Street renaming as a means of re-ordering the symbolic cityscape in time of shifting borders

Małgorzata Fabiszak, Anna Weronika Brzezińska, Patryk Dobkiewicz, Tomasz Dyrmo

Street renaming for commemorative purposes is a hegemonic process reflecting "ruptures in political history" (Azaryahu 1997: 481) and can be considered a "battle for representation" (Trumper-Hecht 2009: 238). Different orders of representing history in the "city as text" (Rose-Redwood et al. 2018: 7-11) show the subversive potential of street naming to create a "natural order of things" (Fairclough 2003: 2).

This presentation looks at how the symbolic potential of street names to ideologically mark the cityscape has been used in two locations: Poznań and Słubice. In particular, I look at 4 sets of changes concerning major waves of street renaming connected with the change of the official language and political affiliation:

(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.

First the street names are classified into semantic categories, e.g. personal names (*ulica Roosevelta* 'Roosevelt's Street'), topological (*ulica Strumykowa* 'Stream Street', *ulica Szeroka* 'Broad Street'), landmark (*Bahnhofstrasse*, *ulica Dworcowa*, 'Railway Street') and others. Then patterns of change within the semantic categories are analyzed. The analysis shows that personal names are most prone to change, while topological and landmark street names are more stable (they can be translated from one language to another, but their semantic content is preserved). These patterns of change are also influenced by the socio-political context of the situation. For example, Polish administration in Poznań after WWI preserves 48% of the Prussian names, the Nazi administration in 1939 reinstates 60% of the Prussian names, but retains only 23% of Polish names of 1939.

The analysis is based on a mixed methodological approach which draws on critical historical geography (Azaryahu 1986), the Discourse Historical Approach (Wodak & Meyer 2009, Wodak & Forchtner 2014), and GIS visualisation techniques (Buchstaller & Alvanides 2018). The findings show that ideological political changes are encoded in the city landscape to varying extent,

depending on time, political context and function/positionality of the individual street.

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