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After the Carnation Revolution: continuity and innovations in Portuguese odonomastics. The case of Aveiro

Abstract: This study examines the sociopolitical dynamics of street naming and renaming in Aveiro, Portugal, following the 1974 *coup* which ended decades of dictatorship. Focusing on a non-capital city, this research contributes to the broader field of critical toponymy, which explores how public spaces and street names are politically and symbolically contested to reflect changes in regime, societal values, and historical narratives. Aveiro presents a unique case study due to its mixed political legacy of both alignment and opposition to the dictatorship. This paper analyzes the local administrative decisions of the first 20 years after the fall of the regime to understand the balance between *recommemoration* and *decommemoration*, the influence of political ideologies, and the role of community engagement in the toponymic changes. Utilizing municipal meeting minutes and a comprehensive database of local political figures, we show how, unlike Portugal's generic approach to dealing with the past, street naming and renaming in Aveiro was an ongoing issue that lasted for many years. The initial attempt to conceal the local historical baggage of the party that controlled the local executive helps explain their cautious and often pragmatical approach.

Keywords: Democratization, Recommemoration, Decommemoration, Portugal, toponymy

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1. Introduction

Studies in the field of critical toponymy show that sociopolitical changes lead to periods of intense transformation of symbols and public spaces. Urban toponymy is seen as a field of political and symbolic dispute where place names serve as vehicles to construct new narratives, legitimize and promote the acceptance of new regimes, and create meanings[2]. Democratic transitions are critical junctures of profound sociopolitical changes and therefore arouse particular interest in the literature of critical toponymy.

One frequently noted criticism of this area of study is the excessive focus on case studies using capital cities[3]. This work seeks to counter this trend by focusing on Aveiro, a less central city in Portugal, but with empirical and theoretical relevance for the study

[1] corresponding autor: faros@iscte-iul.pt
[2] M. Azaryahu, *Street names and the scaling of memory: the politics of commemorating Martin Luther Kind Jr, within the American community*, in "Area" 35(2), pp. 163-173, 2003; R. Rose-Redwood, *From number to name: symbolic capital, places of memory and the politics of street renaming in New York City*, in "Social and Cultural Geography", 9(4), pp. 431-52, 2008.
[3] M. Rusu, *Modeling Toponymic Change: A Multilevel Analysis of Street Renaming in Postsocialist Romania*, in "Annals of the American Association of Geographers", 114(3), pp. 591-609, 2004

of toponymy following regime change. The Portuguese democratic transition, triggered by the Revolution of April 25, 1974, marked the end of nearly five decades of dictatorship and triggered a process of transitional justice and profound redefinition of public memories[4]. In the city of Aveiro, located in the north of Portugal, there was until 1974, a high rate of local integration into the single party of the authoritarian regime, with the press at the time reporting about 8,000 members, which allows us to hypothesize that many of these names may have been perpetuated in the streets of the city and/or district by the regime leaving a strong imprint. Secondly, after 20 months of an interim executive exclusively dominated by left-wing forces, the most right-wing party, and conservative party, consecutively won the local election for 20 years, with a short exception between 2001 and 2005, which allows us to test not only the decisions of the interim executive but also the reactions of the elected executive, particularly if there was resistance in that region to removing names associated with the dictatorship. Thirdly, Aveiro is a city where several layers of memory overlap and coexist, which are valued and claimed differently by the left and the right, both regarding the period of the dictatorship and in relation to more distant historical landmarks dating back to the 16th and 19th centuries.

The second objective is to identify the importance of ideology and other potentially explanatory factors for the attitudes taken by the local executive, both during the transitional period and the established democratic period. This aspect will include an analysis of how the political orientations of successive local governments influenced toponymic choices, as well as the role of other variables such as community pressure, civic initiatives, and the impact of cultural and social movements in the region.

To characterize the case of Aveiro and test continuities and changes in toponymic decisions, we employed two main analytical strategies: first, analyzing the continuities in 2024, and second, analyzing the changes implemented between 1974, from the Carnation Revolution, and 1994, the 20 years of the Revolution and a significant turning point in local power in Aveiro.

The article is structured in four main parts. In the first section, we proceed to the theoretical framing of the study of toponymy, addressing the main theories and debates that shape this field of study. In the second section, we detail the databases used and the method adopted for analysis. Here, we describe the data collection techniques and analytical procedures. In the third section, we present some maps that illustrate the current profile of Portuguese toponymy, the evolution of toponymy in Portugal, and specifically in the city of Aveiro. These maps provide a view of the spatial distribution of toponymic changes and are essential for outlining the local and national dynamics. In the fourth and final section, we present the results of the analysis of the minutes of the Administrative Commission and the Municipal Chamber of Aveiro meetings. We highlight the most significant factors emerging from the analysis, emphasizing how political changes and social pressures have influenced toponymic decisions over time. The article concludes with some general reflections on the case of Aveiro, discussing its relevance and significance in the broader context of Portuguese toponymy.

[4] F. Raimundo and J.R. Morais, *Transitional justice after clean breaks: The case of Portugal*, New York, Lexington, 2024.

2. *Toponymy and Democratization*

The literature on critical toponymy, which develops at the intersection of cultural geography, political sociology, and political science, has consistently shown that changes in street names are almost inevitable phenomena in contexts of significant sociopolitical transformation. These changes are observed at various historical moments, such as during colonization processes[5], at the advent of independence or decolonization[6], in periods of democratization[7], or even in phases of autocratization. The choice to rename urban spaces often reflects an attempt to redefine the collective identity and historical memory of a society[8] as well as a way of "norming" or legitimating hegemonic power relations[9].

From the perspective of the strategies adopted, the change of street names can incorporate various processes, executed simultaneously or alternately. These include *decommemor*ation, which involves removing symbols and names associated with previous historical periods or figures, often seen as controversial or oppressive. *Recommemoration,* in turn, introduces elements to celebrate new events, figures, or values that are valued by the new regime or new social order[10].

Hence, in the context of a democratization process, street naming and renaming can be perceived as a form of "symbolic reparation" and/or of "symbolic retribution", depending on the balance between the two strategies. Furthermore, the search for historically more distant commemorations can be a strategy to reinforce a narrative of historical continuity, legitimating the present through the invocation of a distant and often idealized past[11]. While this classification may sometimes appear reductive and potentially limit the understanding of the memory-forgetfulness dichotomy, as well illustrated in a study on New York City[12], it remains a valuable method for identifying explanatory factors and distinguishing between strategies. The choice of one strategy over another can reveal much about the political and cultural priorities of the elites in power.

From the perspective of the determinants for change, there are several factors to consider. As shown by the extant literature, any attempt by a new political order to take control of the material and symbolic infrastructures will face challenges associated with the strength of the imprint of former regimes or public acceptance of the changes being

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[5] S. Cohen and N. Kliot, *Place-Names in Isreal's Ideological Struggle over the Administered Territories*, in "Annals of the Association of American Geographers*"*, 82(4), pp. 653-80, 1992.
[6] B. Yeoh, *Street names in colonial Singapore*, in "Geographical review", 82(3), pp. 313-322, 1992.
[7] M. Azaryahu, *Street names and political identity: the case of East Berlin,* in Journal of Contemporary History, 21(4), pp. 581-604, 1986; G. Gill, *Changing symbols: the renovation of Moscow place names*, in "The Russian Review", 64(3), pp. 480-503, 2005; D. Light, *Street names in Bucharest 1990-1997: exploring the modern historical geographies of post-socialist change*, in "Journal of Historical Geography", 30(1), pp. 154-172, 2004.
[8] M. Azaryahu, *The power of commemorative street names*, in "Environment and Planning: Society and Space", 14, pp. 311-330, 1996.
[9] L.D. Berg and R.A. Kearns, *Naming as norming: 'Race', Gender and the Identity Politics of Naming Place*, in "Society and Space" 14(1), pp. 99-122, 1996.
[10] R. Rose-Redwood et al, *The political life of urban streetscapes naming, politics and place*, London, Routledge, 2018.
[11] D. Light, *Street names …* cit. 2004
[12] R. Rose-Redwood, *From number to name…* cit., 2008

introduced[13]. Hence, decisions are often affected by cost-benefit calculations. In post-communist Europe, both the difficult economic circumstances that followed the fall of regimes and the presence of nostalgic sentiments made street name changes a process with potential political costs that elites sometimes did not want to risk[14]. Secondly, local collective memory and resistance to change can also affect decisions either due to attachment to existing names or simply due to resistance to change[15]. Studies also show that for many residents, street names become empty signifiers used only for spatial recognition, whose commemorative content is lost over time[16]. In addition, place naming should be understood as "exercised both by those having a great deal of social power and by those comparatively lacking it"[17]. Thirdly, ideology is another factor to consider. It is important to investigate whether a change in local administration directly impacts celebrations and whether priorities change with the administrative change[18].

Even though the extant literature has only recently addressed the potential impact of the mode of transition to democracy, we argue that this could be a particularly important factor to take into account when examining street naming and renaming after regime change.

3. Methodology and data

To reconstruct the political decisions and identity-building behind street naming and renaming in Aveiro following the breakdown of the authoritarian regime, we employed an original database on the local political elite of the District of Aveiro, covering 641 individuals who held relevant political positions during the Estado Novo period, the authoritarian regime that lasted from 1930 to 1974. Although there may be some gaps, this database provides a comprehensive overview of political actors at both the district and local levels, essential for understanding the dynamics of power and influence in toponymic decisions.

At the district level, the analysis includes names. Of deputies to the National Assembly (the authoritarian parliament) elected from the Aveiro circle, identified through press records and biographies. It also covers civil governors and their substitutes, members of the Beira Litoral Provincial Councils and the Aveiro District Council from the 1950s to the 1970s. Leaders of the district committee of the single party, initially called National Union (UN) and later renamed Popular National Action (ANP), as well as members of the ANP district advisory committee and district commanders of the

[13] R. Rose-Redwood et al, *The Politics life…* cit. 2018
[14] E. Ochman, "The legacies of transition, street renaming and the material heritage of Communist Dictatorship in Poland", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 59(1), pp. 68-90, 2024.
[15] B. Yeoh, *Street names..* cit. 1992
[16] R. Rose-Redwood et al, *The Politics life…* cit. 2018
[17] G. Myers, *Naming and placing the other: Power and the urban landscape in Zanzibar*, in "Time & Place", 34(3), pp. 237-251, 1996.
[18] R. Nuñez, and E. Dinas, *Mean streats: Powers, ideology and the politics of memory*, in "Political Geography, 103, 2023

Portuguese Legion, the regime para-military organization, were also cataloged, with records dating from 1933 to 1970[19].

At the local level, mayors and deputy mayors were identified, as well as local leaders of the UN/ANP, with data covering the 1930s and the decades of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. The research specified the municipality of origin for the individuals, which is particularly relevant in the case of municipal positions. This detail is crucial for analyzing how local leaderships may have influenced street-naming policies and collective memory.

Despite the existence of other local political positions, those were the true pillars of political control at the subnational level. Our database analysis reveals that the same individuals often held multiple district and local offices, often remaining in power for several decades. This phenomenon reflects the prolonged nature of the regime, which lasted for more than four decades and illustrates one of the ways in which the authoritarian regime maintained its influence and control, directly impacting the policies of toponymy and the configuration of public space. The use of this database reveals not only the continuities and ruptures in street-naming practices but also reflects the ideological and power shifts that occurred with the transition to democracy.

Secondly, we conducted a comprehensive analysis of 1053 minutes from the sessions of the 'Administrative Commission'—the interim body that replaced the executive appointed by the Estado Novo—and the subsequent City Council, covering the period from May 1974 to December 1994, thus covering a period of 20 years. The inclusion of this period in the analysis was strategic, allowing us to assess the level of *decommemoration/ recommemoration* that the left-wing forces attempted to implement in a region whose political culture was not predominantly left-leaning.

As established by Portuguese legislation, in Portugal, the authority to make toponymic changes rests exclusively with the City Councils, which must consult the competent Parish Councils before making decisions. This regulatory procedure did not undergo significant changes in the transition from the Estado Novo to the democratic regime. However, during the period when the Chamber was governed by an interim administrative commission, toponymic decisions appear to have been carried out without formal consultation with the Parish Councils, or if such consultations occurred, they were not documented in the minutes. From an informal perspective, each administrative commission seems to have viewed the need to consult the population differently. In Lisbon, the interim administrative commission included a period of public consultation[20]. In Aveiro, the minutes do not reveal any such decision, with the administrative commission apparently acting alone.

After the first local elections, in December 1976, new rules were introduced. To elaborate their decisions, the City Councils can advance their own proposals or consider proposals from the Municipal Assemblies, Resident Commissions, or even groups of citizens. Since the Municipal Assembly is an eminently political body, compared to the City Council, which is executive in nature, differences in proposals are expected

[19] There are other elements of the elite (for example, city councilors, municipal council members, parish council chairmen, or leaders of the parish commissions of the UN/ANP) that we have not analyzed.

[20] J. Green, *A Complacent memory? Street name changes in Lisbon during the Revolutionary Period*, in "Iberoamericana", XXII, 7, pp. 63-82, 2022.

depending on their origin. The same applies to initiatives from citizens. Therefore, we always recorded the origin of the proposals. When pertinent, we also referred to the minutes of the Municipal Assembly. This methodological approach enabled us to investigate whether there were attempts to reverse the toponymic decisions by the elected executive from 1976 onwards as well as their origin.

In addition to focusing on toponymic changes, our analysis of the minutes, which cover all areas of municipal governance, allowed us to record parallel discussions of great relevance to the study of collective memory and its management in public space. We pay attention to decisions related to "tributes," "decorations," and "distinctions" awarded to individuals whose trajectories or actions have special significance for the memory theme we investigate.

Regarding the process of street name changes following the Carnation Revolution, there are only a few studies on the case of Lisbon, the capital, and a couple of cities in northern Portugal. Whenever possible, we refer to these other cases as a basis for comparison to interpret the data collected about Aveiro[21].

4. Street Name Changes After the Carnation Revolution: The Case of Aveiro

The Carnation Revolution on April 25, 1974, which ended 48 years of dictatorship overnight, triggered a process of breaking with the past, including an extensive process of settling accounts with the past and transitional justice[22]. The few statues of Salazar were destroyed or severely damaged; the bridge that connects the capital, Lisbon, to the neighboring district of Setúbal, named Salazar Bridge, was renamed the 25th of April Bridge after pressure from civil society[23]. In a reverse process, new monuments to the 25th of April were erected throughout the country, especially in districts where the labor struggle against the dictatorship was most pronounced[24].

Despite this climate of breaking with the past, there was no central policy on transforming public space. Neither the military structures nor the provisional governments transmitted any official indication on how to manage the legacies of the Estado Novo in public space. Each local executive managed this issue in its own way.

From the perspective of institutional politics, there was undoubtedly a window of opportunity to transform the public sphere, which was effectively seized by those who assumed interim positions. This followed the National Salvation Junta's (JSN) decision to dissolve the principal

[21] F. Ferreira and B. Madeira, *Que a vida é para todos: A Revolução de Abril em Braga*, in Ribeiro et al (org.), *Nos 50 Anos do 25 de Abril: Memórias e Reflexões Sobre as Mudanças da Sociedade Portuguesa*, Braga, UMinho Editora, https://doi.org/10.21814/uminho.ed.176, 2024; J. Green, *A Complacent memory*… cit, 2022.

[22] A. C. Pinto and A. Paris, *Democratization and its Legacies*, *in* Fernandes, Jorge et al (org.), *Oxford Handbook of Portuguese Politics*, Oxford, pp. 18-37, 2023; Raimundo, Filipa (2023), Dealing with the past", *in* Fernandes, Jorge et al (org.), *Oxford Handbook of Portuguese Politics*, Oxford, pp. 38-52;

[23] Gori, Annarita (2017), "Il ponte sobre o Tejo: metafora di um Portogallo in transizione", *Memoria e Ricerca*, 55, pp. 283-300.

[24] G. Gonçalves et al, *Pôr a revolução no lugar – as políticas de memória da democracia através dos "monumentos ao 25 de abril*, in "Prática da História"*, 1*8, pp. 251-297, 2024

institutions of the Estado Novo and dismiss its representatives immediately after assuming provisional power. In their stead, provisional national and local executive bodies were established.[25]. At the local level, the 304 municipalities and more than 4000 parishes that had been managed for four decades by a local political elite were ordered to be replaced. In some cases, particularly in the north of the country, local elites resisted and did not facilitate the assumption of office by the interim administrative commissions indicated by the JSN[26], however, with or without resistance, provisional administrative commissions did take office in all municipalities and legitimized the power of local members of the main democratic opposition parties. The Portuguese Democratic Movement (MDP), the heir to an important opposition movement to the Estado Novo, was the main agent of local purges[27]. The MDP was predominantly influenced by the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP), an orthodox communist-Leninist party founded in 1921, but also had the support of notable independents from the local democratic opposition, and this allows us to understand what happens at the level of toponymy. During the so-called "hot summer" of 1975, anti-communist actions led to the resignation of several administrative commissions, particularly in the more traditionally conservative central and northern regions of Portugal. The first local elections, which took place in December 1976, brought right-wing parties into local executives, particularly in those northern and central regions. While at the national level, all parties, from left to right, rejected the past, at the local level, ties with the deposed regime were somewhat more present, particularly among the Democratic Social Centre (CDS), a conservative party with a Christian democratic ethos[28]. Despite legislation adopted in November 1974 prohibiting former politicians linked to the dictatorship from running in the first elections, there is little evidence that the law was strictly enforced[29]. All these aspects are important to understand the case of Aveiro.

Despite the dominance achieved by the Social Democratic Party (PSD), the main center-right party in the district after the first local elections, the Democratic and Social Center (CDS) was the leading political force in the municipality of Aveiro for over two decades. The establishment of the CDS in Aveiro was likely tied to the political and social prominence some of its founders and leaders had gained before April 25th. However, politically, there was no intention to overtly leverage this background. The chairman of the district committee and main architect behind the party's implementation in Aveiro, lawyer Gaioso Henriques, was the last mayor of the City Council during the Estado Novo regime. The CDS's victory in the municipality with 37.5% of the votes in December 1976 owed more to him than to the party's official candidate, Girão, a young public prosecutor

[25] F. Raimundo and JR. Morais, *Transitional Justice*... cit., 2024
[26] F. Ferreira and B. Madeira, *Que a vida é para todos...* cit. 2024.
[27] A. C. Pinto, *Authoritarian legacies, transitional justice and state crisis in Portugal's* democratization, in "Democratization, 13(2), pp. 173-204, 2006
[28] A. Paris and P. Silveira, *Um legado em forma de assim: a gestão do passado autoritário na ausência de um partido sucessor*es, *in* F. Raimundo, F. and J. Cancela (org.), *As eleições de 1975: eleições fundadoras da democracia portuguesa*, Lisboa, Assembleia da República, pp. 63-83, 2021.
[29] F. Raimundo and J.R. Morais, *Transitional* Justice... cit. 2024

from the neighboring district of Aveiro, who lacked any political experience. Additionally, the chairman of the local committee, Barreto Cerqueira, an insurance agent with strong ties to Catholic circles, had been the president of the Parish Council of Glória, one of the three parishes of the county seat. Among the founders and initial leaders of the CDS were several members of the local political elite, including two former councilors, one of whom was a leader of the single party and a former vice-mayor. The prominence of these key figures undeniably played a significant role in the initial establishment of the CDS in the district of Aveiro. a crucial role in the initial establishment of the CDS in the district of Aveiro. However, it was Girão Pereira's leadership as mayor that significantly strengthened the party's position in the region. With no prior political experience, Girão Pereira proved to be an effective administrator, partly by keeping away any explicit attempts at showing CDS' links with the past. He impressively achieved re-election with an absolute majority in all the elections in which he ran. His efficient management and rapid advancement in the party hierarchy earned him the reputation of a "model mayor" for the CDS. Under his leadership, until 1994, the CDS maintained between 3 to 5 of the 7 councilors in the municipality. His early departure in 1994 to take up a position as an MEP coincided with a defeat for the CDS in the following elections, temporarily allowing the Socialist Party (PS), the main center-left party, to take over the governance of the municipality. It was only in 2005, through a pre-electoral coalition between the CDS and PSD, that the right returned to power in Aveiro, relegating the PS once again to the role of opposition. Until 2024, the remaining seats were won only by the PSD and PS, with no councilors from the PCP to date (Table 1).

[Insert Table 1 here]

Figure 1 highlights the geographical distribution of street names and other thoroughfares in 2024 that still bear eponyms linked to the political elite of the Estado Novo, totaling 408[30] cases. Among the most prevalent names are Duarte Pacheco, Minister of Public Works under Salazar, with 71 references, followed by Óscar Carmona and Craveiro Lopes, former Presidents of the Republic during the Estado Novo, with 43 and 15 mentions, respectively. Gomes da Costa, a central figure of the military dictatorship that preceded the Estado Novo, appears in 20 locations, and António Oliveira Salazar is remembered in 15 thoroughfares.

A quick search reveals 1,287 streets named "25 de Abril," highlighting the extensive commemoration of Portugal's transition from dictatorship more than the persistence of names associated with the Estado Novo's political elite. Another key figure is Humberto Delgado, presidential candidate assassinated by the regime, whose broad appeal across the political spectrum is evident with 612 streets named after him as of

[30] The criterion for creating this map was based on names found in Rosas, Fernando and Brito, Brandão de (1996) (org), *Dicionário de História do Estado Novo*, Lisboa: Círculo de Leitores. As a result, the focus was exclusively on names associated with the national political elite, omitting other influential sectors of the Estado Novo such as the intellectual, cultural, and economic elites, which might have provided equally compelling insights.

2024. Comparatively, while the number of streets bearing the names of the national political elite from the Estado Novo is fewer, it remains significant.

Although specific data on how many names existed in 1974 or how many have been removed since then across the national territory are lacking, two important observations emerge from Figure 1. Firstly, the names associated with the Estado Novo are distributed throughout the country, but with a greater concentration in the major cities, where Aveiro is not particularly highlighted. Secondly, it is observed that the interior of the country, especially the Alentejo region, characterized by the dominance of left-wing forces since the Carnation Revolution, has a much lower density of these eponyms. This distribution suggests a relationship between regional political orientation and the preservation or removal of names associated with the former regime which has however never been studied.

[Insert Figure 1 here]

Searching for names associated with the high ranks of the authoritarian regime offers only a cursory understanding of the acceptance or rejection of the past regime. A deeper insight is gained by examining local dynamics. Figure 2 illustrates the collective memory of the political elite of Salazar and Caetano in the Aveiro region as of 2024. The map on the left depicts the city of Aveiro, and on the right, the broader Aveiro District. Blue dots mark the locations of thoroughfares named after men who belonged to the local political elite and held positions during the Estado Novo (N= 13 in Aveiro city; N= 73 in Aveiro District).

[Insert Figure 2 here]

Figure 2 allows us to identify some of the municipalities in the Aveiro district where there is a greater toponymic presence of former members of the local authoritarian elite. A common trait in the toponymy of these municipalities is the inclination to perpetuate the names of former mayors. In Aveiro, for example, the most important mayors all have streets named after them[31]. Even where the presence of names from the authoritarian elite is not as high, as in Arouca, the pattern is very similar, with several former mayors having their names inscribed in the toponymy of the municipality.

A second element that deserves mention is the presence of the most emblematic political figures of the Estado Novo in the toponymy of the Aveiro district[32]. In addition to being figures who, for some time, held the presidency of the local committee of the single party or the City Council, they also held leading roles in the single party at the district level, were deputies to the authoritarian parliament, appointed as civil governors

[31] Lourenço Peixinho (1918/42), Álvaro da Silva Sampaio (1944/57), Alberto Souto (1958/61), and Artur Alves Moreira (1965/73)

[32] Gaspar Inácio Ferreira e Manuel Homem Ferreira (Albergaria-a-Velha), Querubim do Vale Guimarães, Francisco José do Vale Guimarães e Artur Alves Moreira (Aveiro), Joaquim de Pinho Brandão (Arouca), Belchior Cardoso da Costa (Feira), Artur Correia Barbosa (Oliveira de Azeméis), Aulácio Rodrigues de Almeida e Horácio Alves Marçal (Águeda), Jaime Ferreira da Silva (Estarreja), or Manuel Lousada (Mealhada).

or to the district council. This is a portrait of what we could call the "barons" of the regime at the municipal and district level. Except for the case of Mealhada, one of the electoral strongholds of the PS in the Aveiro district, the remaining municipalities correspond to city councils controlled by the PSD and CDS for several years.

Thirdly, there are also some names of figures who had political involvement before and after April 25th. This was the case, for example, of Horácio Marçal, who was president of the municipal committee of Águeda and president of the district committee of Aveiro for the CDS. In addition to party positions, he was a deputy in the democratic parliament, councilor, and municipal deputy in his hometown. The same happened in Ovar with the lawyer Fernando Raimundo Rodrigues, former president of the single party's CC, who, in democracy, led the PSD in Ovar and the district of Aveiro, was mayor, president of the Municipal Assembly, deputy, and civil governor. There are also cases of politicians who were mayors or deputy mayors before and after April 25th, whose names were included in the toponymy of their respective municipalities[33].

Some of those names were assigned before April 25th and were never removed, others were removed and reinstated, and others that were placed already in democracy. The level of continuity results from the fact that the actions of *descommemoratio*n were reduced and directed only at the most well-known names. The analysis of the minutes revealed a total of 91 changes of pre-existing names and the assignment of new names, of which only 6 were *decommemorations* and 26 were celebrations of republican and antifascist values. The changes in the names of the thoroughfares in the city of Aveiro after the coup of April 25th, 1974, reflect an attempt to redefine the local public memory where *decommemoration* took on a lesser weight than celebration. The profile of the members of the toponymy commission, which took office in May 1974, composed of three antifascists, was decisive for the decisions that were made. This commission was responsible for the toponymic changes that sought to reflect a new era of republican and antifascist values in Aveiro, although the number of *decommemoration*s was limited.

As happened in other parts of the country[34], it was right at the first meeting of the Administrative Commission, which took office on April 30th, that toponymy emerged as a clear and immediate priority. The need to "destroy the fascist structure" in urban toponymy was the first issue addressed, underscoring the commission's commitment to making significant breaks with the authoritarian past. Toponymy thus emerged as a central element in the transformation of the urban space, but also as a powerful symbol of the new political and social order that was to be established, decisively marking the cityscape with the values of the new democratic era. However, similar to what happened in Lisbon, where the adopted strategy was to "reflect on the new values in question without the bitter taste of revenge," this transformation was not revolutionary nor very profound[35].

[33] Examples include José Nunes Alves (Albergaria-a-Velha), José Lavado Corujo (Ílhavo) or Ângelo da Silva Azevedo (Oliveira de Azeméis) from the PSD.
[34] J. Green, *A Complacent memory*… cit, 2022.; F. Ferreira and B. Madeira, *Que a vida é para todos*... cit. 2024.
[35] Quintino in J. Green, *A Complacent memory*… cit, p. 71, 2022.

During the meetings of the Interim Administrative Commission of Aveiro, which took place between May 1974 and December 1976, 91 decisions related to toponymy were approved, of which 68 were the assignment of new names and only 26 were with the intention of celebrating new values, dates, or people. In total, there were 23 cases of name changes, of which only 6 were *decommemorations*, exactly the same number as in the case of the capital of the country[36] and two less than in the city of Braga[37]. In another case, in the city of Guarda, 15 changes were detected in the six years following April 25th[38].

Table 2 displays the 26 street name changes during the tenure of the provisional executive, highlighting new commemorative actions. Most decisions that combined *decommemoration* and celebration were made in the initial months following April 25th. By late 1974, it was uncommon to propose removing Estado Novo references or to make significant alterations. Many of the streets renamed during this period were previously identified only by letters or numbers. Despite some notable exceptions, the new names generally shifted towards being non-political, often featuring generic symbols such as significant dates. The Administrative Commission predominantly opted to introduce eponyms, suggesting an attempt to craft a new urban lexicon reflective of the new political climate, yet this was approached with greater caution and less ideological intensity than in the early post-revolution months. While the commission exclusively initiated *decommemoration*, commemoration proposals also came from residents' committees.

[Insert Table 2 here]

4.1 The role of ideology

Among the cases of decommissioning, there are three names with national projection and three with local projection. One of the cases of decommissioning mentioned in Table 1 is the removal of the name of Frederico Ulrich, a civil engineer and university professor, who was chief of staff, Undersecretary of State, and Secretary of State for Public Works before becoming Minister. Ulrich, who was alive at the time, represented a figure with no historical relevance to the city of Aveiro, deeply associated with Salazarist authoritarianism. His name was replaced by that of Humberto Delgado, defined as one of the victims of fascism in Portugal and a symbol of the struggle for democracy. To justify the decision, the Commission recalled his visit to Aveiro during the presidential campaign when he spoke in the same square that would later bear his name, highlighting the moment as a milestone of "civic dignity."

In another case highlighted in Table 1, the removal of the name of Antunes Varela, replaced by Barbosa de Magalhães, was approved. Varela was a professor of law and Minister of Justice from 1954 to 1967, one of the longest periods at the helm of the

[36] J. Green, *A Complacent memory*… cit, 2022.
[37] F. Ferreira and B. Madeira, *Que a vida é para todos...* cit. 2024.
[38] M. Neto, *A toponímia da cidade da Guarda e a construção da memória pública no século XX*, Dissertação de Mestrado em Estudos do Património, Lisboa, Universidade Aberta, 2011.

ministry during the Estado Novo. A central figure in the drafting of the Portuguese Civil Code of 1966, Varela marked the legal history. However, his legacy remains shrouded in controversy, reflecting the tensions between technical recognition and the political context in which he operated. In 2019, at a ceremony in Coimbra marking the centenary of Antunes Varela, the Minister of Justice from a center-left government praised him as "one of the most brilliant Portuguese jurists" and highlighted his contribution to the construction of judicial infrastructure in Portugal[39]. During the discussion on renaming in 1974, while Varela was also alive, it was argued that his name signified “something contrary to what should be practiced in the Palace of Justice inaugurated by him in this city."

A third case referred to in Table 1 is the proposal to rename Rua da Estação to Rua Tomé de Barros Queirós. In this case, as in several others, the introduction of a name was not at the expense of removing another. This proposal was presented based on the historical relevance of Barros Queirós to the Portuguese Republic and extolled as an example of Republican integrity and competence. The Toponymy Commission highlighted the fact that he was "member of the famous republican commission of the Lisbon City Council during the monarchy and later as a notable Minister of Finance of the 1st Republic and Prime Minister,". The change aimed to value a local historical figure with a strong contribution to the republican cause, once again reinforcing Aveiro's connection with the memory of the First Republic.

From the perspective of *recommemoration*, the naming of figures such as Humberto Delgado, Mário Sacramento, Manuel das Neves, or Ferreira Soares was intended to precisely highlight the antifascist memory, in which the connections to the PCP stand out. Moreover, it also emphasizes the republican values that the PS has always represented.

Although the vast majority of political-ideological references introduced by the Administrative Commission were of its own making, there are also cases of popular initiatives in this regard. For example, a group of 71 residents proposed to the Administrative Commission that the name of Manuel Simões Miranda, a baker by profession but above all associated with the Red Legion, a revolutionary anarcho-syndicalist movement that emerged during the First Portuguese Republic, be assigned. In 1927, he was deported to Timor, a repressive measure commonly used by the government to neutralize political dissidents and revolutionary militants.

4.2 Cost-benefit calculations

In the post-1976 period, the predominance of cost-benefit calculations and the tension between the elite's vision and the local population's collective memory stand out. Over time, a strategy of retroactive commemoration also emerges, aimed at both the 16th and 19th centuries, which did not exist in the early years, as illustrated by the discussion around the municipal holiday.

[39] https://trc.pt/antunes-varela-foi-um-dos-mais-brilhantes-juristas-portugueses/ (online consultation: 9 November 2024)

In 1984, there is a particularly illustrative moment in a meeting almost exclusively dominated by the topic of toponymy. With the tragic death of the acting Prime Minister, Francisco Sá Carneiro, as well as the Minister of Defense, Adelino Amaro da Costa, in an airplane crash in December 1980, the City Council of Aveiro immediately passed a motion of condolence. Councilman Commander Faria dos Santos (PSD) proposed, on that same day, that the Council should "eventually perpetuate the memory of Francisco Sá Carneiro, one of the great pillars of Democracy." However, the proposal to name a street after Francisco Sá Carneiro, presented by the Parish Council of Glória, unexpectedly became a catalyst for a broader debate on public memory and the criteria for naming streets. The episode brought to light tensions over the legacy of the toponymic decisions made immediately after April 25th, which introduced names associated with anti-fascist resistance, such as Mário Sacramento and Victims of Fascism. The figure of Sá Carneiro, former prime minister and founder of the PSD, was defended as a "national statesman" by Councilor Dr. Portugal da Fonseca (PSD)[40], who also highlighted his decisive role in the development of the Port of Aveiro as an argument to justify the appropriateness of the tribute by that Council.

Councilor Custódio Ramos (PS) openly criticized the decisions of the Administrative Commission, considering them ideologically biased. Regarding the decisions to remove symbols of the Estado Novo, he stated: “I consider it abusive (...) we are in a democracy, everyone has the right to be fascist; they just do not have the right to preach this ideology, because the Constitution forbids it.” He argued that the Council, as a representative of a mature democracy, should avoid reproducing practices that could be interpreted as partisan or exclusivist, which is why he opposed the proposal.

President Girão Pereira (CDS) aimed to serve as a moderating and pacifying force. He commented on the actions of the Administrative Commission, stating, “Despite our ability and opportunity to restore the toponymy, we refrained, only removing what appeared most egregious. If Mário Sacramento is commemorated; if there is a proposal to honor Arlindo Vicente[41], a former presidential candidate, then all the more reason to include Sá Carneiro and Amaro da Costa.”

The concern to establish clear criteria for toponymy, based on political neutrality and the local relevance of the figures honored, was widely defended. Councilor Celso Baptista dos Santos (CDS)[42] argued that toponyms should prioritize figures linked to culture, science, or local history, and that depersonalizing names could prevent future changes motivated by shifts in regimes or political majorities. The Mayor, in turn, agreed

[40] Manuel Portugal da Fonseca, outro dos principais dirigentes do PSD em Aveiro, não assumiu formalmente um cargo dirigente na estrutura da ANP, mas foi um dos representantes de Aveiro ao Congresso de Tomar (apresentou uma comunicação) e fez parte da comissão organizadora do primeiro plenário distrital da ANP de Aveiro (1973).

[41] Arlindo Vicente, born in the district of Aveiro, was a modernist painter and prominent anti-fascist who once ran as an opposition presidential candidate, later withdrawing in favor of Humberto Delgado. When the President of the Republic posthumously awarded him the honorary Order of Freedom in 1983, the Municipal Assembly proposed to the City Council that his name be included in the toponymy. However, during the 20-year period we analyzed, this proposal was not approved.

[42] Before April 25th, he was the mayor of Murtosa (1967/69) and a leader of the UN's local committee.

with the need to define general principles, proposing a preliminary survey of existing toponyms and available vacancies before making ad hoc decisions.

The proposal for Sá Carneiro was rejected, not only due to a lack of consensus but also to avoid political tensions. The rejection was not, therefore, a devaluation of Sá Carneiro's figure, but rather a reflection of a broader concern with public memory and how it is negotiated in democratic spaces. Days later, after some debate in the media around the decision, the Mayor decided "to completely withdraw his intention to bring the matter back to the meeting."

This episode demonstrates the limits imposed by ideology and the attempt at political neutrality in defining toponymy, revealing a deliberate effort to prevent public space from being captured by hegemonic political narratives. In 1989, the names of Sá Carneiro and Adelino Amaro da Costa were again proposed, and the proposal was approved with the abstention of the PS councilor and the vote against from the President, who justified it with the importance of coherence.

Another particularly significant example is the debate around the role of November 25, 1975, a date considered emblematic by forces from the center-left to the right, seen as a moment that consolidated liberal democracy in Portugal by containing the advance of more radical revolutionary tendencies[43]. In the meetings of November 4 and 11, 1977, the proposals from the President of the Toponymy Commission, Vítor Mangerão (CDS)[44], to explicitly honor November 25 were halted. The idea of naming a street "November 25" was received by the Mayor as "inopportune and even dangerous," considering it best "to do nothing." This decision was approved unanimously. Two years later, in 1979, the role of the Mayor proved again crucial in moderating attempts to equate the symbolic and ideological status of April 25 with other historical dates, in this case December 1 and June 10.

The rejection of some proposals underscores the complexity of negotiating memory during democratic transitions, where the drive to forge political consensus often clashed with the desire to reflect specific historical narratives. The decision not to explicitly honor November 25th in Aveiro's streets exemplifies a strategy to avoid polarization, highlighting that toponymic changes stemmed from a nuanced balance of various historical and democratic perspectives, rather than a single ideological agenda. However, other contentious proposals were approved, such as the decision to name a street after Artur Alves Moreira, a former mayor during the Salazar regime. Despite his prominence in the authoritarian hierarchy, the proposal emphasized solely his professional and civic contributions, overlooking the political context of his tenure. His connections to the Estado Novo did not concern the local populace, who had participated *en masse* in his funeral. This act of naming a street after him conveyed a message of symbolic continuity, prioritizing local and communal significance over any overt political implications. This approach demonstrates that street naming not only mirrored political

[43] F. Raimundo, *Dealing with the past*… cit, 2023

[44] He was one of the "cadres" of the ANP, having been one of Aveiro's representatives at the Tomar Congress, where he presented a paper. Shortly thereafter, in June 1973, he also participated in the first district plenary of the ANP in Aveiro (again presenting a paper). In 1976, he was elected councilor for the PSD (as an independent).

and ideological tensions but also adapted to local dynamics, aiming to balance historical acknowledgment with current community values.

4.3 Popular memory vs. elites

There were at least two cases where the population demonstrated resistance to changes introduced by the interim executive, which, considering the universe of six *decommemorations*, can be considered illustrative of the disconnect between the decisions of the interim administration and the population. One case was the reaction to the replacement of Rua de Ílhavo with Rua Mário Sacramento. Although Mário Sacramento was a native of Aveiro, specifically from Ílhavo, and widely recognized as a central figure in the anti-fascist resistance, the people of Ílhavo made a point of showing their indignation with the change, formally presenting a letter to the Administrative Commission and arguing that the previous name had historical and emotional value for the community. This episode reflects how, for some, decisions to break with the authoritarian past could be perceived as external impositions, disregarding local identity ties.

Another notable case involved the renaming of Homem Cristo Filho Street to 'Vítimas do Fascismo'. Francisco Manuel Homem Cristo, originally from Lisbon, was an intellectual who initially supported the republican movement but later championed monarchist and nationalist causes. Despite the Administrative Commission's initial move to remove names linked to conservatism and fascism, local community pushback and arguments for Homem Cristo Filho's cultural and literary significance led to a reversal of the decision. Six years after the renaming, in 1980, the street's residents submitted a petition to the parish council, which endorsed restoring the original name. This incident underscores that public memory is not solely a political construct but also a realm where societal and elite interests intersect and negotiate.

The City Council, led by a CDS member who prioritized consensus, did not always reflect the regional tensions about public space naming as vividly as the Municipal Assembly, the local political entity. The Assembly features a broader political representation, including a more pronounced left-wing presence, making it a more dynamic forum for debates on collective memory and toponymy. This dynamic was particularly evident during the discussions on the municipal holiday, a topic frequently referenced in the naming of public spaces.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the municipality of Aveiro chose May 16th as the municipal holiday day, celebrating the liberal revolts against the absolutist troops which resulted in 10 martyrs, executed by D. Miguel. With the dictatorship, this holiday was banned, with the regime first suspending it and then forcing the municipality to choose another day that exalted other types of values. Thus, May 12th was chosen, celebrating the patron saint of the city, Santa Joana Princesa. With the takeover of the administrative commissions, the original holiday was reinstated, without consultation or public discussion. This change was not contested or at least no mention was made in the minutes, but in 1978 one of the elected councilors (the only one with political experience prior to April 25th), advanced the proposal to restore May 12th. It was the understanding

of the Mayor that this should be a topic for the political body and not for the executive body, so it was in the Assembly that it was discussed more deeply. The central point of the debate in the Municipal Assembly was the weak popular participation in the holidays of May 16th, which proved crucial for understanding the population's connection to their past. The discussion showed that the weak adherence to the celebrations of May 16th reflected a cultural detachment. However, the councilors ideologically further to the left attributed this phenomenon to decades of educational narratives that minimized or omitted events associated with liberal struggles, replacing them with perspectives that favored conservative or distorted views of history. This aspect was highlighted as a direct result of an education that, during the Estado Novo regime, favored narratives that suppressed "everything that smelled of freedom," creating a gap in the collective memory that could not be quickly reversed after the Carnation Revolution. However, the decision to change the holiday to the day of the festival of the patron saint Santa Joana, which already had cultural rooting and active community participation, was justified by the desire to align the municipal holiday with a date that the population of Aveiro valued and celebrated effectively. In a predominantly right-wing Municipal Assembly, the proposal was approved with 15 votes in favor, 3 votes against, and 2 abstentions.

The redefinition of toponymy in Aveiro was far from a linear process. These cases illustrate the complexity of adjusting toponymy and public celebrations to reflect both the authentic history and current identity of the community. While the Administrative Commission composed of anti-fascists sought to break with the authoritarian past and promote democratic values and those that praised the history of the parties they represented, usually with some concern to present locally relevant names, from 1977, the elected power did not immediately seek to undo the previously taken decisions but still responds to popular claims that prioritize memories and local identities less aligned with the opposition to the regime. Popular resistance to changes reflects the complexities of the democratic transition process, highlighting that collective memory is shaped both by political projects and community sentiments.

5. Conclusion

The cases identified show how toponymy was a crucial space for the redefinition of public memory in Aveiro after April 25th. First, the acts of *decommemoration* or “symbolic retribution” were limited but do reflect an initial intention to break with the authoritarian past and celebrate democratic values without, however, initiating a process of overly pronounced revenge. Although in limited numbers, the acts of *decommemoration* generate episodes of profound resistance from the population, which demanded the restoration of some names. Second, the new names introduced by democracy were a mix of celebration of the values introduced with April 25th and non-celebratory names. However, the process of *recommemoration* was more visible and protracted than *decommemoration*, suggesting a bigger focus on “symbolic reparation”. Third, over the years, a strategy of retroactive commemorations emerged that primarily recovered the

memory of the struggles against absolute power in the 19th century, reclaiming the idea of the city as the "cradle of liberty."

The reactions elicited illustrate a preference for cost-benefit calculations over ideological considerations, even in a stabilized and favorable political environment, as was the case after 1976. The debates, occasionally referencing the events of 1975, underscore the constraints of ideology in shaping public memory. They also demonstrate how the democratic transition did not eradicate tensions around toponymic management but rather transformed them into a continuous negotiation concerning the historical and political identity of the city. Over time, the local executive emphasized moderation, reflecting the impact of pragmatic considerations. This approach largely stemmed from the local governing party's cautious management of its historical connections, initially attempting to distance itself from its past and present as a newly democratic entity with unblemished credentials. As the initial radical sentiments of the early years diminished, so did the party's urgency to obscure the origins of its members.

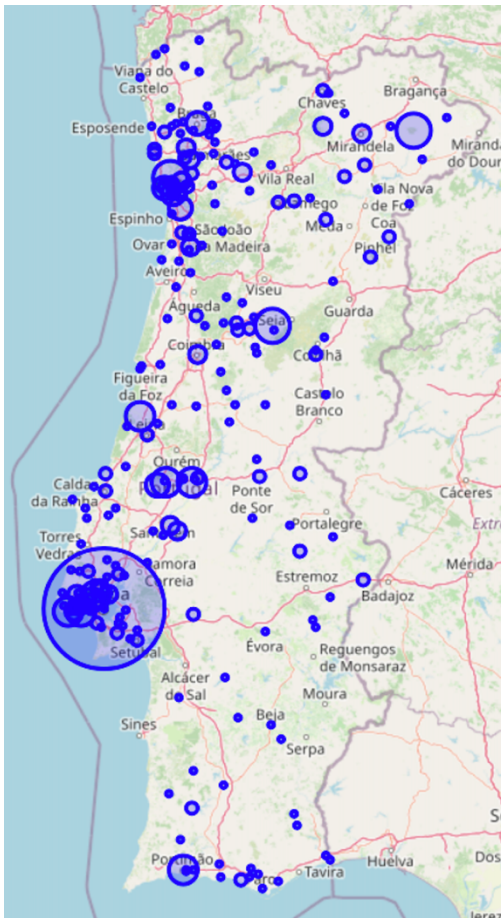
Tables and Figures

Table 1. Number of councilors of the Aveiro City Council (1976-2021), by party/coalition

Year	CDS	PSD (PSD/CDS)	PS
1976	3	2	2
1979	5	1	1
1982	4	2	1
1985	5	1	1
1989	5	2	2
1993	5	2	2
1997	2	3	4
2001	1	3	5
2005	5		4
2009	6		3
2013	5		3
2017	6		3
2021	6		3

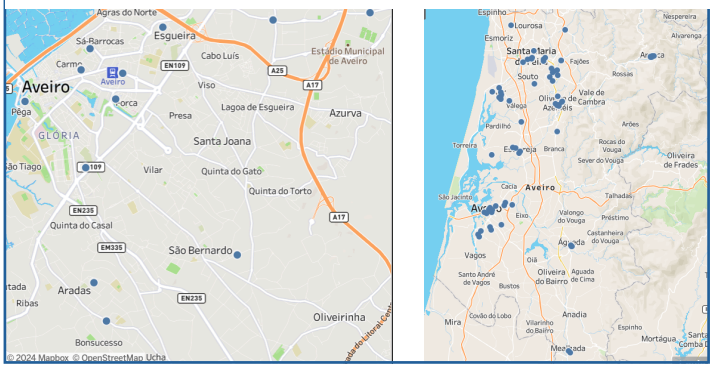
Source: own elaboration from www.cne.pt

Figure 1. Streets named after the political elite of the Estado Novo (Ministers of equivalent) in 2024



Source: Own elaboration based on the extraction of names from the Dicionário de História do Estado Novo[45]

Figure 2. Street named after the local elite of the Estado Novo in 2024 (on the left, the city of Aveiro, on the right, the District of Aveiro)



Source: own elaboration. Dataset containing 641 names

[45] Rosas and Brito, Dicionário... cit. 1997

Table 2. Street name changes approved by the Administrative Commission representing a new commemoration (1974-76)

Minute date	Old name	Classification	New name	Origin	Classification	Decommemoration
21/may/74	Avenida Dr. Oliveira Salazar	Eponym	Avenida 25 de Abril	Municipal Committee on Toponymy	Historical Date	Yes
21/mai/74	Rua de Ílhavo	City or place	Rua Mário Sacramento	Municipal Committee on Toponymy	Eponym	No
10/sep/74	Largo Eng. Frederico Ulrich	Eponym	Largo Humberto Delgado	Municipal Committee on Toponymy	Eponym	Yes
01/oct/74	Rua Professor Antunes Varela	Eponym	Rua Professor Barbosa de Magalhães	Municipal Committee on Toponymy	Eponym	Yes
01/oct/74	Rua Dr. Francisco do Vale Guimarães	Eponym	Rua de Ferreira de Castro	Municipal Committee on Toponymy	Eponym	Yes
01/oct/74	(no name)	-	Praça Dr. Ferreira Soares	Municipal Committee on Toponymy	Eponym	-
01/oct/74	Rua José Mortágua	Eponym	Rua Bernardo Torres	Municipal Committee on Toponymy	Eponym	Yes
01/oct/74	(no name)	-	Rua do Dr. Manuel das Neves	Municipal Committee on Toponymy	Eponym	-
01/oct/74	(no name)	-	Rua de Sebastião Magalhães Lima	Municipal Committee on Toponymy	Eponym	-
01/oct/74	Rua Homem Cristo Filho	Eponym	Rua das Vítimas do Fascismo	Municipal Committee on Toponymy	Eponym	Yes
01/oct/74	Rua A	Other	Rua de Aquilino Ribeiro	Municipal Committee on Toponymy	Eponym	No
01/oct/74	Rua B	Other	Rua Jaime Cortesão	Municipal Committee on Toponymy	Eponym	No
01/oct/74	Rua D	Other	Rua Professor Egas Moniz	Municipal Committee on Toponymy	Eponym	No
01/oct/74	Rua E	Other	Rua de Manuel Mendes	Municipal Committee on Toponymy	Eponym	No
08/oct/74	(no name)	-	Rua Manuel Simões de Miranda	Residents' group	Eponym	-
08/oct/74	Rua da Estação	Other	Rua Tomás de Barros Queirós	Municipal Committee on Toponymy	Eponym	No
09/sep/75	Rua n.1	Other	Rua 1º de Maio	Alagoas Residents' committee	Historical date	No

09/sep/75	Rua n. 3	Other	Rua 31 de Janeiro	Alagoas Residents' committee	Historical date	No
09/sep/75	Rua n. 5	Other	Rua da República	Alagoas Residents' committee	Political values	No
09/sep/75	Rua n. 7	Other	Rua da Liberdade	Alagoas Residents' committee	Political values	No
09/sep/75	Rua n. 8	Other	Rua 5 de Outubro	Alagoas Residents' committee	Historical date	No
13/jan/76	(no name)	-	Rua Mário Sacramento	Municipal Committee on Toponymy	Eponym	-
04/mar/76	(no name)	-	Largo da Liberdade	Cácia Parish Administrative Committee	Political Vaues	-
09/mar/76	(no name)	-	Rua de Norton de Matos	Presas Residents' committee	Eponym	
28/sep/76	(no name)	-	Rua 1º de Maio	Mataduço's Resident's committee	Historical date	-
02/dez/76	(no name)	-	Rua 25 de Abril	Municipal Committee on Toponymy	Historical date	

Source: own elaboration based on data extracted from the minutes of the Administrative Committee (https://arquivo.cm-aveiro.pt)