'It was Never Just About the Statue': Ethos of Historical Figures in Public Debates on Contested Cultural Objects

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Abstract

Collective, historical memory becomes increasingly important in public debates on cultural heritage across many countries. Their key elements are contested cultural objects—such as statues or memorials—which construct nations' memory that governs societal processes such as decolonisation or de-Stalinization. This paper analyses arguments about five such objects in UK, US, South Africa, Poland and Spain in order to identify discursive strategies used to argue whether to remove or to keep them. Large-scale comparative discourse analysis reveals that the *ethos of historical figures*—such as the Confederates or Joseph Stalin—commemorated by these cultural objects plays an essential and primary role in these debates. We argue that values associated with the character of these figures determine the dynamics of discourse and its close analysis allows us to uncover what societies are struggling with when handling artifacts of the past in the present day.

Keywords

argumentation, discursive strategies, cultural heritage, collective and historical memory, ethos associated with contested cultural objects, ethos of historical figures, large-scale discourse analysis

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Introduction

On 9th April 2015, the statue of the British politician and colonialist icon—Cecil John Rhodes—was taken down from the main square of the University of Cape Town in South Africa. In the same year, the Palace of Culture and Science—the highest building in Warsaw erected as a gift to the Polish nation from Joseph Stalin—celebrated its 60 anniversary what brought about emotional debates on artifacts of communism in Poland. Two years later, the statue of the war hero and Confederate's leader—Robert E. Lee—was removed from a public park in Dallas and sold. In 2019, the Spanish government decided to move Francisco Franco's remains—a dictator who ruled Spain for almost 40 years—from the regime-associated memorial, the Valley of the Fallen (*Valle de los Caídos*), to his private family pantheon. In June 2018, a portrait of Edward Colston—a slave trader and Bristolian philanthropist—was removed by Cleo Lake, the lord major of Bristol, from her parlour in the city council:

(1)   Cleo Lake: Having it [Colston's portrait] on the parlour wall in my view sent mixed messages about the city council's values today, which are not the same as what they might have been centuries ago in Colston's time.

In public debates on contested cultural objects, such as statues and memorials, speakers argue that these objects *should be removed* from the public space or they defend them that they *should be kept*. In Example (1), the lord major of Bristol gives an argument for removing a cultural object, i.e., Colston's portrait, from the public space, i.e., a parlour wall of the Bristol City Council, as it commemorates values of the past which are in conflict with values endorsed in the present day. This kind of debates is a phenomenon that has been growing rapidly during the last few years (Silverman, 2011). Public debates on cultural heritage are a venue for the contestation of those controversial cultural objects and for the contestation of the values they promote in public spaces. They follow or influence the changes of policy to facilitate the integration of communities that constitute society. These processes share many similarities and connections with domains outside the cultural heritage too, such as *Black Lives Matter* or *#MeToo* movements.

We claim that a key element of these debates is *ethos of historical figures*—such as Edward Colston in (1)—who are associated with cultural objects such as Colston's portrait in the Bristol City Council. Portraits, statues and memorials are contested precisely because of the legacy of persons whose character was once endorsed and thus commemorated through a cultural object. Today these objects are a remembrance of the values that the historical figures represent—such

as colonialism, communism, Confederate cause, fascism, slavery—and societies engage in debating whether or not they should keep these objects in public space and continue promoting values and ethos of these historical figures.

Ethos, the character of the speaker (Aristotle, 1991), and its role in argumentation has been broadly studied in contemporary accounts (e.g. (Walton, 1997; Walton, 1998), see also (van Eemeren et al., 2014) for an overview), but the focus has been solely on reasoning patterns in which it is concluded that a statement or an argument should be / should not be accepted, because a good person (an expert) / a bad person asserted it. Such an approach does not allow us to analyse the dynamics of debates on cultural objects, since historical figures are not *speakers* in these debates, and the contestation of cultural objects is not an *acceptance* of a statement or an argument. The most recent work in argumentation studies is offering a framework which fits this type of discourse: (Budzynska et al., 2021) introduce a reasoning pattern in which it is concluded that an action in the world regarding an object should be / should not be performed, because a good / bad person is associated with this object. Building upon this framework, we specify that an object in the pattern is a contested cultural object which is associated (Peirce, 1958) with a historical figure.

In this paper, we establish a hybrid methodology that combines large-scale set of data (over 7,500 words) with comparative discourse analysis of argumentation which associates ethos with objects. To our best knowledge, a similar approach was employed only in (Janier and Reed, 2017; Musi, 2018) to analyse, respectively, concessions in argumentation and discursive functions of lexeme `say' in mediation discourse. Still these works consider neither the connection between discourse and society nor the comparison across dimensions of discourse. In our study, we examine argumentation and its design (cf. Aakhus, 1999; Aakhus, 2007; Jackson and Aakhus, 2014; Jackson, 2015) in public debates which are critical for shaping the public space and, as a result, the collective, historical memory of societies. For comparison, we analyse a variety of: *media* (newspaper, webpage, radio); *languages* and *countries* in which these debates have been prominent recently; *speakers' roles* in the discourse (experts, reporters, policy makers); and *cultural objects* associated either with ambivalent historical figures, i.e., figures who have both critics and defenders (Colston, Rhodes and the Confederates), or totalitarian historical figures, i.e., figures whose character is considered unambivalently bad by a given society (Franco in Spain and Stalin in Poland).

The comparative empirical analysis revealed that independently of these dimensions of discourse the speakers ubiquitously use three discursive strategies to design and manage their argumentation about contested cultural objects: (i) a strategy of proclaiming, elaborating or interpreting *values* inherited by cultural objects after bad or good ethos of historical figures; (ii) a strategy of relying on *desirability* or lack of desirability of the legacy of historical figures which is declared by: a society itself, its representative members or demonstrated by a precedent of a similar case of another cultural object; and (iii) a strategy of reframing from ethos to *other context*—such as legal regulations or financial consequences—in which these objects should be considered instead. Such public debates always start with the contestation of the values which then guides the dynamics of this discourse: while proclaiming values usually occur at the beginning of the debate, the other strategies constitute alternative branches that define the path of the debate to final claims.

In what follows, we first delineate the key points that support our theoretical framework: the relationship between cultural heritage, values and society, and the role of ethos in argumentation. Next, we briefly summarise the dataset of debates created for the analysis in this paper. The next two sections comprise the detailed examination of this dataset that unpacks three main discursive strategies described above into specific substrategies. Overall, the paper demonstrates how speakers use these strategies to design argumentation in this genre, showing empirically that public debates on contested cultural objects were "never just about the statue".

Background

This section describes the theoretical foundations on which we draw in examining debates about contested cultural objects. We first summarise the main features of these objects addressed in cultural heritage studies. Next, we describe the key concepts that constitute the scaffolding for the analysis of debates on contested cultural objects: the role of ethos in argumentation theory and the association of ethos with objects.

Debates on cultural heritage

The awareness of the construction of identity (self) and its situated deployment into a given context (society) is in the core of the debates around contested cultural heritage (Silverman, 2011). The current studies about heritage recognise the role of power in the production of identities and values, since cultural objects can mean to assert, defend or deny claims to or from power. For a long time, disenfranchised groups of society have been historically removed

from the construction of this legacy for upcoming generations, losing the chance to express their emotional significance.

Studies about contested cultural heritage are essentially studies about *conflict* with the problematic past. The conservation of unwanted cultural objects inherited from the past triggers questions such as: what should be remembered, what should be forgotten, which values are acceptable today and which are not acceptable anymore. Answering these questions requires a constant negotiation among all the involved parties (Mondale, 1994). In some cases, these debates are particularly distressing, because people affected directly by a given historical figure, such as Franco or Stalin, are still alive. In other cases, current generations still suffer the consequences of the discrimination reinforced by historical figures such as Colston, Confederates and Rhodes.

Cultural heritage management is not only dealing with objects with difficult past but also with intangible heritage (rituals, ceremonies, practices, social practices, etc.) and their *public outreach* in the present days. Practising a public ceremony or a ritual is a way how dominant powers impose a specific interpretation or education dissemination programs of *values* to which a society becomes publicly committed to commemorate. The ritual ceremony of apology by Taiwan's president for facilitating the reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous groups in the country in 2016 turned out to generate the contrary effect and exacerbate the tension between both groups, since practices from non-indigenous groups were not integrated at all in that ceremony (Chu and Huang, 2021). Race talk of US youth is another manifestation of this intangible heritage, since it allows to capture how young generations produce racial identities and perpetuate gender ideologies (Bucholtz, 2011) and also how they suppress and contest the cultural memory of racism by means of discursive practices (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2013).

Ethos in argumentation theory

The current state of the art in the study of ethos in argumentation shows that 'ethotic arguments' referring to expertise, authority and trustworthiness are a key persuasive factor in the society. Ethotic arguments (Brinton, 1986) consist in concluding that a statement is true or false (or that an argument should or should not be accepted) from a premise that an author of that statement or argument is a person of good or bad character, respectively. Depending on whether the recommendation about a statement or an argument is positive (i.e., to accept a claim or an argument) or negative (i.e., to reject a claim or an argument), argumentation theorists speak of

pro homine arguments in case of positive ethotic arguments (Groarke and Tindale, 2013) or *ad hominem* argumentative structures, studied both in general philosophy of argument (cf. Budzynska and Witek, 2014; Walton, 1998; Walton, 2004), and in computationally-oriented argument studies (cf. Habernal et al., 2018). ==@MPF Please add to Habermal et al: Hidey el al 2017; R Duthie, K Budzynska (2018a); R Duthie, K Budzynska (2018b)==

A typical approach to ethotic reasoning in argumentation is to treat it as argumentation scheme (Walton et al., 2008). This consists in discerning common reasoning patterns and identifying a particular argument as an instance of a general scheme for which unique assessment procedures are provided. A typical schematic representation of positive ethotic arguments is the argument from expert opinion, which has the following form:

Argument from Expert Opinion

Premise 1: E is an expert in domain D.
Premise 2: E asserts that A is known to be true.
Conclusion: Therefore, A may be plausibly be taken to be true.

The standard form of negative ethotic (i.e. *ad hominem*) arguments points to making an inferential step from a premise about someone's bad character to the conclusion about rejecting an argument performed by that person:

Ad Hominem Argument

Premise: i is a person of bad character.
Conclusion: Therefore, i's argument should not be accepted.

The latter schematic representation helps to uncover a variety of discursive strategies for attacking a person's trustworthiness and credibility (Macagno, 2013). In the spirit of exploring the overlap between argumentation theory and discourse analysis (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2011; Fairclough, 2016; Ietcu, 2006) we may notice that this research strand concurs with some discourse studies aimed at employing rhetorical tools to explore forms of ethotic attacks such as e.g. insinuation (Bhatia, 2015), and narratives of fear and fight stories (Bucholtz, 2011).

Both the positive and the negative ethotic arguments are claimed by argumentation theorists to have the powerful societal impact (cf. Walton, 1997). According to Goodwin, the societal role of the appeals to the authority of experts relies on the fact that in complex and sometimes confused civic deliberations, nonexpert citizens are unable to recognise which statements from purported experts should deserve their trust—as nonexperts cannot assess expertise directly (Goodwin, 2011). This critical importance of expertise in society may be one of possible

reasons why argumentation scholars dispute about whether arguments from expert opinion are strong or weak arguments (Hinton, 2015; Mizrahi, 2013; Seidel, 2014). Moreover, these debates (that also point to persuasive powers of weak arguments from expert opinion and the arguments from unreliable experts) are claimed by some other argumentation theorists to be evidence for the legitimacy crisis of arguments from expert opinion (Liao, 2021). These and other discussions illustrate that the strength and persuasive force of positive ethotic arguments is definitely not indifferent for reasoned argumentation in the society. That observation concerns also the negative ethotic arguments. Personal attack as a common form of negative ethotic arguments, because of the aim for a vilification of a person's character, motives, or trustworthiness is claimed to be "inherently dangerous and emotional in argument, and is rightly associated with the fallacies and deceptive tactics of argumentation" (Walton, 2008, p. 170).

Associating Ethos with Objects

The theoretical foundation for our inquiry into the dynamics of debates about contested cultural objects is introduced in (Budzynska et al., 2021). This framework allows us to explain various forms of discourse about cultural objects associated with historical figures by means of the following reasoning pattern:

Ethotic Argument about Object Associated with Person

Premise 1: The object o is associated with i.
Premise 2: The person i has a bad / good character.
Conclusion: Therefore, the positive action in the world regarding this object A should not / should be performed.

Unlike traditional schemes for ethotic arguments (see the previous section), it captures in the conclusion the recommendation of undertaking (or not undertaking) a certain action towards an object in the world (instead of undertaking or not an action of acceptance of a statement or an argument). The elements of this scheme can be employed in our current study in the following way.

If we take *Premise 1*, stating that an object o is associated with a person i, we may notice that the debates about the contested cultural objects not only associate them with ethos of historical figures (such as Edward Colston, Cecil Rhodes or Joseph Stalin), but also with its type (such as ambivalent or dominantly conceived in a debate as totalitarian; see the section on 'Data collection of debates on contested cultural objects'). Since in the scheme a cultural object o is a sign representing a historical figure i, this leads us to further investigate the instances of what

types of elements discussed in semiotics (Chandler, 2003; Peirce, 1958) can be found in the discourse about cultural objects associated with historical figures. Peirce defines a sign by means of a triadic model: (i) a *representamen*, the form that the sign takes; (ii) an *object*, an element of reality denoted by the representamen; and (iii) an *interpretant*, a codification that establishes the association between the representamen and the object. When applying this conceptual framework to analyse discourse in which the association between a cultural object and a historical figure is a central issue, we may for instance observe that, in the case of e.g. the statue of Cecil Rhodes, the statue itself is the representamen, the historical figure of Cecil Rhodes is the object (the statue is substituting him) and the interpretant is the understanding of that particular association.

Next, if we take *Premise 2* of the Ethotic Argument about Object Associated with Person, then it may become clear that a given debate with a motion of a kind "a cultural object *o* should / should not be removed" can be focused around different values which constitute a (good or bad) character of a person *i* (or a group people). If a party in such a debate argues in favour of removing *o*, then, depending on the setting of a debate, a variety of elements constituting someone's bad character can be emphasised: doing direct harm to people, accepting morally bad actions of other people in the group without taking directly part in them, being indifferent to the harm that person has witnessed without defending people who had suffered, and many others. Note that depending on the emphasised ethos component, the dynamics of the debate would look differently, e.g., more emotional when discussing the direct harm and possibly calmer when an indirect participation was the focus of the debate.

Finally, the formulation of the last part of the pattern, namely the *Conclusion* about an action in the world regarding an object, which should or should not be performed, may be treated as a point of departure for comparing debates with respect to what kinds of actions are considered by their participants as most commendable. Also, this aspect seems to be playing a significant role for shaping the dynamics of a discourse. For example, it would be a different controversy if the line of a dispute was whether or not to demolish a certain cultural object from one in which one party would be opting for demolishing a monument while the other party would be arguing in favour of arranging a special museum for all object of a certain kind.

Data collection on debates about contested cultural objects

This research analyses debates comparing a variety of sources with respect to different dimensions of discourse regarding contested cultural objects and historical figures in order to

obtain a representative sample of the investigated genre. The main topic of these debates is the recommendation about an action which should be taken regarding such an object, i.e., whether to remove it from or keep it in the public space. We have selected discussions about the following cultural objects: (i) portrait of Edward Colston in Bristol, UK; (ii) Peace Monument associated with the Confederates in Atlanta's Piedmont Park in the US; (iii) Cecil Rhodes' statue in the University of Cape Town in South Africa; (iv) Valley of the Fallen in San Lorenzo del Escorial in Madrid, Spain; and (v) Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw, Poland.

The total data collected (see Table 1) comprises sources from different media, including newspapers, webpage and radio, with more than 7,000 words across them to allow for a large-scale comparative analysis. Moreover, in order to identify discourse strategies which are ubiquitous across various cultures, our data is taken from five countries in Europe, America and Africa and three languages (English, Polish, and Spanish). Finally, we identified two types of historical figures associated with cultural objects: (i) ambivalent historical figures who according to some people represent bad moral values (slavery, colonialism, etc.), and according to others—also good moral values (philanthropy, reconciliation, etc.); and (ii) totalitarian historical figures who in a given society are considered as determined by solely bad moral values (fascism, communism, etc.). We aimed to keep the length of analysed material to be well-balanced between debates on cultural objects associated with ambivalent historical figures and debates which involve totalitarian historical figures.

Table 1. Summary of the resources for debates on contested cultural objects which commemorate historical figures (HF).

	Words	**Voices**	**Lang.**	**Country**	**Media**	**Year**
Colston	695	3	EN	UK	Newspaper	2018
Confederates	1,760	4	EN	US	Newspaper	2019
Rhodes	1,147	2	EN	South Africa	Webpage	2018
Ambivalent HF	**3,602**	**9**	**1**	**3**	**3**	**2**
Franco	1,947	4	SP	Spain	Radio	2017
Stalin	2,095	4	PL	Poland	Radio	2015/17
Totalitarian HF	**4,042**	**8**	**2**	**2**	**1**	**2**
Total	**7,644**	**17**	**3**	**5**	**4**	**4**

For the study of debates about cultural objects associated with ambivalent historical figures, we selected three sources. First, we analysed a newspaper article[1] about the removal of a portrait of Edward Colston in Bristol in the UK. Colston was one of the most prominent British slave traders during the 17th and 18th centuries, but also a renown philanthropist. In this article, a journalist, Steven Morris, describes different opinions voiced by policy makers (lord major of Bristol and the opposition) with respect to the removal of Colston's portrait from the Bristol city council. Second, we examined the Peace Monument associated with Confederates who defended slavery during American Civil War (1861-1865). This sculptural group, composed by an "angel of peace" standing over a Confederate soldier, was erected in 1911 by the Old Guard of the Gate City, a Confederate-era militia. As a textual material, we selected an article[2] published in 2019 by The Christian Science Monitor, an international news organisation. The article reports on views of four speakers regarding whether this monument commemorates negative values of white supremacy and racism or positive value of reconciliation after the war. Finally, in order to study the case of Cecil Rhodes, the British colonialist during 19th century and founder of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe and Zambia), we selected an interview[3] with Zethu Matebeni, a sociologist and a professor at the University of the Western Cape. The article was published on the webpage of Heinrich Böll Foundation which promotes the consolidation of democracy and human rights in Southern Africa. Matabeni is an activist involved in the *#RhodesMustFall* movement, which achieved the removal of Rhodes's statue from the campus of the University of Cape Town in 2015. The interview was taken three years later to reflect on the meaning of removing this statue from a prominent space in the main square of the university.

For the study of totalitarian historical figures, we have analysed two cases. Francisco Franco run the government of Spain from 1936 until 1975 when he died and was buried in the Valley of the Fallen, a monumental memorial of what is associated with regime architecture. In 2017, the Spanish government declared the intention of removing Franco's remains from the monument in order to change the meaning of this cultural object. This led to vivid debates in mass media in Spain, such as the radio debate broadcast on May 2017[4] which involved four speakers (a moderator and three experts) who addressed whether Franco's remains should be removed from the Valley or the Fallen or not[5]. Lastly, we have selected a debate on the Palace of Culture and Science, which was erected in 1955 by the decision of Joseph Stalin as a gift from the Soviet Union to people of Poland. Today, the palace is perceived by some people as a remembrance and an artefact of Soviet influence over Polish nation. We have chosen to

analyse two radio programs—broadcast in 2015 and 2017—dedicated to the 60 anniversary of the inauguration of the building. In these programs, two journalists and three experts discuss the future of this building.

Discursive strategies in public debates on contested cultural objects

The empirical study of this dataset has revealed that speakers use three discursive strategies in public debates in order to design their argumentation about whether to remove or to keep contested cultural objects. The first strategy consists in proclaiming, elaborating or interpreting *negative or positive values*—such as white supremacy or reconciliation—inherited by cultural objects from *bad or good ethos of historical figures*. The second strategy relies on the claim that these values are the *legacy of historical figures* which is *desired or not desired* by a society or its representative members, or that this desirability or lack of desirability is evidenced by a precedent of a similar cultural object which has been removed or kept in the past. The last strategy consists in *reframing* argumentation to shift its focus *from ethos to another context*—such as legal, financial or historical contexts—in which these objects should be considered according to the speakers (cf. Fairclough and Madroane, 2014; Goodwin, 2019; Musi and Aakhus, 2019) for the explanation of a link between argumentation and framing).

In each case *ethos* remains in the very centre of these debates: society struggles with moral values commemorated by cultural objects, as these objects are associated with historical figures whose character represents those values. We may argue that the Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw possesses or does not possess an aesthetic value, i.e. that it is a valuable piece of architecture or just an ugly building, but it is impossible to argue that the palace itself possesses or not a value of communism. Instead, we can argue that it commemorates this *moral value* by virtue of being associated with Joseph Stalin in the collective, historical memory of the Polish nation.

In the next sections, we describe how these strategies were employed in the debates about five cultural objects described in the previous section, focusing on how the debates oscillate around ethos of historical figures: values associated with these persons' character or their legacy, or how the attention is shifted from ethos to other contexts.

Values inherited by contested cultural objects after ethos of historical figures

The first main discursive strategy in this genre focuses on values, revealing that the debate it is not just about the object itself but about the values it inherits after ethos of a historical figure. Here the speaker has three substrategies to choose from in order to design their argumentation, i.e. substrategies of: (i) proclaiming, (ii) elaborating, and (iii) interpreting these values.

The discursive substrategy of *proclaiming* consists in publicly announcing which moral value is responsible for making a cultural object contested and triggers the debate about it. It is in fact a speech action of asserting *Premise 2* of the reasoning pattern from (Budzynska et al., 2021) (see the section on 'Associating Ethos with Objects'), which states a moral value for which a given historical figure is perceived as possessing a bad or good character. This substrategy occurred at least once in each debate in our dataset: in all of them, a negative value—such as colonialism or communism—was proclaimed, making it clear that a historical figure, associated with a cultural object, is a bad person. Additionally, in each case of ambivalent historical figures, a positive value—such as reconciliation—was proclaimed, showing that this person had also some good character traits for which s/he should be still endorsed and commemorated through a cultural object.

In Example (2)a, a journalist from Heinrich Böll Foundation proclaims at the very beginning of an introduction to the interview with Zethu Matebeni that a statue commemorates a historical figure who represents a negative value of colonialism (the linguistic material expressing this proclamation is highlighted in italics). In (2)b, Matebeni, a member of *#RhodesMustFall* movement, draws attention to another perspective on Rhodes' character, shared by many people, which associates him with a positive value of supporting higher education. In both arguments, their ethotic dimension is linguistically signalled by the use of the name of the historical figure (present in all arguments of this kind in our dataset; highlighted in bold in (2):

(2)

    a. Heinrich Böll Foundation's journalist: Originally directed against a statue that commemorates the *colonial icon **Cecil John Rhodes***, the campaign marked the beginning of the largest wave of student protests in democratic South Africa. Across the country, students called for the "decolonisation'" of universities and free higher education, among other things.

b. Zethu Matebeni: many argue that ***Rhodes***' investment in education—through the Rhodes and Mandela-Rhodes scholarships and land bequeathed to university campuses—has made significant contributions to higher education}.

As for the rest of the ambivalent historical figures, the speakers make it clear that Colston represent a negative value of slavery ("the slave trader Edward Colston") and a positive value of respected citizen ("Edward Colston was a great Bristolian in the eyes of many of us"). The Confederates are proclaimed to possess a negative value of Confederate cause and a positive value of reconciliation ("At the time, the monument was meant not to glorify the Confederate cause, but to urge reconciliation, a rekindling of a national bond stretching from Atlanta to Boston"). In case of the totalitarian historical figures, the speakers proclaimed only negative values, i.e. the value of dictatorship ("lo primero que hay que hacer es sacar, exhumar los restos del dictador", *transl*. "the first thing to do is to remove, to exhume the remains of the dictator") and the value of communism ("Człowieka, który wymordował (...) do 200 milionów ludzi, bo liczba ofiar komunizmu jest szacowana mniej więcej na tym poziomie", *transl*. "A man who murdered (…) up to 200 million people, because the number of victims of communism is estimated to be more or less at that level").

The next substrategy, called *elaborating*, consists in deepening our understanding of what these primary moral values really mean by adding some extra information on values introduced through proclaiming. This means that apart from asserting *Premise 2* from the reasoning pattern of 'Ethotic Argument about Object Associated with Person', the speaker also asserts why a given primary value—such as communism, colonialism or reconciliation—is bad or good. In Example (3), the journalist Michał Rachoń provides several reasons ("symbol of the enslavement", "gigantic crimes", "all the worst that happened in the history of Poland"; all in italic) to elaborate on why Stalin is a bad person[6]:

(3)   Michał Rachoń: I Józef Stalin i pałac Stalina, który stoi do dzisiaj w Warszawie jest symbolem zniewolenia narodu polskiego i jest symbolem gigantycznych zbrodni. Jest symbolem wszystkiego najgorszego, co wydarzyło się w historii wspaniałego narodu, wspaniałego narodu.

Both **Joseph Stalin** and Stalin's palace, which still stands in Warsaw today, are a *symbol of the enslavement of the Polish nation* and a *symbol of gigantic crimes*. It is a *symbol of all the worst that happened in the history of a great nation, a great nation.*

Elaborating is the most common substrategy in the category of using values in debates on contested cultural objects—it is almost equally common in our dataset as the other substrategies of proclaiming and interpreting put together. In case of the ambivalent historical figures, it is applied both for arguing against and in favour of the character of the historical figure. For the association between Colston and slavery, it is argued that the current "racism and inequality stem" directly derives from the fact that "people of African descent were dehumanised to justify enslaving them". For Rhodes, five arguments were given to deepen our understanding what colonialism means in South Africa: colonised universities; "impact on people's material lives and psyches until today"; "the elitism of the white race"; "racism and dehumanisation promoted in universities"; and "the assumption and expectation that black students should assimilate to white standards and white values of excellence".

For the Confederates, a negative value of the Confederate cause was elaborated as: white power; "a national white brotherhood to thwart the political power of black Americans"; and distilled hatred and disregard for the humanity of black people". On the other hand, a positive value of reconciliation was elaborated as: "old and new values are integrated"; "bringing brotherhood back together"; and "races are involved and equal". In case of the totalitarian historical figures, this substrategy is applied solely for arguing against the character of these persons. The dictatorship of Franco was elaborated as murder and genocide, and the communism of Stalin was elaborated as "the worst crimes in the history of mankind" and "stigma of slavery burned on the forehead of Warsaw" (in addition to the elaboration given in Example (3)).

The last substrategy in this category, i.e., *interpreting* values inherited after ethos, consists in explicating how the past values, for which historical figures were endorsed and thus commemorated through a cultural object, should be interpreted or reinterpreted in the present day. Structurally, this substrategy is similar to the previous one, i.e., it provides a reason for *Premise 2* in the reasoning scheme of 'Ethotic Argument about Object Associated with Person'. The difference is that this reason relies not on deepening understanding of moral values, but their interpretation according to a current moral code of a society. In Example (4), Patrik Jonsson, a journalist from The Christian Science Monitor, argues that the original values, which led to erecting the monument in 1911, are not recognised as a symbol of progression anymore and that instead the Confederate cause is viewed today as a symbol of oppression:

(4)   Patrik Jonsson: At the time, the monument was meant not to glorify the **Confederate cause**, but to urge reconciliation, a rekindling of a national bond stretching from Atlanta to Boston. It was built to commemorate peacekeeping trips to the North made by members of the Gate City Guard, Georgia's first militia, in previous years. But 2019 is different historical country than 1911. *What seemed progressive then can today strike some as an oppressive symbol.*

In the debate on the Confederates, this substrategy was used particularly frequently, highlighting that the Confederate cause means today: unequal distributions of power; white supremacy; and the evocation of dangers of the past; while the positive value of reconciliation means today the evocation of hope. Interpreting values was also used in the debate on the Valley of the Fallen. Although this memorial was originally built to commemorate those people who died in Franco's army, people from the opposite side of the war were buried there too in order to transform this memorial into a monument of reconciliation. Yet, in the debate, a speaker claims that today the Valley of the Fallen does not mean reconciliation anymore (``¿De verdad alguien puede decir que esto es un lugar de reconciliación?", *transl.* "Can anyone really say that this is a place of reconciliation?").

In this subsection, we have described three discursive substrategies that put values in the centre of the debate. The analysis of the collected data shows that they are used for arguing both against and in defence of cultural objects associated with historical figures who represent proclaimed negative and/or positive values, discussing what these values really mean, and how they should be interpreted in a current moral code of a society.

Desirability of the legacy of historical figures in the public space

Instead of designing argumentation around moral values, which constitute the character of a historical figure, the speaker can decide to choose a discursive strategy which focuses on desirability of having a cultural object, i.e. a legacy of a historical figure, in the public space. In other words, the focus is on whether or not moral values are *desired by a society* in the public space rather than what these values are, what do they precisely mean or how they can be reinterpreted today. In such a case, the speaker argues that a cultural object should be removed / kept in the public space, because it is not wanted / is wanted by a *group* or an *individual* who is representative for the society, or because this desirability or its lack has been already demonstrated by a *precedent*, i.e., a similar (analogous) case of a cultural object. The speaker

can choose thus from three substrategies here: (i) popular desire, (ii) individual desire, and (iii) argument from precedent.

The substrategy of *popular desire* consists in appealing to the desire of removing a cultural object from the public space or keeping it there which is shared by a group of people who are somehow representative for a given society. In Example 16(5)a, a journalist, Patrik Jonsson, lists three groups, of which two groups (a majority of white Americans in the South and a plurality) want the Confederate monument in Atlanta to be kept and one group (a majority of black Americans in the South) wants it to be removed (highlighted in italic). The ethotic dimension of this substrategy is evidenced by the use of the reference to historical figures (highlighted in bold):

(5)

    a. Patrik Jonsson: Americans seem at a wary impasse over the **Confederate** monument issue, polls say. In the South, a majority of white Americans want the monuments to stay, and a majority of black Americans want them removed, according to a Winthrop University poll. Overall, a plurality thinks they should remain. There is little agreement about how, or whether, to contextualize them.

    b. Richard Straut: I'm a soldier in the Old Guard, the precursor to our National Guard. (...) We are not some white supremacist nonsense.

The "representativeness" of such a group is never directly stated, but instead it is surfaced through attacks and defences to these attacks which occurred in our dataset. In (5)b, Richard Straut defends the group of the Old Guard against the accusation that they are not representative for their society or that they are somehow biased in their desire to keep the Confederate monument (i.e., he stresses that they are not white supremacists who want to promote negative values through a cultural object in the public space).

Public desire is the most frequent substrategy of all substrategies identified in the analysed debates on contested cultural objects: it was used 21 times out of the total of 102 arguments given in our dataset. In case of the ambivalent historical figures in the debate about the Confederates, other groups include: the protesters in Charlotesville (Virginia) in August 2017; artists from Richmond; and states, cities, and citizens all across America. In the debate about Colston, some of the groups are well-known and specific such as: *Countering Colston* campaign group and the United Nations; while other groups are quite vague such as: civil rights campaigners; music lovers and artists; or even many; many of us; and people. Finally, in the

debate about Rhodes, this substrategy contains references to: students of South Africa; many black students; some part of the society; many in the society; and many. In case of the totalitarian historical figures, this discursive substrategy is significantly less frequent. It does not occur in the debate on Franco at all, while in the debates on Stalin, the groups mentioned include: social groups; opponents to the Palace of Culture and Science; famous Polish singers who expressed their negative attitude towards the building.

The next substrategy, *individual desire*, follows the similar pattern but appeals to what an individual wants rather than what a group wants. It is used less frequently in the dataset, possibly because an individual desire is considered to be weaker than a group desire. In Example (6)a, a journalist, Steven Morris, shows that the removal of the portrait of Edward Colston from a parlour in the city council was desired by Cleo Lake, the lord major of Bristol:

(6)

    a. Steven Morris: The lord mayor of Bristol has had a portrait of the slave trader **Edward Colston** removed from her office after deciding *she could not share her working space with the image*.

    b. Cleo Lake: I was born in Bristol. I am first-generation Bristolian. My father was a proud African man born in Jamaica and my mother is of Scottish heritage, so I am Campbell by clan on my mother's side. Not at all. [I don't want Colston to be airbrushed out of history.] More needs to be known and understood.

Example (6)b shows that the "representativeness" of an individual plays an important role in this substrategy too. Cleo Lake is trying to defend herself and her decision against a potential accusation that she did not act in the best interest of Bristolian heritage because of her Jamaican roots. This is why she emphasises her connection to Bristol and her right to represent it: "I was born in Bristol", "I am first-generation Bristolian", "my mother is of Scottish heritage".

Amongst other individuals whose desire was mentioned in the debates analysed in this paper, there were: a dean of Bristol Cathedral; a former newspaper editor, an amateur historian, and a spokesman for the Georgia Division of the Sons of Confederate Veterans - Martin O'Toole; a former Atlanta detective who spent a career in both the police and military working for and with African Americans - Richard Straut; a politician - Radosław Sikorski; and two speakers in the debate - Ana Pardo and Łukasz Michalski.

The last substrategy in this category—argument from *precedent*—consists in arguing against or in favour of a cultural object by pointing to a previous action of removing or keeping a

cultural object which represented the same legacy. In (7), Morris gives two examples of removing objects related to Colston from the public space in Bristol: the removal of his name from the city concert hall and the removal of stained-glass window associated with Colston from the cathedral:

(7)   Steven Morris: Last year civil rights campaigners, music lovers and artists welcomed a decision by *Bristol's largest concert hall, Colston Hall, to ditch the* **slave trader's** *name*} after years of protests and boycotts. B*ristol Cathedral entered the debate when its dean said it was prepared to remove its biggest stained-glass window* because of its close association with **Colston**.

Two actions can be similar not only because two cultural objects are associated with the same historical figure as in Example (7), but also because they involve two historical figures who represent the same moral values as in Example (8)[7]:

(8)   Elisa Beni: Esto ya se está haciendo en España, se ha hecho con los restos de Mola y de Sanjurjo, que estaban enterrados en una especie de mausoleo también enorme, que está en Pamplona, en el centro de Pamplona, y han sido sacados. Mola fue entregado a su familia y lo han inhumado donde ellos han creído.
This is already being done in Spain, it has been done with the remains of Mola and Sanjurjo, who were buried in a kind of huge mausoleum, which is in Pamplona, in the centre of Pamplona, and they have been removed. Mola was given to his family and they have buried him where they have believed.

A journalist, Elisa Beni, argues that Franco's remains should be removed from the Valley of the Fallen, because the same was done with other dictatorship generals, Emilio Mola y Vidal and José Sanjurjo y Sacanell. In other words, there is a precedent which justifies a removal of Franco's remains from this monumental memorial.

In the debate on Rhodes, Zethu Matebeni gives a precedent of Hendrik Verwoerd, architect of apartheid, whose statues were removed both from the parliament in Cape Town and from Johannesburg. In the debate on the Confederates, it is just mentioned that a statue of another Confederate was removed from the public space.

In the debate on Stalin, demolishing the Palace of Culture and Science was justified by a precedent of removing the statues of Felix Edmundovich Dzerzhinsky (a Bolshevik

revolutionary and official) and Vladimir Lenin in Poland and renaming the city of "Stalinogrod" to Katowice.

In this subsection, we have described three discursive substrategies that put desirability of the legacy of historical figures in the centre of argumentation. Our analysis revealed that speakers argue for removing or keeping contested cultural objects from the public space by claiming that this is what is wanted by a group or an individual, or by stressing that this desirability or its lack was already demonstrated by a precedent.

Reframing ethos to other contexts of cultural objects

When deciding how to argue against or in favour of a cultural object, the speaker can choose yet another discursive strategy which consists in shifting the focus of the public debate from ethos of a historical figure to other contexts in which a cultural object should be considered according to the speaker. In other words, instead of focusing on moral values and their desirability, the speaker may stress values independent from a historical figure such as an *aesthetic value* of a cultural object. In Example (9)a, Elisa Beni argues that the Valley of the Fallen lacks any artistic value, while a historian, Fernando Iwasaki, takes it even further in (9)b and suggests ironically to create there "the Great Kitsch Museum of Spanishness"[8]:

(9)

    a. Elisa Beni: And above all because *this has no artistic value, that is, it lacks any artistic value. It's kitsch, it's kitsch, I mean, it's terrible…*

    b. Fernando Iwasaki: No, no. Wait; for *a great kitsch monument, the Great Kitsch Museum of Spanishness can be created there.*

It might come as a surprise that arguing in favour of removing or keeping a cultural object because of their aesthetic values is rather rare in public debates (in our data, such reframing occurred only twice out of the total of 31 instances of reframing). The most frequent strategy of reframing was to shift the focus to *historical context* of cultural objects such as in the following example:

(10)   Zethu Matebeni: It is not clear what will happen to this particular statue, but important conversations about statues and artworks that were destroyed or deemed offensive in post-apartheid South Africa should be considered for museums. *The Rhodes statue, as a colonial artefact in the present, should be part of this archive.*

In Example (10), Zethu Matebeni claims that we should relocate Rhodes' statue to the archive of a museum, because it belongs there as a part of the history of South Africa. Reframing to historical context of cultural objects occurred multiple times in each debate in our dataset. The excerpt (11) is an interesting example of exploring such historical frame[9]:

(11)   Fernando Iwasaki: When you walk through Berlin you can see Berlin of the Nazis, Soviet Berlin, democratic Berlin, which are very well explained. Even the streets with the bullet holes of the Night of Broken Glass are preserved and, I, who have Berliner political family, because of my daughter is married to a guy from Berlin, asked, why do you keep and show that? And they told us, so that *our shame remains, it is always present and we do not forget it*.

Here, Fernando Iwasaki argues that even the shameful history should be preserved, as it allows the society to contemplate it which might prevent them from repeating the sins of the past. He gives an example of Berlin, where all eras of its history are maintained, such as the bullet holes from the Night of Broken Glass, a wave of antisemitic violence in Nazi Germany in 1938. In the same way, the Valley of the Fallen should be kept to memorise the shame of Spanish Civil War and Franco's dictatorship.

The second most frequent non-ethotic context to which the speakers have been reframing argumentation is *legal aspect* of contested cultural objects:

(12)   Patrik Jonsson: Conservative Southern state legislatures have passed *laws protecting historical monuments*, including Confederate statuary.

In (12), the author of an article on the Confederates, Patrik Jonsson, stresses that their statuary should be kept, as they are protected by the law of Southern states. The similar argument was given in favour of keeping the Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw and in favour of removing the Valley of the Fallen in Madrid.

In fact, the very same context can be used in a debate both in favour and against a cultural object, such as in the case of reframing to *financial consequences* in the debate on the Valley of the Fallen[10]:

(13)
     a. Elisa Beni: The Socialist Party government, because of the values it says it defends, it is the one that should have taken this measure, like many others, such as the law on religious freedom, I insist, and many others that were put on hold

with the excuse of the crisis, as if they were incompatible, because, on top of that, t*he Valley of the Fallen costs us money.*

       b.   Fernando Iwasaki: Well, I think dynamiting it, demolishing it, is not very operative, *it would be very expensive.*

Here, both speakers argue that the society is charged with the cost of the cultural object, but (13)a stresses the cost of *maintaining* the Valley of the Fallen, while (13)b emphasises the cost of *demolishing* it.

Empirical study revealed that reframing in defence of cultural objects tends to be piled up by speakers, i.e. they give a series of contexts other than historical figures to argue that a contested cultural object should be kept (it occurred in all debates in our dataset, when this substrategy was used in defence of a cultural object). In this example, an expert from a social democratic think tank, Centrum Daszyńskiego, used a sequence of *legal*, *architectonic*, *urbanistic* and *historical* contexts[11]:

(14)   Sebastian Gajewski: (...) it is *under legal protection*. Therefore, the possible demolition of the Palace of Culture and Science would be quite complicated not only in [this respect], as I know architects who say that because of *the underground, which is there,* it is almost impossible to do it. But in legal terms it would be at least as complicated. On the other hand, looking at it politically I am deeply convinced that apart from the fact that the Palace of Culture *houses today the Polish Academy of Sciences, four universities, two theatres and other public institutions - including the famous Youth Palace*, I am convinced that *public space in the city should not distort history*.

The piling-up effect in (14) has been emphasised by a stylistic intertwined construction of this utterance. Sebastian Gajewski starts his defence of the Palace of Culture and Science with its legal protection which he complements with an architectural obstacle of demolishing the palace (because of the underground situated underneath it). From there he moves back to the legal frame ("in legal terms it would be at least as complicated"). Next, he signals ("On the other hand") that there is yet another context which should be accounted for here—a political or historical one—which he interrupts ("apart from the fact that") to add up an urbanistic frame that the palace houses several public institutions. He finishes with the political-historical frame that "public space in the city should not distort history".

Amongst *other* frames found in our dataset, there were claims that cultural objects are headstones in the memory of dead (they are "innocuous cemetery markers"); they make some aspects of the societal life politicised ("It also demonstrates how knowledge production is undoubtedly deeply political"); they are instruments for privileged groups to influence the perception of history ("Statues and monuments give those with the power and resources to erect them a history"); they keep alive the memory and pride of shameful history of a country ("It is a source of pride for the Franco Foundation and for all those who still dare to honour a dictator in this country"); and they pass the shame and/or a problem on other persons associated with a collective cultural object ("the problem of the remains of all the people who are there [buried in the Valley of the Fallen] and who had nothing to do with that regime [of Franco]").

In summary, this section shows three possible paths that speakers can choose when designing their argumentation about contested cultural object. First, they can focus on moral *values* by either *proclaiming* the primary reasons why a historical figure should not / should be commemorated in the public space; *elaborating* on the real and deep meaning of these values for the society; or (re-)*interpreting* what they mean in the present day rather than what they meant in the past. Alternatively, the speaker may choose the discursive strategy of *desirability*, stressing that these values are not wanted by the society in their public space. In such a case, speaker can appeal to *popular* or *individual desire*, or point to a *precedent* that demonstrated this desire in the past. Finally, speakers may try to move away from ethos of historical figure and *reframe* the debate to other contexts of cultural objects such as historical, legal or financial. In the next section, we show how frequently each discursive strategy was selected by speakers in our dataset.

Frequencies of discursive strategies in the dataset

The novel methodology, which combines a large set of data with comparative discourse analysis of argumentation associating ethos with objects, allows us to explore how speakers tend to argue about contested cultural objects. In the public debates in United Kingdom, United States, South Africa, Spain and Poland, we identified 102 instances of discursive strategies (see Table 2) of which 64% arguments were given in favour of *removing* cultural objects and 36% arguments were given in favour of keeping them. Amongst these strategies, the significant majority, i.e., 70%, used *ethos* of historical figures to argue about the cultural object (focusing either on moral values or their desirability), while only 30% reframed ethos to other contexts.

Table 2. Distribution of discursive strategies in public debates on cultural objects (CO) across five datasets for either ambivalent or totalitarian historical figures (HF), grouped into two classes: (i) *ethotic arguments*, i.e., appeals to values or desirability; and (ii) *reframing*. Cells highlighted in grey mean the most frequent types of discursive strategies used to attack or to support COs.

	Ethotic Argument		Reframing		
	Attack on CO	Support of CO	Attack on CO	Support of CO	**Total**
Colston	10	3	2	1	16
Confederates	12	10	1	5	28
Rhodes	12	4	3	1	20
Ambivalent HF	**34 (53%)**	**17 (27%)**	**6 (9%)**	**7 (11%)**	**64**
Franco	7	-	4	6	17
Stalin	13	-	1	7	21
Totalitarian HF	**20 (53%)**	**-**	**5 (13%)**	**13 (34%)**	**38**
Total	**54 (53%)**	**17 (17%)**	**11 (11%)**	**20 (19%)**	**102**

Moreover, we observed that the speakers tend to select *ethotic arguments* when they aim to attack cultural objects (to argue that they should be removed): 53% arguments used ethotic attacks. On the other hand, speakers tend to employ equally frequently ethotic arguments and reframing, when they want to support cultural objects (to defend that they should be kept): 17% arguments use ethotic supports and 19% argument use reframing as support. Reframing strategy is rarely used for attacks, as negative moral values might be considered to be much more important than any other (non-ethotic) context.

More differences in the dynamics of discursive strategies can be observed, if the public debates are divided according to a degree to which the character of a historical figure is considered as negative by a given society (see ``ambivalent'' and "totalitarian" categories in Table 2). For the total of 102 discursive strategies, none of them appealed to positive moral values of *totalitarian historical figures* in order to defend cultural objects (see the category of ethotic argument in support of COs). When speakers wanted to defend these objects, they were solely shifting to non-ethotic contexts, possibly because only a context different than ethos seems to justify keeping those cultural objects in the public space. Unsurprisingly, in these cases the proportion of attacks vs supports is moved slightly in favour of attacks: in 66% cases speakers were attacking cultural objects associated with these persons in comparison to the average of 64%.

In the case of *ambivalent historical figures*, the majority of supports uses positive values of these persons or the desirability of their legacy (27%) rather than reframing to non-ethotic contexts (11%). The uses of ethotic arguments for support is coherent with the ambivalent character of such persons who are associated with both negative and positive values in the collective, historical memory of the society. The proportion between reframing used to attack and used to support is well-balanced with 9% used for arguing to remove a cultural object and 11% used for arguing to keep it. Independently from the character of historical figures, the proportion of ethotic attacks stays on the same high level (53%).

Table 3 describes differences in frequencies of using discursive strategies and substrategies identified in the previous section. The overall distribution across three discursive strategies is well balanced in our data: speakers tend to use equally frequently arguments appealing to values: in 33% cases, arguments appealing to desirability: in 36% cases, and reframing: in 31% cases.

Table 3. Distribution of discursive strategies in public debates on cultural objects (CO), grouped into three classes: (i) strategies relying on *values* inherited by COs after ethos of historical figures; (ii) strategies grounded in *desirability* of the legacy of historical figures; and (iii) strategies *reframing* from "ethotic" values to other contexts of COs. Cells highlighted in grey mean two most frequent substrategies used specifically to attack COs, or to support them, or for both purposes.

	Attack on CO		Support of CO		Both	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Proclaiming	6	9%	3	8%	9	9%
Elaborating	12	19%	4	11%	16	16%
Interpreting	8	12%	1	3%	9	9%
Values	**26**	**40%**	**8**	**21%**	**34**	**33%**
Popular desire	14	22%	7	19%	21	21%
Individual desire	5	8%	1	3%	6	6%
From precedent	9	14%	1	3%	10	10%
Desirability	**28**	**43%**	**9**	**25%**	**37**	**36%**
Historical	3	5%	10	27%	13	13%
Legal	2	3%	2	5%	4	4%
Other	6	9%	8	22%	14	14%
Reframing	**11**	**17%**	**20**	**54%**	**31**	**31%**
Total	**65**		**37**		**102**	

The distribution between the discursive strategies becomes uneven, if we look whether speakers argued to remove cultural objects or to keep them. For *attacks*, the strategies of values and desirability constitute the significant majority (40% and 43%, respectively; see Table 3). Amongst substrategies available for attack, speakers most frequently choose popular desire (22%) and elaboration of moral values (19%). For *supports*, the strategy of reframing is dominant (54%) with a relatively even distribution between remaining types of arguments which appeal to values (21%) and to desirability (25%). Amongst substrategies for support, speakers most frequently go for reframing to historical context (27%) and for popular desire (19%). Independently from the polarity of arguments, the most common substrategy turns out to be popular desire (21%) and elaboration of values (16%).

In the discursive strategy built on moral *values*, the most frequent substrategy of elaborating values is followed by two other substrategies which are chosen equally often (9% in each case; see Table 3). Notice that in this case (as well as in other analyses which use fine-grained distinctions), the occurrences are rather low, and thus we are able to observe only tendencies which need to be further examined in the future work (see the next section). In the discursive strategy grounded in *desirability*, the most frequent substrategy is undoubtedly the appeal to popular desire (21%), followed by precedent (10%) and individual desire (6%). For each substrategy in this and the previous categories, their higher frequency is observed for attacks than for supports. Finally in the discursive strategy built on *reframing*, the most frequent substrategy is to shift the focus to historical context (13%), followed by legal context (4%) and other contexts which are distributing the focus of the debates into many different directions. The strategy of reframing is significantly more frequently used for supports (54%) than for attacks (17%).

Finally, Table 4 explores which discursive strategies and substrategies speakers tend to select depending on a role which they play in a debate. We consider three such roles: a *reporter* who manages and regulates the course of a debate; an *expert* who is invited to the debate to share their knowledge about a cultural object; and a *policy maker*, a politician, who has an authority to make a decision about whether to remove or to keep a cultural object. In their argumentation, reporters seem to mostly stress desirability (46%) and values (31%); experts—values and reframing in equal measure (36% each); and policy makers—desirability (44%). Despite the fact that the last role is underrepresented in our dataset (only 7 arguments in total), the tendency of using popular desire is quite clear (3 arguments out of 7) which means that politicians tend to argue that removing or keeping a cultural object is "what people want".

Table 4. Distribution of discursive strategies used by speakers with different roles in the debates in our corpora: (i) a *reporter* who manages the course of the debate on a cultural object; (ii) an *expert* who is invited to the debate to share their knowledge on a cultural object; (ii) an *expert* who is invited to the debate to share their knowledge on a cultural object; and (iii) a *policy maker* who has an authority to remove or to keep a cultural object. Cells highlighted in grey mean the most frequent types of discursive substrategies used by speakers in each role.

	Reporter		Expert		Policy maker	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Proclaiming	4	10%	4	7%	1	14%
Elaborating	3	8%	15	27%	1	14%
Interpreting	5	13%	1	2%	-	-
Values	**12**	**31%**	**20**	**36%**	**2**	**28%**
Popular desire	12	31%	6	11%	3	44%
Individual desire	4	10%	2	4%	-	-
From precedent	2	5%	8	14%	-	-
Desirability	**18**	**46%**	**16**	**29%**	**3**	**44%**
Historical	5	13%	7	12%	1	14%
Legal	2	5%	2	4%	-	-
Other	2	5%	11	20%	1	14%
Reframing	**9**	**23%**	**20**	**36%**	**2**	**28%**
Total	**39**		**56**		**7**	

When looking more closely into frequencies summarised in Table 4, we can observe that reporters prefer the substrategy of popular desire (31%), followed by interpreting values and reframing to historical context (13% in each case). On the other hand, experts tend to select substrategies of elaborating values (27%) and reframing to contexts other than historical and legal (20%). If we also take into account substrategies used by experts which occurred more frequently than 10%: precedent, historical frame and popular desire, it becomes clear that they tend to select such substrategies which allow them to explore the breadth and depth of the problem of cultural objects. In contrast, reporters focus their attention to substrategies which allow them to sketch the problem by proclaiming main moral values which led to the debate, indicating which group is on which side of the debate and depicting historical context including how values were interpreted in the past and how they are interpreted today.

In summary, the relatively even distribution between discursive strategies and their occurrences across all analysed debates in the variety of media, countries, languages and roles in debates

are the evidence that these strategies are common and ubiquitous techniques for this genre rather than incidental techniques used by a specific speaker in a specific circumstance.

Conclusions

The main purpose of the paper has been to identify discursive strategies used in public debates on contested cultural objects. The analysis has revealed that speakers use three strategies. In the strategy built on moral values, the action with respect to the cultural object (demolishing it or keeping it) is supported by proclaiming, elaborating or interpreting bad / good values of a historical figure associated with a cultural object. In the strategy grounded in desirability, argumentation stresses a desire of a society for having these moral values commemorated in the public space. This desirability is ether declared by a group or an individual, or evidenced by a precedent in the past. Finally, in the strategy built on reframing, argumentation shifts from ethos to other contexts—such as history, law or economy—in which a cultural object should be considered.

The method of large-scale comparative discourse analysis has enabled us to uncover the tendencies in the design of argumentation depending on whether the goal of the argument is to attack or support a cultural object; whether the character of historical figures is considered to be ambivalent or totalitarian; whether a specific discursive substrategy is being used; and which role a speaker plays in the public debate. We observed, for example, that cultural objects associated with totalitarian historical figures are defended solely by reframing argumentation from ethos to other context; popular desire is the most common substrategy chosen both to attack and support cultural objects; and policy makers and reporters appeal in their arguments to "what people want", while experts tend to mostly focus on elaborating on moral values of historical figures. This analysis provides an empirical evidence that the public debates on contested cultural objects were "never just about the statue": in these debates, the speakers most frequently use *ethotic arguments* (70% of all discursive strategies used in our dataset) and the rest of arguments are shifting the focus from *ethos* to other contexts.

In the future work, we propose to go further and deeper in the analysis of this type of debates by enhancing the size of the dataset. In order to evaluate whether the tendencies uncovered in this analysis are confirmed, we aim to study more cases digging into more-fine grained distinctions such as individual vs collective cultural objects; objects which have purely `cultural heritage' function vs those which have also public functions; objects with different time references when a history is still fresh in the memory of a society vs when a history is the

long gone past; different media including traditional vs social media; and other features of speakers such as their gender, age, education and nationality. This line of research can open a path to a better comprehension and insight into the dynamics of debates on contested cultural objects which has such a significant impact on the society.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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¹ Available at https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/jun/19/slave-traders-portrait-removed-from-bristol-lord-mayors-office.

² Available at https://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Society/2019/0822/The-future-of-America-s-past-Should-we-explain-Confederate-statues.

³ Available at https://za.boell.org/en/2018/02/19/rhodesmustfall-it-was-never-just-about-statue.

⁴ Available at https://www.ondacero.es/programas/julia-en-la-onda/audios-podcast/el-gabinete/el-gabinete-se-debe-o-no-sacar-los-restos-de-franco-del-valle-de-los-caidos_20170510591345e60cf2a1da48279e01.html.

⁵ Francisco Franco's remains were eventually removed from the Valley of the Fallen in October 2019.

⁶ We analysed textual material in Polish and then translated it into English in the paper.

⁷ We analysed textual material in Spanish and then translated it into English in the paper.

⁸ In this example, we give only the translation of analysed data here.

⁹ We give only the translation of analysed data here.

¹⁰ We give only the translation of analysed data here.

¹¹ We give only the translation of analysed data here.