



## Вільні Люди ‘Free People’ and Надійний тил ‘Reliable Rear’: Names of Ukrainian Resistance and Support

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ans-names.pitt.edu

ISSN: 0027-7738 (print) 1756-2279 (web)

Vol. 71 No. 4, Winter 2023

DOI 10.5195/names.2023.2518



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## Abstract

During the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian War, Ukrainian society has demonstrated an unprecedented growth in volunteer activity (from 103<sup>rd</sup> position in the World Ranking of Charity to 10<sup>th</sup> in 2022), which specializes in aiding the Ukrainian military and civilians defending Ukrainian territories. This article presents the results of a study that analyzed the naming practices of volunteer organizations in Ukraine. The research was based on an original corpus of 300 names. The study revealed that the names of volunteer organizations are an important component of political language, because their function is to unite people and encourage action via the manifestation of shared cultural values and practices. The names of volunteer organizations may be viewed as cultural artifacts that codify common spontaneous social reactions to the current conflict. These ergonyms are grouped according to three main patterns: naming peculiarities relating to the participants of volunteer groups (both volunteers themselves as well as those supporting their activity), names given depending on the situation, and naming goals as a method of driving social transformation.

**Keywords:** Russia, war, Ukraine, volunteer organization, ergonym, toponym, socio-onomastics

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## Introduction

Proper names not only identify particular people and places, they also carry special signs of different sociocultural spaces. The names of institutions and organizations were initially intended to identify individual objects; however, they gradually established an “animated character” (Langendonck 2007, 221). Thus, they inevitably represent the cultural and ideological guidelines of certain historical periods. Denoting “cultural entities” (Bean 1980, 305), the complex of proper names creates the language portrait of a related domain, and encodes central descriptive meanings through inseparable connections with name givers, and even codifies main ideological messages. According to Shevelov, “every language is a devilishly dangerous witness of the history of the people who use that language” (2009, 287). Therefore, different types of proper names have long attracted the interest of linguists worldwide. Personal and place names are the most researched categories of proper names from a socio-onomastic viewpoint; and scholars have strongly emphasized the role of proper names in shaping minds of people communities (Hansen 2001; Raento & Douglass 2001; Casagrande 2013; Regnier 2016; Wakumelo et al. 2016; Demska & Levchuk 2020).

The active research of Ukrainian proper names began after World War II and focused mainly on the study of anthroponyms and various groups of toponyms (Slavutych 1966). However, proper names of organizations, particularly social institutions, was a taboo object for research in the former Soviet Union (Ukraine was under communist rule for 70 years until 1991). The cultural and sociolinguistic aspects of these organizations were considered “dangerous” by the totalitarian regime. Under this administration, onomastic practices served as an effective tool for reinforcing Soviet ideologies. Consequently, proper names were artificially standardized throughout the whole country, disregarding religious, cultural, and regional naming traditions. The critique of this policy is expressed in the cult Soviet film “The Irony of Fate, or Enjoy Your Bath”, which was released in 1976. The film’s plot revolves around a man who mistakes a stranger’s apartment for his own because both apartments have an identical interior, are in identical residential blocks built according to the same standardized plan, and are on streets with identical names despite the fact that they are situated in different cities.

After its independence in 1991, a sharp change in naming trends were observed within Ukraine. This change first became noticeable in the names of commercial property: names of shops and services became more varied and personalized. Later, this tendency covered the names of social organizations and, eventually, the rest of urban spaces, such as streets and squares. Onomastic tendencies reacted immediately to political, cultural, and social transformations in post-Soviet Ukraine. New naming practices, inherent in many post-colonial societies, appeared in the country. This change involved the decommunization of the onomasticon, and it was characterized by the individualization of names through the expansion of nationally specific vocabulary, which included the introduction of a myriad of borrowings (Azhnyuk 2002, 145). Since then, many onomastic studies have appeared in Ukrainian which treat names as linguistic units that reflect socio-cultural values of Ukrainian society (Beley 1999; Tsylyna 2006; Lesovets 2007; Demska & Levchuk 2020).

One of the reasons for the onomastic explosion in Ukraine at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the emergence of new societal developments. Since the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Ukrainian volunteer organizations

have existed to help socially vulnerable groups of people and improve public spaces. Although this form of social activism is not new, its recent rise has been unprecedented. According to the Charities Aid Foundation, in 2014, Ukraine ranked 103<sup>rd</sup> in the World Ranking of Charity. By 2020 and 2022, it had moved to the 20<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> positions, respectively (Worszech 2017; CAF 2022). This increase was due to the emergence of a great number of volunteer organizations, which have consolidated Ukrainian society's intentions to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine logistically, financially, psychologically, and legally, and assist civilians affected by the full-scale Russian invasion.

The formation of these organizations was particularly fueled by the Russian "special military operation" or war being waged on the territory of Ukraine. Volunteering, as a social act of resistance, increased in popularity as ideological conflicts between Ukraine and Russia sharpened. Such conflicts are deeply rooted in Ukrainian history (Plokhly 2015, 97-180). The modern history of independent Ukraine includes a number of successful examples of cultural and ideological opposition to Russia's imperial ambitions. The Soviet propaganda machine, built on unification and neglect of national and cultural differences, was assigned with the task of creating a new type of citizen: a "Soviet human". To achieve this goal, a strategy of national assimilation was employed. Within this system, people were expected to adjust to a set of social norms and traditions based mostly on Russian cultural values. This strategy of cultural assimilation and unification was coded into modern Russian narratives and widely spread through cultural and political discourses (Truch 2015; Gerber & Zavisca 2016; Babak 2017). Therefore, the ending of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Ukrainian history has been dubbed a period of information warfare (Puhach 2017). Initially, Russian ideological campaigns were supported by a larger portion of the Ukrainian political elite. Since 1991, there were episodes of resistance to their activity that culminated in street protests, such as "Ukraine without Kuchma" (2001), The Orange Revolution (2004) and The Revolution of Dignity or Euromaidan (2013-2014). These events emphasized the changes in Ukrainian inner political context and signaled the transition away from an authoritarian regime toward a more democratic society and the birth of a new Ukrainian nation (Wynnyckyj 2019, 8). At the beginning of 2014, these protests triggered the deployment of Russian troops to Ukraine and the subsequent annexation of its southeastern regions.

The naming of newly created social organizations is one of the ways members articulate their system of motives and values. The names of Ukrainian volunteer organizations have not been the object of linguistic analysis. Consequently, the research presented in this article investigated the conceptual mechanisms involved in coining these names. The goal of this research was to help fill a significant gap in the literature. However, an analysis of all the names in the corpus of volunteer associations was beyond the scope of this study. The main purpose of this investigation, therefore, was to identify the most common naming patterns and characterize the linguistic and social aspects of name giving.

This research objective was informed by a need to monitor the spontaneous reactions of Ukrainian society to the Russo-Ukrainian War through the analysis of selected naming practices. The practice of establishing volunteer organizations in Ukraine from 2014 onward differs significantly from the practices of setting up organizations with remotely similar functions in Soviet Ukraine. Instead of the vertical hierarchy typical of social institutions in the Soviet Union, present-day volunteering is structured as a network of coordinative organizations. Inspired by the events of the Maidan Revolution, the joint effort of volunteer organizations during this time is an excellent example of effective self-organization in the situation of a leaderless revolution (Wynnyckyj 2019, 17). The non-hierarchical character of volunteer organizations and their prompt formation triggered an intuitive approach to .

Naming practices largely depend on the peculiarities of the communicative situation in which the names are coined and used. The usage of proper names in volunteer organizations is not limited by legal discourse. It becomes, however, one of the public and political discourse elements used to construct a social reality. Therefore, a certain group of people can "identify with other actors, values, or symbols that are themselves legitimate" (Ashforth & Gibbs 1990, 181) through names. From this perspective, the names of volunteer organizations express group identity and are "a means of aligning oneself with preferred ideologies or sets of preferred representations of reality" (Galasinski & Skowronek 2001, 51). Linguistic analyses of proper names as cultural artifacts help describe the "personality" and "spirit" behind (Tuan 1979, 389) everyday cultural practices, particularly in public and political discourses.

Ukrainian resistance to Russian aggression since the start of the Russo-Ukrainian War has been formed by a wide network of citizens who address the needs of armed forces and support the civilian population. This network was started by volunteer organizations, and their names carry meaningful messages for all participants of the war. An evaluation of names as language signs cannot be divorced from the communicative situation and pragmatic context where they are used (Galasiński & Skowronek 2001, 51-52). Therefore, it is important to take into account the following components of the communicative situation that have an effect on the choice of analyzed names: (1) the conditions for the emergence of the named entities: recently created organizations have emerged in critical situations of military aggression not anticipated by the majority of Ukrainian society despite the long-term informational, cultural and political influence of the Russian Federation (Gerber & Zavisca 2016);

(2) the nature of these entities: a volunteer organization is a platform for like-minded people, and its name ought to convey their shared social and historical experiences; (3) the goal of volunteer work is to attract as many participants as possible to participate in charitable projects; therefore, the emotional imprint of the name is more important than its informational function. This means that the actualized pragmatic components of the name must be clearly understood and unambiguously interpreted by all members of the community; (4) the conditions of activity of the named entities: these organizations were created to react to the current situation without delay, so their names should encourage immediate action; (5) the system of volunteer organizations is formed as a horizontal structure of interacting parties who are not subordinate to the management center, and, their creation and subsequent naming reflect certain spontaneity and self-formation.

The perception of a public organization's name as a conscious and important "act of resistance"—both from the position of its creators and that of the audience whom they are intended to communicate with—strengthens its connotative and denotative meanings, defines the name as a projective and reflective sign (Raento & Douglass 2001, 2), and brings it closer to another unit of political discourse: the slogan. The purpose of both an ergonym and a slogan is to encourage the audience to support certain measures by appealing to their social and cultural beliefs, which form the identity of these social groups. Hence, the semantics of the name is a "web of latent meanings" (Nuessel 2018, 109) that reproduces an aggregate of "appreciable, emotional, expressive, social, psychological and cultural" components (Habibi 2011, 215) and is clearly understood by all members of the language community. However, it is worth considering that the persuasive nature of a slogan serves "as a means of focusing attention and exhorting to action" (Urdang & Robbins 1984, 17), and it also tends to be associated with the name of the volunteer organization. Altogether, both items have many similarities: they are created to unite people in their personal active responses when a crisis threatens their system of cultural, moral, and national values (Lu 1999, 490).

The similarity of functions determines the structural similarity of these language signs. Most names of the Ukrainian volunteer organizations are multi-component phrases: Only 14.5% of these entities have one-word names, whereas almost 53% have two-word names, 15% have three-component names, and 17.5% have from 4 to 5-component names. Undoubtedly, a multi-component structure makes it possible to express a wider web of meanings and refer to several components of the communicative situation. This fact greatly complicates a one-dimensional typology name by the dominant topic parameter.

## Methods

The data for this study was compiled from open sources in the media and internet. The final compilation use for this investigation contained the names of 300 Ukrainian volunteer organizations that support the Ukrainian armed forces and civilians involved in the Russo-Ukrainian War. Supplementary data (for example, the date of creation and the nature of the volunteer activity) were obtained from relevant open sources, such as the organizations' websites, electronic databases, and mass media.

Since the naming strategy of volunteer associations is determined by their goal of strengthening the Ukrainian resistance, ergonyms are used to create a sense of identity. For the purposes of this paper, the names of volunteer organizations were classified into 3 groups representing the most common naming patterns. These patterns encode the perception of (1) the participants of the situation; (2) the situation itself; or (3) the goal of the named organization's activity.

The analysis examines each naming pattern and offers a discussion of the most wide-spread trends in the selection of a name for a volunteer organization. The data collected is not meant to be a complete list of names, especially given the fact that the number of these organizations has continued to grow as the war expands in scope and lethality. However, as will be shown here, this corpus can help to reveal general tendencies in the naming practices of volunteer organizations that are working to support Ukrainian resistance efforts.

## Results

### *Naming Pattern: "Participants"*

The names that follow this naming pattern fall into two subgroups. The first group uses names to highlight the regional identity of the current and potential volunteers. The second group brings to the forefront the national identity of the present and future volunteers.

Within the onomastic corpus compiled for this study, the first subgroup makes up the majority of names in this pattern (approximately 67%). This set of names expresses the vision of the organization to the target audience—those people who may become future volunteers. These names also provide information about the

current members' social, national, gender, professional, and age identity. Examples of name constructions that express and construct a volunteer group identity include the following: *Волонтери Новомиргород* 'Volunteers of Novomyrhorod'—*Novomyrhorod* is the name of a town in central Ukraine; *Волонтери Полісся* 'Volunteers of Polesia'—*Polesia* is the historical name for the Belarus-Ukraine border region; and *Волонтери без кордонів* 'Volunteers Without Borders'. As these examples show, many of these constructions (47%) feature toponyms. These place names not only identify a location of operation, they also express regional identity. Some examples of toponyms and toponymic components are *Енергодар* 'Energodar', a city in the north-western part of the Zaporizhzhia; *Суми* 'Sumy', a city in northeastern Ukraine; and *Українian Bakhmut*, named after Bakhmut, a city in the Donetsk region. Additional examples include *Білоцерківська волонтерська група* 'Belotserkivsk Volunteer Group' which features the term *Belotserkivsk* which is derived from the toponym *Bila Tserkva*, a city in the Kyiv region. The names of entire regions also fall within this first sub-group. One such example is *Волонтери Острозщини* 'Ostrozhchyna volunteers'. *Ostrozhchyna* refers to the western Ukrainian city of Ostroh and its suburbs. Another example is *Волинські патріоти* 'Volhynia Patriots'. *Волин* is the historical name for the region between Poland, Belarus, and western Ukraine. Also falling within this sub-group is *Вінницький батальйон волонтерів* 'Vinnytsia Volunteer Battalion'. *Vinnytsia* is another city in west central Ukraine. One of the purposes of including toponymic components in the ergonyms of volunteer organizations may be to show unity and highlight regional support of the armed forces throughout Ukraine. The tendency to put "emphasis on regional identity" (Truch 2015, 36) thereby expresses a single, national identity. This strategy which is currently employed in the naming of volunteer associations today was also used in the revolutionary slogans of demonstrators who participated in the 2013 Revolution of Dignity.

The second sub-group of names stresses the national identity of members in the volunteer organizations. About 26 % of the names examined in this corpus exhibit this pattern. The core components of these names include the words *патріот* 'patriot'; *люди* 'people'; *нація* 'nation'; *національний* 'national'; *українці* 'Ukrainians'; *єдиний* 'united'; *разом* 'together'; and *група* 'community'. Examples of organizational names that fall into this sub-category include *Патріот Прилуки* 'Patriot Pryluky'; *Незалежна нація* 'Independent Nation'; *Небайдужий народ* 'Caring People'; *Справжні українці* 'True Ukrainians'; and *Громада Сарненщини* 'Sarnenshchyna Community'. The name *Sarnenshchyna* refers to Sarny, a small city in western Ukraine. Also included in this sub-group are *Народний проєкт* 'People's Project'; *Єдина родина* 'United Family'; *Гуртом Слов'янськ* 'Sloviansk together'; *Разом для України* 'Together for Ukraine'; *Кожен може допомогти* 'Everyone Can Help'; *Сільно – сильно* 'Together—strongly'; *УкрЄдність* 'Ukr[aïne] Unity'; *Моя країна – єдина Україна* 'My Country—United Ukraine'. All of these names are used not only to express national unity, but also to encourage Ukrainians to actively support Ukrainian sovereignty.

Importantly, some of organizational names in this corpus achieved this appeal by referring to civilians as potential participants in the armed conflict. Names that denote the realities of war attract the attention and potential allegiance of different groups of people because of their potentially predictive function. Example of names that cast the identity of Ukrainian civilians as fully-fledged participants of war include *Народний тил* 'National rear', *Партизани Полісся* 'Partisans of Polesia', and *Громадський блокпост* 'Common Blockpost'.

Aside from regional and national identity, there were also ergonyms in the corpus that labelled other demographic features of current and future members. One ergonym, for instance, highlighted the age: *Молодь проти* 'Youth is Against'. This name was, however, alone in the corpus. Far more frequent were names that label gender identity (for example, *Український жіночий батальйон* 'Ukrainian Women's Battalion'; *Волонтерський жіночий батальйон* 'Volunteer Women's Battalion'; *Небайдужі жінки Донбасу* 'Caring Women of Donbas'—Donbas is a region in eastern Ukraine; and *Українська жіноча варта* 'Ukrainian Women's Guard'). The fact that ergonyms which overtly marked female gender made up almost 10% of the names collected for this study is a testament to the activity and social prominence of Ukrainian women in the volunteer organization movement.

Another demographic feature marked in the ergonyms compiled was professional identity. Making up about 5% of all ergonyms of all the names investigated. An example of this ergonymic type is *Госпітальєри* 'Hospitaliers', an organization that provides providing medical care. Another organizational name that falls in this category is *Офісна сотня допомоги українській армії* 'The Office Sotnya for Aid for the Ukrainian Army'. The term "sotnya" meaning 'one hundred' is a military regiment of the Cossacks which consisted of one hundred fighters. The Cossacks were soldiers who defended Ukrainian territories from attackers in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Related to these ergonyms were names that announced the specific activities performed by the organization. *Кухарська сотня Приірпіння* 'Cooking Sotnya of the Irpin region' and *Вінницька кулінарна сотня* 'Vinnytsia Culinary Sotnya' are two volunteer organizations that cook for the demonstrators and soldiers in the Ukrainian cities near Irpin and Vinnytsia, respectively. Note that both of these names also feature the previously mentioned military term "Sotnya". Other names that belong in this category are *Маскувальна сітка Івано-Франківськ* 'Camouflage Ivano-Frankivsk' which supplies the Ukrainian Army with different kinds of camouflage; and *БПЛА-Рівне* 'UAV-Rivne' that provides Ukrainian soldiers with "unmanned aerial vehicles", more commonly known as military drones.

There were also several ergonyms (about 17% of those found in the pattern “Participants”) in the corpus that underscored the moral responsibility of all Ukrainian citizens to get involved, irrespective of their region, age, gender, or profession. One such example was *Вірність Україні і присязі* ‘Loyalty to Ukraine and the oath’. *Наші люди* ‘Our People’ is another example. In this instance, the term “our” refers to everyone who is a member of the Ukrainian society and who are united by their common values and their resistance to the Russian invasion. The name *Сталеві люди* ‘Steel People’ is another ergonym that stresses the importance of unified resistance. The term “steel” became a symbol of Ukrainian indomitability after the Ukrainian soldiers and civilians who lived in the bunkers of Azovstal steel plant of Mariupol as Russian forces launched a devastating siege for three months in the spring of 2022. Other patriotic ergonyms in the corpus that call for resistance are *Free People*; *Сила людей* ‘Power of the People’; and *Чисті серця Калуші* ‘Pure Hearts of Kalush’. In Ukraine, “pure heart” is metaphor for sincerity and justice.

Finally, there were many ergonyms, almost 18%, that highlighted the persons and groups which the volunteer organizations were designed to serve: *Допомога армії України* ‘Assistance to the Ukrainian Army’; *Армія SOS* ‘Army SOS’; *Допомога військовим Тернопілля* ‘Assistance to the Servicemen of the Region of Ternopil’—Ternopil is an administrative center in western Ukraine; *Рух підтримки закарпатських військових* ‘Movement Helping the Servicemen of Zakarpattia’—Zakarpattia is an administrative region in the Ukrainian Carpathians; *Допоможи фронту* ‘Help the Front’; and *Допомога пораненим військовим Житомирщини* ‘Aid to Wounded Soldiers of Zhytomyrshchyna’—Zhytomyrshchyna is a region in the northwest of Ukraine. Some of these ergonyms also identified the specific nature of the assistance offered: *Штаб підтримки морської піхоти України* ‘Marine Corps Support Headquarters of Ukraine’; *Книги для поранених бійців АТО* ‘Books for Wounded ATO Soldiers’. The abbreviation stands for *Anti-Terrorist Operation*. Others, however, made more generic announcements about assistance offered and the organizational goals desired. For example, *Повернись живим* ‘Come Back Alive’; *Рятуюмо життя разом* ‘Save Lives Together’; *Збережи життя солдату* ‘Save the Soldier’s Life’; *Захистимо захисника* ‘Let’s Protect the Defender’ particularly stand out.

There are many examples in this subgroup that indirectly name servicemen and the Ukrainian army in represented by metaphors with strong patriotic connotations. For example, the ergonym *Львівський лицар* ‘Lviv Knight’ puts together the toponym *Lviv*, which is the name of a cultural center in western Ukraine; and *Knight* which carries connotations of honor, morality, and chivalry. Another example is *Київський щит* ‘Kyiv Shield’ which symbolically portrays its members as weapon of defense that offers safety. This name shares similarities with *Українська варта* ‘Ukrainian guard’ and *Козацька варта* ‘Cossack guard’. Also included in this group is *Покрова* ‘Petrova’. In Ukraine, *Petrova* is the name of a religious holiday that honors the patroness of the Ukrainian Cossacks; and *Поліська Січ* ‘Polesia Sich’ where the term *Sich* is the name of a 16<sup>th</sup>-century organization founded by Cossacks in Ukraine.

## Naming pattern “Situation”

The ergonyms belonging to this category call for members to take a clear stand in the face of the current socio-political situation. The names in this sub-group frequently (about 55% of the total number of names) include the word *допомога* ‘help’ or close synonyms like *поміч* ‘assist’ and *підтримати* ‘support’ (e.g., *Підтримай армію України* ‘Support the Army of Ukraine’; *Допоможемо Україні разом* ‘Let’s help Ukraine together’, and *Допоможи фронту* ‘Help the Front’).

Related to these ergonyms are those that overtly describe the ongoing war as an aggression that threatens the national and territorial unity of Ukraine. This sub-group makes up roughly 18% of the corpus and includes the following organizational names: *Захист рідного краю Подолляни* ‘Protection of the native land of Podolians’ (*Podolians* are a Ukrainian ethnic group who live in west-central and southwestern Ukraine); and *Відсіч* ‘The Push-back’. It was not unusual for names in this sub-group to include words that express desirable moral or ethical values. Some examples are *Варто* ‘Worth’; *Гонор* ‘Honor’; *Справедливість* ‘Justice’; *Дорогою Добра* ‘On the Path of Good’; *Час надії* ‘Time of Hope’; and *Час змін*, ‘Time of Change’.

The influence of the Revolution of Dignity was also clearly seen in the names developed for volunteer organizations. These period-inspired ergonyms constituted a fairly large group (19% of those following the pattern “Situation”). One example is *Євромайдан* ‘Euromaidan’. Among Ukrainians, the term *Maidan* ‘a square’ is a common unofficial name for the Revolution of Dignity. *Автомайдан Луцьк* ‘Automaidan Lutsk’ is another insider example. While *Lutsk* is a city in northwestern Ukraine, the term *automaidan* refers to a car rally which is held in support of Euromaidan. *Самооборона Бердянськ* ‘Self-defense Berdyansk’ makes reference to a voluntary formation of Euromaidan activists whose purpose was to ensure public order while protecting protesters against pro-government security forces. There is also *Смачна сотня* ‘Delicious sotnya’. As mentioned before, the term *sotnya* refers to an archaic military unit. During the Revolution of Dignity, various activist groups used this historically significant word to align themselves with the demonstrators.

### *Naming pattern “Goals and Anticipated Outcomes”*

The third sub-group of ergonyms express the goals of the volunteer organizations (about 12% of the total number of names). Many of these names express Ukrainians' hopes for positive changes in the future. These names often contain the adjective *новий* 'new' (for example, *Нова нація* 'New Nation'; *Новий Маріуполь* 'New Mariupol'; *Нова громада* 'New Community'). Other names in this sub-group rely on other positively connotated descriptors such as *вільний* 'free', and *незалежний* 'independent' to express aspirations for Ukraine's future as a nation completely free from enslavement. Some examples of ergonyms include *Вільна доля* 'Free Fate'; *Вільні люди* 'Free People'; *Вільна доля* 'Free Destiny'; and *Моя незалежна країна* 'My Independent Country'. Similarly, there were ergonyms in the corpus that explicitly predicted a favorable outcome for Ukraine (for example, *Усе буде добре* 'Everything Will Be Fine' and *Усе буде Україна* 'Everything Will Be Fine in Ukraine').

Similar to these names were organizational names that expressed a desire to improve the of living conditions of Ukrainians in besieged areas (for example, *За процвітання Черкащини* 'For the prosperity of Cherkaschyna'—*Cherkaschyna* is an informal name for the Cherkasy region which is situated in central Ukraine; *Подільський добробут* 'Podilia wellness'—*Podilia* is a historical name of a region in the west-central and southwestern parts of Ukraine).

Finally, many of the organizational names overtly tied together the patriotic ideal of national renewal with resistance (for example, *Відродження нашої України* 'Renewal of Our Ukraine'). Often these names employed vivid metaphors (for example, *Вогонь Відродження* 'Fire of Renewal'). Sometimes the metaphorical language was based on transnational symbology like the ergonym *Фенікс* 'Phoenix' which takes its name from the legendary symbol of purification and renewal. Other times, the organizational names incorporated references specific to Ukraine. *Херсонська чайка* 'Kherson seagull', for example, makes reference to the fact that a *чайка* 'a seagull' is also the name for a light-weight boat used by the Cossacks in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Another organizational names with a strong Ukrainian cultural reference is *Два кольори* 'Two Colors' which takes its name from the fact that the Ukrainian flag has two colors: blue and yellow. *Гайдамаки* *Haydamaky* also appeals to the unique cultural history of Ukraine. The “Haydamaks” participated in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century fight for Ukraine's liberation. And finally, the name *Залізний тризуб* 'Iron Trident' refers to the fact that a trident is featured on Ukraine's national coat of arms.

## Discussion and Conclusions

The article has examined prevalent naming patterns of Ukrainian volunteer organizations formed during the Russo-Ukrainian War. Founded to support of the Armed Forces of Ukraine by members of different social groups and supported by most Ukrainians, this network of volunteer organizations is non-hierarchical and is not governed by any single administrative center. Therefore, the ergonyms of these volunteer organizations can be considered cultural artifacts that codify spontaneous social reactions to the current military conflict. These ergonyms are distinctive in nature because they provide concepts and ideas vital in expressing the worldview and belief system held by Ukrainian society. As shown here, these names play a multifaceted communicative role. They not only provide information between different organizational groups, but also help to encourage current and potential volunteers to contribute to the cause at hand. In this way, they also send a message to those outside of Ukraine about the resistance and resolve of its people. Interestingly, during this investigation, a gradual decline in the use of the Russian language for the ergonyms of volunteer organizations was witnessed. This change may reflect the Ukrainian society's refusal to accept Russian ideology. The issue of language choice, although not a focus of the present investigation, is one that warrants further research given the linguistic history of Ukraine.

The long-term contact between the Russian and Ukrainian languages within Ukraine's has led to a high degree of bilingualism within the nation. However, since the onset of the war in 2014, Ukrainian has become increasingly favored across various communicative situations. For the data set collected for this research, only three volunteer organizations had names in Russian. For comparison, six names were created in English. Importantly, all of these names were for organizations situated in bilingual regions of Ukraine. Such conscious language choices may be useful for facilitating positive cultural and national self-identification among bilingual residents. However, more research is needed to examine this particular aspect of ergonymic strategies in Ukraine. Nevertheless, the current investigation has successfully demonstrated the importance of studying the onomastic landscape to obtain detailed and powerful insights into the cultural transformations currently taking place in Ukrainian society.

## Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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