

Neighbour, stranger, citizen of Poznań – representation of the other in the narratives
of four generations of Poznań inhabitants

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The present study is a part of a larger project: “Collective memory, collective identity and urban landscape: A case study of Poznan” funded by the Polish National Science Centre (UMO-2013/09/B/HS6/00374). Within the project collective memory is understood following Halbwachs (1950) as elaborated by Assman (English translations: 2005, 2011) and Young (1993). In Poland this line of research has been fruitfully developed by Szacka (1995, 2000, 2005 and 2006), Kwiatkowski (2008), Szpociński (2009), Golka (2009), Kula (2002, 2004a and b) and Traba (2012) inspired by the early studies of Nina Assorodobraj (1963). The part of the project we would like to present at the panel focuses on the question: How do the changes in the urban landscape influence the collective memory and the collective identity narratives? In particular, will the social variable of age influence the knowledge about the localization of the liquidated cemeteries and their religious denomination or is this local memory no longer transmitted across generations? This research question ties in with the subject of the panel “Pragmatics and Society: Discourses about the 'Other'”, specifically with the leitmotif of collective symbols (here understood as the city cemeteries and memorials) and individual identities (here extended to the collective identities as well). The Other is represented via the collective memory of the Jewish and German communities who contributed to the development of the city till the mid 1940s, when the Holocaust and the post-war expulsions of the Germans put an end to the city's multicultural character. The data for the study come from three different sources: (1) a questionnaire conducted in Poznan grammar schools (students aged 16-19); (2) individual interviews with the city elites (city administration officials, priests, school teachers, NGO activists) and (3) focus groups conducted with the four generations of Poznanians: war generation (born in the 1930s), post-war generation (b. 1950s), transformation generation (b. 1970s) and post-transformation generation (b. 1990s). Data analysis and interpretation is based on critical discourse analysis (Wodak 2000, 2001) in combination with metaphor analysis (Musolff 2006, 2012, Fabiszak 2007, Koller 2008) and language and gesture analysis (Cienki and Mueller 2008).