**Street renaming practices in Poznań and Słubice**

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Commemorative street renaming requires an integration of research into language (onomastics, linguistic landscape) and culture (ethnography, collective memory). Earlier research has shown systematic changes in urban toponymy both in CEE countries (Azaryahu 1996, 2011, 2012, Chloupek 2019, Drozdzewski 2018, Marin 2018, Palmberger 2018, Šakaja and Stanić 2018, Zieliński 1994) and in China (Ji 2017, Howlett 2021, Huang 2018, Kang 2016). In this paper we investigate the ways in which changes in official language as a consequence of the shifting German-Polish border are semiotically encoded in the street names of two urban linguistic landscapes: Poznań and Słubice. In this presentation we look at four sets of changes concerning major waves of street renaming connected with the change of the official language. These changes involve the following:

1. Change from German to Polish after WWI in Posen/Poznań.
2. Change from Polish to German at the beginning of the Nazi occupation of Poznań in 1939.
3. Change from German to Polish after the end of WWII in Poznań.
4. Change from German to Polish after the end of WWII in Słubice.

The changes of street names in this historical context raise a number of questions:

1. Which semantic categories of street names are most prone to change?
2. Did the Nazi administration return to the same street names as before 1919? If not, what were the differences?
3. Did Polish (communist) administration return to the same street names as before 1939? If not, what were the differences?
4. Did the changes of street names in Słubice post-1945 follow similar patterns of change as those of Poznań post-1945?

To compare the street renaming practices between these four periods we adopted a four stage procedure:

1. Coding street names into semantic categories.
2. Coding street renaming as either translations or changes.
3. Quantitative analysis: identifying tendencies, discussing dominant patterns of change.
4. Discussing outliers and idiosynchrasies.

The most numerous semantic categories of street names are **topological** – related to the shape or place where the street is located (e.g. *Bachstrasse* / *ul. Strumykowa* ‘Stream Street’, *Breite Strasse* / *ul. Wielka* ‘Broad/Great Street’); **nature-related** – names of birds, animals, plants (e.g. *Hopfenweg* / *ul. Chmielna* ‘Hop Street’); **place-name related** (e.g. *Warschauerstrasse* / *ul. Warszawska* ‘Warsaw Street’); based on **personal names (**e.g. *Bismarckstrasse* > *ul. Kantaka*)[[1]](#footnote-1).

Our findings show that political changes are encoded in the city landscape to varying extent, depending on time, socio-cultural context and function/positionality of the individual street.

Word count: 438

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1. Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898) German statesman and the first chancellor of unified Germany; Kazimierz Kantak (1824-1886) Political activist, took part in conspiracy, member of the Prussian parliament for Wielkopolska, born and died in Poznań. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)