

The cover features a futuristic cityscape with a prominent glass capsule in the foreground. The capsule has a white and orange design and a sign that says 'Ursula'. The background is a dense urban landscape with many skyscrapers. The top of the cover has a geometric design with overlapping translucent shapes in shades of blue, purple, and teal.

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TOPONYMIC LANDSCAPE AND PROBLEMS RELATED TO CHANGING IT

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Abstract

In the paper the problems that arise when changing geographical names have been considered, the conclusion about the regularity and continuity of this process has been substantiated, the course and consequences of changing geographical names as an important element of the symbolic revolution have been studied by using a lot of factual materials, and some recommendations to mitigate the risks of color revolutions have been given.

Keywords

Toponymy – Problems of changing geographical names – Military toponyms – Microtoponyms

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Introduction

Over the recent years, after a relatively brief calm, in the Russian Federation certain social forces have intensified their activity on renaming a number of geographical objects, cultural institutions, and even industrial enterprises. Moreover, according to some experts, this process has a very definite direction: "... the names of the heroes of the war and the blockade [of Leningrad. Authors] are put aside or even removed, and replaced by "princes" and owners of villages and lands that have already been forgotten... the names of the owners of drinking establishments are returned to toponymy"¹.

This work is dedicated to searching for an answer to the following question: "Is this process natural and is it substantiated by objective reasons, e.g., the natural change of generations, the death of participants and witnesses of extremely important historical events, and, finally, migration processes that are already significant in our life?"

Methods

The subject of this study was the problems arising from the spontaneous changes in geographical names (the toponymic landscape).

The authors used the statement about the regularity and continuity of toponyms changes as the hypothesis.

The main objectives of the study were the following:

- To identify the problems arising from changes in geographical names,
- To study the consequences of changing the toponymy as one of the elements of the symbolic revolution, and
- To develop the recommendations on reducing the negative consequences of toponymic experiments.

The study was based on a number of general scientific and special historical and political science research methods. At the same time, the retrospective and comparative methods were important when solving the problems faced by the authors and confirming the authors' hypothesis. They made it possible to use modern scientific data for the deeper analysis of the historical reality. The use of sociological methods enabled the authors to show the social causation of forming conditions for such political phenomenon as the symbolic revolution and make the relevant conclusions.

Results

In order to answer the above question, it is apparently necessary to recall the wonderful idea of A.I. Herzen, who noted that behind the words of our speech, "like behind a coastal wave, one can feel the pressure of the whole ocean of the world history"².

¹ P. I. Yakubenkov, "Otodvinutye" geroi. O problemah sovremennoy toponimiki. Society. Environment. Development num 1 (2018): 69 – 76.

² A. I. Herzen, *Byloye i dumy* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1946), 651

This “ocean of the world history” is constantly seething, foaming, and its tsunamis carry away everything superfluous and obsolete on its way. Therefore, there is no doubt that changes in such proper names as the names of geographical objects – toponyms – are an objective process and it is extremely naive to believe that it can be stopped or even prohibited.

It is only possible to have the impact on it.

However, for the impact to be successful and efficient, it is necessary to understand the mechanisms of the process itself, since the Russian history gives a very rich material for this.

The traditional, and, perhaps, the main function of the toponym was the address one. Its purpose was to assist residents with orientation in the urban (rural) space.

Therefore, toponyms were closely related to the geographical features of the area, daily life, and the way of life and activities of the population. In addition, central streets and squares of cities and villages often had names associated with the names of tsars, their heirs, or representatives of the closest environment of the crowned person, as well as the churches located on them, large owners, and important local events.

However, even at the earliest stages of urban planning, the authorities understood the role of toponyms that could act simultaneously as an element of the historical and cultural heritage and as a political symbol³.

Therefore, in addition to changing the landscape and topography of the urban space, the authorities are the source of names and renaming.

It is possible to mention, for example, the following most famous renaming of the pre-October (1917) period: renaming made by Ekaterina II after the defeat of the Pugachev’s rebellion, or the activities of Pavel I against the toponymic transformations of his mother (after the death of Pavel I, Alexander I returned the names given by Ekaterina). As such, the task on suppressing the memory about the rebellion of Emelian Pugachev (1775) was solved by adding the river Ural (instead of the river Yaik) and the city of Uralsk (instead of the Yatsky Gorodok) on the state map. Pavel I continued using the toponymy for suppressing the memory about historical events: he changed the names given during the Ekaterina epoch: Ekaterinoslav was renamed to Novorossiysk, Sevastopol obtained the turkic name Akhtiar, and Feodosia became Kafa.

The revolutionary year of 1917 opened a new era in the history of toponymy.

As soon as after the February Revolution, they started a struggle against the “accursed” heritage of tsarism in the form of toponyms containing the names of emperors, members of the royal family, and major statesmen of the Russian Empire. Numerous names containing the words Romanovskaya, Nikolaevskaya, Imperial, etc. were replaced by the toponyms including the names of Rodzianko, Guchkov, Milyukov, etc.

³ A. S. Bochkareva, “Toponimika Kubani v sisteme istoriko-kulturnogo naslediya Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny”, Scientific Bulletin of KubSAU Vol: 109 num 5 (2015): 1-15.

This is not surprising. In any society “along with reforms, regime changes, and revolutions, there are so-called *symbolic revolutions* aimed at dramatically changing the picture of the world. At the same time, the *symbolic capital* accumulated within the previous stage of the history is drastically reconsidered⁴.

Nowadays experts think that “symbolic hierarchies that are characteristic of symbolic revolutions are changed approximately according to the following scheme:

— There is a change in the sacred zone: the society removes protection from its *past* “gods” – there is criticism that makes room for *new* “gods”,

— The new sacredness is embodied in the precise selection of symbols – there is a change in the names of cities, streets, replacement of monuments, etc.,

— As a result of the previous stages, the zone of aggression is changed: the society changes the hierarchy in the “friend – enemy” system,

— *Old* texts lose their relevance, a lot of *new* ideological texts are formed to substantiate the change in the political scenery,

— Specialists in the reality verbalization – journalists, writers, scientists – enter the political arena, and

— Symbolic processes that seem uncontrollable, in fact, clearly pursue a certain goal⁵.

Thus, the change in toponymy is very important in the *symbolic revolution* that although invisibly but everywhere accompanies the real revolution.

It is not surprising that in the struggle for a “place under the sun” for new “gods”, renaming in the “Soviet period” became widespread.

According to the calculations of specialists, from 1917 to 1989 in the USSR, only cities were renamed more than 660 times, while such cities as Budennovsk, Belgorod-Dnestrovsky, Pushkin, and a number of others were renamed five or six times in their history⁶.

During the first years after the 1917 October Revolution, the Bolsheviks who came to power continued the activity of their predecessors on changing the toponyms associated with the monarchical system. Therefore, the settlements containing the names of tsars, grand dukes, and influential courtiers were subject to renaming.

At the same time, the toponyms promoting new heroes were widely used, and a new *revolutionary* vocabulary was introduced into everyday life.

⁴ M. I. Knyazeva; N. I. Fadeeva y I. N. Kholkin, *Informatsionnoye prostranstvo sotsiokulturnoy identichnosti*. Retrieved from: http://www.isiksp.ru/library/knyazeva_mm/knyazeva-000004.html

⁵ E. G. Ponomareva, “Sekrety “tsvetnykh revolutsiy””, *Free Thought* 3/4(1632) (2012): 43-59.

⁶ S. N. Selivanovsky, “K voprosu ob istoricheskoy toponimike Udmurtii”, *IDNAKAR* Vol: 1 num 5 (2009): 70–74.

This period was characterized by the fact that most geographical names were changed by decisions of the supreme authorities. The local authorities mainly changed the names of streets.

As a result, many traditional names of settlements, streets, squares, and public gardens were replaced by new ones. As a rule, they were artificial and did not take into account the peculiarities of the area and local traditions.

The 1920 – 1930s was the period characterized by the struggle against religion. It is marked by the disappearance of hundreds of geographical names that included such words as *Holy*, *Annunciation*, *Trinity*, *Candlemas*, etc. or names of saints.

There was an important stage after the Great Patriotic War (especially after 1965), when *military* toponyms played a serious role in preserving and recognizing the memory of the Great Victory.

Military toponymy that became widespread after the end of the Great Patriotic War connected the heroic past and the present, and called to the future.

Nowadays, however sad it is, the patriotic public will apparently face a serious struggle to preserve *military* toponyms.

It is necessary to note that the Soviet Russia, and then the USSR made attempts to introduce toponymic *creativity* into a certain framework. Thus, only since October 1917 to the end of 1920, over one and a half thousand different resolutions were adopted on the protection of monuments of art, antiquity, and folk life⁷, and even on the prohibition of renaming (1923, 1936, 1957)⁸. However, sometimes they were not complied with.

A new stage started on the eve of the 1991 revolution – in the late 1980s – early 1990s. Traditionally, the real revolution was preceded by the *symbolic revolution*.

Today the well-known quote from Dan Brown's book *The Da Vinci Code*: "History is always written by the winners" is perceived almost as an axiom. However, the study of many *symbolic revolutions* makes it possible to state that history is not always written by the winners. Often history is rewritten long before the victory of the coming revolution and is the means that brings this victory closer and, under favorable circumstances, makes it inevitable.

It was impossible not to notice this on the eve of the 1991 revolution. The pejorative criticism of the historical path traversed by the USSR, its heroes, symbols, and ideology caused not only the renaming of numerous geographical objects, but also a wave of vandalism in relation to monuments and other cultural and historical constructions. It is possible to indirectly speak about the scale of the problem on the basis of the fact that M.S. Gorbachev, the President of the USSR, had to issue Decree No. UP-870 dated October 13, 1990 *On Suppressing Desecration of Monuments Related to the History of the State and Its Symbols*⁹.

⁷ P. I. Yakubenkov, "Otodvinutye" geroi... 75.

⁸ S. N. Selivanovsky, "K voprosu... 71.

⁹ Ukaz Prezidenta Soyuza Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik N UP-870 "O presechenii nadrugatelstva nad pamyatnikami, svyazannymi s istoriyey gosudarstva, i ego simvolami". October

The particularly acute phase of the *symbolic revolution*, and hence the peak of renaming took place in the 1990s.

As a result, only in Moscow many streets returned to their original Moscow names. Tverskaya, Maroseyka, Pokrovka, Nikolskaya, Varvarka, Ilyinka, Lubyanka, Goncharnaya, and more than a hundred streets regained their former names.

A lot was made to make this process civilized. In particular, its legislative base was created¹⁰.

However, as often happens, there were some side effects.

In some cases, the authorities acted against the legislation and did not take into account the opinion of the population.

Very often, traditional names of streets, squares, and public gardens people liked were changed.

In those cases, there was the expected negative reaction of the population. It had various forms.

As practice showed, most often the reaction of the population was expressed in assigning its *popular* name to a geographical object¹¹. Unlike the names when they are mechanically given to a certain object, unofficial, secondary toponyms (microtoponyms) are always meaningful, individual, and mediated by the associative nature of human thinking.

They correct mistakes in official names. They are characterized by special imagery, expressiveness, economy of speech efforts, and the desire of native speakers to move away from the standard and stereotypicality.

Microtoponyms can be very malicious and form a negative attitude at the everyday level both to some authorities and to the power in general, e.g., *Sabchakovka* – the unofficial name of St. Petersburg.

Another, very dangerous form of the population's reaction can be an active protest. In the context of the growing social tension, it can quickly acquire a political color.

Nevertheless, having overcome all these difficulties to a different degree and, in general, having solved the tasks of the *symbolic revolution* of the 1990s, the situation related to renaming geographical names seems to have been stabilized in the early 2000s.

However, over the recent years, the *activities* aimed at changing the toponymic landscape have continued. True, those have been carried out mainly spontaneously,

13, 1990. Retrieved from: <http://www.alppp.ru/law/ugolovnoe-pravo--ispolnenie-nakazaniy/14/ukaz-prezidenta-sssr-ot-13-10-1990--up-870.html>.

¹⁰ Federalny zakon N 152-FZ "O naimenovaniyah geograficheskikh obyektov". December 18, 1997. Retrieved from: <http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/11787> y Zakon goroda Moskvy N 40-70 "O naimenovanii territorialnyh yedinit, ulits i stantsiy metropolitena goroda Moskvy". October 8, 1997.

¹¹ E. V. Krasilnikova, *Yazyk i kultura (k izucheniyu yazyka goroda)*. Linguistic Image of the Ural City: Collection of scientific works (Sverdlovsk: UrSU, 1990).

without any visible plan. However, due to *Black Book of Names Not to Place on the Map of Russia*, the edition published by the *Posev* Publishing House in 2004¹², this activity can be given a new impetus. *Posev*, the free Russian publishing house was founded in 1945 in Germany by Russian emigrants from the People's Labor Union. It publishes books in Russian and the magazines *Posev* and *Grani*. Since 1922 the branch of the publishing house has been operating in Moscow.

Indeed, the compilers of the *Black Book* ... frankly declare that they pursue the following goal: "To return historical names, as well as to replace the Soviet names by the ones associated with the creators of the enduring values of our culture, science, and statehood, including the leaders of the anti-Bolshevik resistance"¹³, and the book itself "will help to restore the historical succession of the modern Russia"¹⁴.

However, the authors do not mention whom it is suggested to establish succession with: *the prison of peoples* and the *gendarme of Europe* – the tsarist Russia? The challenge is not very attractive.

There is the same situation with the leaders of the *anti-Bolshevik resistance*, especially if the *merits* of those who are today considered as such in certain circles are taken into account.

Thus, Leonid Lamm, the leader of the *Dobrovolsky Korpus* public organization, meaning the ataman P.N. Krasnov, said "... that today numerous and rather uncoordinated Cossack organizations do not have another bright icon for the unification, such a symbol of resistance to Bolshevism"¹⁵.

It is necessary to recall that since September 1943, the ataman P.N. Krasnov, the Hitler's servant, had headed the Main Directorate of the Cossack Troops (MDCT) of the Imperial Ministry of the Eastern Occupied Territories of Germany, and on January 16, 1947 was sentenced to death by hanging by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR.

Despite the obviousness of crimes committed by P.N. Krasnov, in 2007 in the Rostov Region, a private memorial *Don Cossacks Fighting against Bolsheviks* with the statue of the ataman was installed.

Opening of the Memorial Board to Karl Mannerheim, the Finnish Marshal, the man whose troops carried out the blockade of Leningrad from the north and who, in the most difficult year for the besieged city of 1942, was awarded by Hitler with the Knighthood Crest "for merit to Germany", and in 1944 – with the Oak Branches to the Knighthood Crest, on June 16, 2016 in St. Petersburg seemed to be strange. At the same time, the initiators of installing the Memorial Board to Mannerheim, apparently, did not care about the issue "... on the disappearance of a dozen toponyms associated with the Soviet-Finnish war (streets in honor of Bragin, Vysotsky, Gruzdev, Zubarev, Kvashnin, Pinyaev, Petrushin, Shilov, the heroes of the Soviet Union)"¹⁶.

¹² S. V. Volkov, *Chernaya kniga imen, kotorym ne mesto na karte Rossii* (Moscow: Posev, 2004).

¹³ S. V. Volkov, *Chernaya kniga*... 3.

¹⁴ S. V. Volkov, *Chernaya kniga*... 3.

¹⁵ V. Tikhomirov, *Ataman SS*. Retrieved from: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2300303>

¹⁶ P. I. Yakubenkov, "Otdvinutye" geroi... 75.

It is necessary to individually discuss the reasonability of establishing monuments to Ivan the Terrible, establishing and demolishing the monument to Admiral A.V. Kolchak in the city of Sterlitamak¹⁷, some other events aimed at recognizing the memory of certain historical figures in the landscape of a number of Russian cities and towns.

These and other actions in the area of toponymy, consciously or unconsciously for their initiators, fully comply with the tactics of the *symbolic revolution*, when the space is cleared for new “gods”, and through “the accurate selection of symbols, in particular the change of names of cities, streets, replacement of monuments, etc.”, the zone of aggression is prepared for change: the former *friend* turns into an enemy, the former enemy – into a *friend*.

Such *toponymic policy* disorients people and causes confusion in their minds. At the same time, as usual, the young generation without political and life experience suffers most of all. There is no wonder that during his speech in the Bundestag in November 2017 Nikolai Desyatnichenko, a schoolboy from Novy Urengoy, regrets the *innocent victims* of the Wehrmacht soldiers, and as many as 31 % of the young Russians declare their desire to leave the Russian Federation¹⁸.

Conclusion

Perhaps the authors' anxiety is groundless, and all this is just a confluence of strange and accidental circumstances. However, even if so, it is necessary to remember that such actions, willingly or unwillingly, fit well into the scenario of the *symbolic revolution*, which, under favorable conditions, will contribute to the occurrence of a rather real *color* revolution. Therefore, according to the authors, it is necessary to stop extremely dangerous self-regulatory experiments on the toponymy.

Taking into account the fact that the emergence of new toponyms or the changing of the old ones is objective and will continue, it is necessary to achieve its widespread implementation only within the existing legal framework.

Taking into account the emergence of new threats to the state security in the postindustrial era, the rapid improvement of *information* weapon, the presence of international and national actors interested in destabilizing the situation in the Russian Federation, it is necessary to focus special attention of authorized state bodies and the civil society on improving the legislative framework, including the one regulating toponymy activities.

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