

The Eastern German commemorative city-scape: Tracing ideologically motivated street naming patterns through time and space

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Introduction

#BlackLivesMatter:

Potent symbolism of commemoration as it is inscribed in the public cityscape.

- debates about memorial hegemony in the citytext
- public elimination of discredited ideology functions as a mechanism to obliterate the geographical traces of “the memory [and the legacy] of ... [a] former [world view and/or] regime” (Azaryahu 2012:387).

Civic linguistic acts of renaming simultaneously demonstrate and contribute to the end of one bygone era and the beginning of a new one.

Commemorative street (re)naming in Eastern Germany

Street names

Carriers of the collective memory of our city, of its past and its destiny.

“Whether they remind us of activities since disappeared, whether they commemorate important events in our history or pay homage to exceptional people, street and square names are fraught with significance” (Moszberger et al. 2002:5)

Street names are a central part of the "ideological robe of the city"

Zieliński (1994:195): Measure of political change



Commemorative street (re)naming in Eastern Germany

Street names

Ruptures in political history (Azaryahu 1997:481).

→ Different commemorative needs of the new present which are played out in civic space

Commemorative **renaming** obliterates “the memory of the former regime. [The public elimination of] the discredited past from the public sphere demonstrate[s] the end of [one regime] ... and the beginning of a new era.”

(Arazyahu 2012:387).

"Active forgetting" (Assman 2010, Mitchell 2003)

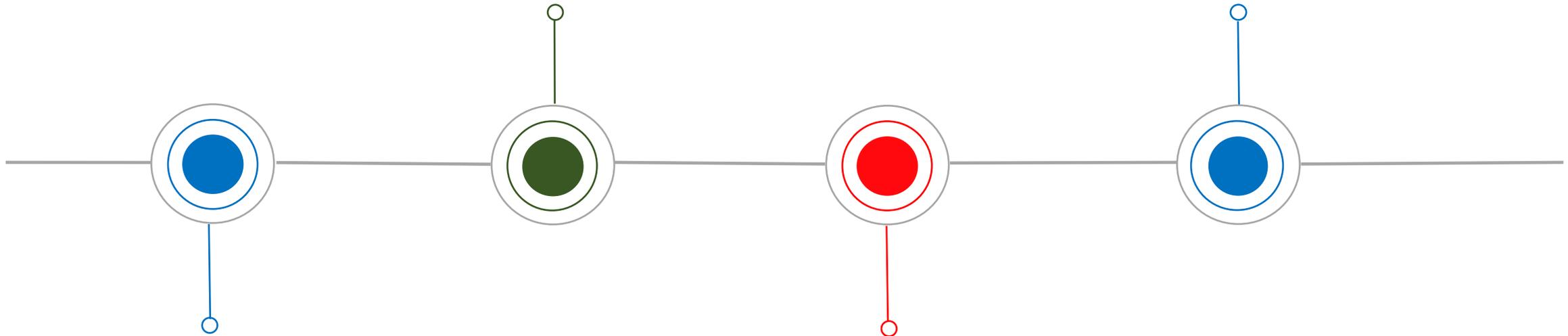
“Repressive erasure” (Connerton 2008)



Time-line of political eras

Until end of WWII:
Nazi Germany

End of the cold war:
Parliamentary democracy



After WWI:
First democracy established

Post-1945:
USSR-aligned country
ruled by socialist regime

Rapid succession of changes in state ideology left mark on the LL:

Chemnitz > Karl-Marx-Stadt (1953) > Chemnitz (1989)

Project data and methods

Comparative analysis of changes in state-ideological identity politics in public space based on street names.

- two large regional centers (Leipzig and Poznań, approx. 560,000 inhabitants)
- two cities of local importance (Zbąszyń and Annaberg-Buchholz < 25,000 inhabitants)
- medium-sized city of Frankfurt(Oder)/Słubice (74,000 inhabitants), separated by the Oder River since WWII.



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- two cities of local importance (Zbąszyń and Annaberg-Buchholz < 25,000 inhabitants)
- A medium-sized city of Frankfurt(Oder)/Słubice (74,000 inhabitants), separated by the Oder River since WWII.

Time frame: 1916- 2018

"waves of renaming that sweep across ... the linguistic landscape" (Arazyahu 1986:590)

→ Temporal and spatial dimensions of commemorative renamings.

Project data and methods

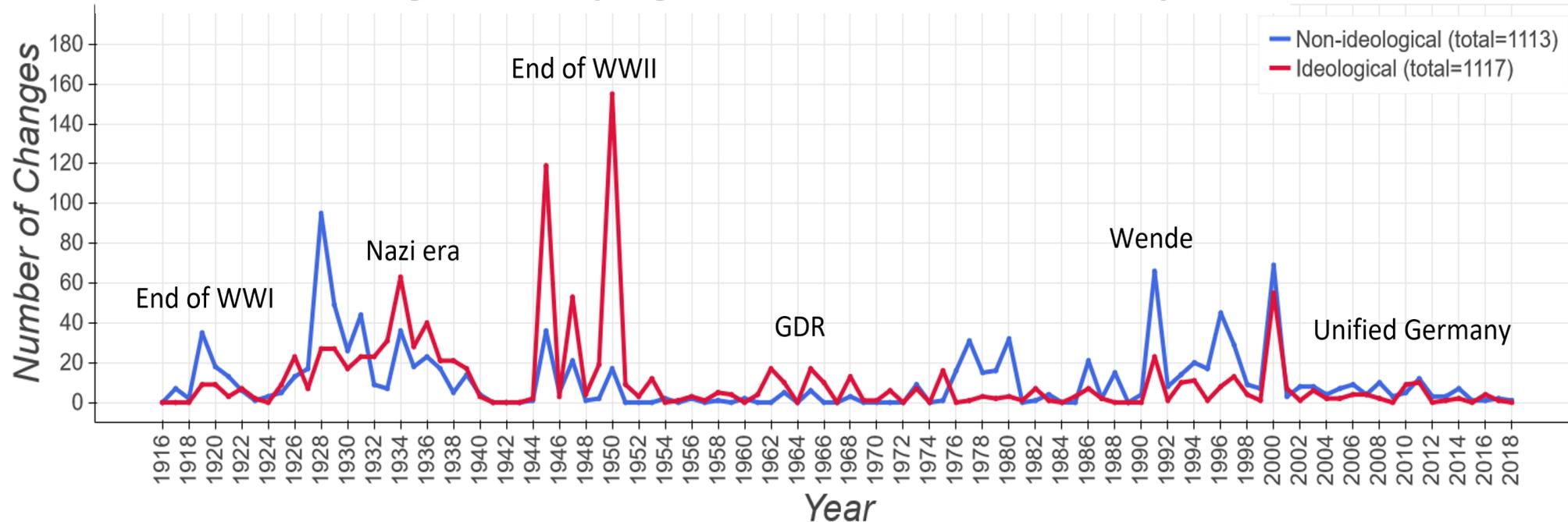
- to uncover the spatio-temporal patterns of change in the street renaming practices
- to identify the spread of the ideologically marked cityscape

Old street name		New street name	Street Semantics
∅	→	Am Teich (,at the pond', naming: 1994)	XN
∅	→	Straße der Solidarität (,of solidarity' naming: 1982)	XI
Nordstraße (,north street')	→	Hindenburgstraße (renaming: 1930)	NI
Hindenburgstraße	→	Friedrich-Ebert-Straße (renaming: 1945)	II
Drosselstraße (,thush')	→	Goldammerstraße (,yellowhammer' renaming: 1997)	NN
Adolf-Hitlerstraße	→	Südstraße ('south street', renaming: 1945)	IN

Moszberger, Rieger and Daul (2002:5): street names are “carriers of ... collective memory”

Lefebvre (1991:54): "a social transformation, to be truly revolutionary in character, must ... show effects on daily life, on language, and on space."

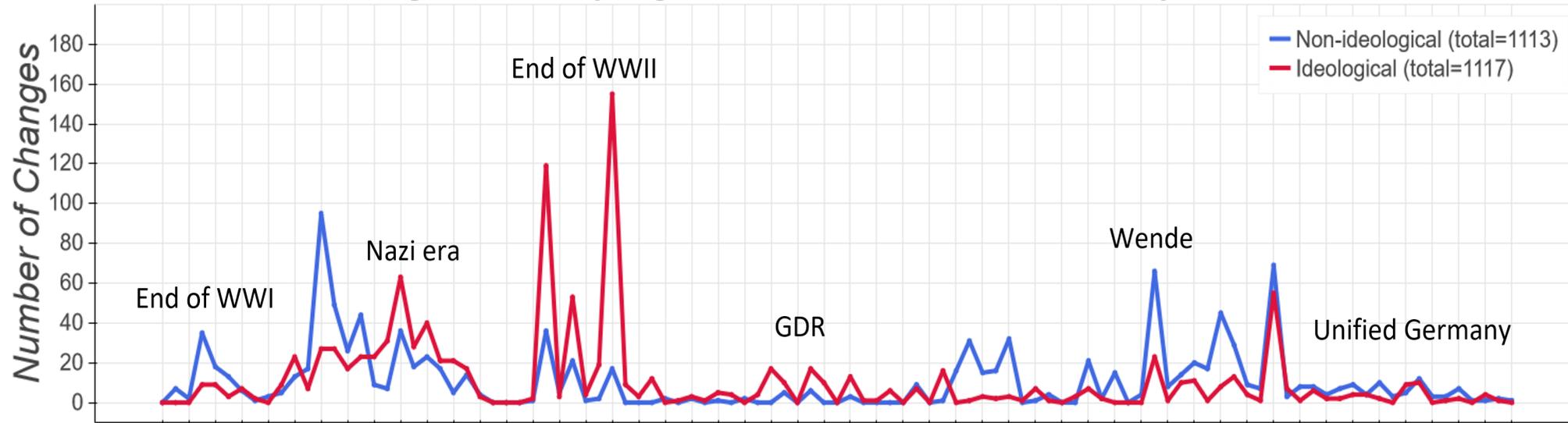
Absolute changes in Leipzig street names over 102 years



“The commemorative renaming of streets in the context of regime change is a common strategy employed to signify the break with the past ... [and as such a] measure of historical revision.” (Azaryahu 2012:385)

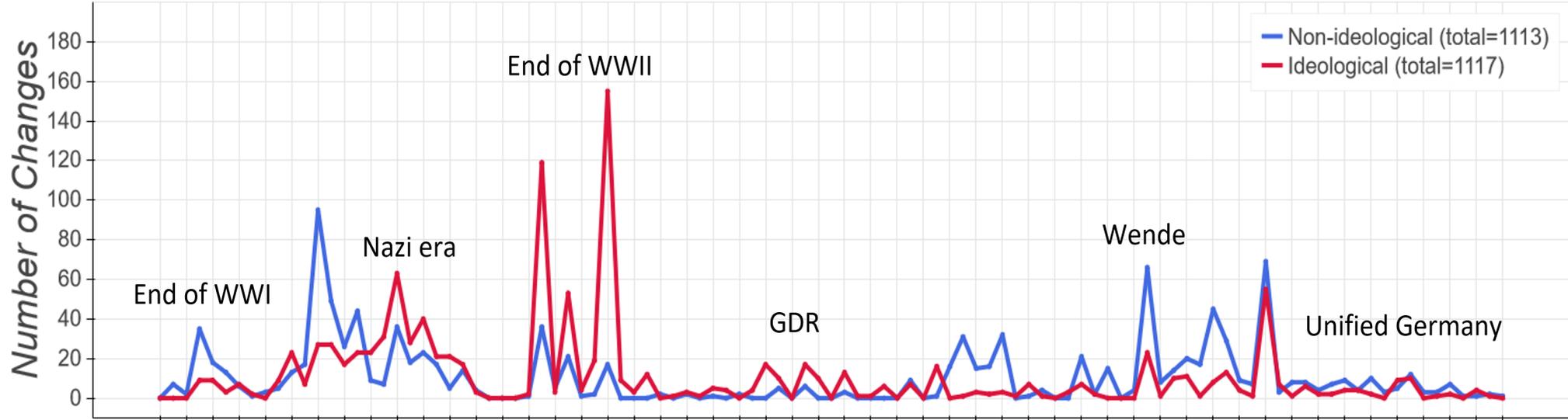
"Waves of renamings that swept" through time and space in the Leipzig streetscape (Azaryahu 1986:590).

Absolute changes in Leipzig street names over 102 years

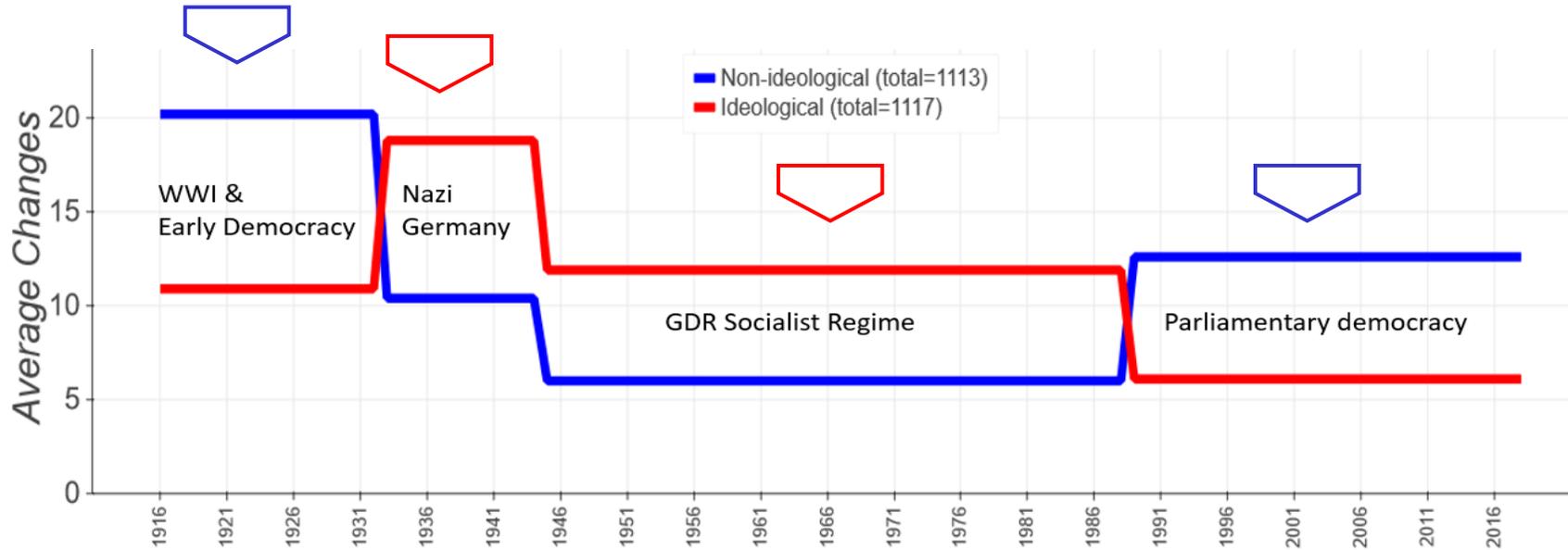


Weimar Republic: 16 years
III. Reich: 11 years
GDR: 44 years
Post-1989: 29 years

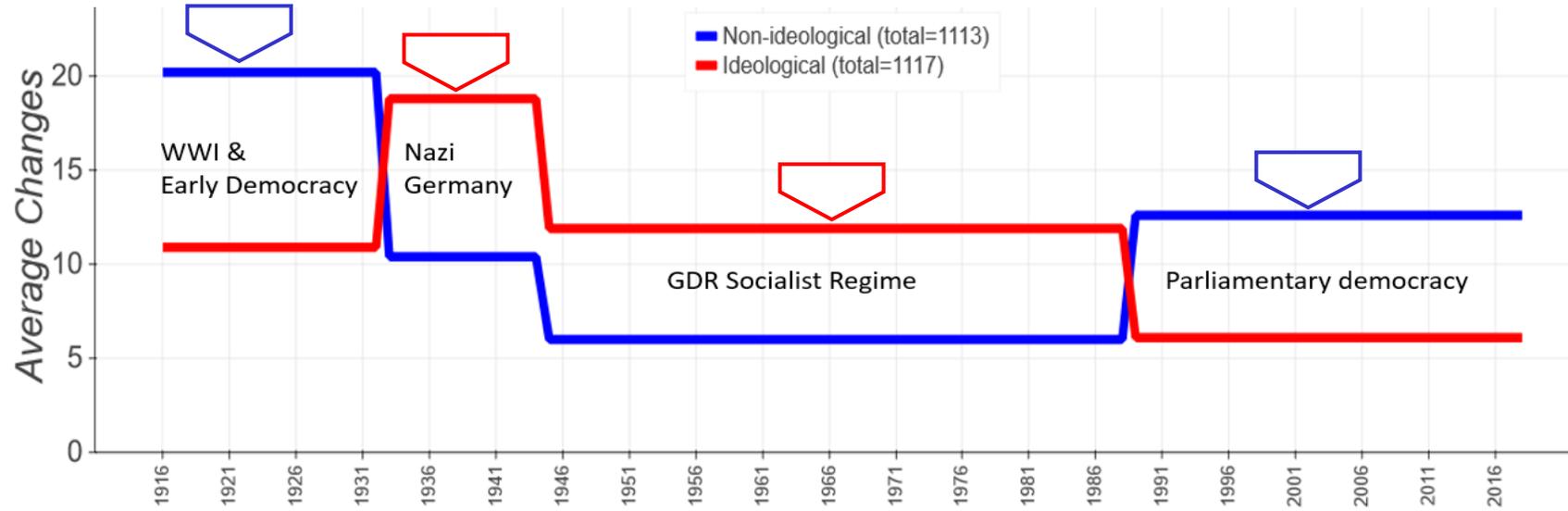
Absolute changes in Leipzig street names over 102 years



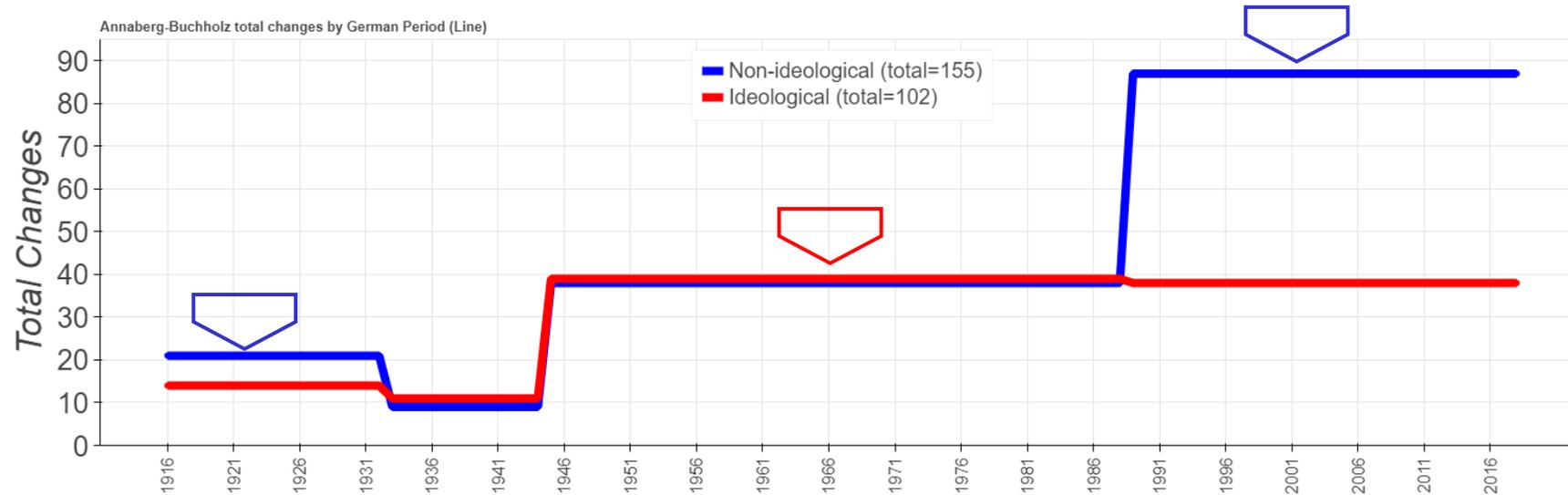
Average number of (re)namings in Leipzig (normalized by length of regime in years)



Average number of (re)namings in Leipzig (normalized by length of regime in years)



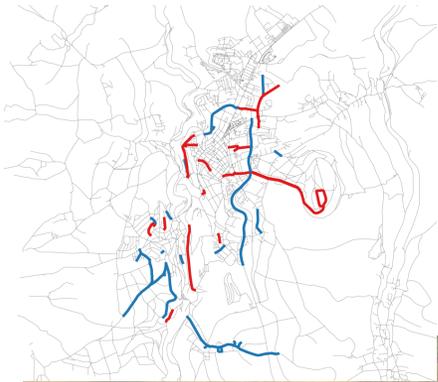
Average number of (re)namings in AB (normalized by length of regime in years)



Spatio-temporal changes in Leipzig (1916-2018)

1916-1932

Annaberg-Buchholtz



Treaty of Versailles
„Verloren aber nicht vergessen“

Hindenburgstraße

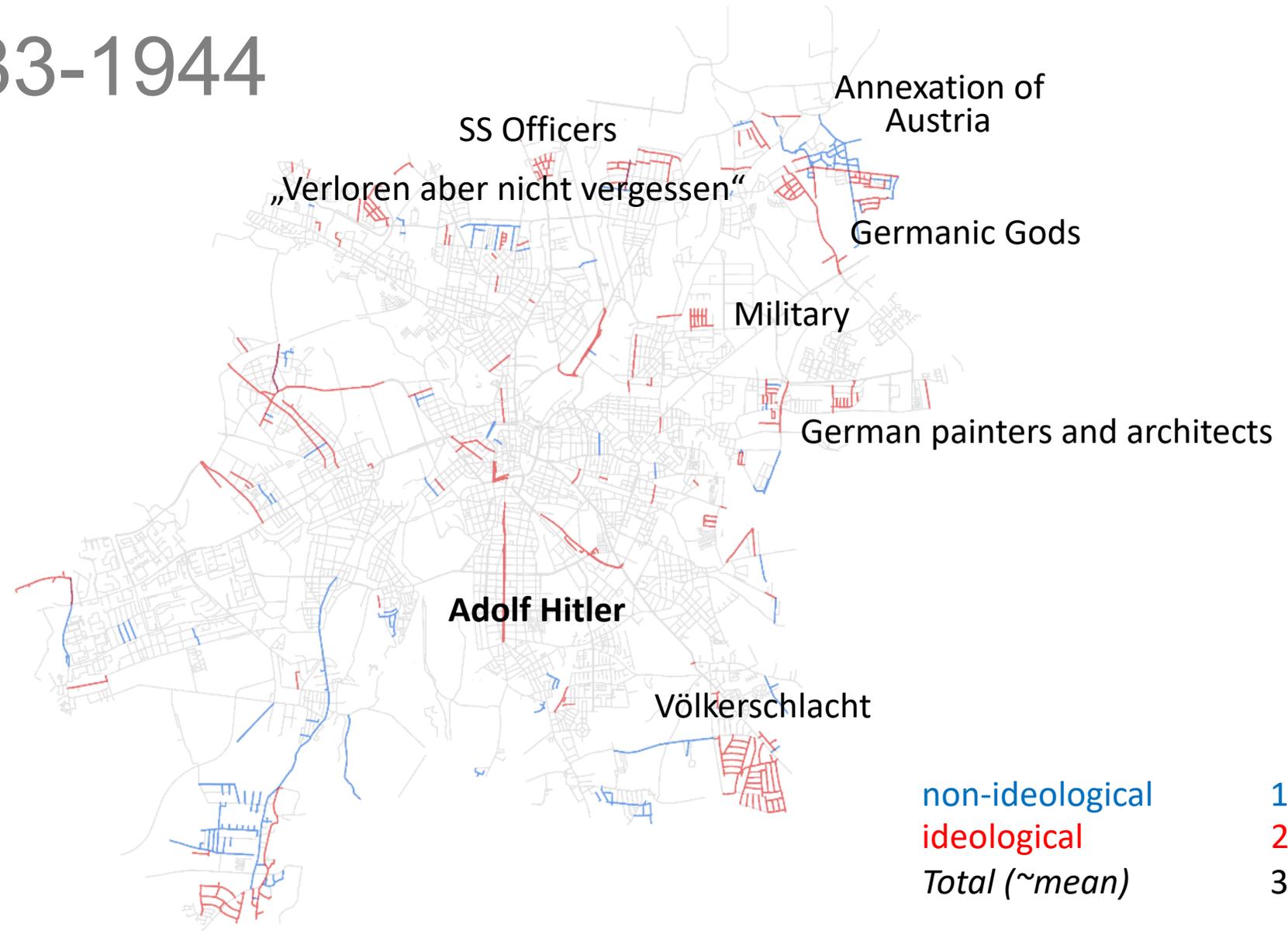
germanophone poets

Nibelungen

non-ideological	343	(~20.2)
ideological	186	(~10.9)
Total (~mean)	529	(~31.1)

Spatio-temporal changes in Leipzig (1916-2018)

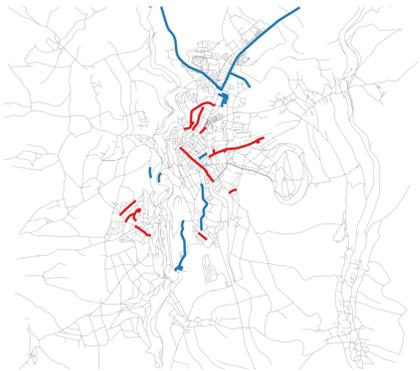
1933-1944



Spatio-temporal changes in Leipzig (1916-2018)

1933-1944

Annaberg-Buchholtz

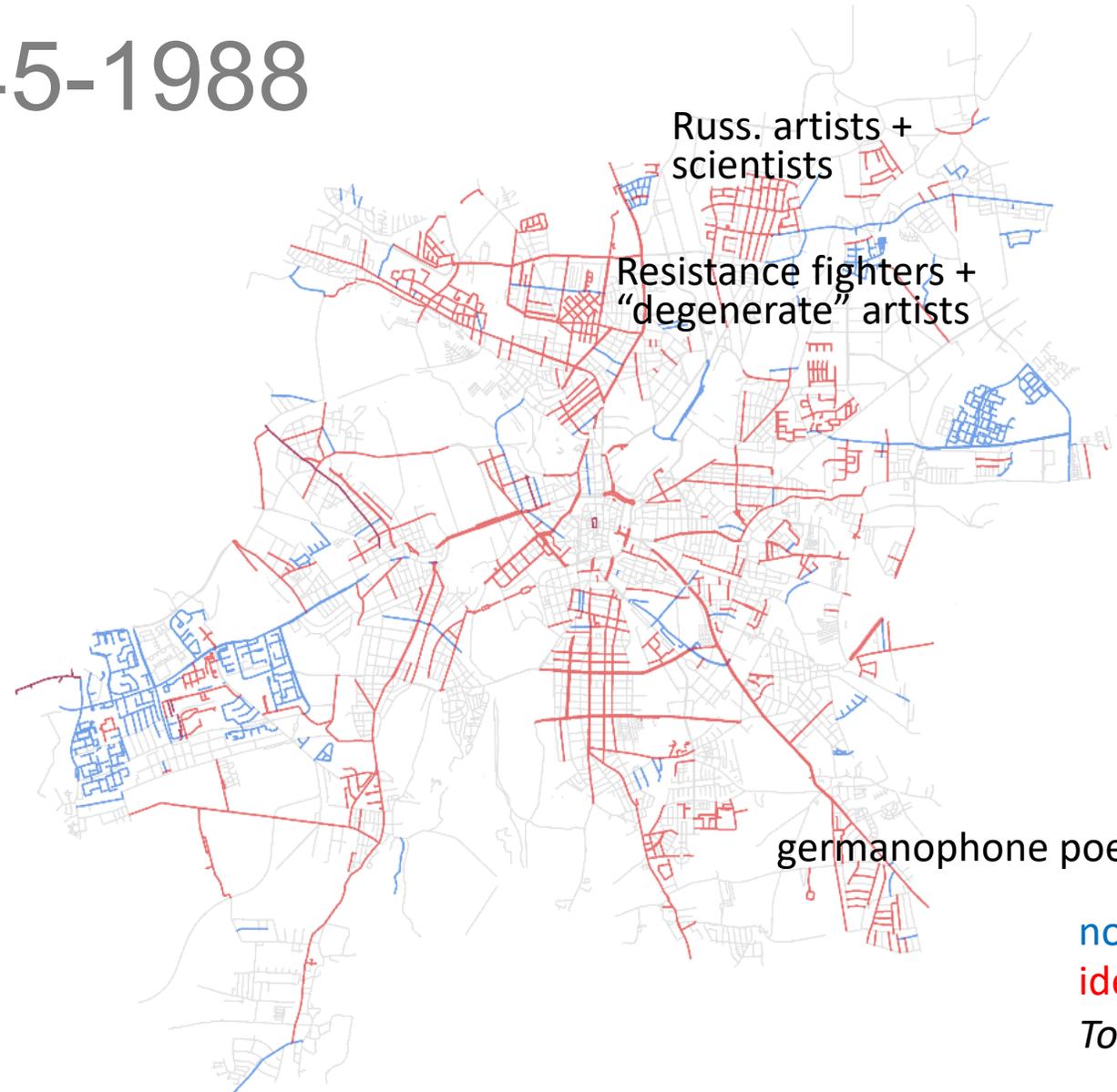


Resolution from 30. Jan 1940

“Every old and historically meaningful denomination of streets, squares, bridges, houses and whole districts is to be pro-ected in all cases and to be safe-guarded, the more so the more unique and meaningful it is”.

Spatio-temporal changes in Leipzig (1916-2018)

1945-1988

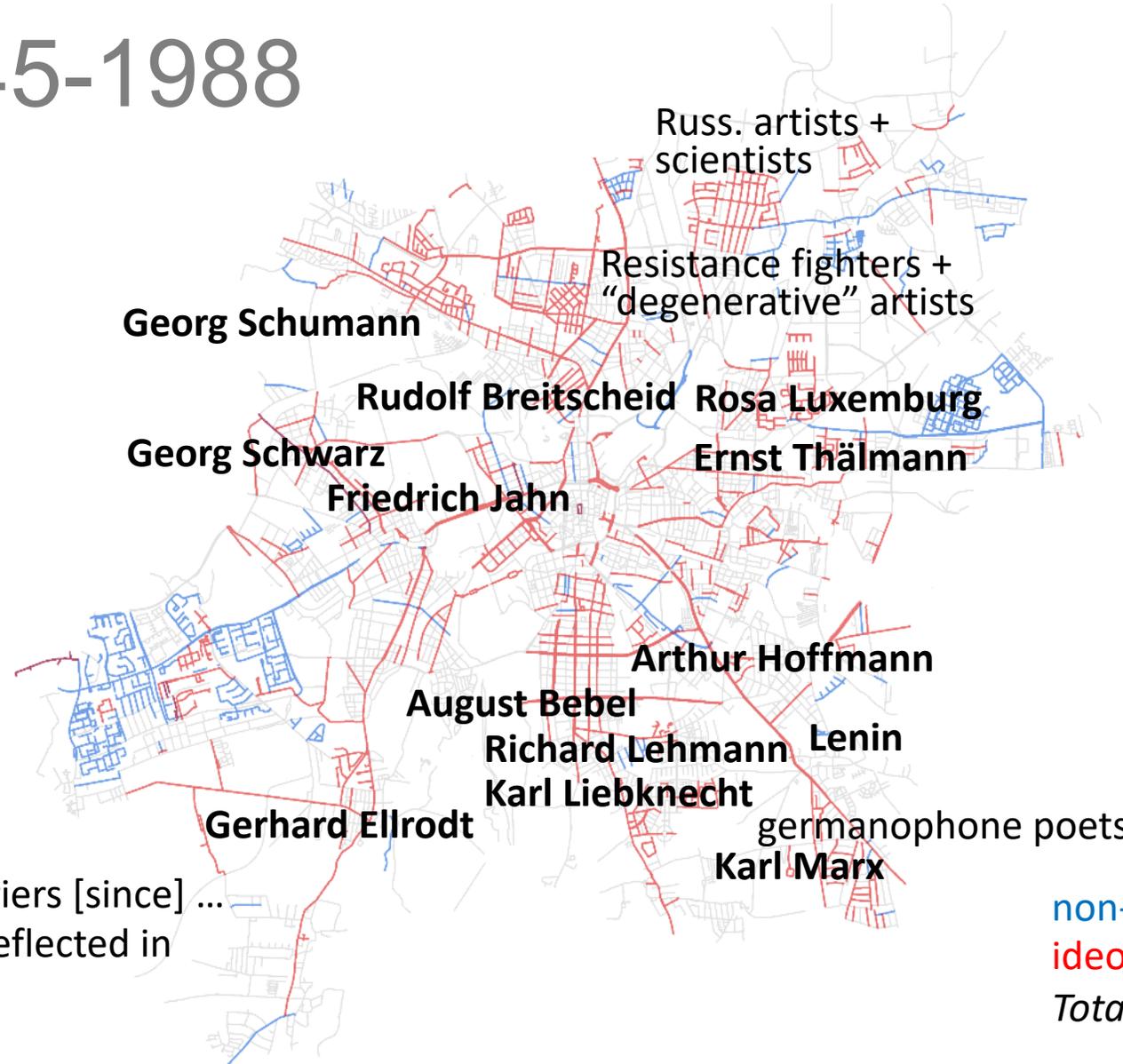
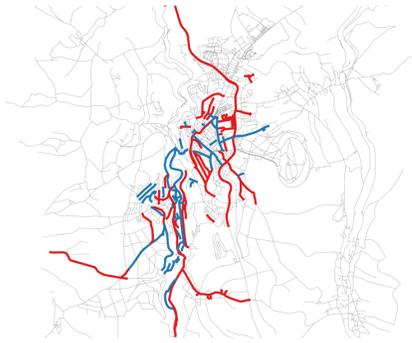


non-ideological	266	(~6.0)
ideological	523	(~11.9)
Total (~mean)	789	(~17.9)

Spatio-temporal changes in Leipzig (1916-2018)

1945-1988

Annaberg-Buchholtz



Streets are "propaganda carriers [since] ... major political changes are reflected in the renaming of streets" (Azaryahu 1986:581-7)

non-ideological	266	(~6.0)
ideological	523	(~11.9)
Total (~mean)	789	(~17.9)

The “socialist genitive” in naming strategies

Constructional frame:

STREET + ART.GEN3 + REFERENT [EVENT, GROUP/ORGANISATION OR VALUE]

Straße der Solidarität (*‘Street of solidarity’*)

Straße des Friedens (*‘Street of peace’*)

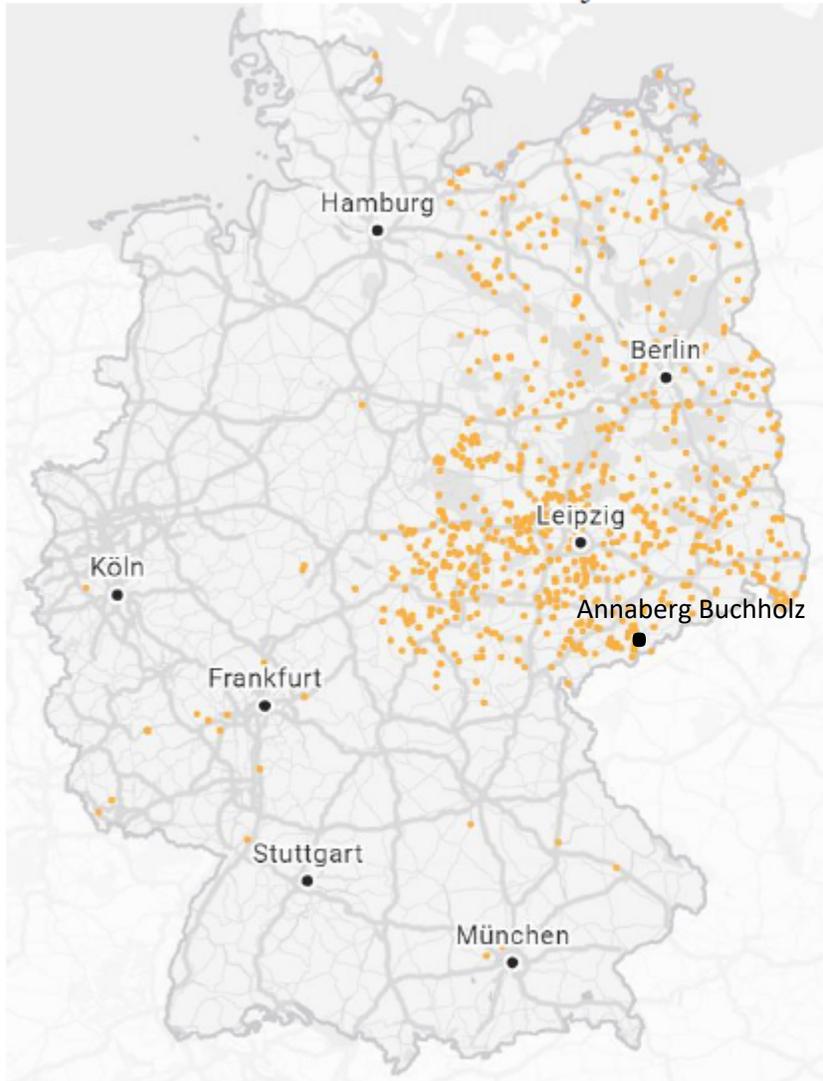
Straße der jungen Pioniere (*‘Street of young pioneers’*) [socialist youth organization]

Straße der Befreiung 8. Mai 1945 (*‘Street of liberation 8th May 1945’*) [from Nazis]

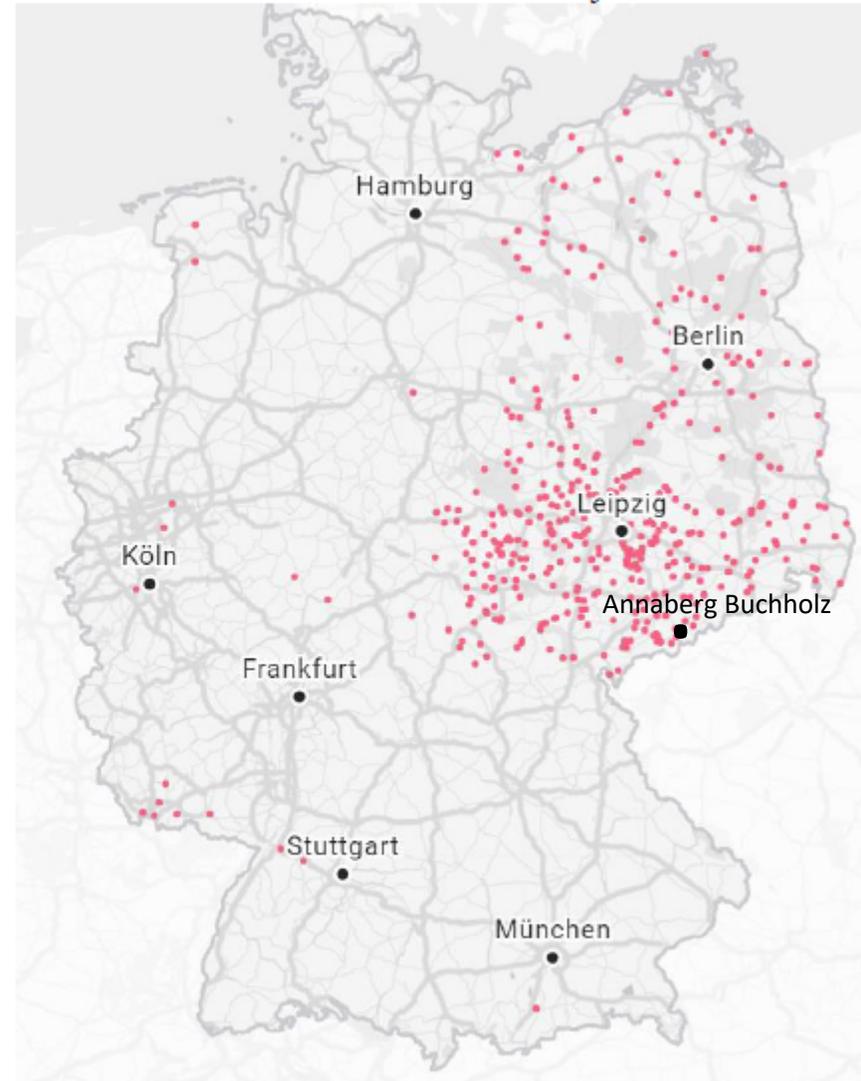
Areal distribution of streets fitting the constructional frame of communist-socialist naming strategies in Germany (n= 872).

The “socialist genitive” in naming strategies

Areal distribution of “*Straße der*”



Areal distribution of “*Straße des*”

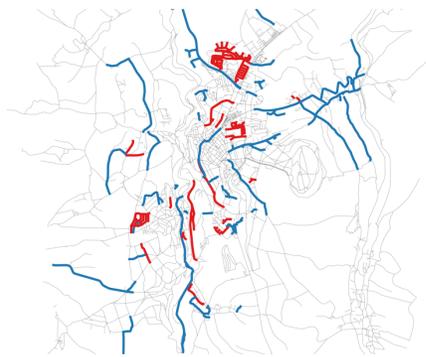


Spatio-temporal changes in Leipzig (1916-2018)

Righting the wrongs of the past

1989-2018

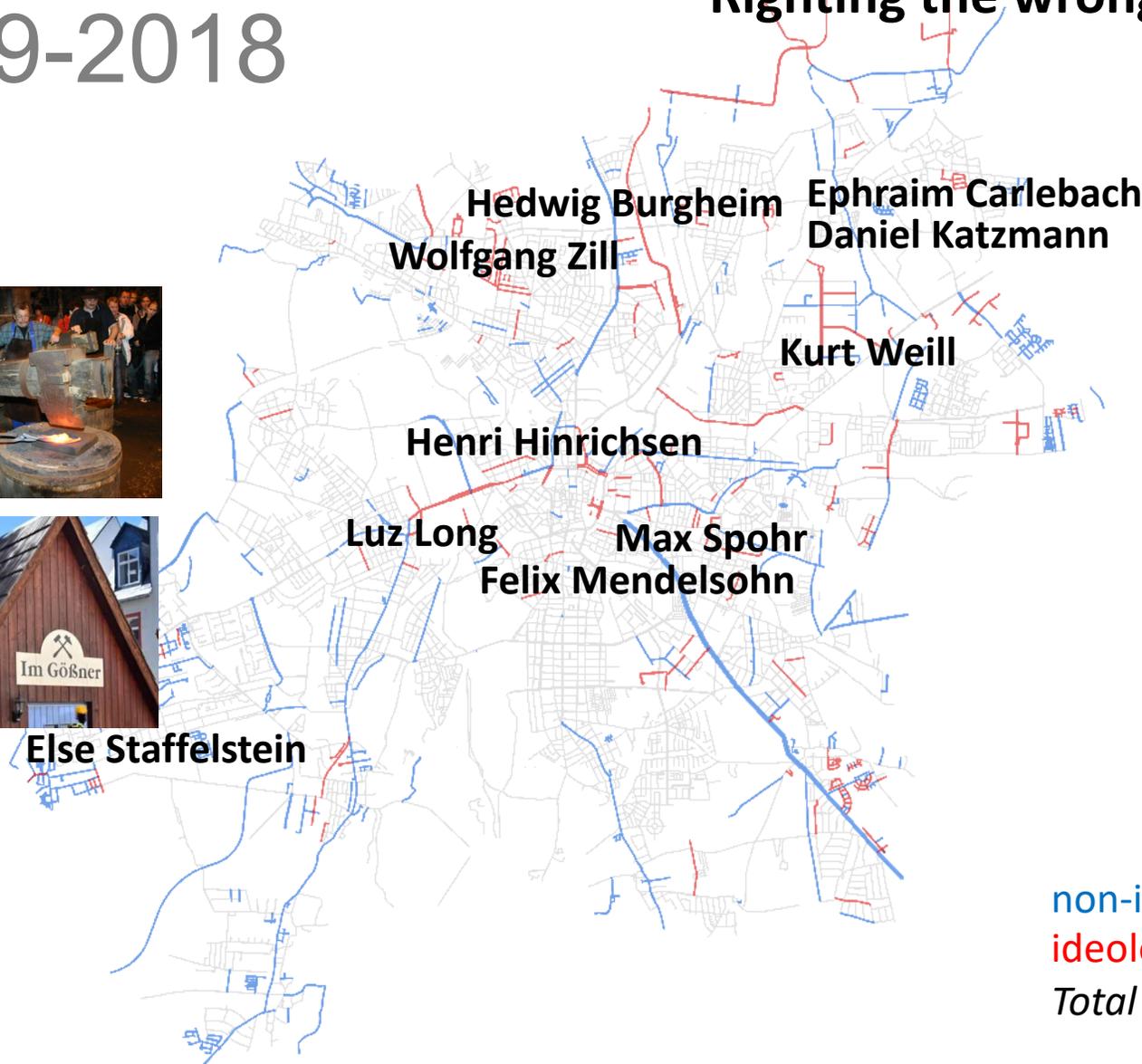
Annaberg-Buchholtz



Commodification
of cultural heritage



'copper street'
ore street
cobalt street



non-ideological	379	(~12.6)
ideological	182	(~6.1)
Total (~mean)	561	(~18.7)

Conclusions

Commemorative change of street names is hegemonic process:
Public display of ((changes in)) state political / social / cultural identity.

Different versions of history exist + are sequentially replaced

Subversive potential of street name changes as "creation of a natural order of things" (Fairclough 2003:2).

Street names appropriate and construct space (Tufi 2019)

propaganda carriers, "as important political changes are reflected in the renaming of streets" (Azaryahu 1986:581-7).

Our project: interdisciplinary approach to changes in the "ideological robe of the city" (Zieliński 1994:195).

- dynamic geographic visualization
- CDA analysis of media data.

Conclusions

Combined methodology explores locally negotiated and renegotiated ways in which memory and identity are enshrined in and exculpated from public space.

The spatio-historical patterns that emerge suggest that commemorative renaming is a continuous struggle for representation in the cityscape, a barometer reflecting political changes and a tool for creating and displaying different types of identity.

Street renaming continues -- different world views and concepts encoded:

- anti antisemitism
- anti colonialism
- civil liberties
- feminism
- marketing / commodification of identity (Weller 2003)

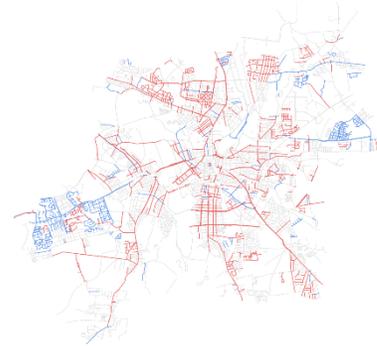
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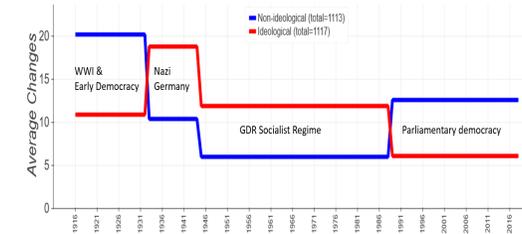
Methodological remarks



- Line graph by year
- + detailed longitudinal viz. of ideological marking of the city
- too detailed variation, no geographical information



- Spatiotemporal maps
- + extent of the ideological marking of the city
- compression of eras of different length into one frame

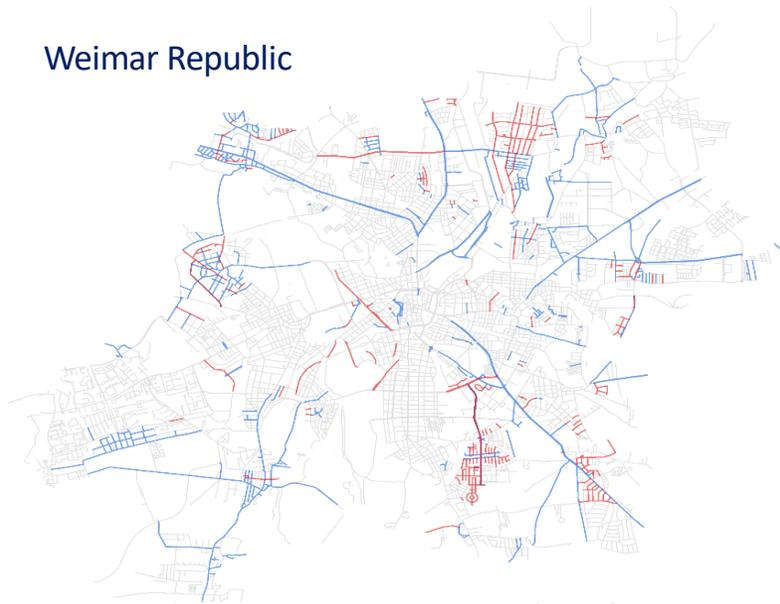


- Normalised renamings by year
- + balanced representation of the intensity of ideological marking
- variation hidden behind average

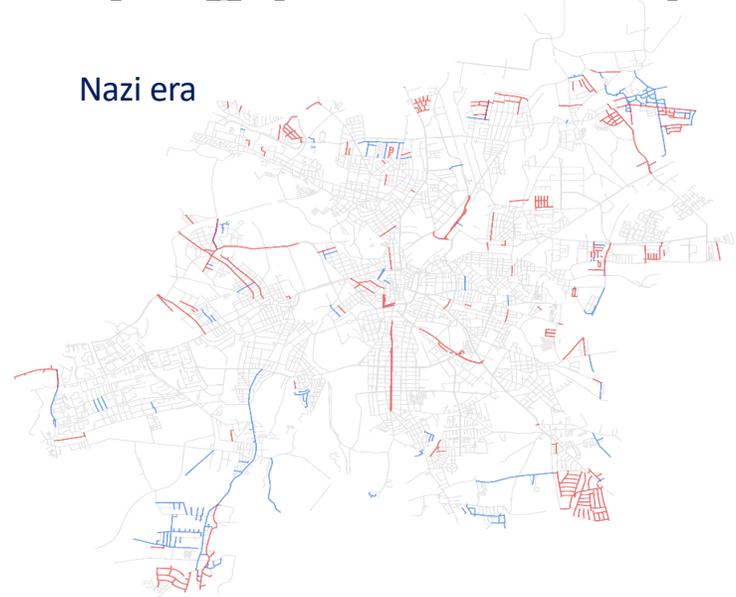
- Only a combination of
 - quantitative and qualitative analyses and
 - different types of quantitative data analysis
- can give us comprehensive insights into the complex nature of commemorative cityscapes.

Spatio-temporal changes in Leipzig (1916-2018)

Weimar Republic



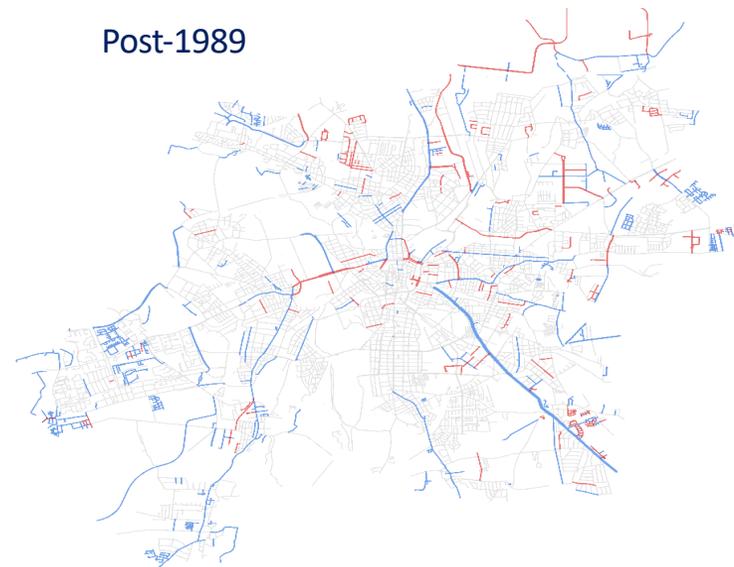
Nazi era



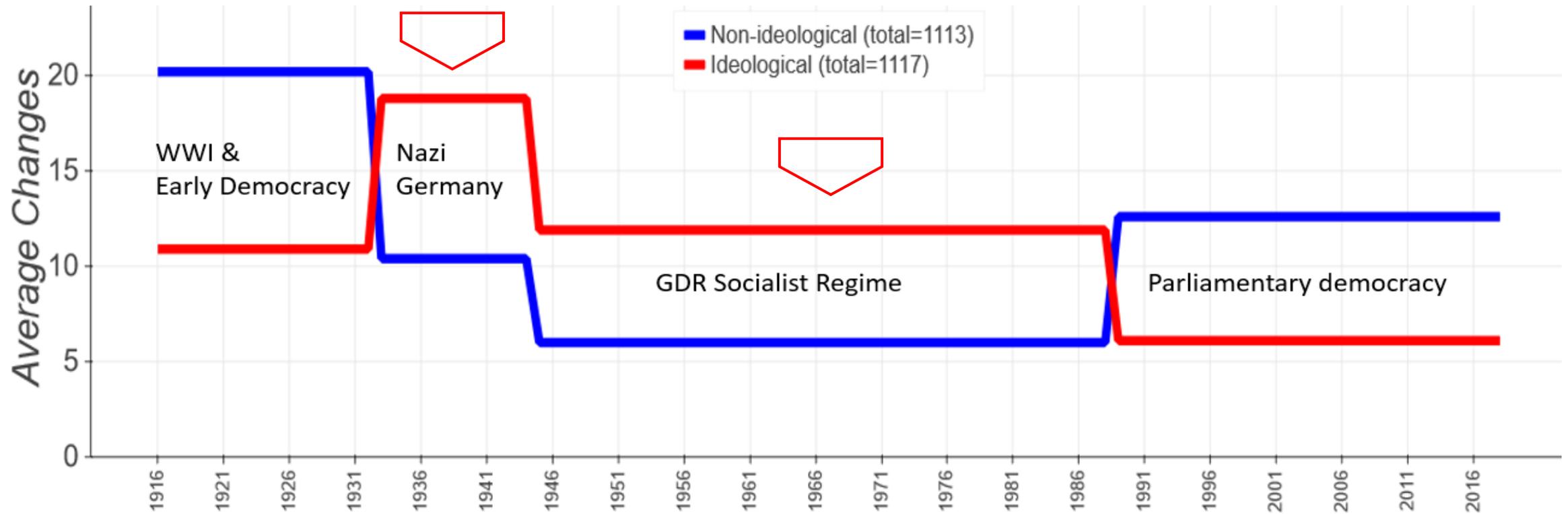
GDR



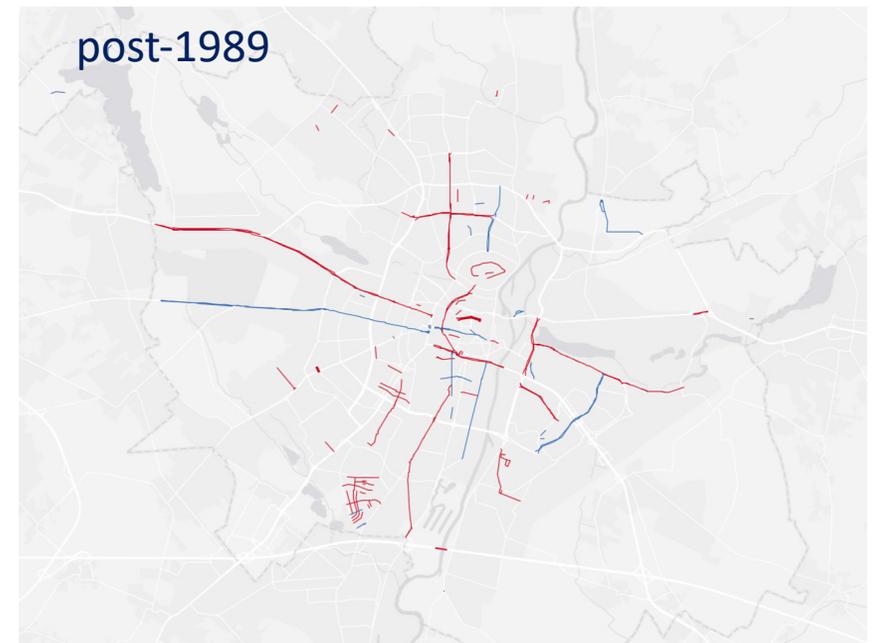
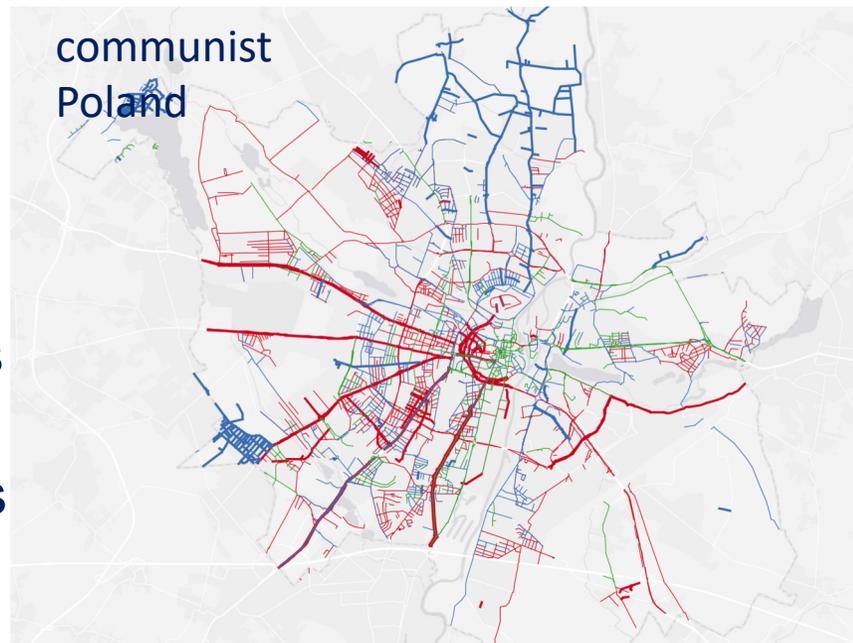
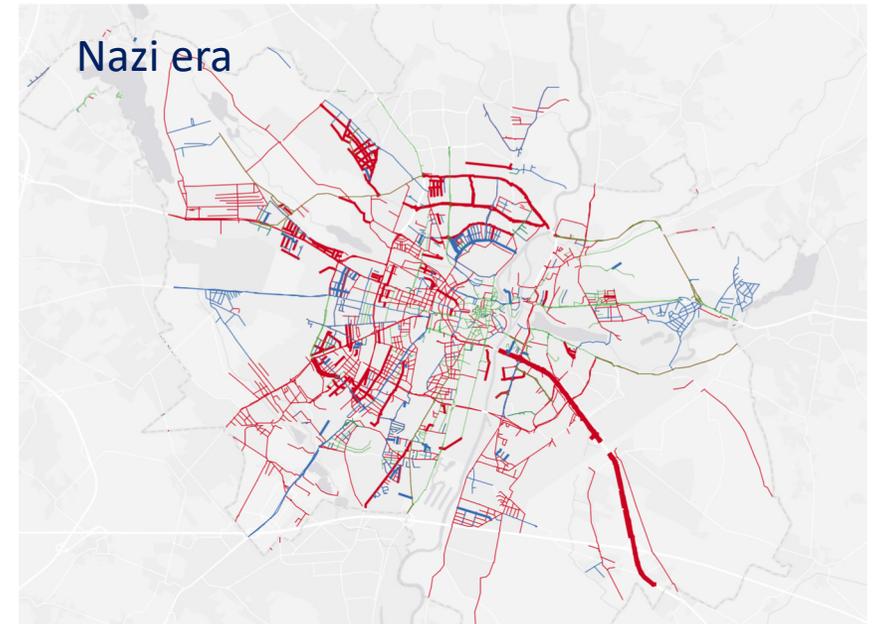
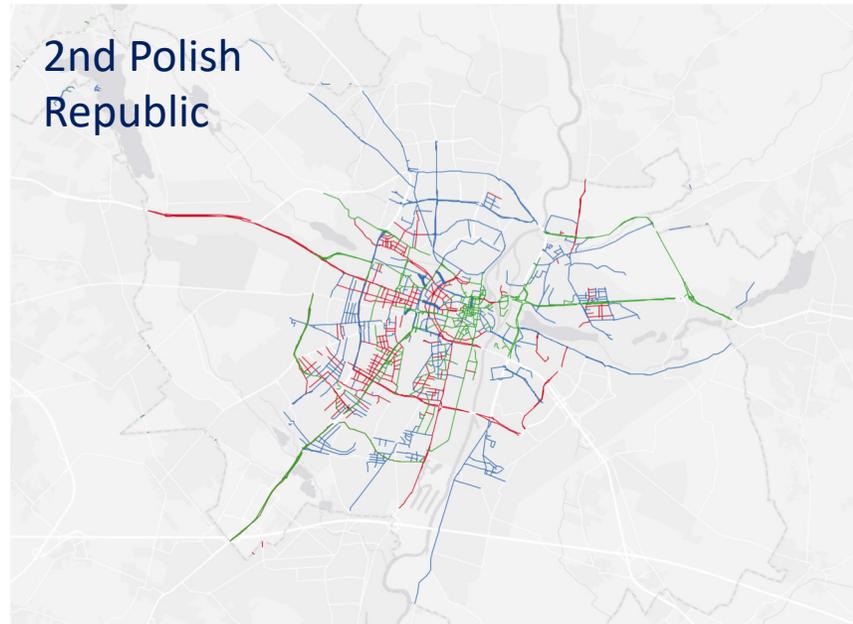
Post-1989



Average number of (re)namings by outcome (normalised by length of regime in years)



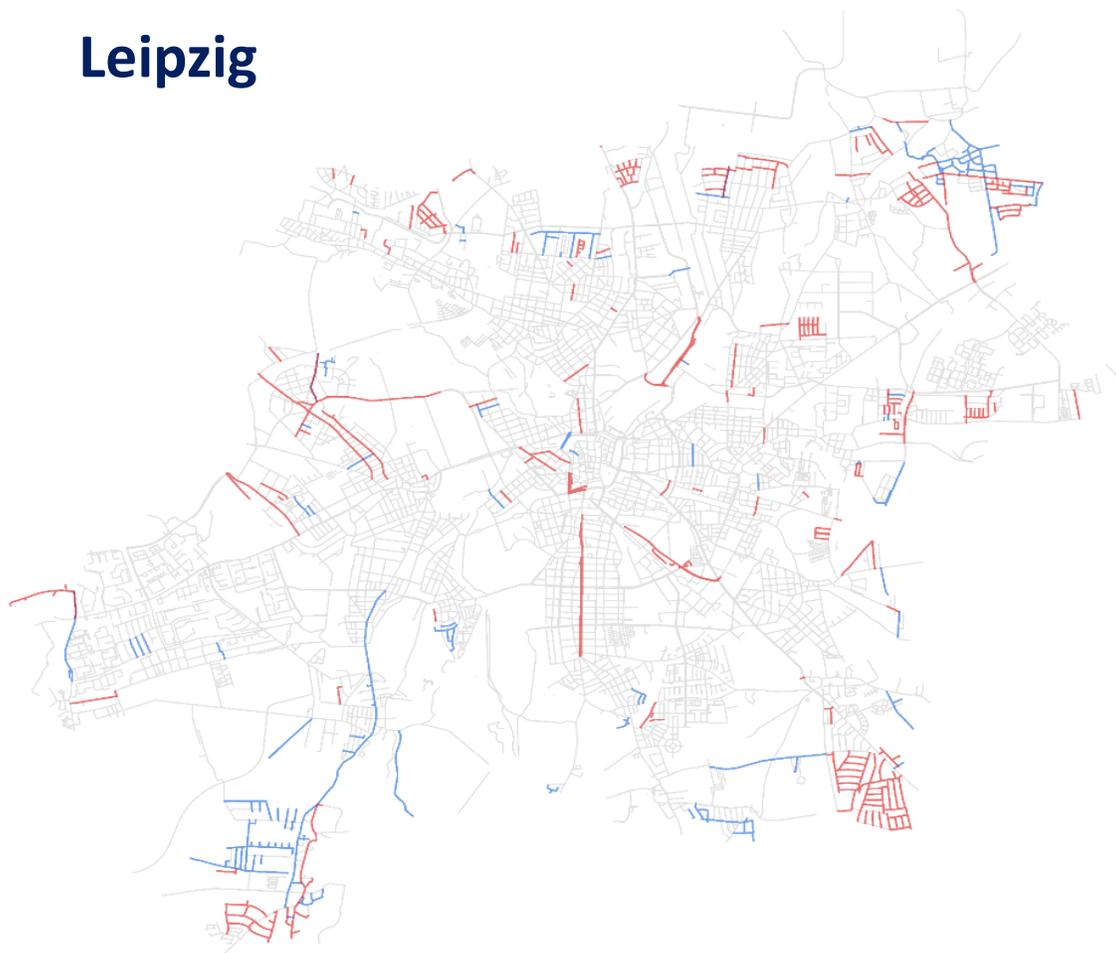
Spatio-temporal changes in Poznań 1916-2018



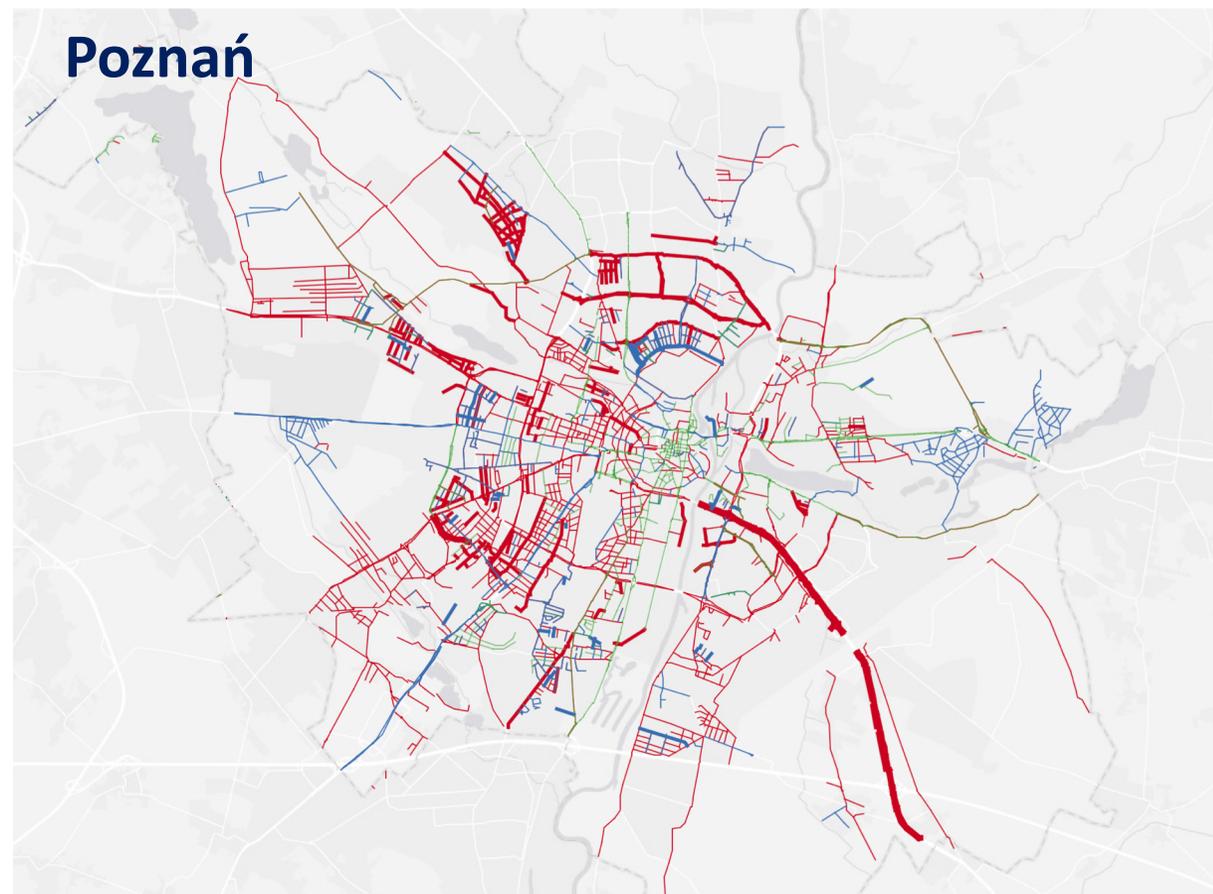
2nd Republic - 20 yrs
Nazi era - 5 yrs
Communist r. - 44 yrs
post-1989 - 29 yrs

Nazi era at home and in the occupied territories

Leipzig



Poznań



Poznań: additional variables in renamings: national identity and language change

1916-1921

1921-1939

1939-1944



Prussian street names

- > renaming into Polish (translation and change)
- > new Polish names

- > renaming Polish back to Prussian
- > changing Prussian to Nazi
- > renaming new Polish to Nazi

Street name change	Change	Transl.	Total	% of change
1921 from Prussian to Polish	166	149	315*	53%
1919 Prussian to 1939 Nazi German	134	191	325*	41%
1939 Polish to Nazi German	346	105	451	77%

*These two numbers should be identical, but Ring road has been divided into a bigger number of sections by the Polish administration, hence a different number of streets.

Conclusion 1: Similarities in the patterns of change

- peaks of change at the onset of a new regime with a lower followed by more balanced rate of change as the system stabilized
- renamings focussed on personal names, in particular of political and military leaders
- the long thoroughfares leading out of the city were most prone to change
- Nazi and communist administration more extensive ideological marking of the commemorative cityscape than the democratic governments post WWI and post 1989

Conclusion 2: Idiosyncrasies

In Poznań:

2 additional variables influencing the spatio-temporal patterns of renamings:

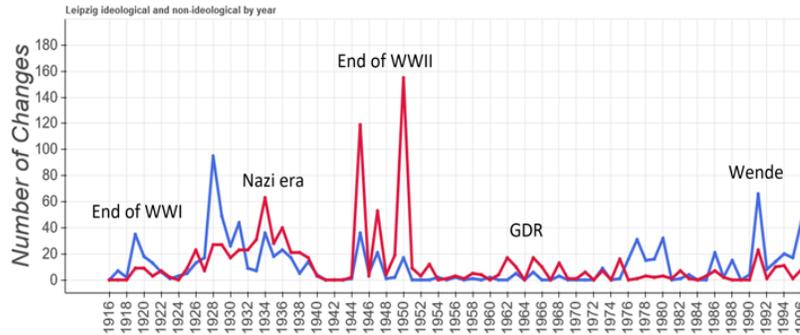
(1) change in the national identity of the city administration

(2) change in the language of administration

Both resulted in the emergence of an additional analytic category – translated names.

→ Necessity to analyse the changes not only year by year, but across all periods.

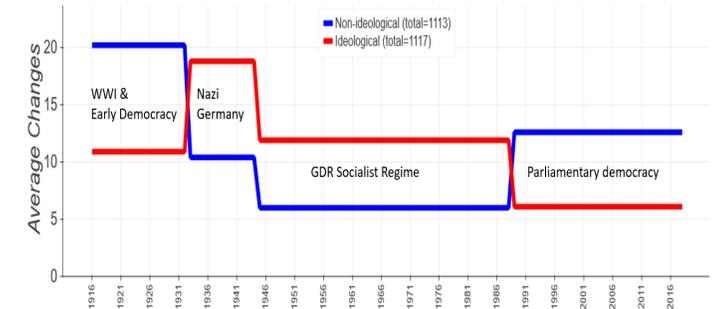
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Commemorative cityscapes: spatio-temporal patterns in street names in Eastern Germany and Poland

Serafeim Alvanides, Isabelle Buchstaller, Małgorzata Fabiszak, Frauke Griese, Patryk Dobkiewicz, Carolin Schneider, Anna Weronika Brzezińska

Thank you for listening
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