# The perception of identity through urban toponyms in the regional cities of Slovakia

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## Abstract

This work largely deals with the practical possibilities of the analysis of urban toponyms and their interpretation, which may be appealing in the field of multidisciplinary studies of sociology, history and geography. Our ambition has been to attempt to verify the statement that the names of streets, squares or parks in the historical centre of cities serve as indicators of official views and ideological impressions on the political, social and historical events, in the context of Central Europe. This study analyses the current network of streets in the historical centre of Bratislava, Trnava, Trenčín, Nitra, Banská Bystrica, Žilina, Košice and Prešov. We will attempt to define basic tendencies in the process of nomenclature of streets, while we pay attention to their thematic focus. The study aims to determine the intensity of local, regional and national identity, based on

geographical research, at the model territory of the historical centre of cities, through the names of streets and squares in the eight regional cities.

KEYWORDS: territory, regional cities, urban toponyms, identity, ideology

## Introduction

The work aims to examine the perception of identity through the urban toponyms in the regional cities of Slovakia. The naming of streets, parks and squares refer to the significant historical events, social and cultural manifestations, in which the city actively participated. This study analyses the current network of stores in the historical centre of Bratislava, Trnava, Trenčín, Nitra, Banská Bystrica, Žilina, Košice and Prešov. We will attempt to define basic tendencies in the process of nomenclature of streets, while we pay attention to their thematic focus.

The study aims to determine the intensity of local, regional and national identity, based on geographical research on the model territory of the historical centre of cities, through the names of streets and squares in the eight regional cities.

As stated in Mácha (2010), if the concept of the country should be beneficial to society, it must offer an explanation, i.e. an understanding of the human experience. If a country is a cultural process between place and space, or cultural analogy of the physical environment of the body, i.e. relevant social environment of the individual, then toponyms are potentially fascinating material for the evaluation. How do people perceive and interpret space, how do they orient in it, how do they define the boundaries of identity, do they enter into the space their individual and collective experiences and projects, and how do they find the meaning of existence in a chaotic world?

## Research objectives

What role will personalities have on the naming of the streets? What meaning do geographical toponyms have in the hierarchy of the cities' urban toponyms? Which identity will dominate? These are just few of the research questions that we will attempt to answer throughout this work.

In general, the basic problem of toponymic works is the lack of clear, theoretical reasoning about whether there is any sense in analysing geographical names. What is appealing about people, can toponyms offer? Toponyms can help us identify physical or cultural and geographical elements. They can clarify the process of the settlement of certain territory or the ethnic composition of the population.

## Theoretical framework

The basic meaning of population identity in space and time is strengthening the knowledge of continuity of development. In the concept of rational and irrational expressions, the transmission of identity is realised through accepted and implemented human culture. If the identity has the ability of generational succession that social development still confirms, then the people of the territory are constantly being exposed to opposing forces.

The influence of linguistic theory in the context of geography has drawn attention to culture as uniform and normative set of traditions, models, opinions and material artefacts. With the concept of cultural geography, the traditional concept of culture has been replaced by the theory of cultural policy (interests). This theory is based on the opinion that everyday activities in the society are the completion of different cultural ideas and arguments in the struggle for power (Peet 1998).

Local names or toponyms play an prominent role in geographical research. Although in the traditional society of social scientists stereotype thinking prevails, by which is geography mainly dedicated to physical and geographical description and spatial distribution of population, services in the country, cultural geography, these archaic prejudices about the position of geography in the system of social and behavioural sciences are gradually being transformed.

The desire of cultural geography is to focus on patterns and interactions of human culture, material, as well as immaterial, with a relation to the natural environment. It also attempts to reconstruct migration links between regions in time and space. An important part of research in cultural geography is a perceptive understanding of the region, based on researching the various forms of identities that form or formed certain region. (Leighly 1978; Raitz 1973; Zelinsky 1988).

In recent years, geography focused on the dialectical relation between social processes and the natural environment as well as on the spatial relations in the wider context of critical geography (Rose-Redwood et al. 2010). Newer approaches dealing with the study of toponyms emphasise the need for attention to the process of forming names of the streets, i.e. determining the cultural and political events/institutions that participated in their establishment in practise.

Toponyms are not merely abstract names in the spatial structure of cities, but also represent the construct of social and power relations, through which the identity of the city and society is being formed (Berg & Voulteeenaho 2009).

Many authors influenced by the Anglo-Saxon school of geography (Azaryahu 1997; Azaryahu & Cooke 2002; Light 2004) focus on the relation between nationalism and post-colonialism, in which they seek to demonstrate how, through the control of state and local government, the political elite can promote its ideology also in relation to the nomenclature of the street network. Their interests, in particular, focused on naming significant urban spaces, squares, parks and names of streets that represent political and ideological representations of the state. The purpose of these names is to remove from memory of the nation, signs of the former ideological regime, while the process of defining new symbols of the current political class is continually running.

The classic example of how to use the armed forces to change the names of prominent buildings is the case of an international airport in Baghdad. In April 2003, just two weeks after the initial invasion of U.S. troops to Iraq, soldiers occupied the strategic site of the International Airport of Saddám Hussein, which was subsequently renamed to the International Airport of Baghdad. This act symbolised the triumph of U.S. troops and their foreign policy in Iraq (Pike 2007).

Geography, together with cultural anthropology is many times understood as a so-called colonial science (Livingstone 1992). From its origin, it served science and also fulfilled the power interests of the colonial powers, because their purpose was to cartographically describe all their new territories.

In English, we can translate the term *toponymum* as *toponym*, *place name* or *geographical name*. At the root of systematic interest of geographers about toponyms, stood the monumental work of the Swiss geography: Johann Egliho's *Nomina Geographica (Versuch Einer Allgemeinen Geographischen Onomatologie)* published in 1872.

Geographical interest in toponyms culminated in the first half of the 20th century and gradually declined after World War II. The interest in toponyms as indicators of physical, cultural and geographical elements and historical processes has brought a number of intriguing suggestions, but it was internally exhausted relatively quickly (Conedare, Vassere, Neff et al. 2007).

As David and Mácha (2012) point out, in the 1970s, cultural geography as well as other social science disciplines went through dramatic transformations, and new theoretical and methodological approaches connected with the perception of geographical space and a country's beneficial aspects. Although interest in the perception of geographical space in current geography continues, toponyms in these studies appear only sporadically. While toponyms certainly are among the key layers of landscape stratigraphy, the concept of landscape in the last 20 years is characterised by a fundamental diversion from positivism (Nestor), cultural geography (Carl O. Sauer) to neo-Marxist, feminist and phenomenological approaches: a country is considered as an ideological construct, while the possibility of direct study of the country without any mediated representations (as in the case of phenomenological approaches) is sought.

Streets differ by their length, width, function, but above all by their meaning. In our article, we will attempt to outline current tendencies in the nomenclature of streets in regional cities by taking account of the geographical and personal toponyms from which they were derived. We will also show the connection between political elites and the topographic nomenclature of streets.

Political elites are aware of the symbolic power of toponyms, by which the centre space in cities is named. After the change of political regime in 1989 in the then Czechoslovakia, came the revision of historic facts, mostly those that formed part of modern history.

On the initial level, the nomenclature of streets serves as the set of characters, by which we can orient in the urban space. The name of the street in our minds creates a range of mental images, by which we can create a portrait of certain personalities, phenomena or events that are bound to the certain toponym.

Azaryahu & Kook (2002) emphasise the fact that certain urban spaces symbolise places with notable cultural and historical potentials for people and politicians. These places mostly are named after some famous person with a good reputation, or an event that influenced national interests in a positive way.

Early studies of hierarchy of street nomenclature in cities of the so-called socialistic block of Eastern Europe showed a wide range of symbols and characters used,

which were incorporated to the urban space in order to legitimise and institutionalise the ideology of revolutionary socialism (Light et al. 2002). Light et al. (ibid.) examined the changes in nomenclature of the street network of Bucharest, the capital of Romania, from 1948 to 1965. When the Communists took power, the massive process of changing names of streets that were not appropriate to the regime began. Their effort was to 'erase the memories' of the previous regime, by changing the names of streets and to strengthen the ideology of the communist agenda. The newly established toponyms celebrated numerous events and personalities of Romanian and Soviet/Communist nomenclature.

Jansen (2001) in his ethnological article defined the spatial scale of the protests against the Milosevic regime in 1996–1997 in different cities of Serbia. He attempted to point out the main places (streets and squares) of the largest cities, which serve as the initiators of resistance against the regime.

Renaming streets in the 1990s was a response to changes brought about by democratisation in post-communist Central and Eastern Europe. These changes were related to the restructuring of urban space and the history that was marked by the ideology of communism.

In addition to the other countries of Central Europe, Hungary has a negative experience with changing the names of streets during communism. The work of Panolena (2008) analysed the changes in street names and various urban monuments, between 1985 and 2001. Toponyms in Budapest were a highly resonant topic of the discussions of the various political camps, including the national parliament and local government authorities.

## Methodology

In this article, we used two basic methods about the definition and systematisation of the names of streets and squares in the regional cities of Slovakia. First, it is a statistical method, by which we quantified the data file (i.e. toponyms) and subsequently made a partial analysis and synthesis based on probability and theoretical considerations. An interpretative method of analysis (decoding) the text was used in the analysis of the street names and map of the historical centres of cities.

In addition to the methods listed above, we applied a comparative analysis, by which we tried to verify the perception of identity of the regional cities, as well as the relationship of the toponyms to a variety of historical and cultural specificities in the centre of cities.

In our article, we have adhered to the methodology of the work of the authors Siperski et al. (2011), who analysed the toponyms of eight Central European cities. The purpose of their contribution was the reflection of the identity of the cities, based on their names, in space and time; by their comparison, they came to the consensus that street names reflect a common history, culture, and political processes, of which the wider region of Central Europe was a part.

The primary source of data for our research consisted of the plans and the street network of historical centre in the regional cities of Slovakia. In total, we analysed 520

streets from eight regional cities. Since many urban toponyms showed signs of ambiguity, the authors of the article had to join the multidisciplinary analysis of the names. To achieve the maximum consistency, we needed to set precise criteria of their complex classification, using lexicographical and historical interpretation dictionaries of town's toponyms. With the actual identification of toponyms, we divided different names by scale into the following groups:

*Local scale, local identity:* analysing the city in its administrative borders. In this group are mainly various town names that are related to names of territorial units or architectural buildings, which name genealogy is related to physical-geographical (local relief, river) and human-geographical (church, tower, factory) attributes of that location. This category also includes streets that show the direction of how to find certain objects (Ku Kumštu, Pri Miklušovej väznici, Predmestská, Pod Jasenským vŕškom). Furthermore, these toponyms can show significant events in the context of the history of the city (e.g. Nám. 4. Apríla, until 1989 this street symbolised memory of the liberation of the capital city, Bratislava, from fascist occupation).

*Regional scale, regional identity*: this is associated with the wider region of studying city, e.g. the Prešov region and its historical, statistic regions. Duklianska Street, Levočská Street, Šarišská Street are examples of this. This category is also created by personalities, who by their activity helped with the development of culture, art, political self-determination or they helped with the economic development of the region (Janko Borodáč Street, Pavlovič Square)

*National scale, national identity:* this is bound to a state. This group of toponyms should reflect the names of streets and squares that have national meaning. For example, we will show Hviezdoslav Square and Ľudovít Štúr Square, which were named after significant national people active in the formation of the Slovak language and literature.

*International scale:* hodonyms that are connected with the people and events or concepts outside of Slovakia (e.g. Wilson Embankment, John Paul II. Square).

The following classification characterised toponyms by the theme. The set of streets was classified into five basic groups: *personalities* (male, female), *geographical names*, *historical events/institutions*, *craft and trade*, and the last group of *other* toponyms.

The group of personalities was formed by the subgroups of toponyms, visible in Table 1, while male and female street names were separately analysed.

*Table 1: Groups and subgroups of toponyms*

| Group | Subgroup | Explanatory notes |
|---|---|---|
| **PERSONALITIES** (MALE, FEMALE) | Politics | President, politicians, members of the military, aristocrats, kings, etc. |
| | Art and Culture | Poets, writers, painters, sculptors, architects etc. |
| | Religion | Saints, priests, bishops, popes, other religious personalities. |
| | Science | Personalities who have contributed to the progress of various scientific disciplines. |
| | Business and entrepreneurship | Businessmen, craftsmen, patrons of cities, managers. |
| **GEOGRAPHY** | Geographical names | Names of rivers, mountains, cities, regions, etc. |
| | Location names | Related to e.g. surroundings of a railway station or bus station, architectural buildings (castle, church, palace) other building hospitals, courts, etc. |
| | Signs (A, B) | A – defining direction, shape of objects. B – biological attributes. |
| **HISTORIC EVENTS & INSTITUTIONS** | (Same as group) | e.g. 1. Mája Street, names of banks, newspaper, social movements, historical events. |
| **CRAFT & TRADE** | (Same as group) | Places, where butchers, blacksmiths, millers, weavers, shoemakers worked. |
| **OTHER** | (Same as group) | Names of streets that could not be classified into any of these groups or subgroups. |

Source: Siperski, Lober, Heršak et al. (2012). All titles in these groups were evaluated and then classified according to the space importance (scale): local scale, regional scale, national scale, international.

Among the analysed cities, Bratislava is the capital of the Slovak Republic, with a population of 431,192 (2001). To the east, Košice (population 240,688 (2011)) is the second biggest city of Slovakia. Other cities are regional centres of autonomous regions with populations ranging from 55,832 (Trenčín) to 91,638 (Prešov). Although all the studied cities have the same national history, as they were part of Austria, later

the Kingdom of Hungary, Czechoslovakia and, from 1993, Slovakia, we can observe in their historical development certain distinctives that participated in forming their spatial and territorial shape. The realisation of the research was oriented to the historical centre of the cities. These zones currently represent the oldest and most recognisable parts of the cities. We excluded from the research the wider centre, which did not follow the historical part, as well as urban places that were built during a planned socialist stage of building, the so-called panel housing estates. The local population and tourists are the typical visitors of the historical centre, because they are part of the urban historical reserves and are characterised by multifunctionality. They generally have commercial, recreational and residential functions.

# Urban toponyms according to genealogy

## *I. Personalities*

The highest proportion of toponyms of the analysed streets in regional cities in Slovakia derives from the surnames of famous personalities (45%) who significantly participated in the formation of society with their active contribution and involvement. In a more detailed characterisation of toponyms according to particular surnames, we can state that two subgroups prevail. Firstly, there are personalities who contributed to the development of art and culture of their work and creation (poets, writers, painters, sculptors, architects). Street names derived from the personalities in the field of culture and art make up almost half (48%) of all personal toponyms.

The second proportionally significant subgroup is represented by the people who significantly participated in the political and military leadership of the state (presidents, politicians, military members, nobles, kings, revolutionaries). This group represents a 24% share of all personal toponyms; therefore, we can claim that every fourth street in this category is named after a person whose professional life was somehow bound to politics or the military.

Ecclesiastic toponyms of saints, priests, bishops, popes and other religious figures are ranked at the third place according to frequency. Together, they represent a 16% share within the group of personalities toponyms.

The last place in this group of toponyms is represented by the street names linked to the personalities of science and business. Streets that have its name derived from a significant domestic or international scientific person represent a 7% share of the street names in regional cities in Slovakia in the examined category of personality toponyms. In Trnava and Trenčín, are no streets of this subgroup at all (Figure 1).

It is worth noting that only 5% of all the streets named after a persona relate to the individuals devoted to business and trade, i.e. entrepreneurs, artisans, town patrons and managers. Streets of this subgroup do not exist in Trnava, Trenčín, Nitra and Prešov.

Gender emancipation is an notable phenomenon regarding the names of the streets after personalities. Female street names make up only 5% of the total of 237 streets having such names. Almost 75% of female street names occur in the subgroup of art and culture. For example, Podjavorinska Street or Soltesova Street in Bratislava, or Bozena Nemcova Street in Nitra. Female street names do not exist in Trenčín and Prešov. However, we take into consideration only the analysed territories of the historical core of the cities, not the administrative boundary of towns.
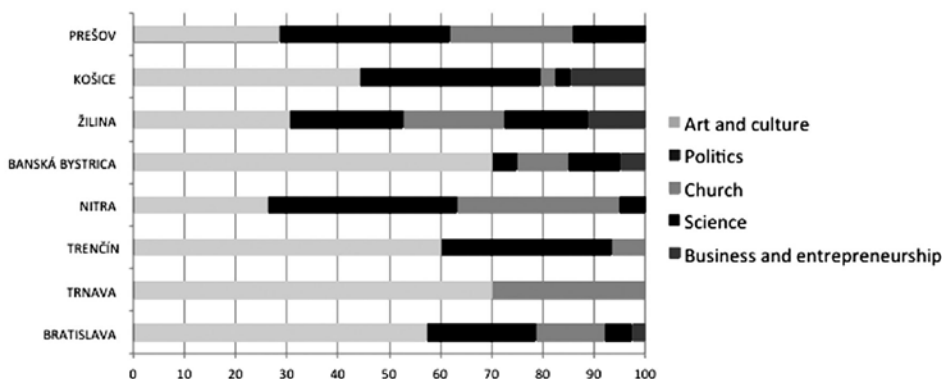
*Figure 1: Spatial distribution of toponyms related to personalities (total) %*

## II. Geography

This category is, after the personalities, the second most significant group from which the street names in the regional cities of Slovakia are derived. This group includes some differentiated few subgroups: geographical names (rivers, places, regions, states, mountains, islands), location names (e.g. related to the area of the railway station, bus station, describing particular architectonic buildings of the city or city quarters and neighbourhoods); signs determining the direction, shape of an object and biological attributes.

This category involves 214 (41%) of the total number of 520 analysed streets. The most numerous subgroup is the streets with location names (146 streets).[1]

Signs determining the direction, shape and biological attributes are together with the geographic names (toponyms) equally represented among the names of the streets in the regional cities of Slovakia. Signs represent 17% of the total number of streets in the category of Geography and geographic names. Geographic names mostly occur in Prešov (16% of all streets) and Bratislava (10% of all streets); there are no examples of this category in Trenčín at all.

Additional categories associate the name of the streets with historical events, institutions (III) and craft and trade (IV). They account for a 6% share on the total number of street names (Figure 2).

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[1] One example of this kind of street genealogy of this category is Marianska Street (Marian Street) in the historic part of the capital city of Bratislava. For a non-involved visitor, the street could evoke an impression that its name is derived from the Virgin Mary, who is venerated as the Slovak national patron. Marianska Street was created in 1849 and on the 9th of November, 1849 the economic committee brought a proposal to the City Council to provide a name for the new street. A plenary session of the City Council named it Marianska Street. However, its name comes from the fact that on one of the old houses in the garden part of the street there was a stone statue of the Virgin Mary. Currently this statue decorates the walls of Hurban barracks with their tract facing Marianska Street.
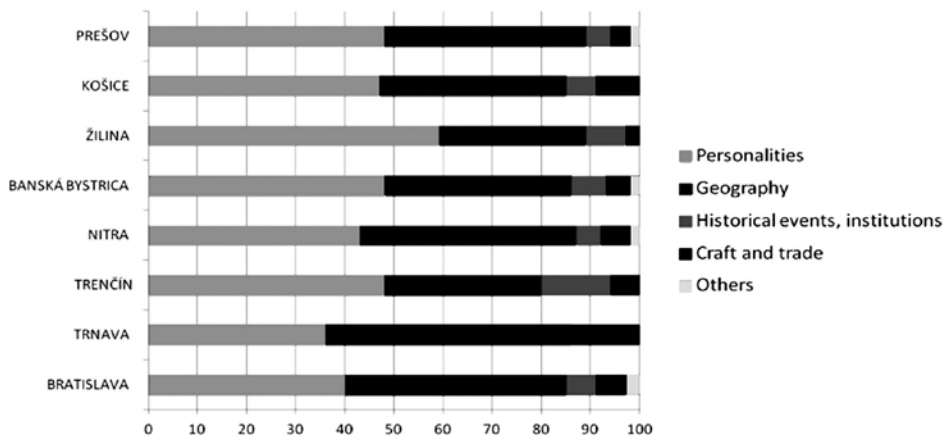
*Figure 2: City toponyms according to genealogy – basic groups (%)*

*Table 2: Urban toponyms according to genealogy (%)*

| Theme | Cities total | Bratislava | Trnava | Trenčín | Nitra | Banská Bystrica | Žilina | Košice | Prešov |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Politics | 11 | 8 | 0 | 16 | 16 | 2 | 13 | 17 | 16 |
| Art and culture | 20 | 22 | 21 | 29 | 9 | 29 | 16 | 21 | 14 |
| Religion | 6 | 5 | 9 | 3 | 14 | 5 | 10 | 0 | 11 |
| Science | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 10 | 1 | 7 |
| Business and entrepreneurship | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 6 | 7 | 0 |
| **PERSONALITIES TOTAL (MALE)** | **42** | **38** | **30** | **48** | **39** | **43** | **55** | **46** | **48** |
| Politics | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Art and culture | 2 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Religion | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Science | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Business and entrepreneurship | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **PERSONALITIES TOTAL (FEMALE)** | **3** | **2** | **6** | **0** | **4** | **5** | **4** | **1** | **0** |
| **TOTAL (MALE, FEMALE)** | **45** | **40** | **36** | **48** | **43** | **48** | **59** | **47** | **48** |
| Geographic names | 6 | 10 | 4 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 16 |
| Location names | 27 | 28 | 36 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 25 | 26 | 23 |
| Signs (A, B) | 8 | 7 | 10 | 3 | 9 | 5 | 3 | 9 | 2 |
| **GEOGRAPHY TOTAL** | **41** | **45** | **50** | **32** | **44** | **38** | **30** | **38** | **41** |
| Historical events, institutions | 6 | 6 | 0 | 14 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 6 | 5 |
| Crafts and trade | 6 | 6 | 14 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 9 | 4 |
| Other | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| **TOTAL** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** |

As shown in the Table 2, the highest proportion of toponyms is derived from personalities (45%), closely followed by geographic toponyms (41%). Together, these two groups represent 86% share in the nomenclature of the streets in the regional cities of Slovakia.

## Urban toponyms according to spatial importance (scale)

The following section summarises the spatial importance (scale) of urban toponyms. The names of streets, parks, squares were classified into four basic spatial groups: urban (local), regional, national and international scale, depending on the meaning of an actual street name. Some streets have more attributes according to which they can be classified into several categories. In this case, we classified a street into the group according to prevailing features and attributes of the name.

Table 3 shows that local (urban) toponyms (50%) dominate in eight regional cities. The second largest group involves national toponyms (33%). Regional toponyms account only a small proportion (4%). International names, names of foreign states and cities account for 13% of all the examined streets (Table 3).

*Table 3: Urban toponyms according to spatial importance - scale (%)*

| Spatial importance (scale) | Cities total | Bratislava | Trnava | Trenčín | Nitra | Banská Bystrica | Žilina | Košice | Prešov |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Local scale | 50 | 52 | 70 | 52 | 61 | 45 | 38 | 45 | 41 |
| Regional scale | 4 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 10 | 6 | 0 | 14 |
| National scale | 33 | 25 | 17 | 42 | 28 | 45 | 50 | 40 | 27 |
| International scale | 13 | 20 | 13 | 6 | 9 | 0 | 6 | 15 | 18 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** |

In a closer analysis of the regional cities, we can identify differences in the distribution of individual toponyms according to spatial importance. Local toponyms dominated in Trnava (70%), Nitra (61%), Bratislava and Trenčín (52%). In contrast, Prešov (41%) and Žilina (38%) have the lowest share of the streets in the group of local scale. Street names reflecting people, events, geographic names of national importance were the least frequent in Bratislava (25%) and Trnava (17%). Žilina gained the primacy in the share of the streets of national scale, thanks to the streets representing a significant person of Slovak art, culture and policy. Up to 50% of all the streets belong to the category of national scale.

As shown in Figure 3, the regional scale is the most frequent among the street names in Banská Bystrica (10%) and Prešov (14%). Regional toponyms of Prešov streets refer to geographic names. They are largely tied to the history, culture and ethnology of the Prešov self-governing region. For example, Duklianska Street represents a memorial dedicated to the historical events of the World War II in the area of Dukla Pass and the memory of fallen soldiers. The ethno-cultural subtext of Sarisska Street expresses the historic commemoration of Šariš as a significant cultural-historical region with specific Ruthenian folklore and significant cultural sites, whereas it was a Hungarian county in the past. The historical centre of Šariš region was the Šariš castle and since 1647 it has been the city of Prešov.

Regarding the spatial distribution of international toponyms, the most decisive factor affecting their frequency was the size of the settlement and its importance. The highest share of international streets was identified in the cities with the highest population, i.e. Bratislava (20%), Prešov (18%) and Košice (15%).
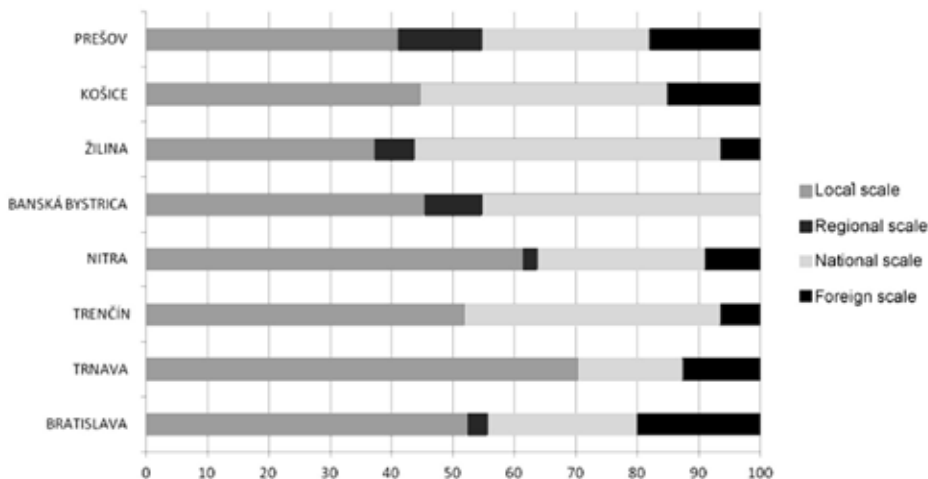


*Figure 3: Urban toponyms according to spatial importance (scale) %*

Due to its polysemantic character, the concept of identity often has an abstract meaning; therefore, it can lead to ambiguous definitions. The definition evokes the relation to individual identity, while simultaneously encouraging the research of collective identity, where the object of study is represented by a group of people with which it is identified (Barbard & Spencer 1998).

Several authors examining identity in their theoretical and empirical works point to the mutual interrelation of individual identity and collective identity (Refsing 1998). Belonging to a group means that an individual accepts its standards of behaviour as well as its mutual history and culture, i.e. social memory. Memory is an vital component of identity formation. History works as a structural component of social memory of a group identity. By means of a toponym analysis, we can identify basic elements of social memory that represent group identities in cities. A subsequent analysis of international toponyms in regional cities aid in creating a collective identity by means of international toponyms in Slovakia. These toponyms refer to the interrelatedness of international personalities and historical events that have participated in state formation process, as well as in the spiritual and cultural revival of Slovakia.

In Bratislava, we identified 35 international toponyms of which four represent politicians, members of the military and kings, 14 represent the personalities from the field of art and culture, four are associated with personalities active in the church (of which one is a female toponymum) and the group of personalities who contributed to the progress in various scientific disciplines is associated with one street. Geographical names are represented by nine international toponyms and historical events and institutions by three international toponyms.

The second place in the number of international streets belongs to Košice with its 11 toponyms. Three of them represent politicians and members of the military, six are associated with the personalities from the field of art and culture, and one toponym connected with science. In Košice, we can also find a street named after a female religious personality.

In Prešov, there are eight streets with international names. One is named after the personalities from the field of art and culture, two belong to the group of religious personalities. Two streets represent geographic toponyms as well as the toponyms of historical events or institutions. One street belongs to the category Other.

There are six international street names in Trnava. From these, for represent religious personalities (one female) and two are in the category of geographic names.

In Žilina, we have identified four international street names; one is connected to the personality from the field of culture and art, two streets after scientists and one street (female toponymum) refers to other religious personalities.

Similarly, in Nitra there are four international street names; one is in the category of politicians, two represent religious personalities (one is female) and one street is named after a female personality in the field of culture and art.

In Trenčín, there are two streets with international names. Both are the toponyms in the category of historical events/institutions.

In Banská Bystrica, there is no street with an international name.

The most frequent is the international toponyms of Czech origin. A high proportion of these streets are natural if we take into account the cultural proximity of both nations and common state of Czechs and Slovaks for over seven decades. In the analysed regional cities, nine Czech toponyms were found in Bratislava (Zizka Street, Jiskra Street, Palacky Street, Bezruc Street, Nedbal Street, Heyduk Street, Janacek Street, Dvorak square, Legionaires Street), three in Žilina (Burian gap/Street, Comenius Street, Halko Street) and Košice (Jiskra Street, Masaryk Street, Palacky Street), two in Prešov (Plzen Street, Legionaires square) and one toponymum referring to a Czech person appeared in Nitra (Bozena Nemcova street)[2].

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[2] Czechian toponyms: **Žižkova ulica (Zizka Street)** (John Zizka was a Czech Hussite leader and warrior of the 14-15th century), **Jiskrova ulica (Jiskra Street)** (John Jiskra from Brandýs was a Czech captain, strategist and diplomat of the 15th century), **Masarykova ulica (Masaryk Street) (**Thomas Garrigue Masaryk (1850-1937) was the 1st President of the CSR), **Palackého ulica (Palacky Street)** (František Palacky (1798-1876) was a Czech historian and cultural mover, author of the 1st synthesis of the Czech national history), **Bezručova ulica (Bezruč Street)** (the name Petr Bezruč is a pseudonym of Vladimír Vašek (1867-1958), the Czech poet who was influenced by symbolism and Czech modern), **Nedbalova ulica (Nedbal Street)** (Oskar Nedbal (1874-1930) was a world-renowned Czech conductor and composer of the operetta), **Heydukova ulica (Heyduk Street)** (Adolf Heyduk (1835-1923) was a Czech writer who became an important promoter of the Czech-Slovak relations), **Janáčkova ulica (Janacek Street)** (Leoš Janáček (1854-1928) was a world-renowned Czech composer of classical music), **Dvořákovo nábrežie (Dvořak Waterfront)** (Antonín Leopold Dvořak (1841-1904) was one of the most important Czech music composers), **Burianova medzierka (Burian Gap/Street)** (the narrowest street from the Middle Ages named after the builder Burian Svetlovsky. He came from the village Vlčnov in Czech Republic), **Ulica Boženy Němcovej (Bozena Nemcova Street)** (Božena Němcová (1820-1862), born as Barbora Panklová, was a Czech writer. She was one of the founders of the Czech modern prose), **Komenského ulica (Comenius Street)** (Jan Amos Comenius (1592-1670) was a Czech linguist, naturalist, humanist, and philosopher), **Hálkova ulica (Halko Street)** (Halko (1872-1945) was a Czech doctor who worked in Žilina), **Plzenská ulica (Plzen Street)** (Plzeň is the fourth largest city located in the west of the Czech Republic), **Nám. Legionárov (Legionaires Square)** (refers to the Czech and Slovak Legions, which were the units of the foreign military resistance movement during the 1st world war.

The second place, in terms of the number of international toponyms according to their origin, was taken by Russia. These are mostly toponyms derived from cultural and political personalities. From the analysed cities, there are five Russian toponyms in Bratislava (*Gorky Street, Tchaikovsky Street, Dostojevsky Street., Lomonosov Street, Moscow Street*) and four are located in Kosice (*Tchaikovsky Street, Gorky Street, Lermontov Street, Puskin Street*)[3].

The third place in the number of international toponyms was represented by Israel. These are mostly the toponyms of a religious character. The message of the Judeo-Christian heritage is hidden in the names of Israeli origin. There are two toponyms in Bratislava (Jánska ulica (John Street) and Anenská ulica (Anna Street) and Trnava (Jerichova ulica (Jericho Street), Jeruzalemská ulica (Jerusalem Street)), and one toponym in Nitra (Marian Street) and Žilina (Marian square).[4]

It is necessary to note that the same international street name occurs in several cities e.g. Tchaikovsky Street (Bratislava, Košice), Jiskra Street (Bratislava, Košice), Gorky Street (Bratislava, Košice), Palacky Street (Bratislava, Košice), Legionaires square, Legionaires Street, (Bratislava, Prešov), Marian Street/square (Nitra, Žilina), 1st of May Square (Trenčín, Bratislava).

## Discussion and conclusion

The character of the street network as well as historic buildings is often the theme for postcards are part of a marketing promotion of the city. By using the hierarchy of the street network, we can define various ideological views of local institutions on social and historical events, which influenced the political formation of territory in local or national contexts. The file of toponyms that were analysed represents a reflection of the territory. A promenade through the historical centre of the city evokes in as an impression, as if streets passed on to the visitors part of the history, worldview or ideological intention that is reflected in their names. The political elite decides on the nomenclature of streets, city sites, by whom or by which institution or social events streets will be named. After the change of the political system in 1989, a transformation of social values and norms of

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[3] Russian toponyms: **Gorkého ulica (Gorky Street)** (Maxim Gorkij (1868-1936), born as Alexej Maximovič Peškov, was a Russian writer, playwright, publicist, poet and revolutionary), **Čajkovského ul. (Tchaikovsky Street)** (Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893) was a Russian music composer of the Romanticism), **Dostojevského rad (Dostojevskij Street)** (Fjodor Michajlovič Dostojevskij (1821-1881) was a Russian writer and philosopher, representative of the Russian literary Realism), **Lermontova ulica (Lermontov Street)** (Michail Jurievič Lermontov (1814-1841) was a Russian Romantic poet and playwright), **Puškinova ulica (Puskin Street)** (Alexandr Sergejevič Puškin (1799-1837) was one of the most significant Russian Romantic poets and novelists), **Čajkovského ul. (Tchaikovsky Street)** (Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893) was a Russian music composer of the Romanticism), **Lomonosova ulica (Lomonosov Street)** (Michail Vasilievič Lomonosov (1711-1765) was a Russian naturalist, philosopher, chemist, and initiator of the University of Moscow establishment), **Moskovská ulica (Moscow Street)** (Moscow is the capital of the Russian Federation).

[4] Israel toponyms: **Jerichova ulica (Jericho Street)** (Jericho is a city located on the west coast of Jordan), **Jeruzalemská ulica (Jeruzalem Street)** (Jerusalem is the capital of Israel), **Jánska ulica (John Street)** (St. John was one of the Jesus' apostles), **Anenská ulica (Anna Street)** (St. Anna was the mother of the Virgin Mary), **Mariánske nám. (Marian Square)** (The Virgin Mary was the wife of Joseph the carpenter of Nazareth. According to Christian faith she was also the mother of Jesus Christ).

behaviour came, which is widely reflected on the changes in the names of many streets that symbolised the relationship to the former regime.

There is not always a compromise between the elites and the population of the city when naming certain streets. Sometimes it happens that an existing street name is not used among the people even after several decades, some people identify themselves with the previous name, or they have their own name for a certain territory.

Especially in the historical centre of cities, people react sensitively to the change of street name made by local elites. Public space in the historical part of the city is therefore perceived more sensitively and also its planned changes, as opposed to peripheral areas. The periphery has less historical and cultural meaning. It is not understood by people as an essential element that has formed the morphological, cultural and historical structure of the city. The key role in shaping the identity of the historical centre of our cities is also the name of the central area of the city. It can be a street or a square. We can find the simplest variants of these names in Košice, Prešov and Bratislava.

In Košice and Prešov, the dominant street name is Main Street, in Bratislava Main Square. In the past, the main square was an important scene of cultural and historical events that had an impact beyond the city. From the genealogy of the names, we can mention the following: 1673: Forum Civitas, 1783: Haubtplatz, 1920: Masarykovo námestie (Masaryk Square), 1940: Hitlerovo námestie (Hitler Square), 1953: Námestie 4. Apríla (4th April Square).

Trinity Square is the central historical dominant of Trnava, named after the statue of the Holy Trinity. There is a tower, cultural centre, the Ján Palárik theatre and several townhouses.

In Trenčín, the central area is on and around Mierové námesie (Peace Square). It has a lenticular shape. The genealogy of the name is significant: Intra Mona (15th century), Civitas (15th–16th c.), Teatrum, Rink, Forum Publicum (1771), Hauptplatz (1st half of 19th c.), Fópiac, Fóter (1858–1911), Szalavsky Gyulatér (1911–1918), Masarykovo námestie (Masaryk Square) (1919–1938), Hlinkovo námestie (Hlinka Square) (1938–1945), Stalinovo námestie (Stalin Square) (1945–1962), Mierové námestie (Peace Square) (since 1962).

In Nitra, the central square is named after the most important and most famous monarch of the homeland of the Slavs: Great Moravia. Svätoplukovo námestie (Svätopluk Square) is the central and relaxation zone of the lower city.

The historical centre of Žilina is composed of Marian Square, named after the statue of Immaculate Virgin Mary (Immaculata), which is in the middle of the square and built in honour of re-catholisation in 1738.

In Banská Bystrica, the main square is named after the Slovak National Uprising. The centre of the uprising was the town of Banská Bystrica.

Regarding the example of the main streets and squares in regional cities, we have attempted to interpret the space that has always been a centre of business, social and cultural life of the city. The high real estate costs makes this place only for profitable activities (shops, offices, financial institutions). This is the most accessible area of the city, and there is the highest population turnover. The names reflect the Christian-Slavic tradition of Slovakia that has been many times exposed to possible extinction (World War II, reflected in SNP Square in Banská Bystrica).

We consider this study to be rather unique in comparison to other current issues in the field of geography. We are convinced that the higher number of analogical works, especially in sociological and geographic journals, could contribute to the more sophisticated concepts and methods, which could be prompt further investigation. However, we believe that this issue will not remain unnoticed and will have own followers, who could enrich it with new knowledge.

This study is largely devoted to the practical options to the toponym analysis and to their interpretation. This interpretation can be of interest to the multidisciplinary field of research since the influence of sociological, historical and geographical topics can be observed here. Our main aim was to verify that the names of streets, squares, and parks located in the historical city centres serve as indicators of the official views and ideological perceptions of the political, social and historical events in the context of the Central European region.

From the above analysis, we can draw conclusions, based on which the collective identity of the city population, as well as their cultural and historical development can be defined through the nomenclature of streets, squares, and other public spaces. To reveal this dependence, a combination of quantitative (statistical and mathematical) and qualitative (interpretation of the text) methods was used. Based on the research of identity expression through the toponyms in the historical centres of regional cities in Slovakia, we have concluded that from the spatial point of view, local and national identities are the most important. At the same time, the frequency of a variety of international and regional toponyms in the historical city centres is subject to the specific conditions of development of the city.

Regarding dominant themes, the top three positions are occupied by the names of localities, and eminent people in the field of art, culture and politics (Table 4). The names of the localities are mainly related to local identity, since they describe a position or relationship to the significant place such as the area around the railway/bus stations, markets, architectural buildings (castle, church, palace), or other functional buildings in the city (hospital, court, administrative buildings, etc.). Representation of international toponyms of the street names depends on the size and population of the city. The highest proportion of international toponyms was recorded in the cities with the highest populations.

*Table 4: Ranking of toponyms by thematic focus (three most significant groups)*

| TOPIC | Bratislava | Trnava | Trenčín | Nitra | Banská Bystrica | Žilina | Košice | Prešov |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Locality names | 1 | 1 | 1/2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Art and culture | 2 | 2 | 1/2 | | 1 | 2 | 2 | |
| Politics | | | 3 | 2 | | 3 | 3 | 2/3 |
| Church | | | | 3 | | | | |
| Geographic names | 3 | | | | | | | 2/3 |
| Crafts and trade | | 3 | | | | | | |
| Historical events, institutions | | | | | 3 | | | |
| Science | | | | | | | | |
| Business | | | | | | | | |
| Signs (A, B) | | | | | | | | |
| Others | | | | | | | | |

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## Povzetek

Prispevek se ukvarja s praktičnimi možnostmi analize urbanih toponimov in njihove razlage, ki bi bila uporabna na področju multidisciplinarnih raziskav sociologije, zgodovine in geografije. Želeli smo preveriti trditev, da imena ulic, trgov in parkov v zgodovinskem središču mesta lahko služijo kot kazalci uradnih stališč in ideoloških prikazov političnih, družbenih in zgodovinskih dogodkov, v kontekstu Srednje Evrope. Študija analizira trenutno mrežo ulic v zgodovinskem središču mest Bratislava, Trnava, Trenčín, Nitra, Banska Bystrica, Žilina, Košice in Prešov. Poskušali bomo opredeliti temeljne tendence v procesu nomenklature ulic, osredotočili pa se bomo na njihovo tematsko osredotočenost. Namen raziskave je bil prek imen ulic in trgov v zgodovinskih središčih osmih regionalnih mest ugotoviti intenzivnost lokalne, regionalne in nacionalne identitifikacije s pomočjo geografskih raziskav.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: ozemlje, regionalna mesta, mestni toponimi, identiteta, ideologija

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