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URBAN TOPONYMY AND COLLECTIVE MEMORY: A CASE OF LAW-ENFORCED DECOMMUNIZATION OF STREET NAMES IN POLAND

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Abstract: In April 2016, the Polish Parliament passed a law on decommunization. Its objective was to eliminate from Polish public space the names commemorating communism. The paper discusses the names, which were earmarked for change and presents means of implementing these changes. The study is grounded in the methodology of critical toponymy and onomastic discourse analysis. It reveals interconnections between names and politics, authority, discourse and collective memory.

Keywords: urban toponymy; critical toponymy; onomastic discourse analysis; street names; name changing; naming policy; urban discourse; collective memory.

1. Introduction

The original dimension of the scientific descriptions of space has already been changed, especially when it comes to social as well as human sciences. Space, understood as the environment of specific human actions, turns into a "place": a space, which has been culturally and socially tamed and cultivated (Tuan 1977). What turns this physical yet unspecified space into a place are linguistic elements such as proper names. The process of naming is recognized as a typical social action whose aim is to perpetuate the desired ideologies. Geographical names (toponomy) apart from organizing space when it comes

to the indicative dimension (Rutkowski 2000; Zilliacus 1997), also influence the symbolic as well as the discursive dimensions.

The contemporary toponymic research does not ignore this particular fact. The study is not confined to the linguistic dimension whose purpose is to define the origin as well as the etymology of the given names together with their semantic motivation. The contemporary toponymic research considers the previously mentioned names as signs of social action with the ascribed functions, going beyond the process of denoting objects (Gammeltoft 2016; Kostanski & Puzey 2016; Zelinsky 1997). Exposing the hidden connections between the names understood as linguistic signs and their social dimension, namely the discursive actions, seems to be interesting. Names are believed to be elements of symbolic action – such as any other linguistic elements. Apart from becoming a communication tool (in this context, of orientation in space), they also become an instrument of symbolic power (Jordan 2012).

Proper names are regarded as preferred values carriers, especially within a particular community, and these values have an impact on both social identity as well as social memory (Connerton 1989; Erofeeva & Ushnikova 2017). Naming practices, particularly those determining the official terminology-connected sphere, play a fundamental role in the process of shaping collective memory. The community establishes as well as exhibits the pillars of its identity through the practice of commemorating particular people, events, institutions, and other objects.

Politicians, whether intentionally or not, name objects in space according to their values, worldviews, philosophy, and the way they present history. The most visible example of such practices, which could be interpreted as symbolic reinforcement of power by using names, is giving names to regions, towns, streets, squares, and buildings (Madlome 2019). It bears resemblance to the physical marking of space (by erecting monumental buildings

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or statues); however, it takes place on the symbolic plane. Many examples from the past and present times illustrate this, starting with Antiquity (*Caesarea*, *Alexandria*, *Constantinople*), to the communist regimes in the USSR (*Stalingrad*, *Kaliningrad*, *Leningrad*), and in Vietnam (*Saigon* renamed *Ho Chi Minh City*). As researchers point out, a change of a geographical name is in itself politically attractive: "Political leaders and public officials are increasingly willing to view toponyms strictly in terms of their exchange value rather than the use value they acquire as an integral part of the public sphere" (Rose-Redwood & Alderman 2011: 3).

A change in power, especially a major one, yielding a change in a political system, "naturally", so to say, invites name changes (Alford 1988). This is what happened in the countries of the former Eastern Bloc, where, after WWII, communism was enforced. The new order of values, worldviews, and beliefs, which was to be officially implemented, needed reinforcement and perpetuation. Proper names served the purpose ideally, because they created the world of alternative values, symbols, and heroes. Introducing new names, the communist regime could identify those who were important and meritorious enough to become a name donor for a city, street, or any other space object. Consequently, public space in the Eastern Bloc was filled with names of the Communist Party leaders, communist politicians and activists, army or its formations (divisions, regiments, etc.), military commanders, social actions, and initiatives as well as general names of values represented in the Communist Party propaganda in all these countries (Azaryahu 1996; Light et al. 2002).

After 1945, Poland found itself within the Soviet sphere of influence. Political power was seized by communist activists, fully subservient to Soviet Russia (Davies 2005; Kemp-Welch 2008). Not only was the political system changed, but also the name of the state: the historical name *Rzeczpospolita Polska* ('the Republic of Poland') was replaced by *Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa* ('the Polish People's Republic'). Street names were

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changed in all the cities and these had to be names propagating and reinforcing (symbolically) the communist power. Consequently, for over half a century, Poles had lived in the space with the most important sites bearing names with a strong propagandist load. The most frequent street names in Poland in the years 1945-1989 commemorated the following: *Feliks Dzierżyński*, *Bolesław Bierut*, *Generał Karol Świerczewski*, *Julian Marchlewski*, *Armia Czerwona* ('the Red Army'), *Marceli Nowotko*, *Hanka Sawicka*, *Marian Buczek*, *Obrońcy/Bohaterowie Stalingradu* ('Defenders/Heroes of Stalingrad') and *22 Lipca* ('July 22', the date of the proclamation of the Soviet-backed communist administration), *1 Maja* ('May 1', International Workers' Day, redefined as communist workers' holiday). Poles, physically and symbolically, were surrounded by the communist ideology.

Beginning with the year 1989, in Poland, and later throughout Eastern Europe, the communist regime was replaced by democracy. The changes in the political system created an opportunity for changing names. The newly elected authorities, in a bottom-up and spontaneous fashion, initiated the process of renaming streets, thus creating a new symbolic space and reestablishing the presence of individuals and events erased from the collective memory by the communist authorities. The personalities most obviously associated with the communist system were quickly forgotten and replaced by new heroes: both historical, such as Józef Piłsudski (considered to be the father of the independent Polish Republic re-established in 1918, whose name was removed by the communists), as well as more recent, such as Pope John Paul II, iers of the Polish Resistance*, victims* of *Stalinist and communist* repressions, and opposition activists (in the years 1945-1989). The urban space (in its toponymic dimension) was being gradually "regained" and organized according to the new principles and values, including the earlier, pre-communist, values. This process took place in all the countries of the former Eastern Bloc (see Azaryahu 1997; Czepczyński 2009; Light 2004; Light & Young 2010; Palonen 2008; Peterson 1977). The "purging" of names in the 1990s restored the balance and created a

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system (both symbolic and axiological), with which the majority of the population could identify[1]. According to Hałas (2004: 149):

> "this is symbolically the end of the history. In the pool of names introduced in the post-communist times and in all the renaming practices, one cannot see any indicators of consistent ideologization of names. In name-giving practices, one can see liberal trends of abandoning ideological associations and symbolism pertaining to collective identity defined by historical memory".

As we are going to see, such assessments were premature and overoptimistic. New political changes in Poland brought back ideology-driven name-giving practices. Hunting down the remaining communist symbols were to develop into a systemic and countrywide trend and finally eliminate these symbols from urban space.

2. Objective, method, and material

The principal **objective** of this article is to present the process of changing Polish public space place names (mainly, street names), which has been enforced by the authorities focused on adjusting the symbolic space to both the historical as well as the ideological policies supported by the government. The basic **methods** of this particular description will determine critical toponymy (Beyer et al. 2019; Puzey 2016; Rose-Redwood & Alderman 2011; Vuolteenaho & Berg 2009). The most important assumptions of this particular method pertain to interconnections between geographical names and issues such as power, politics, domination as well as social identity and collective memory. In fact, the contemporary toponymic research cannot be separated from the social and political as well as the economic factors (Light & Young 2015).

In addition, the research in the field of critical toponymy is targeted at showing the political practices, which concern the process of managing space in the authoritarian way together with acts of domination. Power manifests itself at the symbolic level through the process of naming space (Madlome 2019). The space having its particular name becomes

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the environment for social activity. Moreover, the names themselves update the ascribed value system if used on a regular basis. In addition, collective memory undergoes a similar procedure.

Proper names discussed here in the social context take us to another mainstream methodology: **critical discourse analysis** (CDA), different variants of which were presented by van Dijk (2005, Fairclough (1992; 2003), and Wodak (1996). This methodology assumes that language communication (discourse) is grounded in social, political, and ideological practices (frequently implicit). Hence, social practice can be revealed through a variety of language analyses. In this approach, discourse is not an isolated text structure but a complex phenomenon of communication, and the cultural and ideological determinants it encompasses are usually expressed only indirectly. This ideological message can be revealed through different levels of analysis: lexico-semantic, grammatical (syntactic), textual, and, as in the case of this analysis, onomastic. The objective of such an application of CDA is discovering interdependencies (usually indirect and implicit) between textual and discourse structures on the one hand, and social, political and ideological on the other. As it turns out, proper names can also serve as a tool in social practices.

I suggest looking on proper names not only as linguistic signs but also as social constructs, often highly ideologically marked, entering numerous textual and discourse relationships. Such names, street names inclusive, build both formal and denotative/connotative or metaphoric/metonymic series, and in many cases play a key role in the (re)construction of social reality. When critical discourse analysis becomes narrowed down to the level of names, a specific sub-methodology emerges, i.e. **onomastic discourse analysis**. Its theoretical assumptions are discussed by Rutkowski and Skowronek (2010; forthcoming). Social practices through the use of proper names are omnipresent. They are well visible in marketing and branding, political communication, as well as in naming space, which is

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demonstrated in this paper. Social reality, which surfaces in street names, constitutes an important dimension of public discourse, in which there is a conflict between the tendencies to change and to preserve the former system, between the tendencies to an instrumental treatment of space and to its "liberation", between the central and the local. The discourse, when construed in such a way, feeds directly into collective memory, because street names, by their very nature, represent the aspects which are most important for a given community, and which shape this community in terms of axiology and identity. This paper demonstrates how political power aims at taking ownership of the local space and imposing a prescribed system of values, and how it is achieved through substitution of names.

The analysis of the above-mentioned process will be done in accordance with the social symbolic activity (the discourse). The dynamics of the social process understood as a conflict between the imposed changes in the form of a political directive (an act of parliament), on the one hand, and the social feedback ("inhibiting" the changes), on the other, will be presented (Panasenko et al. 2018). Street names, considered as socially important elements, allow for combining the toponymic research or, more broadly speaking, the linguistic research with the social and cultural geography understood on the basis of the contemporary standards. This particular dimension related to urban space has been well documented recently in various studies (Hoelscher & Alderman 2004; Madden 2018; Rose-Redwood et al. 2019; Wanjiru 2016).

The above-mentioned **methodological perspectives** appear to be compatible with the framework of critical toponymy defined as the unifying method, which integrates interdisciplinary perspectives on geographical names.

In this article, street names will be discussed. The city is considered to be a significant semiotic space related to symbolism ("city-text") and all the social practices are treated as

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elements of urban discourse (Boyle & Rogerson 2001; Lees 2004; Parker 2000). Proper names and toponyms understood as linguistic signs in particular, constitute its important layer. The necessity of providing such methodological assumptions is supported by the previous studies related to street names in terms of discourse as well as ideology (Boyle & Rogerson 2001; Lees 2004; Rutkowski 2017). The research has shown the influence of political and ideological factors on the process of changing the urban nomenclature worldwide, especially in post-colonial, post-socialist, and post-Apartheid areas. Based upon these assumptions, the processes of changing street names in Bucharest (Light et al. 2002), Mostar (Palmberger 2017), Berlin (Azaryahu 1997), New York (Rose-Redwood 2008), Nairobi (Wanjiru 2016), Durban (Bass & Houghton 2018), and Cracow (Drozdzewski 2017) were described. On the one hand, all the research conducted puts emphasis on the importance of particular street names for certain local communities due to the fact that the process of naming organizes local space. On the other hand, the findings highlight the importance of the political aspect related to identity as well as collective memory. This particular article approaches the problem of the above-mentioned discrepancies. The linguistic content is represented by a set of street names, which have been intended for replacement on the basis of the decommunization act.

The key issue is connected with the concepts of denotation as well as connotation of proper names (Rutkowski 2012). Commemorating street names (only these will be discussed below) are exceptional in this respect. They refer to specific designations which can be found in the city space (communication strings), in the meantime owing their connotations to other proper names whose designations should be commemorated. The first – denotative – layer (*name – street*) will not be taken into account in this article. However, the second – commemorating – dimension will be taken into consideration due to the fact that it promotes certain attitudes as well as ideologies. The connotations related to the commemorated person (less frequently, institutions or events) determine the propaganda aspect of the whole name. Therefore, the Polish authorities intend to eliminate

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the names whose connotative values are somehow connected with the communist ideology. The problems with whether a given name relates to communism connotatively or not will be discussed further in the article.

This paper presents both the names earmarked for change and the justification for such change. The IPN (Institute of National Remembrance, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej), a special institute established to preserve historical memory, indicated 943 streets across Poland, the names of which should be changed under the 2016 act. On its website, the IPN lists 101 examples of names that violate the act and adds historical comments explaining why a given name is considered unacceptable[2]. The paper further discusses examples of names earmarked for change and the ways local authorities implemented the new legal acts.

The name-changing practices had to involve the verification of the compliance of existing names with the general guidelines of the act. In other words, when actually applied to specific names, the vague and wide-encompassing statement that any propagation of communism by commemorating individuals, dates, or events associated with this system is prohibited had to be verified. Consequently, local authorities were forced to decide whether a given honoree promotes the communist system or not. In some cases, the matter was obvious because of the actions or achievements of specific individuals. However, it was more complicated if, for instance, the names commemorated general values, which, in themselves, are not associated with communism. The association is created by a conventional link to historical events connected with the implementation of communism in Poland. The street or square name *Zwycięstwa* ('Victory') serves a good example. In many cities, it was the name given to the main street and the renaming of the latter raised questions: is victory exclusively associated with the communist system or is its scope wider, encompassing universal values as well? Even if this name, introduced after 1945, was automatically linked to defeating Nazi Germany in WWII, and even if it was the

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original justification, is not victory (in opposition to defeat, failure, or loss) a general value worth preservation in urban toponymy? Such doubts accompanied the process of name changing across Poland.

The presentation of the names to be replaced will be supplemented by the new names, "correct" in the IPN's opinion. Thanks to naming space engineering, there appeared (by the authorities' decision) a new inventory of individuals, dates, and events, which are to symbolize new, desirable social values and attitudes. Such actions triggered violent responses in many Polish cities. The violence was grounded not only in malice or general resistance to the values enforced, but also in pragmatism, sentimentality about the old names, and unwillingness to change them.

The process of renaming streets is illustrated by examples coming from many Polish cities. The focus is on the process of change itself and its specific realizations instead of on the systemic changes in the selected cities. The most typical ways of renaming streets are listed and some of them discussed in detail. The data come from an inventory of street names available at the website of the Polish Central Statistical Office.

The changes of street names presented in this paper offer an insight into the nature of social and local conceptualization of urban space. My objective is to focus on the process of implementing changes, especially, on the differences in how the city space is perceived by representatives of central authorities (the Parliamentary act is the legal basis of the discussed processes), local authorities, and ordinary residents. The city space becomes thus a symbolic site where a number of perspectives clash: historical policy and ideology, collective memory, local identity as well as orientation and spatial location (Hebbert 2005; Hoelscher & Alderman 2004; Norton 2000; Rose-Redwood et al. 2010). These incompatible points of view and different categorizations of space resulted in a conflict that surfaced in many Polish cities as resistance to the top-down instructions to introduce

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order, which in practice meant destruction of the old and familiar system of symbols and implementing the new and unfamiliar ones. This is why we focus on the social actions, which reflect this conflict. They prompt several questions. Who does cultural urban space belong to? Who can decide on the symbolic dimension of a city? To what degree should politicians and local authorities take "the voice of the people" into consideration, and to what degree can they implement the process, justified from their point of view, of removing the traces of the now-defunct communist system? In the light of these questions, urban toponymy appears to be a special bearer of memory and local identity as well as a socially significant form of commemoration and celebration of what (and who) is important (Hebbert 2005). A street name is, in this context, one of the more prominent ways of commemoration in space.

3. Results

In 2015, as a result of parliamentary elections, the power in Poland was seized by the party Prawo i Sprawiedliwość ('Law and Justice'; the abbreviation PiS is used hereafter) with Jarosław Kaczyński as its leader. As a rightwing and conservative party, which has built its political status by fusing nationalist and Christian traditions with social interventionism, the PiS openly declares its anticommunism. Among many other activities, such as establishing state institutions, aimed at creating new collective identity and historical memory, the PiS passed a special Act of Parliament prohibiting propagation of communism or any other totalitarian system by naming buildings or any public facilities (Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland. 1.04.16, item 744).

The act was passed by the Parliament of Poland on April 1, 2016. It reads that "names of buildings, any public facilities such as roads, streets, bridges, or squares, given by local government units cannot commemorate individuals, organizations, events, or dates making reference to communism or any other totalitarian system, or in any other way to propagate such a system"[3]. Under this act, local authorities are put in charge of renaming

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these public space objects, which glorify communism. If local authorities refrain from implementing the changes within twelve months, the names are to be changed within following three months by the province governor, who supervises local authorities and represents the state government. Such a "violent" legal solution created a situation, in which the central authorities have a tool to enforce the replacement of "unsuitable" names. The act did not clearly define, which names were "correct" and which were "incorrect" or "unacceptable". It only generally stipulated that names propagating communism are those, which "make reference to individuals, organizations, events, or dates standing for the repressive, authoritarian and subservient system of power in Poland, in the years 1944–1989". In case of doubts as to the connotations of a given name, a local authority should consult the IPN.

3.1 Communism: Who and what is connoted? Name categories to be changed

As mentioned above, the IPN earmarked 943 streets across Poland for renaming. Prior to the act of April 1, 2016, these streets bore different names. An exemplary list of over a hundred names was presented by the IPN on its website[4]. These names can be grouped into the following categories:

a. personal names;
b. names of military formations;
c. names of institutions and initiatives;
d. dates and anniversaries;
e. names of values, attitudes, and models of behaviour.

In what follows, these categories are discussed in detail and supported with examples coming from all over Poland.

3.1.1 Personal names

Naming streets after individuals is the most widespread model of the street-naming practice in Poland. Streets named in this fashion perform a commemorative function and

constitute linguistic monuments of individuals deserving special commemoration. Naming a street using an individual's first name and surname is one of the highest forms of glorifying him/her in Polish culture (Rutkowski 2016a).

Consequently, in the above-mentioned IPN list, the personal names constitute the largest group of the names to be changed. However, the strength of association between the name "donor" and the communist system varies. Some individuals are directly and without any doubt linked to communism. These include the Communist Party activists, ideologists, and members of the government and state administration: Edward Gierek, Władysław Gomułka, Władysław Hibner, Jan Krasicki, Julian Marchlewski, Karl Marx (Karol Marks in Polish), Marceli Nowotko, Hanka Sawicka. Furthermore, there are the military leaders who participated in implementing communism, such as Zygmunt Berling, Captain Diaczenko, Michał Rola-Żymierski. It has to be stressed that in this group of names we can find some characters artificially manufactured by communist propaganda. For example, Franciszek Zubrzycki aka "Mały Franek" ('Little Frank') was a member of the Polish Workers' Party and a leader of its underground military organization People's Guard during WWII. By the post-war communist propaganda, he was presented as the first leader of a partisan detachment and the myth was reinforced by naming streets after him.

The IPN, however, equally resolved to rename the streets associated with individuals whose link with communism was less direct and obvious. They were neither party activists nor politicians nor soldiers, but they were either people whose work or activities were used by communist propaganda or those whose achievements have become associated in the common awareness with the times of communism in Poland. One of such individuals was Wincenty Pstrowski, a miner, who, due to his productivity at work, became a paragon of a model worker or "shock worker" (someone who is especially productive and thus contributes to the strengthening of the communist state more than others). Another shock

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worker was Stanisław Sołdek. He was a Gdansk shipyard worker as well as the co-initiator and winner of a propagandist productivity competition in the shipbuilding industry. *Sołdek Street* was also to be renamed. Yet another example is Leon Kruczkowski, a Polish writer, an author of a number of books and dramas, and it is as a writer that he is remembered by the general public. The IPN in its justification for removing his name from the public space emphasizes that Kruczkowski was a Communist Party member, president of the communist Union of Polish Writers, and lists his positions in the political system of the Polish Peoples' Republic. However, because he was seen as a prominent figure in Polish culture apart from being a Party activist or a communist, inhabitants of some Polish cities protested against erasing his name.

3.1.2 Names of military formations

The IPN's list of the toponyms to be altered includes names of the armies and formations, which could be treated as symbols of enforcing the communist system. A "special role" has been assigned to the Red Army, that is the Soviet Army, which, as a result of warfare against Nazi Germany, entered occupied Poland in 1945. In the post-war Polish propaganda, this entering of the Soviet Army was depicted as "liberation" of Poland from the German occupation. The competing, right-wing account (associated with the PiS, among others) interprets these actions not as liberation but as a new occupation of Poland, this time by Soviet Russia. Following this approach, the true liberation took place only in 1989, with the first democratic elections. In its justification, the IPN writes that when the Red Army entered Poland, "a new era of Polish nation martyrdom had begun", and that the presence of Soviet troops "abounded in acts of violence and violation of law, affecting Polish citizens as well, with Polish lands ransacked and destroyed"[5]. There was a great number of streets named after the Red Army: before 1989, there were over 70 such streets. Even after the renaming in the 1990s, there were still about a dozen left and earmarked for change by the act of 2016.

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In 1945, the Polish troops formed in the Soviet Union and totally subordinated to Soviet commanders entered Poland, hand in hand with the Red Army. Both the name of the troops as a whole, *Ludowe Wojsko Polskie* ('the Polish People's Army'), and its abbreviation, *LWP*, as well as names of particular formations, were earmarked for change. They include, for example, the street names after the Polish 1st Tadeusz Kościuszko Infantry Division: *1. Dywizji Piechoty (im. Tadeusza Kościuszki)* and its variants: *I DP (im. T. Kościuszki)* and *Dywizji Kościuszkowskiej*. Other names from this group include, for instance, *1 Armii WP* ('1st Army'), *2 Armii WP* ('2nd Army'), *1 Korpusu Pancernego* ('1st Armoured Corps'), and *1 Batalionu Platerówek* ('1st Emilia Plater Independent Women's Battalion').

Streets commemorating Polish underground formations of socialist and communist background were to be renamed, too. Two such toponyms were identified: *Gwardii Ludowej* ('People's Guard') and *Armii Ludowej* ('People's Army or Peasants' Army').

The instruction to change names of the indicated army formations has a stipulation, though. It seems that the IPN was aware that the ban to commemorate Polish soldiers fighting in WWII was controversial. Thus, a subtle distinction was made between an army formation and common soldiers. Thus, we find explanations on the IPN website that one must distinguish the "communist nature" of the army formations, which were created by the Soviet system with the objective to implement communism in Poland, from the fate of "common soldiers" who, according to IPN representatives, deserve honouring and commemoration. That is why there was a suggestion that if local authorities wanted to commemorate "common soldiers", they could modify existing names by adding the word *żołnierze* ('soldiers'), for example, changing the name *ul. 1 Dywizji Piechoty* ('1st Infantry Division Str.') to *ul. Żołnierzy 1 Dywizji Piechoty* ('Soldiers of the 1st Infantry Division Str.'). The word *soldiers* was supposed to direct the interpretation of the street name from a formation linked with the communist system to the fate of common people. In some

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cases, local authorities actually followed this suggestion, which is discussed later on in this paper.

3.1.3 Names of institutions and initiatives

In the Polish Peoples' Republic, street names also commemorated the public institutions whose objective was to introduce and reinforce the communist system. Such names include *ul. Krajowej Rady Narodowej* ('State National Council Str.'; a political authority, which established the legal foundations of the communist system in Poland), *ul. Polskiego Komitetu Wyzwolenia Narodowego* ('Polish Committee of National Liberation Str.'; an executive governing authority established by J. Stalin), *ul. Polskiej Partii Robotniczej* ('Polish Workers' Party Str.'), *ul. Planu 6-letniego* ('Six-Year Plan Str.'; a centralized plan adopted by the communist government in the years 1950-1955 aimed at industrialization and development of socialism), *ul. Związku Młodzieży Polskiej* ('Union of Polish Youth Str.', abbr. ZMP; a Stalinist youth organization, subordinated to the Communist party), *ul. Walki Młodych* ('Youth Struggle Str.', a title of a magazine published by Polish communists in the years 1943–1990).

3.1.4 Dates and anniversaries

There is a tradition in Poland of naming streets after dates of historic events. In the times of the Polish People's Republic, there were a number of dates incorporated in toponyms across the country and related to the events pivotal to communist mythology and view of history. These were: July 22 (the date when, according to the communist propaganda, the Polish Committee of National Liberation was established; a state holiday known as National Independence Day) and May 9 (Victory Day in the USSR and other communist countries, unlike May 8, celebrated in Western Europe and marking the surrender of Nazis).

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Finding a justification for renaming streets named after May 1 and commemorating the international Workers' Day, or Labour Day, was more problematic. On the one hand, it used to be one of the most important state holidays in the socialist countries, with compulsory parades expressing support for the communist system. On the other hand, abolishing the widely acceptable workers' day would be questionable. That is why the name *1 Maja* ('May 1') is not in the INP list of the names to be changed. However, the May Day holiday was counterbalanced by the newly established May 3 holiday, which commemorates the first Polish Constitution of 1791 and a Catholic holiday related to the worship of Mary. Consequently, in many Polish cities, streets named *3 Maja* ('May 3 Str.') appeared next to streets named *1 Maja* ('May 1 Str.').

Similarly, the IPN resolved to change the names pertaining to the anniversaries of establishing the Polish People's Republic, such as *X-lecia PRL* or *X-lecia Polski Ludowej* ('10th anniversary of Polish People's Republic'). The structure *...-lecia PRL* itself, referring to any anniversary in the Polish People's Republic, was also to be removed.

On the local level, apart from the dates mentioned above, there were several street names commemorating the dates when the Soviet Army entered different Polish cities. These dates, obviously non-identical for different cities, were described in the communist propaganda as the dates of liberation. Removing these names, however, often caused grassroots opposition, mainly because for the inhabitants of these cities such dates really stood for the liberation from the German occupation, and not for an introduction of new, communist terror brought by the Red Army or the Polish People's Army. I will return to this topic later in the paper.

3.1.5 Names of values, attitudes, and models of behaviour

The Polish People's Republic's propaganda used street names to perpetuate some values and models of behaviour. Such names could express these values and models directly or

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metonymically, i.e. by reference to collective paragons (Light et al. 2002). The latter was a common way to glorify the desirable models of behaviour. Such names include: *Przodowników Pracy* ('Shock Workers' Str.'; commemorating socialist work competition and especially productive workers, who were used as a symbol of socialist reforms in economy, cf. W. Pstrowski and S. Sołdek discussed in section 3.1.1), *Pionierów* ('Young Pioneers' Str.'; a youth organization of the Soviet Union), *Obrońców Pokoju* ('Defenders of Peace Str.') or *Spółdzielczości Pracy* ('Cooperatives' Str.'). Values that ranked highly in the communist propaganda were also used directly as street names, for example: *ul. Pokoju* ('Peace Str.'; in the communist propaganda, the Soviet Bloc was depicted as the defender of world peace while Western countries, especially the USA, were presented as those seeking war and military confrontation), *ul. Pracy* ('Work Str.'), *ul. Wyzwolenia* ('Liberation Str.'), *ul. Zwycięstwa* ('Victory Str.').

3.2 Introducing new names

The act of April 1, 2016 gave local authorities twelve months to replace unsuitable names. Once the renaming date had expired, the names not changed by local authorities were to be changed by local representatives of the state government. The vast majority of street names, which could be interpreted as propagating the communist regime, were changed at the local level. In some cases, however, local authorities either could not decide on the new name or did not consider the names earmarked for change as indeed propagating communism. In such cases, the representatives of the state government imposed new names, which occasionally resulted in appeals to courts. Consequently, in some cases, courts decided whether a street name should be changed or not.

Although the details of the implementation of the new law were not identical in different cities, often reflecting local traditions and mentality, it is possible to single out several patterns in the actions of municipal officials. While the new law intended to promote renaming, municipal officials and inhabitants alike tried to minimize the scope of the

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imposed changes. This was because they did not look on the street names as symbols, but took a pragmatic perspective of a "common citizen": street names provide for the "intersection of hegemonic ideological structures with the spatial practices of everyday life" (Azaryahu 1996: 311). From this standpoint, renaming meant not only a mental change and the need to get accustomed to a new name, but made it necessary to change one's residential address and all the relevant documents. For city councils and municipal institutions, it also involved the necessity to change all the street nameplates bearing the old name, replacing signboards, if necessary, and updating addresses wherever they were stored. All this meant real economic costs. Additionally, there was also natural conservatism or even *retrotopia* (cf. Bauman 2017), a tendency to preserve the old world or the world, as we know it. All this resulted in social resistance to the enforced decommunization of the public space.

3.3 How to modify a name and yet to keep it intact? New justifications for street names

One can venture an opinion that the act of April 1, 2016 encountered the resistance coming from both city dwellers and officials representing them. In the first place, people were used to toponyms naming their city space. Secondly, renaming streets was also a challenge for post offices, delivery agencies, and mapmakers who needed rapid updates. Considering the above, attempts to resist renaming and preserve the former names were very frequent. One of the strategies was to "purify" the toponym of its communist connotations through giving it a new justification. For example, if a street was named after an individual or concept associated with communism and originally the name was intended to glorify the communist system and ideology, a change of justification would break the link between the name and communism. Such superficial renaming can be theoretically classified as a change in a name's denotation: the former denotation was "removed" and replaced by a new one, while the name form was kept intact.

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This strategy was frequently applied to streets named after significant dates. For instance, the name *ul. 22 Marca* ('March 22 Str.') was left intact in Gdynia and Sopot but the justification was changed: up to that point it had celebrated the entry of the Soviet Army and the liberation of the city from the German occupation; conversely, the new denotation commemorated the Day of Polish-Hungarian Friendship established by President Lech Kaczyński. In Sosnowiec, the toponym *ul. 27 Stycznia* ('January 27 Str.') was retained with a modified justification: now the name refers to the liberation of the city from the Nazis instead of the previous reference to the entry of the Red Army. Analogically, in Tarnowo Podgórne, *ul. 25 Stycznia* ('January 25 Str.') does not commemorate the "liberation" but the end of WWII. The local authorities argued that "for the local community, the date January 25 does not symbolize the communist system but the end of the war, as does May 8 for the rest of Europe. This is when the German occupants stopped killing Tarnowo Podgórne's inhabitants"[6]. Such interpretation was approved by the IPN. In Poznan, changing the name *ul. 23 Lutego* ('February 23 Str.') developed into a conflict between the local and state authorities. February 23, 1945 is the date of the surrender of the last point of Nazi resistance in the city. The city council initially did not change this name arguing that it does not propagate communism but commemorates the end of the German occupation in Poznan. The local representative of the state authorities, however, changed the name because, according to him, it did glorify communism and the Red Army (which was engaged in the fights with Germans in Poznan). The city council appealed to the provincial court, which set the judgement aside. The courts of higher instances have upheld the city council's decision. Consequently, the street bears the name after February 23 and, following the court's interpretation, it propagates not communism but the end of the war in Poznan.

In many cities of Lower Silesia (e.g., Głogów, Karpacz), *Ulica Obrońców Pokoju* ('Defenders of Peace Str.') was interpreted as propagating communism because it commemorated the World Congress of Intellectuals in Defence of Peace held in 1948 in

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Wroclaw. This event, organized by Soviet and Polish communists and directed against the "American imperialism", falsely dignified the Soviet Union and other communist countries as supporters of peace. The IPN itself points out that the name does not have to be changed if the local authorities approve of a new justification for this name: "The justification of a new name should indicate real defenders of real peace after whom the street will be named. The new justification can, for example, make reference to the efforts of the Polish government to maintain peace in 1939"[7]. Local councils followed this suggestion and thus, in Głogów, the justification reads: "the street name Defenders of Peace commemorates all those who have fought for peace, in the past and today"[8], which means that it does not propagate communism but makes reference to universal human values.

The name *Ulica Pionierów* ('Pioneers' Str.') was subject to analogical reinterpretations in a number of Polish cities. The IPN included it in the list of the names to be changed on grounds of the available dictionary definitions of the word *pioneer*. The latter has three meanings in Polish dictionaries: i) a person or group that originates or helps open up a new line of thought or activity or a new method or technical development; ii) one of the first to settle in a territory; iii) a member of the Young Pioneers organization in the USSR[9]. The IPN's explanation makes it clear that the street name should be changed only if it pertains to the third sense, because in that case it propagates communism. Many local authorities adopted street name justifications based on the first or second dictionary meaning (e.g., Gdynia, Wrocław, Koszalin, Gliwice, Orneta, Mielno).

Even popular street names such as *Wyzwolenia* ('Liberation Str.'), *Przyjaźni* ('Friendship Str.'), *Wolności* ('Freedom Str.'), or *Zwycięstwa* ('Victory Str.') caused interpretative problems. On the level of language, these names make reference to general values or events with clearly positive associations. They were, however, abused by the communist propaganda; consequently, their usage was narrowed down. Thus, victory meant the Red

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Army's victory over Nazi Germany in 1945, liberation equaled the entry of the Soviet Army into Poland, and friendship was limited to the "eternal" Polish-Soviet friendship. If local authorities wanted to keep such names unchanged, they were forced to adopt new justifications, which would clearly indicate a different denotation of these words. In Białystok, for example, the name *ul. Zwycięstwa* ('Victory Str.') no longer refers to the victory of the Soviet Union and the Allies over Nazis in 1945, but to the victory of the Polish forces over the Soviet Union in 1920. Therefore, the same name has acquired the opposite axiological effect: instead of glorifying the victory of the Soviet Union, it commemorates its defeat.

The street name *ul. Anieli Krzywoń* ('Aniela Krzywoń Str.') provides an interesting case. Aniela Krzywoń was a Polish soldier, a private in the Emilia Plater Independent Women's Battalion of the Polish Army, which, during the WWII, fought together with the Soviet Army. She died in the Battle of Lenino while rescuing injured soldiers from a burning truck. She was awarded the USSR's highest honour for bravery, the title *Hero of the Soviet Union*, as the only Pole and the only woman who was not a Soviet citizen. Many streets, schools, and organizations were named after her across Poland. In the context of decommunization, a question appears: is she commemorated as a soldier of the army, which introduced communism in Poland, and the Hero of the Soviet Union, or a heroic soldier ready to sacrifice her life to save others? The city councils differed in their answers to this question. In Opole, the street was renamed to commemorate Inka, a heroine of Polish anti-Soviet underground movement, the legacy of which the PiS readily claims to carry on. In other cities, as for example, in Białystok, the name remained unchanged but a new justification was added to emphasize that it commemorates a Polish soldier and a prisoner in Siberia, not a Hero of the Soviet Union.

As can be seen from the examples discussed above, denotation and connotation, which are the two levels at which proper names can function, come into conflict. The new

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justifications of the names are in fact their new denotations, as the new objects are named by the same language structure (an analogous situation is presented in the next section). However, the cases in which a name connotes communism are more interesting from a linguistic point of view. For example, even common words such as "victory", "friendship", or "liberation" have been assigned a connotative load because, as a result of many decades of their propagandist use as proper names, they turned to be directly associated with the Soviet Army and the enforced Polish-Soviet alliance. Their meaning has been narrowed down and semantic values have been limited. The new justifications highlight their broader and primary meanings, thus new names restore the original sense of words. Thus, when these words were used in the function of proper names, they reclaimed their primary connotative value.

3.4 Same name, different person

A similar strategy, i.e. retaining the name form but changing its denotation, was applied to streets named after individuals. A way to minimize the changes was to replace the former honoree with a different individual but bearing the same name. Such changes were adopted in a number of Polish cities, especially in Warsaw, where the following names were altered: *ul. Juliana Bruna* ('Julian Brun Str.'; 1886-1942, a Polish and Soviet writer and communist activist) to *ul. Giordana Bruna* ('Giordano Bruno Str.'; a 16th-century philosopher, burnt alive for heresy by the Inquisition)[10], *ul. Józefa Feliksa Ciszewskiego* ('Józef Feliks Ciszewski Str.'; 1876-1938, a Polish communist activist) to *ul. Jana Ciszewskiego* ('Jan Ciszewski Str.'; 1930–1982, a sport journalist), *ul. Anastazego Kowalczyka* ('Anastazy Kowalczyk Str.'; 1908–1943, a Polish communist activist) to *ul. Jana Kowalczyka* ('Jan Kowalczyk Str.'; 1833–1911, a Polish astronomer), *ul. Lucjana Rudnickiego* ('Lucjan Rudnicki Str.'; 1882-1968, a Polish communist activist) to *ul. Gen. Klemensa Stanisława Rudnickiego* ('General Klemens Stanisław Rudnicki Str.'; 1897–1992, an officer of the Polish Army in the West), *ul. Jana Kędzierskiego* ('Jan Kędzierski

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Str.'; 1900-1958, a Polish communist activist) to *ul. Apoloniusza Kędzierskiego* ('Apoloniusz Kędzierski Str.'; 1861–1939, a Polish painter).

Other Polish cities followed the same pattern. For example, in the cities where there was a street named after Janek Krasicki (1919–1943, a communist youth activist), it was renamed to honour Ignacy Krasicki (1735–1801, a bishop, poet, and playwright). In this way, the honoree was changed while the street name remained intact in its short form – *ul. Krasickiego* ('Krasicki Str.'). The strategy was adopted in such cities as: Sosnowiec, Siemianowice Śląskie, Lwówek Śląski, Opoczno, Płońsk, Baranów Sandomierski, Więcbork, Kolbuszowa, Mielec, Dębica, Błażowa, Śmigiel, Grajewo, Wierzbica, Koronowo[11].

3.5 A common word instead of a proper name

A similar effect has been achieved in the cases when streets were named after individuals whose surnames were the same as common words. All that was needed to keep them intact was to change their official justification. Thus, in Sosnowiec, *ul. Adama Śliwki* ('Adam Śliwka Str.'; a communist activist) was changed to *ul. Śliwki* ('Plum Str.') and *ul. Jana Gacka* ('Jan Gacek Str.') to *ul. Gacka* ('Bat Str.'; *gacek* is a dialect word for *bat*). For the habitants, these changes may also be interpreted as humorous because of their new semantic values (Rutkowski 2016b; Samokhina & Pasynok 2017).

3.6 New names, new heroes

As a result of the act of April 1, 2016 and its wide scope, in almost every Polish city new street names have appeared. What were the trends in naming strategies? Did it really bring back the remembrance of the heroes either forgotten or intentionally erased by the communist regime, as was the intention of lawmakers and as it was explicitly expressed in the IPN's instructions?

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Although the process of renaming took a slightly different course in different cities and was more or less ideologically biased[12], today one cannot find a single city free of names associated with a new kind of heroes. Communist heroes were most often replaced by individuals or groups of people who, during WWII, represented the Polish rightist underground and who, in the times of Stalinism, opposed the new system in a more or less open way. Interestingly, the most outstanding individuals and organizations, such as Józef Piłsudski, the Home Army, generals of the Polish Armed Forces in the West (Władysław Anders, Władysław Sikorski, Kazimierz Sosnkowski), and generals of the Home Army (Okulicki, Komorowski, Rowecki) have already been honoured as part of an earlier renaming campaign in the years 1989-2016. Similarly, "new heroes" such as the victims of the 2010 Polish Air Force Tu-154 crash[13], especially Lech and Maria Kaczyński, the presidential couple, have also been honoured right since the PiS gained the majority in the Parliament and even before the act of April 1, 2016 was passed (over 50 names in different cities). A separate category of names pertains to individuals or whole groups who, from the communist perspective, were called "the enemies of the people" and "bandits" for their armed resistance to the newly established communist government. The current – rightwing – perspective depicts them as patriots and cursed soldiers. The name *Żołnierze Wyklęci* ('Cursed Soldiers') appears 90 times in Polish urban toponymy. Another name applied to refer to clandestine organizations is *Żołnierze Niezłomni* ('Indomitable Soldiers'), which is used 29 times as a name of streets, squares, or roundabouts across Poland.

Apart from the group names, some iconic individuals, often members of the above-mentioned "cursed soldiers", were added to the new list of the deserving. The most honoured person is Witold Pilecki (1901-1948), a Polish cavalry officer, a soldier of the Home Army, who, after WWII, was sentenced to death by the communist regime and subsequently executed. There are as many as 183 streets, squares, and roundabouts named after him. Danuta Siedzikówna "Inka" (1928-1946), who was also sentenced to death and

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executed by the communist authorities, is another icon of the anti-communist underground resistance: 39 streets were named in tribute to her.

As the names of all the better-known and deserving individuals had already been used, and yet the act of April 1, 2016 enforced changes, less recognized names had to be utilized. Thus, streets were named after lower-rank officers. This is best visible in Warsaw, where the former communist names were changed to commemorate the following soldiers: Colonel Władysław Belima-Prażmowski, General Witold Urbanowicz, Major Hieronim Dekutowski "Zapora", Captain Zbigniew Dunin-Wasowicz, Major Adolf Pilch "Dolina", Major Tadeusz Furgalski "Wyrwa", Major Marian Bernaciak "Orlik", Major Józef Jagmin, General Stanisław Bułak-Bałachowicz, Kazimierz Kardaś "Orkan", Andrzej Romocki "Moro", and Colonel Maciej Kolankiewicz "Kotwicz". They all represent either the Polish military forces supporting their Western Allies or the anti-communist underground resistance. It can be said that they have symmetrically replaced the soldiers who supported the Soviet Army.

Other honorees in Warsaw include the composers and musicians Przemysław Gintrowski and Jacek Kaczmarski, known as "The Solidarity Bards", whose patriotic songs were very popular in the 1980s. There are also streets, which commemorate victims of the communist regime: Grzegorz Przemyk, an 18-year-old killed in 1983 by the Citizens' Militia, and Stanisław Pyjas, a student killed in 1977 probably by the communist Secret Services. The street *Bohaterów z Kopalni Wujek* ('Heroes of the Wujek Mine Str.') is named in tribute to the nine miners of the mine "Wujek" killed by the communist Citizens' Militia on December 16, 1980 during strikes and protests against the Martial Law. It is worth noting that the former name of this street was *Wincentego Pstrowskiego*, after another miner, a shock worker and a symbol of the communist competition and productivity discussed in section 3.1.1.

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The patrons of the streets, as can be noticed, are intended to change the vector of collective memory. Besides, they bring the new, axiological markedness, namely, steadfastness, struggle for independence and anti-Communism. The connotations that refer to the altered names are usually the evaluative opposite of the previous connotations introduced in 1945-1989.

4. Discussion and findings

The present study shows the connection between the theoretical assumptions of critical toponymy and the empirical findings based on contemporary linguistic content. Proper names are not treated here as linguistic signs only. They are perceived as both means of social action and discursive practices within urban toponymic discourse. Proper names have become the subject matter of a dispute between the political authorities imposing changes and the local people who are inhibiting the process of their implementation. On the discursive surface, the street names become a kind of *dispositif* (Giraut & Houssay-Holzschuch 2016).

The process of renaming urban space enforced by the act of April 1, 2016 discussed above has symbolic objectives. The aim of the act was not only to replace one kind of (unwanted) symbols by another, consonant with the currently dominating ideology. Its aim was also shaping historical awareness and, consequently, the collective identity of the whole society (Drozdzewski 2014). On the one hand, by using new names, the new authorities show the values that are considered important from the point of view of the new historical policy. On the other hand, the forceful removal of the former names, of the traces of the now-defunct communist system becomes a symbolic "obliteration" or "erasing" of the old spatial signs, which, retained for decades, were part of people's lives.

"The renaming of streets opens a space in which the symbolic struggles over remembrance and erasure are anchored in specific sites that serve as places of memory" (Rose-Redwood

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2008: 446). However, action by force has a different impact than grassroots movements and active citizenship as it evokes associations with an oppressive state. This is the way in which the state imposes new heroes and new values over its citizens, destroying and nullifying the former order. This is the way – by force and top down – in which a new symbolic order and, consequently, a new historical policy are constructed.

The context of historical policy is of special relevance here. The new Polish government is very sensitive to the subject of protecting the good image of Poland and Poles, especially in relation to WWII and cases of disgraceful behaviour of Polish citizens towards Jews at that time. In the context of anti-Semitic acts both during WWII and later, the names, which pay tribute to heroic deeds of Poles towards Jews, gain a special meaning. It has to be emphasized that, during German occupation, Poland was the only country, in which helping Jews was punished by death; yet, there were many examples of often successful attempts of hiding and saving Jews. In this context, the story of the Ulma family has a symbolic status. In their house in the village of Markowa near Łańcut (south-eastern Poland), Józef and Wiktoria Ulma were hiding two Jewish families for two years. When subsequently denounced to the authorities, Józef, pregnant Maria, and all their six children were murdered by German gendarmes on March 24, 1944. This event, referred to as the Crime in Markowa, is frequently recalled in Polish public discourse as evidence of heroic behaviour of Poles during German occupation. The Ulma family have also been commemorated in urban toponyms: in Warsaw, Ostrołęka, Łańcut, Więcbork, and Sompolno there are streets, and in Rzeszów a roundabout named after the Ulma family.

Tribute to individuals, events, and values via urban toponymy, especially in street names, is a way of introducing the former into wide communication. Furthermore, it is one of the highest forms of paying honours in the Polish tradition. Only highly respected individuals were worthy of such commemoration. That is why removing names propagating the communist system from public space can be interpreted as an attempt to restore the

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axiological order and is received with understanding and consent. However, while the removal of communist names is accepted, the next step – introduction of new names – frequently meets resistance. The point is that the new names and the new heroes promoted by the government are far from general acceptance and approval. Especially controversial are names associated with WWII and the underground resistance movement because many people, including historians, find their drastic methods of fight morally ambiguous. Many people also look on some members of the underground resistance as bandits robbing Polish villages in the post-war years, when the new authorities were trying to introduce some order. The names of the lately deceased politicians, especially President Lech Kaczyński and other victims of the 2010 Polish Air Force Tu-154 crash are not widely accepted either[13].

Street names are not only some kind of language monuments. They are also landmarks encountered in daily basis and, thus, a powerful bearer of meanings. Heroes, dates, or models of behaviour become naturally preserved in social awareness and, consequently, they develop into a "natural" aspect of the Polish identity and collective memory. The systemic renaming analyzed in this paper can be undoubtedly interpreted as an attempt not only to clear the public space of the remnants of communism but also to "manually control" the collective memory of the nation. Broadly speaking, the process may be regarded as the manifestation of the symbolic dominance that was mentioned by Bourdieu (1991). The new collective memory as well as the authorized version of the history are being created through the use of names understood as linguistic signs. Consequently, the practice of "reading" the Polish city has changed to a great extent (Palonen 1993).

The current research on critical toponymy makes it clear that place names are more than innocent spatial references and they are embedded in social power relations (Alderman & Inwood 2013). However, this statement does not undermine a purely "physical" conceptualization of urban names and their function of helping orientation in urban space.

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The reactions of residents and local authorities described above suggest an alternative way to perceive urban toponymy. It pertains to the conceptualization of these names not only as bearers of memory, but as established, familiar, and stable signs of orientation in space. Urban space is both symbolic and material (Anderson & Tolia-Kelly 2004; Jackson 2000). That is why people perceive this space as their own: personal, familiar, and domesticated. They take a pragmatic stance instead of an ideological one. It is this "duality" of urban space – ideological, on the one hand, and locational and pragmatic, on the other – that has become the source of resistance against the enforced top-down changes. The grassroots opposition against changing street names was not ideology-driven (with a few exceptions), that is, did not mean resistance to decommunization as such. What constituted the real reason for the conflict was the fact that a new ideological network was being imposed (from the state level) over the existing network of socially and culturally important places in urban space (to the local level). Introducing changes in space names, even if generally approved, turns out to be a very delicate issue, because in each case it affects the fragile yet socially important order. At the same time, stability and permanence of the symbolic spatial arrangement proved to be an important value for local residents, who perceived the attempted change as a legally sanctioned "violation" of their cultural space. This aspect should always be taken into account by politicians who consider introducing changes in space names.

When considering street names from the perspective of discourse analysis, at least two observations can be made. Firstly, street names as part of urban toponymical discourse exist between a local community as their users, on the one hand, and centralized political authorities as a dominating but alien element, on the other. In this paper, the struggle of the local community for the right to decide the quality of this discourse was presented. Those who have the power to give names, have also the power to shape collective memory and impose discourse itself. Secondly, one can also look on names as part of an even broader public discourse: historical or political. From this perspective, it becomes

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apparent how the process of name changing described in the paper is directed at changing the discourse profile. Additionally, from the point of view of onomastic and critical discourse analyses, it is relevant that most new names bear a heavy ideological load. Like the former, communism-related names, they reinforce the ideology of fighting, martyrdom, death for the fatherland, and heroism, but make reference to different heroes (e.g., a series of names connected with the "cursed soldiers"). Thus, the new Polish urban toponymy complies with the Romantic paradigm, which is one of the prevailing patterns of interpretation of history, and, above all, it gives primacy to history over the present times.

Notes

1. The process of name changing was especially dynamic in the years 1989-1992, at the beginning of the democratic changes. Later it subsided. According to Hałas (2004: 132), the numbers of communism-related names to be replaced across Poland in the given years were as follows: in 1989 – 298 names, in 1990 – 1135 names, in 1991 – 273 names, in 1992 – 123 names, in 1993 – 66 names, in 1994 – 27 names, in 1995 – 2 names, and in 1996 – 1 name.

2. See the IPN web page: https://ipn.gov.pl/pl/upamietnianie/dekomunizacja/zmiany-nazw-ulic/nazwy-ulic/nazwy-do-zmiany

3. The quoted fragments of the act come from the *Journal of laws of the Republic of Poland* (Dziennik Ustaw 1.04.16, item 744); available at: http://www.dziennikustaw.gov.pl/du/2016/744/1

4. On the IPN official website, there is the tab "Decommunization of the public space", which takes us to another tab, "Names-to-change". The latter lists examples of names and explanations, why a given name violates the act of April 1, 2016. (cf. https://ipn.gov.pl/pl/upamietnianie/dekomunizacja/zmiany-nazw-ulic/nazwy-ulic/nazwy-do-zmiany).

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5. Available at: https://ipn.gov.pl/pl/upamietnianie/dekomunizacja/zmiany-nazw-ulic/nazwy-ulic/nazwy-do-zmiany/39770,ul-Armii-Czerwonej.html

6. Available at: http://www.tarnowo-podgorne.pl/fileadmin/pliki/AgaRz/25_Stycznia/4_28_12_2017_odp_zmiana_nazwy_ulicy.pdf, DOA November 23, 2018

7. Available at: https://ipn.gov.pl/pl/upamietnianie/dekomunizacja/zmiany-nazw-ulic/nazwy-ulic/lista/38513,ul-Obroncow-Pokoju.html

8. Available at: https://polskatimes.pl/jak-miasto-przechytrzylo-pis-ulica-zmienila-nazwe-na-taka-sama/ar/12631514?najstarsze

9. Available at: https://ipn.gov.pl/pl/upamietnianie/dekomunizacja/zmiany-nazw-ulic/nazwy-ulic/lista/38514,ul-Pionierow.html

10. While the two surnames differ in the Nominative (Julian Brun vs. Giordano Bruno), the street names in Polish require the Genitive. In this case, both names have an identical form in the Genitive, which is *Bruna*. Thus, the short form of the street name remains unchanged: *ul. Bruna*.

11. In everyday usage, the short form is typically used and it contains only the surname. The full form, with the first name, is used only in official documents.

12. The bias was clearly connected with the structure of local city councils: if they were dominated by the majority party PiS, then they followed the directions of the party ideologues more enthusiastically. In many cities, a significant resistance to new names emerged; therefore, the changes, always highly ideologically biased, were implemented only as a result of the state authorities' intervention.

13. On April 10, 2010 the Polish Air Force Tu-154 crashed near the city of Smolensk, Russia, killing all the 96 people on board. The victims were President of Poland Lech Kaczyński and his wife Maria, and many members of the political establishment. The event has become a turning point in the latest Polish history. The rightwing parties, especially the PiS, have adopted a narration with heroic and epic undertones, and depict it as a political assassination resulting from a Polish and Russian plot. For a large part of

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the Polish society such an interpretation is unacceptable and is treated either as a political tactic of the PiS or as resulting from Jarosław Kaczyński's personal revenge or even trauma after his twin brother's tragic death. The issue of the Smolensk crash remains an important topic in the political discourse concerning the current situation in Poland.

14. This lack of wide acceptance is clearly connected with the fact that President Lech Kaczyński's twin brother, Jarosław Kaczyński is the controversial leader of the PiS.

List of abbreviations

IPN – Instytut pamięci narodowej (Institute of national remembrance)

PiS – Prawo i sprawiedliwość (Law and justice)

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Résumé

In the times of communist regime in Poland (1945-1989), many street names commemorated communist activists, important events, and symbolic dates. Such a system

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of urban naming supported communism symbolically, because the names people were using in everyday navigation in the city space eventually became a "natural" social, political, and axiological reference point. After the fall of communism in 1989, most such names were changed; however, the Polish Parliament passed the act of 1 April, 2016 forcing the local councils to change the remaining names that could be interpreted as propagating communism. 943 street names across Poland were identified as propagating communist symbols and, as such, were deemed unacceptable. Such enforcement of changes almost thirty years after the collapse of the communist system and actual cleansing of the cultural space from communist symbols was, in many cases, difficult to understand and met with resistance. In many cities, both the residents and the local authorities made efforts to introduce as few changes as possible. This paper demonstrates which names were identified as propagating communism. Further, local reactions to the top-down forceful decommunization are described and the new names are presented. The processes described in the present study constitute a good starting point for a discussion on the issues connected with urban naming and its multidimensionality. Such naming is, on the one hand, a bearer of symbolic content and a monument of collective memory. On the other hand, it is also a collection of names facilitating city space navigation. It was the clash of these two perspectives that resulted in a social and cultural conflict.

Keywords: urban toponymy; critical toponymy; onomastic discourse analysis; street names; name changing; naming policy; urban discourse; collective memory.

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