Figuration in city as text

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Framing the talk

- applying theoretical cognitive linguistic concepts to a new set of data: city-text

- the (mis-)fit of abstract concepts and real life data
  - CENTRE-PERIPHERY image schema / IMPORTANT IS CENTRAL
  - metonymic chains

- the possible solutions

The MILL project

Memory and ideology in the linguistic landscape: Commemorative (re)naming in East Germany and Poland 1916-2016

Data:

- maps, city council documents
- newspaper articles
- below-the-line comments, social media
- ethnographic interviews with city administration officials, teachers, tourist guides, social activists

Time span:

1916-2018

Geographical scope:

Poznań, Zbąszyń, Słubice Leipzig, Annaberg-Bucholz, Frankfurt(O)

Research Goal:

to create a framework for examining the spatio-temporal determinants of change in the LL

Linguistic Landscape: Streetnames

spatial dimension

- city as text

- city centre

- main thoroughfares leading to other big cities

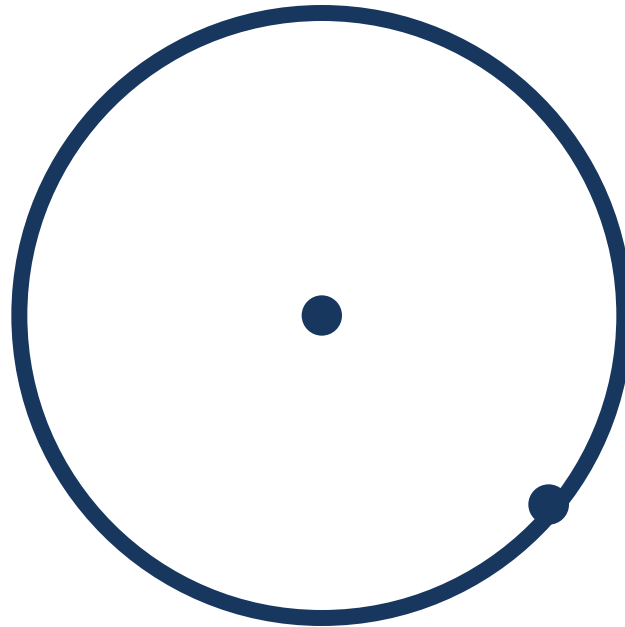(Rose-Redwood et al 2018, Šakaja – Stanić 2018)

temporal dimension

- "ruptures in polit. history"

- repressive erasure/ recovering of repressed memory
- naturalization of the dominant ideology

Azaryahu 1997, Connerton 2007, A. Assmann 2010, Fairclough 2003)

CENTRE – PERIPHERY image schema

IMPORTANT IS CENTRAL
researcher's perspective

…in <u>Bucharest</u> the majority of renamings took place in the **central part of the city**: almost two-thirds of renamed streets were within 4 km of the city centre

(Light 2004 in Light and Young 2018: 189)

relocation of „left overs" from the centre to the periphery – the relocation of the name of the street of Božidar Adžija in <u>Zagreb</u>

(Šakaja – Stanić 2018: 163)

<u>Leningrad/St Petersburg</u> (Marin 2018)
<u>Moscow</u> (Gill 2005)

IMPORTANT IS CENTRAL
social agents' perspective

[about finding a street to commemorate John Paul II]

„… but there is a problem… because the best sentence goes: <<Director, why can't you find **a prestigeous location in the city centre** to commemorate such a personage worthy of commemoration?>> and I go: <<There aren't any such locations left **in the centre**>>"

[Director of the Poznan Cadastre and Land Surveying Dept.]
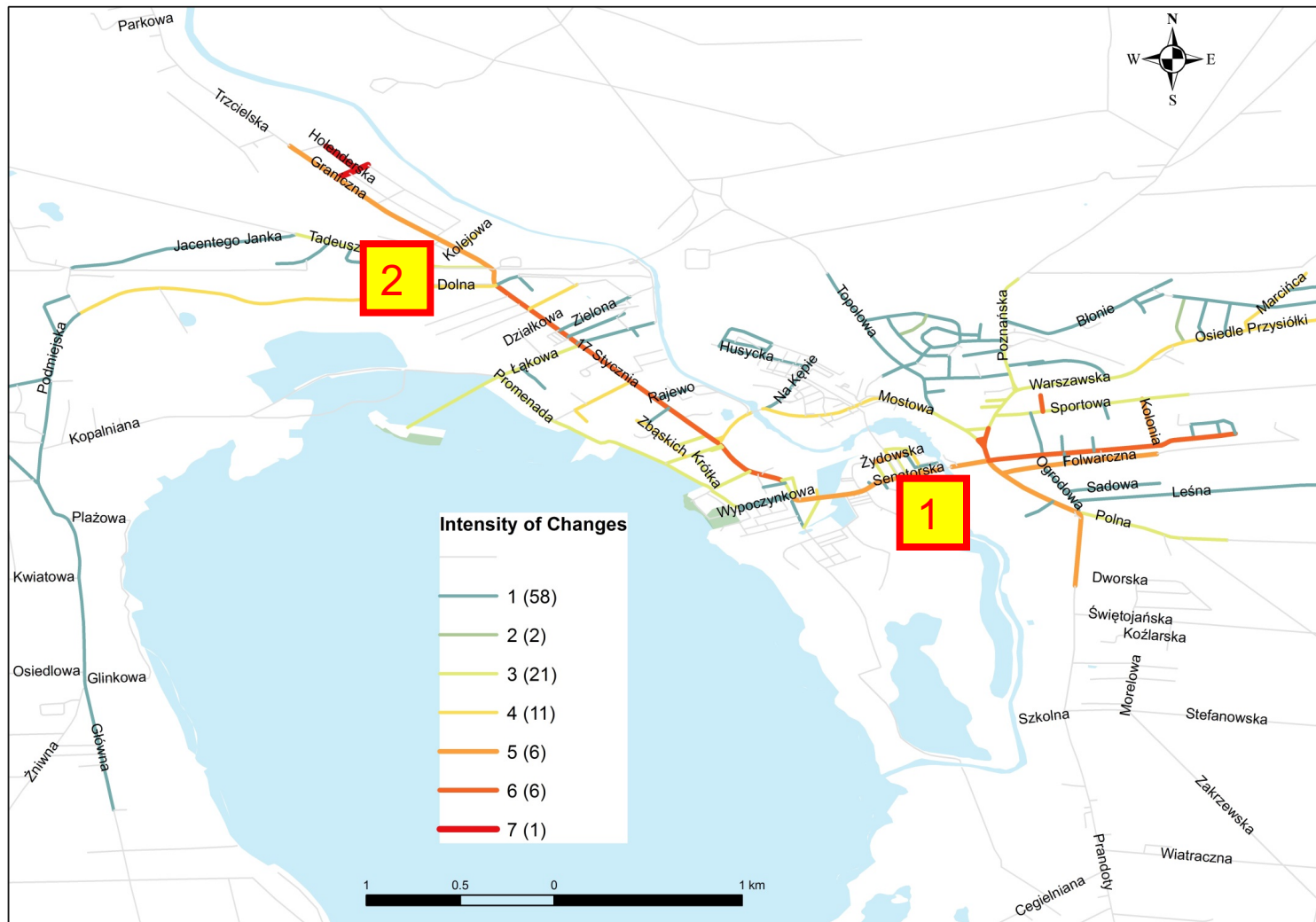
street segmentation (Alderman *2016)*

What does centre mean in the real life?

Poznań

Zbąszyń

operationalising / understanding importance
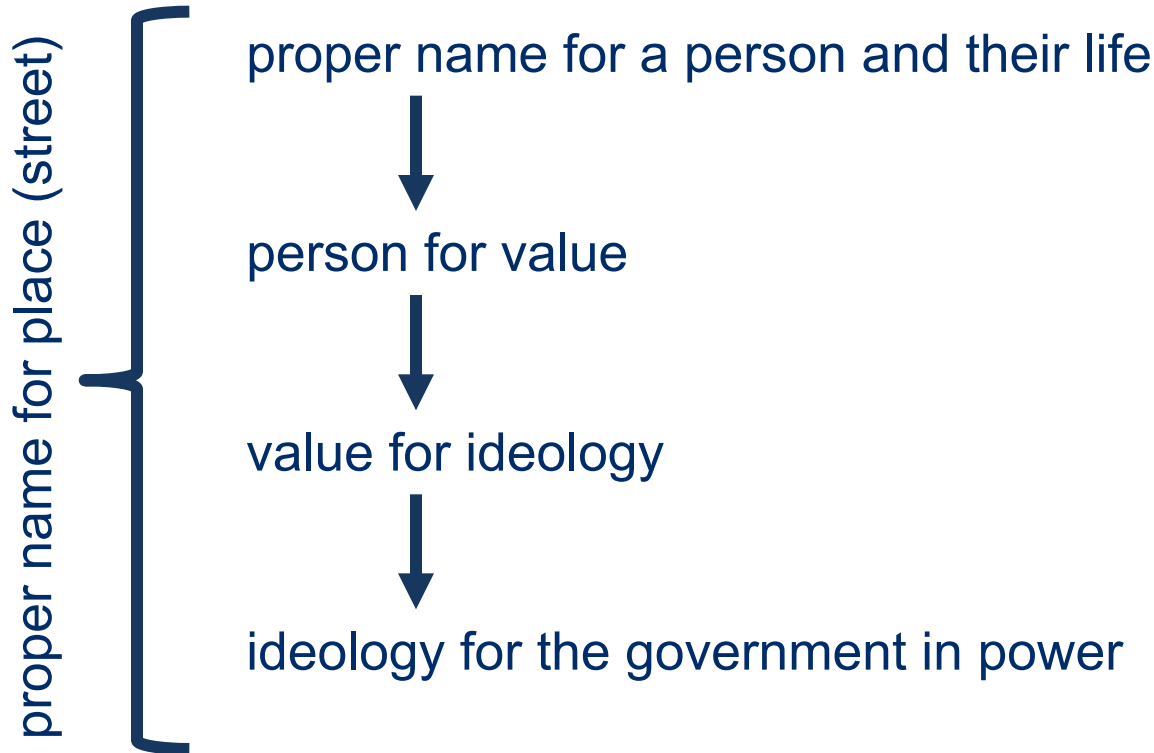
„…**a central boulevard is more significant** than is a small lane on the margin of the city… The evaluation of urban prestige, however, also has to take into account, that **different parameters may have contradictory effects** on the production of prestige and status."

(Azaryahu 2016: 64)

- city centre (IMPORTANT IS CENTRAL)
- street length (thoroughfares leading out of the city) (IMPORTANT IS BIG)
- street age
- key construction sites of the „new" regime
- number of inhabitants (but semantic displacement!)
- landmark buildings and institutions

metonymic chains in urban streetscape

proper name for place (street) {

proper name for a person and their life

↓

person for value

↓

value for ideology

↓

ideology for the government in power

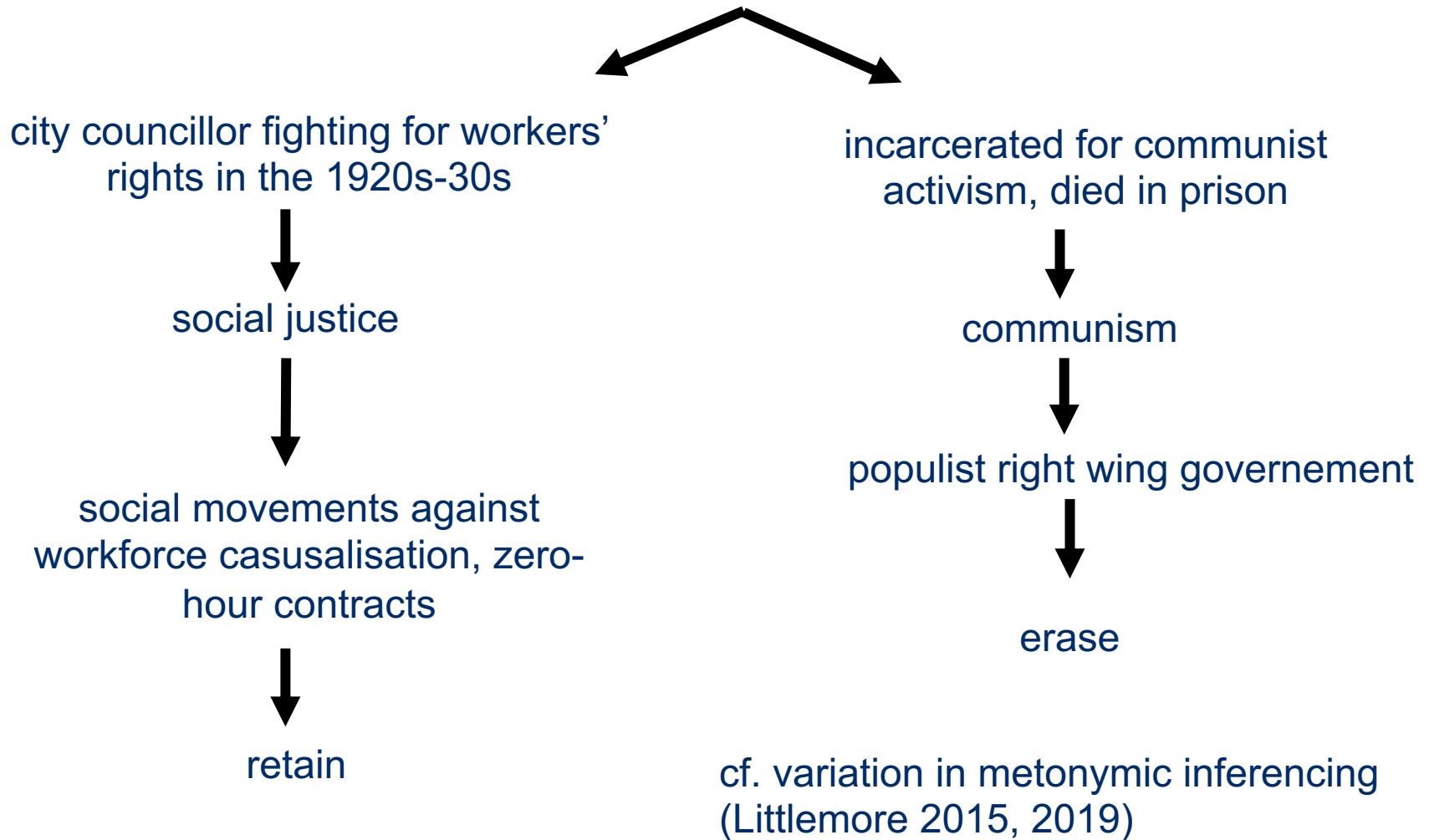cf. paragon model and the metonymic tiers in figurative personal names
interpretation   (Brdar and Brdar-Szabó 2007)
eponymy and life narratives   (Pang 2010)

Variable inferencing of metonymic chains

Marcin Chwiałkowski

city councillor fighting for workers' rights in the 1920s-30s

↓

social justice

↓

social movements against workforce casusalisation, zero-hour contracts

↓

retain

incarcerated for communist activism, died in prison

↓

communism

↓

populist right wing governement

↓

erase

cf. variation in metonymic inferencing (Littlemore 2015, 2019)

Gradability of ideological markedness

	Poznań	Zbąszyń	Słubice
L	82 = 13%	17 = 45%	1
R	108 = 17%	5 = 13%	4
N	378 = 59%	16 = 42%	35 = 88%
TR	72 = 11%	0	0
Total PN	640	38	40

"The version of history represented in **the city-text is biased in favour of local history**; this is evident in the names of local dignitaries, most notably mayors, … that are commemorated in the street signs."

(Azaryahu 2016: 65)

Forces shaping street renaming processes

spatial dimension

- city centre
  (IMPORTANT IS CENTRAL)
- thouroughfare
  (IMPORTANT IS BIG)
- key construction sites
- landmark buildings
- no of inhabitants

dynamic systems approach to
metaphor (Gibbs and Cameron 2008)

temporal dimension

- the dynamic interpretation
  of the meaning of names
  (METONYMIC CHAINS,
  variable metonymic
  inferencing)
- gradability of the ideological
  markedness of personal
  names
- street age

Conclusion

evidence
from LL

>

models
vs.
real life data

>

dynamic systems theory
(Lars-Freeman – Cameron 2007,
Gibbs and Cameron 2008)

metaphor in context
(Kövecses 2015)

variation in metonymic inferencing
(Littlemore 2015, 2019)

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