area and moved to other places.²⁴

On the other hand, there were multiple voices questioning the plans of building the new Stadium there, as well as the general municipal idea of the "revitalization" of South Praga. The final decision to build the National Stadium precisely where the 10th Anniversary Stadium stood was made by the Civic Platform²⁵ in 2007, shortly after it came to power. It was done in order to speed up the process of preparations for the Euro 2012 Football Championships, which had been slowed down by the indecisiveness of the Law and Justice party, formerly in power. The National Sports Centre was established and made responsible for the construction of the new object. The project was criticized from the very beginning by a number of oppositional politicians and non-governmental organizations for being rushed, overly-expensive, and badly-planned. One of the main arguments was that there already existed a functioning football stadium in Warsaw - the *Legia Warszawa* football Stadium, also in close proximity to the city centre. However, the original plan assumed that the grounds of the National Stadium would consist of several other facilities, including a sports and entertainment hall for about twenty thousand people. Even though these plans were withheld, the general cost of the construction of the new stadium much exceeded the estimated budget.²⁶ A number of problems with the subcontractors throughout the building process, and the question of whether the National Stadium would be profitable, strengthened the ambiguous feelings Varsovians had towards the new construction.

The last remains of the bazaar - tens of tinsplate booths by Zamoyski Street, called *Bazarek przy Zamoyskiego* - were returned to their location after a short break. They were going to be removed in the autumn of 2014, and orders were given for the stalls to be dismantled, but the sellers did not give up. For the time being they sell their wares from tables under big umbrellas, fighting the official court ruling that ordered them to remove all permanent structures from the place.²⁷ The whole process, from the removal of the first stalls in 2008, to the present day, six years later, when the last ones continue to withstand modernization and revitalization

efforts, has been closely covered by the media. A local activist recently wrote: "There is a project, an idea, for these few booths which are left of the famous bazaar to become a monument of the economic and cultural transition [in Poland] after the fall of communism. I am in favour of this".²⁸ Indeed, Polish entrepreneurship exploded in the period of transition: one could see people selling things in almost every possible place. Expressions of this boom of entrepreneurship could be witnessed in the empty public spaces, i. e. post-socialist squares, once used for state- and party-sponsored events. In Warsaw of the early 1990s, provisional stalls appeared almost overnight in Parade Square (*Plac Defilad*) by the Palace of Culture and Science (*Pałac Kultury i Nauki*) and in Constitution Square (*Plac Konstytucji*), central to the *MDM*,²⁹ an impressive soc-realist residential complex. The 10th Anniversary Stadium was another empty space taken over by traders: inspired by the new opportunities of the free market, they incorporated the space of the once glorious Stadium into the new economy.³⁰

However, the beginnings of the Stadium were quite different. Planned on the 10th Anniversary of the Polish People's Republic,³¹ it celebrated the new Polish statehood and was designed to strengthen the communist social order.

The construction of the object was astonishingly quick: it was completed in a little over 11 months!³² The Stadium needed to be ready for the Fifth World Festival of Youth and Students, a celebrated event for communist countries, which was supposed to promote peace and coexistence between the nations of the world. Moreover, during the period of the People's Republic of Poland, the Feast of July 22nd was the most important national holiday, celebrated by parades and huge official festivals, which required an arena in order to be performed. The 10th Anniversary Stadium was therefore built with panache. It contained a football field and a 400-meter racing track, with seats for 71,008 people.³³ During the biggest events it could accommodate 100,000 spectators. Moreover, the Stadium's complex consisted of a practice field, a small sports dome, and 900 parking spaces. Surrounded by a park, it was well connected with the nearby bus and railway station, which were opened specifically for the purpose of bringing the spectators to the events.

What seems particularly interesting is the way that the 10th Anniversary Stadium was built: the facility was raised on 'embankments' made out of the debris of war-

destroyed Warsaw. Broken bricks of old apartment houses were reused for the purpose of rebuilding, in a symbolic way, Polish society. It was not only a monument constructed to celebrate political events, but also, in the words the stadium's architect Jerzy Hryniewiecki, "the most democratic architectural form (...) in a way it provides all people with equally good conditions to watch and experience."³⁴ This is how, years later, he described his idea of the object:

[At the Stadium] people take part in events in the most active way. They are not only the audience, but also co-creators of the place. An empty stadium with sportsmen achieving great results is not the same as a stadium filled with people [watching it]. This stadium also has the value of allowing you a chance to come and spend the day there. You can sunbathe, get some fresh air, enjoy the view - all the things everyone misses, if deprived of them on a daily basis. [...] For urban dwellers, a stadium like this is fascinating and gives them a lot of freedom.³⁵

The whole complex was one of the important urban projects of the People's Republic of Poland. For years, older generations were accused of feeling "socialist nostalgia" towards the building, but now, a new interest in the legacy of the former regime is emerging among young people - contemporary urban planners, architects, photographers, and historians.³⁶

Similarly to the 1955 Stadium, the National Stadium of 2012 was also built somewhat hastily. The spirit of the time might have been different, but the work had to be done in an extremely short period of time. There were only four years between the closing of the Stadium-Bazaar and the UEFA Championships. What also connects the two openings is the international spirit of these events - both the 1955 Youth Festival and the 2012 Euro Football Championships gathered an audience from multiple countries. They were a celebration of both national identity and of multiculturalism, especially when taking into account the accompanying festive atmosphere in the city's streets. Photographic documentation of the two openings clearly shows a celebration of unity amongst difference, short-lived yet powerful - in 1955, young people from all over the world dancing in national costumes on the streets of newly rebuilt Old Town, and in 2012 football fans in national colours gathering to see matches in the pubs and open-air fan zones in Warsaw.

Today, what is left of the old 10th Anniversary Stadium - apart from pictures and memories - is, surprisingly, a monument. The "Relay-race" (*Sztafeta*) sculpture was supposed to symbolise communist brotherhood and the idea that to win the race of progress, all citizens have to run "for the common good" as fast as they can. Today the renovated monument, still standing proudly in front of the Stadium, is a link between the past and the present - it was left where it stood for decades, not only for its artistic value, but also for a historical one. Even though traces of the complicated history - the problematic communist and transition-time heritage³⁷ - were supposed to be wiped out from the *new* Stadium, the fixed figures of the runners are a silent reminder of the long-gone glory of the Decenary Stadium, and the beliefs that underpinned the foundation of the previous construction.



The "Relay-race" (*Sztafeta*) sculpture in front of the new National Stadium (Przemysław Jahr/Wikimedia Commons)

Routes and Routines: Everyday knowledge of the Stadium

You could reach the Stadium-Bazaar in a few different ways: there was a tram, a bus, and a train going there. I used to go to the Stadium by tram. I would get out at the Zieleniecka Alley stop; it was the closest stop to my favourite part of Jarmark Europa - the north part, with lots of Vietnamese sellers. I would go there to get new underwear or fake perfumes. You would go out of the tram, go through the pedestrian crossing, smoothly avoiding the Gypsy women from Romania, who told the future from a deck of cards for five zlotys. This was a very nasty crossing and you had to run to make it to the other side, without waiting for the green light. And then, the closer you got, the more street sellers you met, and in no time you were inside the "Stadium". There was a little gate, but it really didn't have any beginning. At some point the booths would start and you would get inside one of the alleys. I would enter the first one on the left, just by the bazaar's border. And then I would pass the small Vietnamese canteen, which was on the left. If you went straight, you got to the underwear and shoe stalls. If you entered the second or third alley, not the first one, and immediately turned left into the perpendicular alley, you would get to the perfume stands run by "Russians" - different sellers from the former USSR. If you followed that alley for a while, passing through the stands with clothes and shoes, you would at some point reach the "Vietnamese alley", where you would

be able to buy ethnic food, loved by some and feared by others.

While the Stadium-Bazaar was sometimes perceived as chaotic or even dangerous, our informants said that they usually felt safe there. They followed their paths and knew their way around the Stadium-Bazaar. They had their favourite places; booths they knew, and routes they usually followed. When asked about it, they listed places they would visit in order to get what they were looking for, whether it was special food, cheap white t-shirts for kids from a sports school, an elegant though inexpensive fabric needed for a prom dress, or small-size shoes, impossible to get elsewhere. Visiting the Stadium-Bazaar was a part of their routine. They would go there when in need of a certain commodity, and usually get it. To do so they stuck to the paths they knew: booths they recognized, vendors they remembered. The Stadium, while exotic and definitely unusual, was also a part of their lives. It was a space of diversity, yet it was manageable to find one's way in it. There was also an element of surprise: the process of buying was frequently a process of looking for the cheapest offer (*okazja*), but it was not an uncontrolled dive into a chaotic, unknown field. Through experience they gained knowledge, which made it easy for them to move around the place: a place that nonetheless remained a puzzle.

The Stadium-Bazaar was a frequent subject of stories, some of which we should categorize as urban legends, even if told as eye-witness accounts. It shows how much the Stadium was an imagined space of the unknown, the exotic, and the dangerous, somehow a liminal space; notwithstanding the fact that it was at the same time a well-known place of everyday shopping and leisure. The Stadium thus became a space where everything could happen - the huge space and the variety of people one could meet there was enough to create such imaginaries. The stories recounted by people had different topics: the exotic animals one could buy there, the availability of every imaginable item at the bazaar, the strange customs of different ethnic groups, the dangers one could encounter there, and the items one bought there as a source of pride. Some of the narratives recounted dangerous encounters in the bazaar, and were told as a kind of warning to those who would break the rules of the place. One very vivid story recounted to us was a story of a woman who was robbed in the Stadium and then violently blinded, because she was careless enough to expect help from a stranger and admitted that she had seen the thief. While this story was especially terrifying, there were other scary legends circulating around the city, proving just how dangerous the Stadium-

Bazaar could be if you did not know how to behave. Alongside those legends, our interlocutors described other astounding experiences. One of our informants felt endangered during one of her visits to the Stadium; another had arrived there just after a police raid and witnessed the place completely swept out, with single vendors peeking out of their hiding places, waiting for the danger to pass.

Serving as a frame for all those experiences was a set of rules people followed in order to feel safe. One of the most important rules was to stay away from the upper part of the Europe Bazaar, the so-called "Crown" (*Korona*). People would only go up there when in need of a particular commodity: illegal computer games, second-hand phones, pirated DVDs, or cassettes and CDs with music. It was common knowledge that one could buy almost everything there, including drugs and weapons. In addition to the potential danger, the *Korona* was also frequently described as unwelcoming. Women, especially young, often said that they felt uneasy, in particular when they ventured there alone. This gave one the feeling that the top part of the bazaar was a men's place. This characteristic was typical in the knowledge of the Stadium: there were some places where our interlocutors would not go alone. They felt safer if they were accompanied by friends or family. Another rule was to be careful with money. Some would wear their backpacks on their chests, instead of at their back, to avoid robbery. Others noted that it would be careless to take a big sum of money to the Stadium. Even with all those potential dangers, the majority of our informants said that they felt rather safe in the Stadium: the above-mentioned precautions were presented as a kind of a guideline, part of the knowledge that made the Stadium a place one could regularly go to without any unpleasant incidents happening.

Knowledge of how to move through the bazaar came from experience: both personal and shared by others. The Stadium therefore appeared to be exclusive. While it was accessible in terms of prices, it was not in terms of usage: to buy there, you needed to know how it worked. Many would be introduced to the Stadium by a third party: a person who was fluent in how to move around the bazaar's grounds. Our interlocutors who were frequent visitors to the bazaar told us how their friends and acquaintances would ask them to be taken to the *Jarmark Europa*. People with a knowledge of the Stadium would become guides for those who were new to the place.

The knowledge, while crucial in guiding the buyers through the Stadium-Bazaar, was also very partial. Even those of our informants who spent a lot of time there would admit that they were not familiar with all of it. Vendors or particular stalls were points of reference that allowed them to orient themselves in the space of the bazaar. However, gaps in their knowledge did not seem to affect their ability to move around the Stadium. Contrary to what Sulima writes about being lost at the bazaar³⁸, they were still able to get what they wanted and usually felt safe following their routines. The unknown was a part of the Europe Bazaar experience, yet it did not obscure the perspective on the known. One could say that the unknown was adapted: while still alien and sometimes incomprehensible, it was in place at the Stadium.

“I remember they laughed at my shoes”: Commodities, Growing up, and Moments of Embarrassment

Commodities bought by our interlocutors at the Stadium-Bazaar were mentioned and remembered within varied contexts. Some would remember buying their favourite things and describe how useful the place could be in terms of providing goods at affordable prices. However, commodities bought at the Stadium were sometimes also remembered in the context of quick changes in the approach to things, changes that were a part of the Polish transformation period.³⁹ Some of our informants told us about the particular feeling of shame they felt when they were able to tell the fake from the original commodity for the first time. We show the process of changing their perspective on things and their origin as intertwined with the personal stories of our informants.

When people talked to us about the Stadium, it was mostly about buying things at the Stadium-Bazaar. It was about the weekly trips to buy necessary socks, t-shirts, and underwear, buying small household appliances or the like with the family, occasionally hunting for nice shoes and dresses with friends, the ritual of buying sportswear for those who did sports, but also venturing out to find specific vegetarian food products (i.e. tofu), or trying to find something extravagant, but not highly priced: a Chinese dress with a Mandarin collar, red shoes, a sheepskin coat, or fabric for a prom dress.

Shame emerged as an important theme in what people said about the Stadium-

turned-bazaar. Many of our interviewees shared stories of a specific moment when they realized that buying in the Stadium is embarrassing and that things they bought there could become a source of shame. These moments were usually connected with a realization that the products bought at the bazaar were fakes or that the things available there were different from things bought elsewhere. The recognition came through a clash with a different view, be it a friend expressing an opinion in a conversation, a group of peers making fun of the speaker, or a parent resisting the idea of buying something for the child. One of the women we talked to remembered how her mom refused to buy her the shoes she very much wanted, and laughingly commented on this fact, using the knowledge she gained later: *I now know why she didn't want to buy them for me, but then I was not able to comprehend it.* Another example was of a girl being laughed at in school because she wore fake training shoes. Her shoes were not original, because the logo was wrong - the older boys who mocked her knew that already. She remembered how bad she felt. She said it was this precise moment when she realized that "they were only fake Adidas" and that there was something wrong in wearing them. There were more stories of this kind we heard in connection to the Europe Bazaar and the things bought there, and most of these stories were accounts of a change in the attitude towards these items. Referring to Kopytoff's idea of the social biography of commodities⁴⁰, we can perceive this moment of sudden realization as a moment when the commodity, undergoing a process of withdrawal from a particular social setting - in which the value was based mostly on utility - quickly loses its value.

In the narratives we collected, becoming aware of the shamefulness of buying at the bazaar was often connected with the fact of growing up, which coincided with the period of transition in Poland. Young people who grew up in the 1990s-2000s recounted how they visited the bazaar with their parents and how they ventured there with their teenage friends as a favourite pastime or as part of their daily shopping trips. For them the bazaar was often a natural place to shop until someone told them that it was "lame, uncool" (they used the Polish slang word *obciach*, which is very strongly associated with embarrassment). The negative narration about the *Europe Bazaar* can be connected with the period of the 1990s and 2000s when Polish society was supposed to "grow up" to democracy and capitalist economy. That was a phrase often heard in the public discourse, based on growth metaphors and Western ideas of development. The so-called "generation of

the transition" or the "generation of 1989" matured alongside the new economic system. At the time, people were being educated in proper consumer behaviour, especially by the media. Educated in knowing what and where to buy, in distinguishing the fake from the original, and in applying a proper dress code to their occupation and position.⁴¹ As Sulima has argued, commodities bought at the bazaar - contrary to those bought at the mall - are opaque.⁴² As they bear inseparable traces of their origin, when this identification with the Stadium becomes embarrassing, owning and wearing these things also starts to be problematic.

Shame: Stadium-Bazaar and its Unkempt Glory

For many Varsovians, the Stadium-Bazaar became a place that was strange, unknown, and unexpected: a space that was different from everything else they knew. People working there frequently looked and spoke differently. The whole place was filled with sounds of *strange* languages with a foreign, unknown melody. Even the smell was unusual, of strange, exotic food prepared and served in the Vietnamese alley. Our interlocutors would frequently recall the part of Stadium that was filled with bars and tiny restaurants of varied origins, and the food served there, with noticeable nostalgia. "It differed from the Vietnamese food you can buy now", said one of them. Another interlocutor fondly described the special dessert she would usually buy at the Stadium; during the conversation she struggled to find a right way to describe it. She did not know its name, as it was not available in places that a Varsovian would usually go to, and did not have a Polish name. While some referred to the Vietnamese alley with sentiment, others stated they have never eaten there, and would never dare to. They found the place dirty: some would talk about rats running around it. They would also cite the lack of canalization and proper sanitation to support their views. For them it was unthinkable to eat there, and the idea of doing so made them frown or laugh.

Those two completely different approaches to one aspect of the Europe Bazaar give away the ambiguity of the whole place. While its unusual and exotic character was perceived as a positive trait by some, others were more negative about the otherness and strangeness of the place. Some particular aspects of this negative perspective were undoubtedly connected to fear, as well as to a lack of understanding and being not accustomed to different languages, cultures, cuisines,

and everyday habits. Another aspect of that ambiguity, which became a necessary part of the perspective on the Stadium, was shame. Shame linked to the place. Shame as a part of experiencing the bazaar itself.

This particular type of embarrassment was experienced in various situations. Our interlocutors would sometimes refer to the feeling of shame connected to the sole process of buying at the Bazaar. The experience of buying there was described by some as unpleasant. Chaos, crowds, and noise were typical aspects connected to shopping at the Stadium, and while some were rather fond of the atmosphere, others would see it in a negative light. Experiencing the constant lack of comfort, trying on shoes and clothes in the open, in the din of the Stadium, in the dirt and where everyone could see were described as negative aspects of visiting the Stadium. Partaking in the everyday life of this chaotic community by buying; being a part of it, sharing this sometimes ambiguous, or even simply unpleasant experience with strangers: those encounters generated the unwanted feeling of shame. To avoid the humiliation, some would choose to buy only from particular sellers: for example from Vietnamese rather than Polish sellers. According to one of our interlocutors, the language barrier made the experience of buying at the Bazaar somewhat less shameful.

Embarrassment was not limited to the process of buying. The feeling of shame clung to the Stadium so strongly that even heading toward the Bazaar could cause it. People would say that they would sometimes feel uneasy about others knowing that they would go there. The whole place, the *Jarmark Europa*, was frequently described as dirty, even by those who were fond of it. Not only was the Stadium itself unkempt: its surroundings



Vietnamese trader and buyers.

(Source: *Wiedza i życie*, nr 9/1996)

were also dishevelled, as if the dirtiness was a sign of closeness to the Stadium's borders. The nearby train station was described as always dirty, filled with empty plastic bags and other mementos of the busy life of the nearby bazaar. The beach close to the Stadium was also affected. One of the most common opinions as to the way the new National Stadium affected the neighbourhood was that the beach finally became cleaner and open to all Varsovians. Opinions on the new Stadium also tell us a lot about the influence that the old Stadium, and the Europe Bazaar located within it, had on the neighbourhood. While many people were definitely not

happy with the change and strongly critical of the new monumental National Stadium, they would usually admit that the change was connected with making the surrounding area finally uncluttered and cleaner. Some would also connect the building of the new stadium with the neighbourhood getting safer, at least from their perspective. This goes hand-in-hand with the city's plans for the redevelopment of the Praga district and the vision of a new modernized area.

The Stadium described above, along with the chaos and griminess it created, was not necessarily a place that fit the image of a Western capital. This aspect was especially important at the time of transformation, when aspirations to being modern and Western became very visible; an important topic in public debates, loaded with symbolical meaning and emotions repressed during decades of socialist regime. The ambiguity of the spatial localization of Poland and its impact on Polish history has been the subject of many debates. According to the argument made by Jan Sowa, Poland has never belonged to Western or Eastern Europe. It belongs to the *in-between*, a part devoid of characteristic identity based on its spatial localization. It is therefore the *in-betweenness* that serves as a particularly important part of the identity of countries that do not belong to the West nor to the East.⁴³ As Magda Szcześniak notices, the year 1989 brought about a visible turn toward the Western world: both within Polish public discourse and in political decisions.⁴⁴ On the level of the city those aspirations were expressed by a particular approach to architecture and the general image of the public spaces. The professional discourse regarding this matter would frequently address the need to organize anew and clean up the space of the city.⁴⁵ This dialog would also embrace the evaluative labelling strategy regarding the East and the West. Those two categories, usually loaded with inscribed meaning, also became important in relation to the public sphere. Aspirations to fit an imaginary idea of a proper European capital influenced the perspective Varsovians had on their own city.

The above-described aspirations were also expressed when discussing the Stadium-Bazaar. "There should not be a bazaar in the centre of the city; not in a European capital, at least", said one of our interlocutors, when remembering the former Stadium. This perspective, expressed by many of our interlocutors, matched a visible trend within the public discourse: public debates and articles published in both newspapers and journals with academic aspirations. Warsaw was a city with a dynamically changing status. From a symbolic ally of the USSR to a city that, at

least from the perspective of so-called public opinion, turned to follow the path of capitalist Western countries. This turn is especially visible when analysing the Western popular discourse about the Polish transition: as stated by Elizabeth Dunn in *Privatizing Poland*, the Polish transition was met with a warm reception within the Western media.⁴⁶ It was described as “highly successful” in terms of bringing capitalist solutions to life. As the capital of a country that attracted so much attention, Warsaw also became a subject of strong critique. Varsovians were worried about its image; public space became a subject of newly emergent criticism, based on new foundations. Several aspects of the changes in public space started to be agitatedly discussed, and often strongly condemned. During the period following 1989 people were used to provisional stalls, temporary stands made of folding beds and plastic tables, so clearly visible nowadays when we take a look at the transition-era photographs of Warsaw streets (see for example the works of the photographer Tadeusz Rolke and his series of photographs taken during the time of transition⁴⁷).

This makeshift character of public space was an element of everyday life during a time where there was a constant shortage of supplies and basic articles. Then, with the shift on both political and aspirational levels, some places became visible in the everyday space of the city. The Stadium-Bazaar is an exemplary case of this process. As stated by Roch Sulima, after 1989 the Stadium became the quintessence of everything that was cheap.⁴⁸ Its legitimization became more and more doubtful as its structure dilapidated, and its role in state celebrations decreased in the 1980s.



After trading hours: rubbish at the empty Stadium Bazaar. (Source: lwogole.blogspot.com)

During the time of transition the Stadium’s presence was self-explanatory. While the transitional period was never connected to the shortage of supplies, there were still commodities that were difficult to obtain. The Stadium-Bazaar was a place where people were able to buy goods such as computer games, software programs, or denim pants at prices affordable for most during the time of the changing economy. Some goods were available there due to their origin: they were imported by immigrants who sold products in the Stadium. By providing people with goods that were difficult to get otherwise, the 10th Anniversary Stadium

symbolically gained a right to live even after it was already dead as a sports facility. Following the development of a free market economy in Poland, the *Jarmark Europa Bazaar* ceased to be indispensable. People were able to find the necessary goods in other places; shops became better equipped, Western brands got access to the Polish market, and the first shopping malls were built soon after. With this change, the approach to commodities was slowly transformed as well. The Stadium-Bazaar was no longer necessary, and its unkempt, temporary glory came to be seen as more and more out of place.

Something Ends, Something Begins. The Stadium's Catalyzing Power

The appearance of the Stadium and its current role seems to reflect the historical moment and the ongoing socio-cultural transformations. Being a monument of the present day, *Stadion* has become a catalyst, a scene of the most crucial social and political discussions. The visual and practical impact that the building had over the years on the whole city, and the Praga district in particular, became very appealing to a number of engaged citizens and social activists. The first highly memorable use of the stadium to stage dissent was the self-immolation of Ryszard Siwiec at the Harvest Festival in 1968, in protest against the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia. The place became a scene of political manifestation once again in 1983, during the visit of Pope John Paul II, when almost 1.5 million people came to the Stadium to take part in the papal mass and, using the scale of the event and its international mediality, to manifest their discontent with the regime.⁴⁹ It is interesting to see which initiatives appeared and which problems became more visible thanks to the presence of the Decenary Stadium and, more recently, the newly built National Stadium.

Europa Bazaar inspired a number of social and cultural projects near the end of its existence, probably due to its complicated, ambivalent character - both fascinating and repulsive. The multicultural 'salad bowl'⁵⁰ space of the bazaar and the labyrinth of green-painted stalls, with their "Oriental vibe", attracted urban activists. The Stadium itself, as a space and as a building, attracted the most interest around the time when the information about its demolition went viral: gossip about it was enough encouragement. A handful of non-governmental activists, artists, and social researchers engaged in the mission of documenting the diversity of this unique place, trying to attract media attention, and pulling the Stadium-Bazaar out

of the paradoxical invisibility, before it disappeared under the construction site of the National Stadium. This brought a new group of Warsaw inhabitants, migrant entrepreneurs from Asia and Africa, into the limelight. However, because the upper part of the bazaar was removed first, media mostly drew attention to the Vietnamese sellers, who stayed longer in the lower part of the market. When the *Stadion* still existed, you could easily see a Vietnamese family in Targowa Street, the main artery of the South Praga district, or around the Stadium. As migrant labourers do, they lived close to their workplace. However, the Vietnamese community, the biggest national minority in Warsaw, was barely visible elsewhere. For a long time, people eating “Chinese” fast foods did not know where the cooks came from. Also, the Vietnamese, unlike the Africans, kept more to themselves. Until the media started writing about it,⁵¹ almost no one knew that a Vietnamese temple, “Thien Viet”, and cultural center, “Thang Long”, stood in the proximity of the Stadium for nearly ten years.⁵² The traders found themselves in the spotlight of media attention.

Several activists working with migrant communities became interested in what Europa Bazaar and the old Stadium could offer. Apart from initiatives devoted strictly to the migrant traders⁵³, several projects focused also on the stadium itself, exploring the history and changing role of the object. The first artistic project to take place in the space of the *Jarmark Europa* bazaar was the “Trip to Asia”.⁵⁴ Announced as “an acoustic walk”⁵⁵, it was a performative event designed to make participants understand how it is to work and live at the bazaar on an everyday basis. They asked people to embark on a journey:

For this trip take with you: an mp3, a map with instructions to follow, and a big plastic bag filled with underwear to be delivered to one of the bazaar's stalls. Get on the train, cross the imagined Europe/Asia border on the Vistula river and within 3 minutes you will arrive at the Europa Bazaar, *Warszawa Stadion* station. You can expect a cultural shock, a jetlag, some bizarre encounters, an everyday theater, acknowledging the local Vietnamese presence, and merging into the Buddhist micro-climate [of the nearby temple].⁵⁶



The famous “Vietnamese Alley” on the day of its closure, July 2010, photo by Agata Wróblewska. (Source: Slodkokwasna.pl)

The project was a success: it received a prestigious award⁵⁷ and attracted media attention to the presence of immigrants in Warsaw, giving the *Jarmark Europa* a new kind of positive recognition and visibility. It also became the inspiration for a sequence of six performative actions, known together as the "The Finissage of Stadium X".⁵⁸ They started a discussion about the "heterogeneity of the place, its (absent) presence in the middle of the post-communist city and the invisibility of the Vietnamese minority".⁵⁹ Although one might argue that the 10th Anniversary Stadium was just in the background of the ongoing events, these artistic initiatives raised a number of important questions about the Polish transition and the role of migrants in the city.

The socio-cultural initiatives undertaken in the years 2006-2008 came into dialogue with the space of the old *Stadium*, and brought a new kind of visibility to the picture. The *Jarmark Europa* started to be seen positively, contrary to the dominant negative image of a ruin and a dangerous and chaotic place. The activists prepared a foundation for what came next: the vivid public and media interest in the last months of the existence of the Europa Bazaar. Shopping at the Stadium or going there to eat a hot *Phở* soup in the morning became trendy. This influenced the way migrant labourers were perceived in Warsaw, and it was the Vietnamese community that gained the most.⁶⁰ The popularity of *Stadion* food, such as the famous *Phở* and *Bún Bò Nam Bộ* salad, remained even after the bazaar was demolished. Several activists helped the owners of the most prosperous food stalls from the alley to move their businesses to a new location. What is very surprising are the locations to which these small "underground" bars moved: the very centre of the city, for example, the expensive Chmielna Street.⁶¹ Today we can buy Vietnamese food in bars and restaurants all over Warsaw. The once infamous cuisine, accused in urban legends of being based on the meat of city pigeons or even stray dogs,⁶² became one of the trademarks of progressive Warsaw: a multicultural, modern European capital. As one activist said:

It was a big chance for [the Vietnamese] to come into being in the very heart of Warsaw, amongst, so to say, regular society, and they did. There is a Vietnamese bar right by Starbucks! They don't live in the ghetto anymore, nor somewhere on the margins of the city. They became the very flesh of this city.⁶³

Paradoxically, the danger of the imminent demolition of *Jarmark Europa* gave the Vietnamese and other migrant communities visibility in public discourse, which has not disappeared with time.⁶⁴

The Stadium was also a catalyst in the domain of discussing the vision for public space in Warsaw. The plans to build the new National Stadium in the place of the 10th Anniversary Stadium triggered a vivid social reaction, not only among social and cultural activists, but also ordinary citizens. The first voices of critique came from the initiators of the "Stadium X" project and from the SISKOM Association.⁶⁵ The act of demolition of both objects, the Decenary Stadium, as well as the Europe Bazaar, was sometimes interpreted as an act of symbolic violence. Joanna Warsza wrote on the fifth anniversary of the "Finissage" project: "The National Stadium ... aspires - through its white-and-red basket⁶⁶ - to ultimately demonstrate to all immigrants, who for a decade have created one of the most fascinating cultural and urban areas in the city, who is the boss."⁶⁷

Several local activists wondered why the new stadium could not be built outside the city like many other modern stadiums. Some proposed to turn the old stadium into a museum of transition by registering it as a heritage site.⁶⁸ At the same time, activists interested in the city's public transportation and urban development had mixed feelings about the project: "SISKOM was critical towards the visual side of the National Stadium project and the amount of money it took to build. The rush and chaos before the Euro 2012 Football Championships."⁶⁹ They thought, however, that there was still "much room for improvement": the original plans of the development of the National Stadium included building a neighbouring infrastructure for smaller cultural and sport events, as well as the wider plans of the revitalization of the South Praga district.⁷⁰

While the Euro 2012 united crowds in the spirit of supporting the national team against rival countries, several spontaneous grass-root movements actively critiquing the government's organization of the championships have sprung up. A performative artistic movement called "Flowers from the Flower Bed" (*Kwiatki z rabatki*), demonstrations under the slogan "Bread, not Olympics" (*Chleba zamiast igrzysk*), and a group of volunteers called "Shame on the Vistula" (*Wstyd nad Wisłą*)⁷¹ cleaning up the left bank of the Vistula in Warsaw are just a few examples of these civic reactions.⁷² Nevertheless, the games brought about the finalization of

some critical investments in the city, drew the attention of government officials to a number of important issues, and had a strong influence on the way Praga looks today. The first step towards the aesthetic transformation of the area was the shutdown of the Europa Bazaar.

The non-governmental and artistic projects attracted a very narrow audience – young, educated Varsovians, who used to go to the ill-famed bazaar anyway. When the *Jarmark Europa* was finally being shut down, the attention of the public reached its peak. As one of the interviewees pointed out: “even if people used to go there earlier to shop or eat, they started to look at the place in a different way”. Indeed, the shutting down of the bazaar changed people’s perception of the Stadium and the Praga district. The decision to close down the Europa Bazaar was also the first step towards a municipally-planned aesthetization of Warsaw’s central area, fulfilled today by the newly-opened second metro line and the controversial revitalization of city parks.⁷³ This modernization has “moved the centre closer to Praga”, or “Praga closer to the center”, as one of our interlocutors argued.

When the bazaar’s mysterious, colourful matter was dismembered, it put focus on the migrants, who had until then remained unseen, although they had lived in the city for years. The visibility of African and Asian immigrants in the public space of Warsaw has grown incomparably since 2008-09, when the Decenary Stadium with the Europa Bazaar disappeared from the city landscape. The fact that social and cultural activists started to pay attention to a number of minorities made them and their problems visible to the public and the politicians. We thus argue that the Stadium itself had a catalysing power, accelerating certain processes, bringing up issues left out of the public debate, and creating spaces where certain groups could be active.

Invisible Turning Visible, and What Comes Out of It

Visibility and invisibility functioned on many different levels at the Stadium-Bazaar. First, the dilapidated sports arena and the Europa Bazaar were invisible in the urban landscape of Warsaw, blending in with the surrounding greyness, chaos, and temporariness of post-socialist structures.⁷⁴ Placing the bazaar at the Decenary Stadium was a consequence of the economic changes in the country. Any empty space could become a place of economic activity – in the new system nothing should be left unused, and unprofitable. The freer movement across borders,

resulting in the possibility of foreigners coming to Poland to work, and a trading boom amongst Polish citizens, gave new life to the old stadium. As Psimmenos argues, immigrants often revitalize socially 'dead' places⁷⁵, which can be said of the Decennary Stadium at that time. The Stadium has had its glorious past and has been an important place for state-oriented and sports activities, both of which are important for building national pride and unity. However, it fell into disrepair in the late 1970s-1980s,⁷⁶ and ceased to play an important role in the everyday life and the imaginaries of the city's inhabitants.

With time, the Stadium as Bazaar gained visibility in a negative sense. With changing ideas on how to manage public space, a sports arena filled with makeshift stalls came to be more and more out of place in the middle of the modern European capital that Warsaw aspired to be. Together with this new way of perceiving *Jarmark Europa* came a desire to get rid of it, demolish it, and erase any trace of it from the local history. Aside from being connected to the process of forgetting the communist past, this iconoclastic drive played with ideas of what is beautiful, modern, valuable, and Western, versus what is wild, backward, cheap, and Eastern.

When the urge to remove the 10th Anniversary Stadium found its realization in the plans of building the new National Stadium for the UEFA Euro 2012 Football Championships, and when all the plans were set into motion, there came a second phase in the process of the Stadium gaining visibility. This phase was characterized by a growing interest in the "otherness" and "exoticism" of the Stadium. It hosted a lot of different nationalities, spoke many languages, and offered products unknown or unavailable elsewhere. The interest was spurred by urban activists, who re-discovered the Stadium-bazaar, making it a part of broader academic discussions about the local and the global.⁷⁷

Suddenly people wanted to venture into the undiscovered Vietnamese alleys, find the hidden shops, order meals from the illegible menus - in short, to experience a different Warsaw. This appetite for diversity, present among activist groups, gave the Stadium a new, even if short-lived, glory. Under the guidance of those who knew



New mosaic with the view of Warsaw with the National Stadium, 2015.
(Source: Twitter of TIKa)

the secrets of the bazaar, groups of people started to visit Vietnamese bars and wander between the stalls to feel the real spirit of diversity. Others still looked for the old glory of the place in the ruins of the Stadium, and artistic projects started to flourish. Most of them did not gather crowds, and were aimed at a specific audience, but they changed the scene. These projects, and their authors, lay claim to having made a lasting contribution to the history of the place.⁷⁸ Notwithstanding their claim, they did open up crucial discussions about local history and memory, the role and significance of the bazaar, and the presence of immigrants in public space.

The new National Stadium is no longer the multi-cultural hub it had been at the time of the bazaar: it has once again become a unifying, all-encompassing, and modern nation-building symbol through its national colors design and the use it is put to. The stadium is highly visible: it has risen high above the surrounding area. One cannot miss its imposing structure in the panorama of Warsaw. Supposedly, there was a need to construct it on the debris of the old Stadium, and the layers that lay below. However, it was clearly designed to be an impressive, massive construction, standing out in the city landscape, and visible from afar. Now the National Stadium is seen from many different points in Warsaw: from the Old Town, the central street Aleje Jerozolimskie, and the Praga and Saska Kępa districts.

This red and white "basket", as people call it, has become a new symbol of Warsaw, a site where tourists come to take pictures, as well as a place of moulding the future, where kids are brought for school trips. The National Stadium is visible in the media discourse and in the new visual representations of Warsaw. A good example is a traditional Turkish mosaic presenting the capital's panorama, recently placed in the hallway of the Politechnika Metro Station. Paired with the panorama of Istanbul, it is a gift from the Turkish Ambassador for the 600th anniversary of Polish-Turkish diplomatic relations. The mosaic shows the city skyline from the Praga side of the Vistula river, yet what catches the eye is the bright red-and-white shape in the lower right-hand corner: the National Stadium. A photo of this mosaic of city has been shared by the mayor of Warsaw on her official Facebook page, adding to the image that municipal government tries to create. Notwithstanding this official portrayal of the National Stadium, in the on-line discourse of memes, creations of virtual, open-collaboration communities, the giant structure is being called different names: the basket, the (Russian) shopping bag, the net, or the swimming pool. It

has been the subject of jokes, becoming a popular theme of *image macros*, the most common commentary tool of anonymous Internet users.

However, there is a high degree of satisfaction and pride from the new construction. The structure is valued for what it signifies for Poland and its citizens. The ultimate goals are growth, modernization, and being closer to the dreamed-of “Westernness”.

After the infamous events of the year 2013 when the rainbow in Saviour’s Square (*Plac Zbawiciela*) was burned down⁷⁹, Warsaw’s nationalist “Independence March” of 2014 was moved to a new location. The official reason for it, as they argued, was purely symbolic: to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the birth of the pre-

war leader of the nationalist movement, Roman Dmowski. The organizers led a march through places in Warsaw that commemorated their hero – starting from the Dmowski Roundabout (*Rondo Dmowskiego*), along the Jerusalem Alleys (*Aleje Jerozolimskie*), and ending in the National Stadium grounds, close to Skaryszewski Park, where an obelisk to the memory of Dmowski is placed. After a group of aggressive young militants attacked the police forces, a street battle erupted at the foot of the Stadium.⁸⁰ Its grounds once again became a witness of important events, events that spoke to the conflicts currently present in the Polish society.

Conclusion

Throughout this article, we have looked at the Stadium as a monument. First of all, we read it as a classical monument, that is, a structure that commemorates and appropriates space. Secondly, in our analysis the old and new *Stadion* is understood as a new kind of monument: a space where conflicts present in society resurface and are activated. The Stadium could be approached from many more perspectives, one of which could be looking at it as a form in transition between two social orders, moving through a dangerous and unpredictable liminal phase.⁸¹ Our theoretical focus made us see the bazaar and the events around it as a kind of lens that enables one to notice many processes crucial to the transformation. One of the conflicts made visible by the Stadium was the clash between the bazaar economy and new forms of consumer lifestyle. Another discussion that emerged was the



Example of a meme on the National Stadium: “The National Swimming Pool. The Chinese are interested in buying it...” (Source: [Artykul.com.pl](http://artykul.com.pl))

vision of the Stadium, which we argue can be read as representative for Poland, as a national space as opposed to a multicultural one. The story of the rise and fall of this architectural object also illuminates the different visions of public space, and the discourses of modernization and development.

At the end of its life, the 10th Anniversary Stadium gained a different kind of visibility. It happened through the activities of social and cultural activists who found the dilapidated Stadium-turned-Bazaar fascinating and worth documenting. The immigrants, who were invisible until then, also started to be seen as an emerging group in the supposedly homogenous Polish society. The group that gained the most visibility within the Warsaw public spaces were the Vietnamese, also due to the rapidly rising interest in their cuisine.

The moment when the 10th Anniversary Stadium was acknowledged as a place worthy of interest for some, and as a problematic space for others, was the moment when its fate was decided and its glory came to an end. The new National Stadium was already in the making. It rose on the ruins of the old stadium, and - as a classical monument does - started to dominate the space around it. The red-and-white basket of the construction stands as a clear sign of the national character of the stadium, and has since 2012 already become a new symbol of Warsaw, inescapable in the city landscape. The monumentality and verticality of the structure makes it highly visible - a sign of Warsaw and its aspirations. The Stadium comes back, in a tricky way, to its socialist state-building role and to being a source of pride for many: from a 1955 monument to the new socialist system to a 2012 monument to the market economy, modernization, and development.

Even though the new National Stadium has emerged as a symbolic national space, the memory of the earlier heterogeneous and diverse Stadium still exists through the embodied memories of people, visual representations of the old Stadium, and the signs and traces that can be found around the Stadium. It can also be seen in artistic happenings, which remind the public of what had existed there. Those actions and performances make it impossible to forget the heterogeneous, sometimes painful, history of the Stadium. A history that some perceive as



The nationalist *Independence March* at the foot of the Stadium, November 11, 2014. (Source: Polityka Warszawska)

shameful. The very recent commemoration of Maxwell Itoya, a Polish-Nigerian trader shot by the police in 2010, can be seen as an evocation of such a memory of the past *Stadion bazaar*.⁸² On the 5th anniversary of his death, Maxwell Itoya was honoured by a group of activists who named a small square in close proximity to the Stadium after him. It brought back, if only for a brief moment, the complex transition time history of this space, which is being actively forgotten by Varsovians. Erasing the history of the Stadium happens in the process of becoming modern and thereby getting rid of everything that was a source of shame, and through the establishment of new buildings and new infrastructure by the city, as well as in the new ways in which people use this space.

Footnotes

1 From the Polish online guide issued for foreign football fans of UEFA Euro 2012 Football Championships. More to be seen on the official website:

<http://polishguide2012.pl/en/warszawa/fan-guide/stadium/>, accessed June 19, 2015.

2 We use both English translations for *Stadion Dziesięciolecia: 10th Anniversary Stadium* and *Decennary Stadium*, as you can find both names in the English-language publications and information on the subject.

3 The research was done by a team of four cultural anthropologists: Magdalena Góralaska, Helena Patzer (head of the team), Emilia Piechowska, and Małgorzata Winkowska. The interviews and observations were collected from June 2014 to February 2015. We also used ethnographic materials gathered by M. Góralaska in 2009-10, and cooperated with Filip Skrońc, a photographer doing a project documenting the remains of the Stadium-Bazaar.

4 Gertrude Hüwelmeier, "Postsocialist Bazaars. Diversity, Solidarity, and Conflict in the Marketplace", *Laboratorium* 5(1) (2013): 42-66; Karl Schlögel, "Theses on Post-Socialist Urban Transformation," in *Chasing Warsaw. Socio-Material Dynamics of Urban Change since 1990*, ed. Monika Grubbauer and Joanna Kusiak (Frankfurt/New York: Foundation for Polish-German Cooperation, 2012); Magda Szcześniak, "Śmietnik z podróbkami. Kilka uwag na temat dyskusji o przestrzeni

miejskiej okresu transformacji," in *Postmodernizm polski. Architektura i urbanistyka*, ed. Lidia Klein (Warszawa: Stowarzyszenie 40 000 Malarzy, 2013), 118-143.

5 The term Stadium-Bazaar, denoting the common way the Europa Bazaar at the Decenary Stadium was referred to, was introduced by Roch Sulima, in his chapter *The Laboratory of Polish Postmodernity*. We thus use also his term, among others, in our article.

6 The *Jarmark Europa* bazaar will be referred to in this article as: Europe Bazaar, *Jarmark Europa*, the Stadium-Bazaar, or the *Stadion* bazaar.

7 Magdalena Szeniewska, "Na Stadionie jest moje życie," in *Etnografia do kieszeni, nr 2: Bazary* (Warszawa: Stowarzyszenie Pracownia Etnograficzna im. Witolda Dynowskiego, 2013).

8 Michał Buchowski, *Rethinking Transformation. An Anthropological Perspective on Post-Socialism* (Poznań Wydawnictwo Humaniora, 2001); Boris Buden, *Strefa przejścia. O końcu postkomunizmu*, trans. Michał Sutowski (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, 2012).

9 Michał Buchowski, "The Specter of Orientalism in Europe. From Exotic Other to Stigmatized Brother," *Anthropological Quarterly* 79(3) (2006): 463-482.

10 Monika Grubbauer and Joanna Kusiak, introduction to *Chasing Warsaw. Socio-Material Dynamics of Urban Change since 1990*, ed. Monika Grubbauer and Joanna Kusiak (Frankfurt/New York: Foundation for Polish-German Cooperation, 2012).

11 Karl Schlögel, *Post-Socialist Transformation*, 32.

12 Magda Szcześniak, "Od Umy do Pomy – o roli podróbki w polskiej transformacji," *Widok. Teorie i Praktyki Kultury Wizualnej* 1 (2013), <http://pismowidok.org/index.php/one/article/view/13/30>, accessed May 15, 2015.

13 Ibid., 10.

14 Roch Sulima, "The Laboratory of Polish Postmodernity. An Ethnographic Report from the Stadium-Bazaar," in *Chasing Warsaw. Socio-Material Dynamics of Urban Change since 1990*, ed. Monika Grubbauer and Joanna Kusiak,

(Frankfurt/New York: Foundation for Polish-German Cooperation, 2012).

15 Ibid.

16 Szcześniak, *Śmietnik z podróbkami*.

17 "Chinese food", the only Asian cuisine known widely in Poland in the 1990s, see: Hài Lê Thanh, "Pogranicze smaków. Antropologiczna refleksja o rozwoju wietnamskiej kuchni w Polsce od lat 90.," *Azja-Pacyfik* 17 (2014): 132-150.

18 Sulima, *Laboratory of Polish Postmodernity*; see also: Joanna Warsza, "Stadion X - Miejsce, którego nie było. O projektach performatywnych w przestrzeni Stadionu Dziesięciolecia," *Konteksty* 01-02 (2009): 166-171.

19 A testimony to the popularity of the Alley is the multiplicity of projects and activities that rose around it. One such example is the website *Slodkokwasna.pl*, where it is possible to see many photos and also take a virtual walk through the Vietnamese bars and stores. See: <http://www.slodkokwasna.pl/panorama.html>, accessed October 15, 2015.

20 The old Stadium was finally closed on September 6, 2008. The closing event was a commercial show (Red Bull X-Fighters) which attracted thousands of people. At the end of the event, Mirosław Drzewiecki, then Minister of Sports and Tourism, came up on stage to officially declare the closing of the stadium.

21 This sentiment was expressed several times. It was vocalized by our informants, but also by various journalists, and even academics, i.e: architects, whose narrations were analysed by Magda Szcześniak (*Szcześniak, Śmietnik z podróbkami*). This issue will be further developed throughout the article.

22 *Stadion* (Eng. Stadium) as a colloquial term is popularly used in reference to the same area for a couple of decades now, regardless of the changing nature of the place. The word *Stadion* with no further adjectives is popularly understood as the Decennary/National Stadium by default, in contrast to the other stadiums in Warsaw, which are always mentioned with their specific names.

23 In the future, the South Praga district will change completely as a consequence of the rebuilding of the old Praga Port (*Port Praski*), which will become the new business centre of right-bank Warsaw and an exclusive residential

area. See: *WawaLove*, <http://wawalove.pl/Tak-bedzie-wygladac-Port-Praski-FILM-ANIMOWANY-sl13968>, accessed May 30, 2015.

24 After the closing of the bazaar many immigrants went back to their home countries, or moved somewhere else, following work opportunities.

25 The Civic Platform (*Platforma Obywatelska*) is a political party, which was in power in Poland from 2007 to 2015.

26 The cost was higher by more than half billion Polish zlotys (PLN), according to the report of the Supreme Audit Chamber (NIK). See: "NIK negatively on the National Stadium's construction site supervision", *Gazeta Wyborcza*, April 23, 2014.

27 More on the issue of the fate of what is left from the Stadium can be found on the website of the project 1/280, an artistic documentation project of a young Warsaw photographer Filip Skrońc, carried out under a scholarship from the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. See: this issue of *View*.

28 "The Zamoyski Street Bazaar should become a monument of transition" ("Bazarek przy Zamoyskiego powinien zostać pomnikiem transformacji?"), *Gazeta Wyborcza*, October 5, 2014.

29 MDM (*Marszałkowska Dzielnica Mieszkaniowa*) is a huge housing complex and a communist heritage site by the Marszałkowska Street in Warsaw, build in the years 1950-1952, in soc-realist style.

30 See also: Sulima, *Laboratory of Polish Postmodernity*.

31 It was supposed to honour the July 22nd Manifesto of the Polish Committee of National Liberation. The Manifesto, signed in Lublin in 1944, proclaimed a provisional Soviet-backed government in Poland, and was seen as the founding of the Polish People's Republic.

32 "Prof. Jerzy Hryniewiecki, the main architect of the 10th Anniversary Stadium" ("Prof. Jerzy Hryniewiecki, główny architekt Stadionu Dziesięciolecia"), *Młody Technik*, Nr 2 (187) (1964): 46-47.

33 See also: *WawaLove*, <http://wawalove.pl/Przypominamy-historie-Stadionu-Dziesieciolecia-a5078>, accessed May 15, 2015.

34 A quotation from an interview with Jerzy Hryniewiecki in *Przegląd Tygodniowy* vol. 37 (1986). Used by the Museum of Praga, a branch of the Museum of Warsaw, for their exhibition on the Decenary Stadium (2008-2009). Source: Museum Archive.

35 Ibid.

36 See for example: Filip Springer, *Źle urodzone. Reportaże o architekturze PRL-u* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Karakter, 2011).

37 Buden, *Strefa przejścia.*; Szcześniak, *Śmietnik z podróbkami.*

38 Sulima, *Laboratory of Polish Postmodernity.*

39 Szcześniak, *Od Umy do Pумы.*

40 Igor Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things. Commoditization as Process," in *The Social Life of Things. Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

41 Szcześniak, *Od Umy do Pумы.*

42 Sulima, *Laboratory of Polish Postmodernity.*

43 Jan Sowa, *Fantomowe ciało króla. Peryferyjne zmagania z nowoczesną formą* (Kraków: Universitas, 2011).

44 Szcześniak, *Śmietnik z podróbkami.*

45 Ibid.

46 Elizabeth Dunn, *Privatizing Poland. Baby Food, Big Business, and the Remaking of Labor* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).

47 Tadeusz Rolke's exhibition of transition-time photographs was exhibited in Le Guern Gallery in 2013: <http://www.leguern.pl/wystawy/Tadeusz-Rolke-Jutro-Bedzie-Lepiej>, accessed June 18, 2015. See also: Dorota Jarecka, "Obsceniczna transformacja na zdjęciach Tadeusza Rolkego," [Obscene transition in the photos of Tadeusz Rolke], *Gazeta Wyborcza*, March 11, 2013.

48 Sulima, *Laboratory of Polish Postmodernity.*

49 See also the website of the *Centre of the Thought of John Paul II*:

<http://www.centrumjp2.pl/wikijp2/index.php?>

[title=Pielgrzymka_zagraniczna_%2818%29](http://www.centrumjp2.pl/wikijp2/index.php?title=Pielgrzymka_zagraniczna_%2818%29), accessed May 15, 2015.

50 *Salad bowl* is an American concept of cross-cultural integration, suggesting that “the many different cultures of United States residents combine like a salad, as opposed to the more traditional notion of a cultural melting pot. In Canada this concept is more commonly known as the cultural mosaic”. See:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salad_bowl_\(cultural_idea\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salad_bowl_(cultural_idea)), accessed June 1, 2015.

51 Jakub Chełmiński, “Wietnamska świątynia w Warszawie?,” [Vietnamese temple in Warsaw?] *Gazeta Wyborcza*, March 6, 2004.

52 Jakub Chełmiński, “Wietnamczycy opuszczają Pragę. Zamknięto im świątynię,” [The Vietnamese are leaving Praga. Their temple has been closed], *Gazeta Wyborcza*, March 6, 2010.

53 Many of those projects were destined to help migrants regulate their legal status in Poland and to settle in the country by providing legal and practical advice. Others were cultural projects. Organizations engaged in this were, among others: The Free Word Association (*Stowarzyszenie Wolnego Słowa*), The Other Space Foundation (*Fundacja Inna Przestrzeń*), Foundation for Somalia (*Fundacja dla Somali*), The Association of Legal Intervention (*Stowarzyszenie Interwencji Prawnej*), La Strada Foundation (*Fundacja La Strada*), and the Arteria Art Foundation (*Fundacja Sztuki Arteria*).

54 It was organized in June 2006 by the actor Anna Gajewska, the artist Joanna Warsza and the Vietnamese activist Ngô Văn Tường of the Arteria Art Foundation. More can be found on the official of the project:

<http://www.arteria.art.pl/azja/english.php>, accessed May 10, 2015.

55 Official website of the project: *Arteria*, <http://arteria.art.pl/azja/english.php>, accessed May 17, 2015.

56 Ibid.

57 The “Wdecha” award in the category Event of the Year, awarded annually by the nationwide newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza*.

58 The project was organized by the curator Joanna Warsza of the Laura Palmer Foundation. The six performative actions were: *Boniek!*, *Wizja lokalna*, *Likwidacja Jarmarku Europa*, *Radio Stadion Nadaje*, *Palowanie i Schengen*".

59 *Stadion X - Miejsce, którego nie było. Reader*, ed. Joanna Warsza (Warszawa-Kraków: Fundacja Bęc Zmiana & Korporacja Ha!art, 2009), 166. "The Finissage of Stadium X" was summarized in the post-project reader. More on the book: <http://stadion-x-pl.blogspot.com/2008/12/stadion-x-miejsce-ktrego-nie-byo-reader>, accessed February 1, 2015.

60 Alexandre Bruni, "Wschodniowarszawska Wieża Babel Jarmark Europa, czyli tam, gdzie Afryka spotyka się z Azją," *Konteksty* 01-02 (2009): 150-159.

61 Due to the enormous interest in the "Vietnamese Alley" with its *authentic* cuisine, the concept of what should be sold in the "Chinese-Vietnamese" fast food bars across Warsaw (and Poland) changed dramatically. From then on, Vietnamese cuisine became more than just jasmine rice mixed with thawed vegetables and bits of chicken. The bar "Toan Pho", the most famous of all the Stadium bars, is always full. Since it moved to its new location on Chmielna Street in 2009, it became one of the must-see/must-eat points on the culinary map of the capital.

62 This is one of the most common, and most harmful, stereotypes about the Vietnamese. It resurfaces once in a while in stories circulating around the city, but also, surprisingly, in media reports, like this one: "Psie mięso w Wólce Kossowskiej? Urażeni Wietnamczycy piszą do minister," [Dog meat in Wólka Kossowska? Offended Vietnamese write to the minister], *Dziennik.pl*, December 4, 2014, <http://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl/wydarzenia/artykuly/476977,psie-mieso-w-wietnamskich-barach-w-wolce-kosowskiej-urazeni-wietmaczycy-pisza-do-msw.html>, accessed May 30, 2015.

63 The interview is a part of the material gathered by Magdalena Górska in years 2010-2011 during her research about the interest of activists and artists in the Vietnamese community in Warsaw.

64 During the local government elections in 2014 and the parliamentary elections in 2015, a number of activists from the Vietnamese minority joined the elections as candidates. Although none of them was elected, they gained significant

media attention. Nga Phan Vien, Ton Van Anh, and Ngo Van Tuong were candidates from the list of the Local Government Community in Warsaw. Van Anh Dam was a candidate from the "Together" Party during the parliamentary elections in October 2015, gathering as many as 1894 votes.

65 Association for the Integration of Metropolitan Transport (*Stowarzyszenie Integracji Stołecznej Komunikacji*).

66 The red-and-white colours of the Stadium are a direct reference to the Polish flag, being thus a mark of its national, homogenous character.

67 The 5th anniversary of the "Stadion X" project: <http://stadion-x-pl.blogspot.com/2012/06/stadion-x-2007-2012-boniek-1982-2012.html>, accessed May 21, 2015.

68 Those ideas did not break through to the media, being known only to a small group of architects. See: <http://stadion-x-pl.blogspot.com/2008/07/odcinek-2-wizja-lokalna.html>, accessed May 30, 2015.

69 Jakub Adamski, a representative of the "Miastodukty" initiative, a think-tank working with infrastructural and social projects, see: *Miastodukty*, <http://miastodukty.pl/>, accessed May 31, 2015. More to be found on the official website of SISKOM Association: <http://siskom.waw.pl/pisma/?p=131#/h>, accessed May 31, 2015.

70 The visualisation of the development plan in the area of the Praga Port can be seen here: *WawaLove*, <http://wawalove.pl/Tak-bedzie-wygladac-Port-Praski-FILM-ANIMOWANY-s113968/A>, accessed May 21, 2015.

71 *Wstyd nad Wisłą* is a reference to the well-known event from the year 1920 named *Cud nad Wisłą* (*Miracle on the Vistula*), when the Polish army defeated the Russian bolshevik army.

72 Such actions were also present in Ukraine, where major social protests were undertaken by Femen, a radical feminist protest group. See: *Huffington Post*, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/21/femens-euro-2012-protest-_n_1532989.html, accessed July 15, 2015.

73 Joanna Erbel, "Władze Warszawy kontra drzewa - dlaczego ratusz nie chroni

terenów zielonych w mieście?," [The Warsaw government against trees: Why does the City Hall not protect green areas in the city?], *Natemat.pl*, September 2014, <http://joannaerbel.natemat.pl/117349,wladze-warszawy-kontra-drzewa-dlaczego-ratusz-nie-chroni-terenow-zielonych-w-miescie>, accessed May 3, 2015.

74 See: Karl Schlögel, *Post-Socialist Transformation.*; Szcześniak, *Śmietnik z podróbkami*.

75 Iordanis Psimmenos, *Immigration from the Balkans. Social Exclusion in Athens* (Athens: Papazisis-Glory Books, 1995).

76 A telling documentary showing this process of the decline of the 10th Anniversary Stadium is the film "Stadium, or the life of Joseph" ("Stadion czyli żywot Pana Józefa", 1985) by Ireneusz Engler. Available in the archive of the National Audiovisual Institute: <http://ninateka.pl/film/ireneusz-engler-stadion-czyli-zywot-pana-jozefa-wfdif>, accessed January 20, 2015.

77 See: Zygmunt Bauman, "On Glocalization. Or Globalization for some, Localization for some Others", *Thesis Eleven* 54(!), (1998): 37-49.

78 Warszawa, *Stadion X*.

79 See: Weronika Plińska, "Rainbow in Flames," *View. Theories and Practices of Visual Culture* 9 (2015), <http://pismowidok.org/index.php/one/article/view/270/513>, accessed December 1, 2015.

80 For an account of the fight with the police at the foot of the National Stadium at Waszyngtona Roundabout, see for example *Newsweek Polska*: <http://polska.newsweek.pl/marsz-niepodleglosci-2014-11-listopada-obchody-program-newsweek-pl,artykuly,351573,1.html>, accessed June 20, 2015. You can also see a collection of mems connected to the Independence March 2014 here: <http://www.se.pl/galerie/152031/marsz-niepodleglosci-2014-memy/>, accessed June 20, 2015. In order to see the meaning of the march for the participants, see for example, one of the videos made by *Surge Polonia*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WAXUAD7_cl8, accessed June 20, 2015. The video shows the sense of pride and purpose, which the march can give to the attendees, however it also shows the strong nationalistic elements in the

initiative. Watching the video one can see the march participants with white-and-red flags, matching very well the white-and-red 'basket' of the Stadium.

81 Arnold Van Gennep, *Rites of Passage* (London: Routledge, 1960).

82 The story, as it was described, can be found for example here, at the website of a Polish tabloid, *Super Express*:

http://www.se.pl/wiadomosci/polska/warszawa/warszawa-strzaly-przy-stadionie-narodowym-nie-zyje_140323.html, accessed May 30, 2015. The whole situation was seen by activists as an example of the way the police can discriminate against people of a different ethnic background. However, not only the police, but also the press can be criticized for their portrayal of the event - they published drastic photographs of the incident and also used a discriminatory language, underlining the fact that the trader was "dark-skinned", and undermining the fact that he was already a Polish citizen.