



## A Case Study of De-Russification of Ukrainian Hodonyms: Rigged Trial or Justice Restored?

**Oleksiy Gnatiuk**

*Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Kyiv, UKRAINE*

**Anatoliy Melnychuk**

*Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Kyiv, UKRAINE*

[ans-names.pitt.edu](https://ans-names.pitt.edu)

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

Vol. 71 No. 4, Winter 2023

DOI 10.5195/names.2023.2599



Articles in this journal are licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



This journal is published by [Pitt Open Library Publishing](https://pittopenlibrarypublishing.com/).

## Abstract

The 2022 outbreak of the Russian full-scale war against Ukraine has led to a reassessment of memory politics in Ukraine. The erasure of communist symbols or “decommunization” has evolved into a decolonization process of de-Russification in which Russian cultural symbols, including toponyms, are removed from the symbolic space. This article presents the results of a mixed method investigation of Ukrainian hodonyms to shed light on the effects of war on a nation’s postcolonial toponymic legacy. We argue that de-Russification in Ukraine is a case of national “toponymic cleansing”. Simultaneously, this process may be interpreted as an act of restorative justice following cultural colonization. The findings indicate that posttransitional rethinking of place names in Ukraine is still strongly bounded by the effect of scale, and specific approaches to de-Russification are largely dependent on the local historical, cultural, and geopolitical context.

**Keywords:** decolonization, de-Russification, hodonym, toponym, Ukraine, toponymic cleansing, memory politics

---

## 1. Introduction

The interaction between geopolitics and toponymy is a well-known phenomenon with various spatial dimensions and political implications worldwide (Lindsay & Yoon 2021; Giraut & Houssay-Holzchuch 2016; Vuolteenaho & Berg 2009; Kadmon 2004). In recent years, the post-Soviet realm—with its constant and multidirectional geopolitical transformations and related hegemonic toponymic practices that range from erasing and cleansing to restoration, memorialization, and even promotional branding—has been the subject of a growing number of theoretically diverse, political, toponymic studies (Basik 2022, 2020a; Kudriavtseva & Homanyuk 2020). The existing proliferating literature on the critical toponomastics of post-Soviet countries already covers various national contexts (see, for example, Basik 2020b; Costa 2020; Golomidova 2020; Basik & Rahautsou 2019; Kaşikçi 2019; Malikov 2018; Kangaspuro & Lassila 2017; Saparov 2017; Manucharyan 2015; Balode 2012; Marin 2012; Dabaghyan 2011). Among the post-Soviet states, a great deal of academic attention has been placed on Ukraine’s wide-scale erasure of communist symbols after the Revolution of Dignity in 2014. This erasure has included the removal of communist place names from symbolic spaces. In the media and the scientific literature, this process is commonly called “decommunization” (see Kovalov 2022; Kuczabski & Boychuk 2020; Kudriavtseva 2020; Kutsenko 2020; Gnatiuk 2018).

Before the full-scale Russian invasion in 2022, de-Russification was a marginal phenomenon. Indeed, for many years after the collapse of the USSR, most of Ukrainian society tolerated post-communist remnants. However, with the onset of the Russo-Ukrainian War in 2014, there was a greater unified push by the central government towards decommunized toponymy (Kuczabski & Boychuk 2020). Nevertheless, obligatory changes in Ukrainian place names still faced many obstacles, including resistance due to issues of ideology and identity. For example, regions of southeastern Ukraine were less willing to comply with the decommunization laws due to higher pro-Russian/pro-Soviet sentiments, stronger local/regional identity that was deeply rooted in the Soviet era (Gnatiuk 2018), greater pro-Russian/Soviet political forces at the regional or local level (Shevel 2016; Kovalov 2021), and lesser efficient regional toponymic commissions (Kovalov 2021). However, even outside of these regions, there was general skepticism in the nation over the necessity of changing Russian place names. It was argued, for instance, that these changes would require other changes such documents and address plates, thereby lead to additional expenses. For all these reasons, the Ukrainian population generally accepted the obligatory decommunization of toponyms, but did so with a high degree of caution. Consequently, the wave of toponymic decommunization in Ukraine gradually began to fade in the 2020s. The full-scale Russian military invasion of Ukraine abruptly brought an end to that trend and prompted a new wave of toponymic revision in Ukraine. This latest public reform is commonly known as “de-Russification” and is considered a specific form of decolonization. In Ukrainian public discourse, “decolonization” is a process of cleansing the public space from symbolic markers of the “colonial” past (Males & Deineka 2020). Although Ukrainian lands were controlled by various states in the past (for example, Poland, Romania, or Austria-Hungary) leading to policy that may be qualified as “colonial”, the term “decolonization” usually refers to the heritage of the Soviet Union and Russian Empire only. In this sense, decolonization in Ukraine is generally equated with de-Russification. Despite the fact that this de-Russification campaign has taken place for a relatively short period of time, its consequences for the Ukrainian linguistic landscape are already comparable to those of decommunization.

Indeed, contemporary Ukraine is veritable hot spot of geopolitically driven toponymic restructuring. Even when compared to other nations within the tumultuous post-Soviet sphere, Ukraine stands out.

In response to the recent striking changes in Ukrainian geopolitical toponymy, the principal goal of the research presented in this paper is to explore the unique national context of rethinking the postcolonial toponymic legacy in war-affected Ukraine. Like Yeh (2013), we examined Ukrainian nation-building on the basis of erased place names rather than those newly introduced. Erased place names, as Yeh (2013) argues, are just as important as newly selected place names for the cultural politics of a nation. Using a mixed method approach, we sought to (1) explain the nature of toponymic de-Russification in Ukraine within the framework of critical toponomastics informed by post-socialist and postcolonial theories, (2) reveal prerequisites and motifs for de-Russification of Ukrainian urban toponyms, (3) demonstrate key discourses and narratives related to de-Russification, and (4) argue that the current public re-thinking of place names in Ukraine is similar to the previous phase of decommunization in that it is also strongly bounded by the effect of scale: namely, specific approaches to de-Russification largely depend on the local (urban or rural) historical, cultural, and geopolitical contexts involved. On the basis of the findings presented in this paper, we also address the following question: Is the ongoing de-Russification of urban namescapes a case of “restored justice” in the postcolonial society or just a “rigged trial” in which Russian culture is indicted?

The current article is structured as follows. In the next section, we detail the theoretical and methodological framework of this critical toponomastic case study of Ukrainian placenames. We discuss how this research is embedded within post-socialist and postcolonial theories. Afterward, we outline the methods implemented and the data sources. In the following section, we discuss de-Russification in Ukraine, including its prerequisites, general course, and consequences for the urban linguistic landscape. In this section, we also discuss the associated narratives and attempts by the national authorities to regulate the process of de-Russification. Then we illustrate the general points of de-Russification using the specific case of the Ukrainian city of Vinnytsia. In the final section, we draw conclusions regarding the aforementioned research goals.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

In the 1990s, critical toponomastics defined place naming as a part of the social construction and contestation of place. It was seen as a crucial element of the production and reproduction of the symbolic and material order, and was viewed as a way of norming or legitimating hegemonic power relations (Berg & Kearns 1996). In different geographic contexts, place names serve as markers that reflect political discourse and the power dynamics of the milieu from which they emerge (Rose-Redwood et al. 2010; Kearns & Berg 2002). Naming and renaming urban public spaces are a traditional way of introducing and disseminating an authorized version of history with the objective of creating a new collective memory (Swart 2008; Azaryahu & Kook 2002), and, by naming places, the ruling political regimes define what is historically significant or worthy of remembrance (Alderman 2002). Through this process, identities and ideologies are articulated, territorialized, and contested (Hui 2017). Toponymic inscription involves both the chronotopic (temporal) and chorotopic (spatial) construction and legitimization of borders between “Us” and “Them”—colonial/indigenous, national/foreign, East/West, etc. (Gnatiuk & Melnychuk 2020a; Marin 2017).

Rose-Redwood et al. (2017) distinguish between three primary frameworks of critical toponymy, each offering a distinct, but not necessarily mutually exclusive, lens through which to interpret the political life of urban streetscapes. These frameworks can broadly be conceived as viewing the urban streetscape in a variety of ways. Three of the most prominent are listed below:

1. “city-text” where political regimes inscribe own values and authorized version of history (see also Gnatiuk & Glybovets 2020; Šakaja & Stanić 2017; Azaryahu 2012; Azaryahu 2011; Palonen 2008; Light 2004)
2. “cultural arena” where the politics of recognition are played out across the fault lines of race, gender, and class (see also Alderman & Inwood 2013; Alderman 2002; Dwyer & Alderman 2008; Rose-Redwood 2008a; Berg & Kearns 1996), and
3. “performative space” where different stakeholders play their performances via the varying practices of (re)naming and their acceptance, negotiation, contestation, or simply ignorance (see also Sysiö et al. 2021; Creţan & Matthews 2016; Light & Young 2014; Tucker & Rose-Redwood 2015; Marin 2012; Rose-Redwood 2008b)

According to Giraut and Houssay-Holzschuch (2016), the four main geopolitical contexts of (re)naming places are (1) conquest, including imperial, colonial, and national acts of domination; (2) revolution, involving a complete change of political system; (3) emergence; and (4) commodification. These four categories are not

mutually exclusive, but often overlap. Numerous scientific investigations have addressed these four contexts of renaming as they relate to colonialism and postcolonialism. Many of these contributions have focused on the hegemonic naming regimes enacted by colonists to erase local toponyms and impose their own toponymic system in order to claim territories (see, for example, Hui 2017; Wanjiru & Matsubara 2017; Bigon & Njoh 2015; Yeoh 1992). Other researchers have focused on the toponymic cleansing or rethinking of the colonial place names in the wake of independence (see, for example, Azaryahu 2019; Hui 2017; Wanjiru & Matsubara 2017; Bigon & Njoh 2015; Yeh 2013; Nash 1999). As this work has shown, the Indigenous populations of historically colonized territories often perceive imposed toponyms as culturally alienated embodiments of hostile colonial powers. Consequently, it is not unusual within postcolonial contexts for policies to be enacted which attempt to restore toponymic justice by return the right to name to the local Indigenous people (Listewnik 2021; Rose-Redwood et al. 2017).

Moore (2001) was one of the first to consider the post-Soviet historical context as postcolonial by arguing that the post-Socialist sphere shares a lot of essential features with postcolonial political regimes and by criticizing both post-Soviet studies and Anglo-Franco-focused, postcolonial studies for being too parochial. Despite the arguments against the complete convergence of post-Soviet and postcolonial contexts and their corresponding methodological approaches (see Kuzio 2020; Adams 2008; Velychenko 2002), scholars have demonstrated numerous overlaps between the nature of Western colonial regimes and both the Russian Empire and Soviet Union, arguing that Soviet economic, social, and cultural politics were clearly imperial and colonial in character (Kolodziejczyk & Şandru 2012; Lazarus 2012; Chernetsky et al. 2006).

These academic arguments can be expanded upon to include the toponymic reconfigurations within the post-Soviet sphere. According to Males (2014, 20), “place names had a systematic shift towards Russia” in the Soviet Union. This point was supported by a study of geographical names in Ukraine that evidenced their role as symbolic markers of geopolitical belonging, including to the Soviet realm (Gnatiuk & Melnychuk 2020a). Simultaneously, recent decommunization-driven toponymic transformations in Ukraine invoke certain parallels to and repercussions for the postcolonial discourse (Gnatiuk 2018). Employing toponymic data from Belarus, Basik shows that the Soviet regime “implemented a specific form of colonization [. . .] reflected in toponymic policies and practices” (2020b, 13). He asserts that the Belarusian toponymic system “serves as a symbolic reminder about the ideological and imperial superiority of the ‘Elder brother’ who implemented the strict ‘top-down’ hegemonic toponymic practices” (2020b, 13). Examples of these practices include inserting “the mental images” of the colonizers (Yeoh 1992); commemorating colonial “heroes” and officials (Azaryahu 2011); “othering” and “peripheralizing” the colonized population (Bigon & Njoh 2015); and producing a phenomenon of toponymic dispossession (Tucker & Rose-Redwood 2015).

The renaming of streets during post-socialist and postcolonial transitions may be considered an act of justice (Kovalov 2022). Specifically, transitional/retrospective justice is a legal and administrative process carried out after a political transition to address the repression and wrongdoing carried out by a past regime that has been toppled from power. This process may involve trials, purges, and reparations (Pettai & Pettai 2015; Elster 2004; Elster 2003).

### 3. Data and Methods

The study pursued several goals that required the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods. Therefore, we employed a mixed method approach to a variety of data sources. Covering both the process and result of de-Russification through a mixed method analysis, we sought to achieve more comprehensive, reasoned, and valuable results. The recent literature on critical toponomastics contains numerous indications of the effectiveness of this approach to better examine landscapes, spaces, and territories as performative and dynamic productions (Light & Young 2014; Rose-Redwood et al. 2010). According to Giraut and Houssay-Holzschuch (2016), “end product” names might be less revealing than the processes through which toponymic regimes are themselves constructed. Similarly, Brocket (2019) argues for incorporating various digital sources, including social media commentary, into a process-based analysis.

Firstly, in order to reveal the public discourse—including main narratives, motifs and objections for de-Russification in war-affected Ukraine—several sources were used, including online media reports and official documents issued by Ukrainian state bodies to regulate de-Russification. Specifically, we screened the official documents and publications issued by the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory (UINM)—the central executive body in Ukraine for the implementation of state policy in the field of restoration and preservation of national memory, whose activities are directed and coordinated by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine through the Minister of Culture. Additionally, we analyzed official statements of politicians regarding de-Russification, as well as the visions of and attitudes to de-Russification expressed by ordinary citizens on social media. At this stage of research, we also employed quantitative methods to show the extent of both colonial toponymic imprint

and ongoing de-Russification in terms of quantity and share of (re)namings. For this purpose, online media reports, naming catalogs, and recent official documents on the (re)naming of urban place names within the de-Russification framework were used alongside analytics and an online tool for tracking hodonyms in Ukrainian cities as of 2018 (Dukach 2018). The online tool used, Texty.org.ua, is based on the Open Street Map platform and CARTO, a geocoding service. Using this tool, it is possible to perform searches for specific street names in Ukrainian cities.

Secondly, to understand the embeddedness of the de-Russification process within the local historical, cultural, and geopolitical context, we established a database for the city of Vinnytsia that includes all hodonyms (names of streets, squares, etc.) commemorating prominent people. To achieve this, we used online media reports, cartographic and archival materials (city maps, naming catalogs), and recent official documents on the (re)naming of urban place names through de-Russification. Then, we classified prominent historical figures according to their contributions, ethnic origin, place of birth, contribution to the specific national culture, and, if possible, their attitudes toward Ukrainian culture and the national state project. We performed this classification to estimate the historical dynamics, in absolute and relative values, of toponyms that could be considered “Russian” or “Russia-related” (i.e., viewed as “colonial” during the ongoing de-Russification). Afterward, we analyzed whether or not certain toponyms have been renamed during the de-Russification in order to identify and rank more or less crucial “risk factors” of a historical figure’s name being purged from the symbolic space of a city. Simultaneously, to understand the de-Russification discourse taking place at the local level, we consulted local online news portals, as well as posts and comment threads on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Telegram).

Most critical toponomastic studies focusing on the post-Soviet space have concentrated on the political aspects of urban place names of capitals or large cities (Basik 2020a), although some recent researchers have addressed smaller—including non-capital—cities (see Gnatiuk 2022; Golomidova 2020; Kutsenko 2020). The research presented in this article focuses on the city of Vinnytsia, not known for having either strong nationalist sentiments or strong pro-Russian attitudes, with the aim of portraying an ideally average scenario of de-Russification in Ukraine. It is imperative to note that this case study focuses primarily on hodonyms commemorating prominent figures and does not address transferred geographical names—the other important category of the urban toponymicon in the context of post-Soviet decolonization (see Gnatiuk & Melnychuk 2020a for a situation in Ukraine just two years prior the outburst of de-Russification in 2022).

## 4. Findings

### 4.1 Street-name Changes throughout Ukraine

As explained in the introduction, before 2022, most Ukrainians practiced a kind of “presumption of innocence” with respect to the place names that were related to Russia but were not directly connected to communist ideology. The general thought process was that it was unreasonable to change a toponym named after a prominent Russian who had made outstanding accomplishments. Predictably, across Ukraine, during 1991–2021, we counted only 238 cases of renaming and 43 proposals to rename hodonyms that could be classified as de-Russification. This is a practically negligible amount when compared to the more than 52,000 hodonyms renamed due to decommunization (Yermolaieva & Honcharuk 2018). Most of the renamings we identified were localized in the western part of Ukraine and in the capital city of Kyiv (see fig. 1a). The cases of de-Russification often induced heated discussions (see Males & Deineka 2020; and Males 2016 on the renaming of the Moscow Bridge in Kyiv).

With the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, the prevailing attitudes in Ukrainian society toward Russian cultural markers in the country’s public sphere drastically changed, however. On the basis of media screening during the initial months of the invasion, we have detected four essential and potentially overlapping narratives expressed by ordinary people and local governments: (1) there are too many Russian cultural markers in Ukraine; (2) prominent Russians are to blame simply for being Russians; (3) there are no good Russians because all of them are/were Ukrainophobes; (4) prominent Russian historical figures were not outstanding people, and their achievements were either exaggerated, imaginary, or stolen from prominent people of other nations. According to these arguments, the “presumption of innocence” has changed to the “presumption of guilt”.

Following the Russian invasion, public discontent caused a striking wave of de-Russification of Russia-related toponyms in Ukraine, including hodonyms. From February to June 2022, according to the interactive map of de-Russification by the Ukrainian realty service LUN City, there were 993 hodonyms across Ukraine



that were changed as a function of de-Russification. This figure grew to 2,529 hodonyms in December 2022 (LUN Misto 2022). In the figure 1, *A* and *B* below, these developments are shown.



**Figure 1:** *A*, Geographical distribution of de-Russified hodonyms in Ukraine in 1991–2021 and *B*, after the full-scale Russian invasion in February–December 2022

As shown in the figure above, de-Russification of Ukrainian hodonyms took place across in nearly all government-controlled territories of Ukraine. However, there is a remarkable regional contrast apparent between the more affected west and center of the country and the less-affected south-east (fig. 1B). Importantly, these acts of toponymic de-Russification were largely a voluntary, bottom-up process initiated by local governments, journalists (via critical publications in the media), and ordinary citizens (via petitions and public appeals). Ukrainian national authorities initially made no attempts to regulate it, unlike their enforcement of decommunization.

## 4.2. Street-Name Changes in the Ukrainian City of Vinnytsia

Before the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, street-names in Vinnytsia were mostly uncontroversial. However, in the Spring of 2022, street names associated with the Russian colonial administration began to come to light. This discovery led to public demands to erase the respective toponyms from the Vinnytsia urban space. In response, some inhabitants countered that many of these historical figures had contributed to the development of the city and therefore deserved commemoration despite their links with Russia. Moreover, they expressed a fear that the purging of famous name sakes from Vinnytsia streets would diminish the local urban identity.

In the following passage, we present an authentic dialog that took place in the comments section of a Facebook posting by the Vinnytsia Historical Society. The heated discussion took place over the city administration's plans to rename certain streets in Vinnytsia as a part of its de-Russification campaign. In particular, eponymous hodonyms commemorating three historical figures are discussed:

1. Nikolai Pirogov/Mykola Pyrohov (in Russian and Ukrainian, respectively), an ethnic Russian physician who was born in Moscow and lived in Vinnytsia where he treated local peasants and established a free medical clinic
2. Hryhorii Artynov, a Russian-born 20<sup>th</sup> century architect, who designed Vinnytsia's modern city center
3. Mykola Ovodov, an ethnic Russian, born in the Voronezh governorate, who served as a mayor of Vinnytsia from 1899 to 1917

In June 2022, a debate over the continued commemoration of these three figured could be freely accessed by anyone on Facebook. We provide an English translation of passages excerpted from the original Ukrainian argument with minor stylistic corrections. We have replaced the author online names with the pseudonyms Users 1–4:

**User 1:** Well, in Vinnytsia, many streets commemorate “good Russians”—all sorts of Ovodovs, Tolstoys, Artinovs, Pirogovs, Pushkins [ . . . ]

**User 2 to User 1:** What is wrong with Artynov, Ovodov, and Pyrohov? Are you going nuts?

**User 1 to User 2:** It is you who is going nuts here. I repeat once again [ . . . ] all the listed Muscovites<sup>1</sup> are declared “good Russians”. That is, they are viewed through the lens of “Russian world” propaganda. That’s all.

**User 2 to User 1:** Please, learn about the city’s history, then write comments about “Russian world” propaganda.

**User 1 to User 2:** How can knowledge of the city history make a Muscovite a worthy person? How does a Muscovite imperial official become a non-Muscovite, and a propaganda poet, a non-propagandist? I advise you to learn history in order not to grind nonsense.

**User 2 to User 1:** Could you read about Artynov’s place of birth [Artynov was born in Chernihiv region, within contemporary Ukraine], about the activities of Artynov and Ovodov in Vinnytsia, and Pirogov’s contributions? It is a shame to live with people like you in the same city.

**User 1 to User 2:** Well, then you can move somewhere to Russia, nobody is stopping you. A Russian that was born somewhere in Ukraine but remained a Russian and worked in the imperial (that means occupying) administration is an enemy of Ukraine and deserves to be forgotten. Pirogov was an imperialist, and he basically did not invent anything that is attributed to him.[ . . . ]

**User 4 to User 1:** No problem. Please do something for Vinnytsia and the local community that could be proudly shown to Ukrainians and foreigners for centuries. And then we will name the street in your honor. Or is a Ukrainian surname the only criterion now and not actual contributions?

User 1 is an adherent of a “maximalist” approach to de-Russification. In User 1’s opinion, anyone who had any relationship to the Russian government should have their name purged from the symbolic space of the city. User 1 also deliberately uses the Russian variants of the names *Pirogov* and *Artinov* and calls them *Muscovites* instead of simply Russian. In doing so, User 1 humiliates their memory and denigrates User 2.<sup>2</sup>

In comparison to User 1, Users 2 and 4 expressed a more moderate position and argued that *Mykola Ovodov*, *Hryhorii Artymov*, and *Mykola Pyrohov* (notably, using the Ukrainian variants of their names) have contributed a lot to the city’s development and therefore deserve commemoration in the streetscape. User 3 also seems to disagree with User 1’s use of the Russian versions of the historical figures’ names.

Similar discussions over de-Russification process in Vinnytsia were carried throughout social media after the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Both ordinary residents of the city and governmental groups increasingly expressed concern over the high proportion of Russia-related hodonyms in the urban toponymicon. In January 2022, there were 234 hodonyms in Vinnytsia commemorating prominent figures. Among them, 66 (28.2%) were ethnic Russians; 8 (3.4%) were partial of Russian heritage; 69 (29.5%) were born within Russian; 84 (35.9%) contributed to Russian nation-building, warfare, culture, and science. Importantly, 34 (40.5%) of all these Russia-related figures who had had a street named after them in Vinnytsia had no biographical relationship to Ukraine, and 71 (84.5%) had no connection to Vinnytsia.

On March 26, 2022, a petition titled “De-Russification and commemoration of Ukrainian heritage in street names of Vinnytsia” was created via the service for online petitions E-DEM. The author of the petition made the following argument:

Many streets, squares, alleys, and institutions of our city are named after Russian figures of politics, literature, and art, who are not related to Vinnytsia and Ukraine in any way. These names have been generated by the policy of building a common all-Russian and all-Soviet cultural space. Alexander Pushkin has never been to Vinnytsia and has nothing to do with Ukrainian culture. Just like Leo Tolstoy, Saltykov-Shchedrin, Alexander Blok, and others. This is not a question of the quality of the works of Russian figures or artists. The problem is that their names, inscribed in our toponyms, leave no space for perpetuating the names of those who directly laid down their lives for the sake of Ukraine and Ukrainian culture. (Shatokhin 2022)

The author of the above petition created a list of 52 toponyms to be renamed. Of these, 49 commemorating prominent Russian-related historical figures.

Almost simultaneously with this petition, the Vinnytsia Historical Society (VHS)—a non-governmental organization that closely cooperates with the city administration on issues of local memory policy—made an appeal to the Vinnytsia community about its toponyms. The VHS wrote:

Our city should not have streets named after Moscow, Alexander Nevsky, Stepan Razin, Alexander Suvorov, Valentina Tereshkova, as well as a number of other toponyms [. . .] that fix in the mind the colonial past and the dominance of the Russian language, Russian culture, and the Russian version of our history. Instead Ukrainian heroes of the past and present should be duly honored in the city (2022).

In the VHS appeal, the residents of the city were invited to send ideas and proposals to Vinnytsia’s municipal Council for History, Cultural Heritage, and Toponymy.

On April 21, 2022, the Council listed 82 hodonyms that it recommended for de-Russification. The list included 72 prominent historical figures. The Council gave many reasons removing these figures’ names from the city’s toponymicon. Some of the most commonly noted justifications and their frequencies are the following: being ethnic Russians (54); lacking a biographical link to Vinnytsia (52); having no biographical link to Podolia (47); missing a biographical link to Ukraine (26); belonging to a Russian or Soviet political party or military unit (25); being used as propaganda for the Soviet or Russian political regime (14); fighting for the Soviet Union in Ukraine and/or against Ukrainian national liberation forces (including Ukrainian People’s Republic Army, Ukrainian Insurgent Army, and so on) (8); having their true achievements exaggerated by the Russian or Soviet propaganda (8); working on behalf of Russian or Soviet political regimes (8); supporting left-wing political ideas (which were used by the Bolsheviks to seize the power) (6); possessing an ideological attitude against Ukrainian culture and the Ukrainian state (5); participating in military massacres, engaging in acts of cruelty or suppression against Ukrainians and other nations (3). For only a few historical figures like the world-famous Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky, the Council made an exception.

In the absence of a representative survey, we cannot determine the quantitative proportions of supporters or opponents of the toponymic de-Russification in Vinnytsia. However, street polls conducted by local journalists in the Spring and Summer of 2022 recorded the opinions of Vinnytsia residents on the matter of de-



Russification (Korpan & Kurdiukov 2022; Chudnovskiy 2022). Some people unequivocally approved of de-Russification and cited war-related reasons. Three examples are provided below:

I am for renaming the streets with my hands, feet, and soul. During the war, I don't think people even question this. Vinnytsia cannot have a Moscow Street; let there be a Ukrainian Street instead. Or let it be Mariupol, Bucha, or Irpin Streets [cities that suffered the most from the advances of the Russian army in Spring of 2022] [. . .]. If the residents of this street had a father or son fighting, they would immediately remove this sign with the name Moscow. (April 2022; middle-age male) (Korpan and Kurdiukov 2022)

After the atrocities of the Russian army in Bucha, Irpin, and Mariupol, there should be no Russian generals and writers on the streets of Vinnytsia. (June 2022; female, age 23) (Chudnovskiy 2022)

Of course, it is necessary to change! This is not even a point of discussion [. . .]When you have a son, nephew, and son-in-law all at war, it is not difficult to say goodbye to such names. (April 2022; elderly female) (Korpan and Kurdiukov 2022)

Now a new Ukrainian history is being built and it is worth paying tribute to those people who are creating it (June 2022; male, age 21) (Chudnovskiy 2022)

However, there were also dissenting opinions. Some people defended a more selective approach to toponymic renaming. In June 2022, a 72-year-old male wrote, "Russian legacy must be cancelled. But, in particular, I would keep Pushkin Street in place. His writings are a part of global culture, not only Russian". There were also objections to radical de-Russification that had been voiced during the previous decommunization process. As a 38-year-old female reasoned in June 2022, "Each renaming entails the replacement of a bunch of documents, registration, and so on. Therefore, I am in favor of this process taking place in a balanced and calm manner". There were even some people who completely condemned de-Russification as a useless nuisance: "I am against renaming the street. And what does it accomplish? I'm used to this name. Let the city administration do something necessary [. . .]. Nothing will change from this", complained an elderly man in April 2022. In the same month, a young woman agreed, "Right now we have to deal with other issues. The name is the name; what can it affect? Before the war, it was not a shame to live here, but now it is a shame?" Finally, there were those who responded with complete indifference. As one woman quipped, "Let them do what they want: Moscow, Mariupol, even China Street—it doesn't matter"

In the end, the public discussion and official voting resulted in the renaming of 197 streets, squares, alleys, and so on in Vinnytsia. The renaming took place in four waves: 12 places were renamed in April 2022; 4 in May 2022; 158 in September 2022; and 23 in November 2022. Specifically, the names of 77 prominent historical figures were "purged" from the city for their relation to Russia. The chances of not being affected by de-Russification were 18.0% for ethnic Russians (10 unpurged people) and 15.9% for those born in Russia (11 unpurged people). Having a biographical link to the local or regional area substantially increased the chances of not being affected by de-Russification. While 7 out of 14 (50.0%) of historical figures without a connection had their names removed, only 8 out of 70 (11.4%) with a connection were selected for de-Russification. Having a link to Ukraine proved an even stronger protective factor for avoiding de-Russification: none of the Russia-related figures who lacked a biographical link to Ukraine "survived" de-Russification. Likewise, nobody who participated in Russian state-building or warfare escaped toponymic removal.

It is instructive to take a closer look at those 15 Russia-related figures whose legacy was untouched by de-Russification in Vinnytsia. Of this group, 7 were somehow connected to the local or regional context and were therefore considered important for local identity-building. Besides Pirogov, Ovodov, Arabei, and Tchaikovsky, this group included the aviation pioneer Alexander Mozhaysky (1825–1890); the painter Vasily Tropinin (1776–1857); and Ukrainian female writer of Russian descent, Marko Vovchok (1833–1907). The rest of the 8 figures were in some way related to Ukraine. They were Nikolai Gogol (1809–1852), a Russian writer of Ukrainian origin; Ilya Mechnikov (1945–1916), a Russian biologist who was born and lived in Ukraine; Vasily Vereshchagin (1842–1904), a Russian painter who helped prepare for print the series of paintings "Picturesque Ukraine"; Konstantin Ushinsky (1823–1871), a Russian pedagogue of Ukrainian origin; Ivan Aivazovsky (1817–1900), a painter of Armenian origin who was born and lived mostly in Crimea, Ukraine; Nikolai Amosov (1913–2002), a Ukrainian physician of Russian origin; Mikhail Yangel (1911–1971), a Ukrainian missile engineer of Russian origin; and Vladimir Vernadsky (1863–1945), a Ukrainian, Russian, and Soviet mineralogist and geochemist of Russian origin who was one of the founders and the first president of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. Thanks to the contributions of these individuals to the Ukrainian nation, their connections with Russia were "forgiven" and their names in Vinnytsia's toponymic landscape were preserved.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusions

The Ukrainian patterns of toponymic de-Russification shown in this article are not unlike other cases of toponymic cleansing performed by transitional societies in postcolonial and post-socialist contexts (see Basik 2020b; Bigon & Njoh 2015; Azaryahu 2011). As in Ukraine, such actions are often undertaken to renew the country's symbolic space, by removing unwanted symbols of toppled political regimes to make room for commemorating new national heroes. It can therefore be seen as a process of nation-building (Billig 1995). Notably, the similarity between the developments witnessed in Ukraine and those reported in a previous study of Belarusian toponyms (Basik 2020b), may indicate the possibility of linking the post-socialist and postcolonial paradigms in the field of critical toponomastics.

Simultaneously, the toponymic de-Russification in Ukraine may be seen as an example of transitional justice (Pettai & Pettai 2015; Elster 2004; Elster 2003) carried out to correct the toponymic actions of the Russian and Soviet colonial regimes and to restore the symbolic space of the country. This process of toponymic justice (Rose-Redwood et al. 2017) has manifestations of performativity in that it effectively passes judgement on toponyms before banishing them from the landscape. This kind of performance targets audiences both inside the country from people who demand this social action as well as outside the country including the regime or society whose symbols are no longer wanted. Therefore, as the present study demonstrates, place naming as a process and practice is a strategy employed to shape spaces where performative action is carried out (Rose-Redwood 2008b).

This analysis of Ukrainian de-Russification has also mirrored other study findings (see, for example, Yeh 2013) which have shown that the rethinking and erasure of toponymy in postcolonial settings can be substantially delayed in time and may occur gradually across several stages. However, as this research has also shown, belligerent, aggressive, geopolitical actions, such as the Russo-Ukrainian war, may radically alter the speed and course of toponymic change. The changing public attitudes towards the "Russian" place names in Vinnytsia exemplifies how street naming is "capable of exposing both the collaborative and conflictual nature of power relations" (Adebanwi 2012) and how the streetscape functions as a cultural arena where conflict can be perpetuated through symbolic means (Adebanwi 2012; Kadmon 2004).

The findings of this study also demonstrate that toponymic cleansing in postcolonial settings may neither be smooth nor straightforward, particularly given how deeply intertwined cultural legacies of former dominating and subjugated nations are on local, national, and even supranational levels (Rose-Redwood 2008b). In light of the past historical bias in favor of Russian place names, the current toponymic de-Russification movement may be seen as rebalancing the scales to make room for recognizing Ukrainian history and culture. Seen from this perspective, Ukrainian de-Russification may be considered as an act of "restorative justice". However, the accelerated and unsystematic nature of the de-Russification process can also result in lead to decisions that ignore or harm already shaped local identities. This negative potential outcome could lead to the de-Russification process being considered a "rigged trial" by a substantial part of the Ukrainian population. If this happens, a new wave of toponymic revisions may be triggered. Therefore, it is in the interest of Ukrainian society to ensure a balanced approach be taken. Only then can the Ukraine "undo the legal, institutional, and historical legacy of the Soviet era without repeating the Soviet approach of mandating one 'correct' interpretation of the past" (Shevel 2016).

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> *Moscovia* (or *Muscovy*) was the name of the Russian state. It was used in Western sources until the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In Ukraine, Russia is sometimes colloquially called *Moscovia* (or Московія), and Russians *Muscovites* (москвитини). This terminology is derogatory.

<sup>2</sup> See Kearns & Berg (2002) for a similar case where the pronunciation of place names is used as a performative action in New Zealand.

## References

- Adams, Laura. 2008. "Can We Apply Postcolonial Theory to Central Eurasia?" *Central Eurasian Studies Review* 7, no. 1: 2–7.
- Adebanwi, Wale. 2012. "Glocal Naming and Shaming: Toponymic (Inter)national Relations on Lagos and New York's Streets". *African Affairs* 111, no. 445: 640–661. <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/ads055>
- Afanasiev, Illia. 2020. "Renaming of Streets in Ukrainian Regional Centers during 2010–2019: Offensives and Compromises". *Ideology and Politics Journal* 16, no. 2: 321–339. <https://doi.org/10.36169/2227-6068.2020.01.00024>
- Alderman, Derek H. 2002. "Street Names as Memorial Arenas: The Reputational Politics of Commemorating Martin Luther King Jr. in a Georgia County". *Historical Geography* 30, no. 1: 99–120.
- Alderman, Derek H., and Joshua Inwood. 2013. "Street Naming and the Politics of Belonging: Spatial Injustices in the Toponymic Commemoration of Martin Luther King Jr". *Social & Cultural Geography* 14, no. 2: 211–233. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2012.754488>
- Azaryahu, Maoz. 2011. "The Critical Turn and Beyond: The Case of Commemorative Street Naming". *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies* 10, no. 1: 28–33.
- Azaryahu, Maoz. 2012. "Renaming the Past in Post-Nazi Germany: Insights into the Politics of Street Naming in Mannheim and Potsdam". *Cultural Geographies* 19, no. 3: 385–400. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474474011427267>
- Azaryahu, Maoz. 2019. "King George or King David? Renaming the Colonial Past in Israel". *Zeitgeschichte* 46, no. 1: 15–37. <https://doi.org/10.14220/zsch.2019.46.1.15>
- Azaryahu, Maoz, and Rebecca Kook. 2002. "Mapping the Nation: Street Names and Arab-Palestinian Identity: Three Case Studies". *Nations and Nationalism* 8, no. 2: 195–213. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1469-8219.00046>
- Balode, Laimute. 2012. "Place-names in the Urbanonymy of Riga: Mark of Identity". *Studii și Cercetări de Onomastică și Lexicologie* 5, no. 1–2: 17–28.
- Basik, Sergei, and Dzmitry Rahautsou. 2019. "Toponymic Politics and the Symbolic Landscapes of Minsk, Belarus". *Geographia Cassoviensis* 13, no. 2: 107–120. <https://doi.org/10.33542/GC2019-2-02>
- Basik, Sergei. 2020a. "Place Names as a Political Instrument in the Post-Soviet Realm: Introduction". *Journal of Geography, Politics and Society*, 10, no. 3: 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.26881/jpgs.2020.3.01>
- Basik, Sergei. 2020b. "Rethinking the Toponymic Politics in Belarus in the 20–21 Centuries: Toward the Post-Colonial Perspective". *Journal of Geography, Politics and Society* 10, no. 3: 5–15. <https://doi.org/10.26881/jpgs.2020.3.02>
- Basik, Sergei. 2022. "Encountering Toponymic (Geo)politics in the Post-Soviet States: Introduction". *Encountering Toponymic Geopolitics: Place Names as a Political Instrument in the Post-Soviet States*. Edited by Sergei Basik. Abingdon: Routledge, 1–27.
- Berg, Lawrence D., and Robin A. Kearns. 1996. "Naming as Norming: 'Race', Gender, and the Identity Politics of Naming Places in Aotearoa/New Zealand". *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 14, no. 1: 99–122. <https://doi.org/10.1068/d140099>
- Bigon, Liora, and Ambe J. Njoh. 2015. "The Toponymic Inscription Problematic in Urban Sub-Saharan Africa: From Colonial to Postcolonial Times". *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 50, no. 1: 25–40. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021909613510246>
- Billig, Michael. 1995. *Banal Nationalism*. London: Sage.

- Bojanowska, Edyta M. 2007. *Nikolai Gogol: Between Ukrainian and Russian Nationalism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Brocket, Tom. 2021. "Governmentality, Counter-Memory and the Politics of Street Naming in Ramallah, Palestine". *Geopolitics* 26, no. 2: 541–563. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2019.1590341>
- Chudnovskiy, Valerii. 2022. "‘Треба було прибрати все російське ще у 2014 році’. Вінничани про заміну назв вулиць під час війни" [‘It Was Necessary to Remove Everything Russian Back in 2014’: Residents of Vinnytsia on the Change of Street Names During the War]. *20 Khvylyn*. Accessed December 3, 2022. <https://vn.20minut.ua/Podii/treba-bulo-pribrati-vse-rosiyske-sche-u-2014-rotsi-vinnichani-pro-pere-11615310.html>
- Chernetsky, Vitaly, Nancy Condee, Harsha Ram, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. 2006. "Are We Postcolonial? Post-Soviet Space". *Publications of the Modern Languages Association* 121, no. 3: 819–836.
- Crețan, Remus, and Philip W. Matthews, P. 2016. "Popular Responses to City-Text Changes: Street Naming and the Politics of Practicality in a Post-Socialist Martyr City". *Area* 48, no. 1: 92–102. <https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12241>
- Dabaghyan, Artak A. 2011. "Place Renaming Practices in Post-War Karabakh/Artsakh". *Acta Ethnographica Hungarica* 56, no. 2: 403–427. <https://doi.org/10.1556/AEthn.56.2011.2.9>
- Costa, Augusto Dala. 2020. "Toponymy and the Issues of Memory and Identity on the Post-Soviet Tbilisi Cityscape". *Ideology and Politics Journal* 15, no. 1: 148–171. <https://doi.org/10.36169/2227-6068.2020.01.00007>
- Diesen, Glenn, and Conor Keane. 2017. "The Two-Tiered Division of Ukraine: Historical Narratives in Nation-Building and Region-Building". *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 19, no. 3: 313–329. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19448953.2017.1277087>
- Dukach, Yulia. 2018. "На чюю честь названі вулиці України" [In Whose Honor are the Streets of Ukraine Named?]. Accessed October 26, 2022. <https://texty.org.ua/d/2018/streets/>
- Dwyer, Owen J., and Derek H. Alderman. 2008. "Memorial Landscapes: Analytic Questions and Metaphors". *GeoJournal* 73, 3: 165–178. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-008-9201-5>
- Elster, Jon. 2003. "Emotions and Transitional Justice". *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 86, no. 1/2: 17–40.
- Elster, Jon. 2004. *Closing the Books: Transitional Justice in Historical Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Giraut, Frédéric, and Myriam Houssay-Holzchuch. 2016. "Place Naming as Dispositif: Toward a Theoretical Framework". *Geopolitics* 21, no. 1: 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2015.1134493>
- Gnatiuk, Oleksiy. 2018. "The Renaming of Streets in Post-Revolutionary Ukraine: Regional Strategies to Construct a New National Identity". *Acta Universitatis Carolinae Geographica* 53, no. 2: 119–136. <https://doi.org/10.14712/23361980.2018.13>
- Gnatiuk, Oleksiy. 2022. "Nation-Building by Virtue of the Local Renaissance: ‘Exemplary’ Decommunization of Street Names in Vinnytsia, Ukraine". *Encountering Toponymic Geopolitics: Place Names as a Political Instrument in the Post-Soviet States*. Edited by Sergei Basik. Abingdon: Routledge, 49–65.
- Gnatiuk, Oleksiy, and Anatoliy Melnychuk. 2020a. "Geopolitics of Geographical Urbanonyms: Evidence from Ukrainian Cities". *Acta Universitatis Carolinae Geographica* 55, no. 2: 255–268. <https://doi.org/10.14712/23361980.2020.19>
- Gnatiuk, Oleksiy, and Anatoliy Melnychuk. 2020b. "Ideologic Storms in the Still Waters: Postrevolutionary Life of Urban Spaces in Vinnytsia, Ukraine". *Spatial Conflicts and Divisions in Post-socialist Cities. The Urban Book Series*. Edited by Valentin Mihaylov. Cham: Springer, 171–188. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-61765-3\\_10](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-61765-3_10)
- Gnatiuk, Oleksiy, and Victoria Glybovets. 2020. "Do Street Status and Centrality Matter for Post-Socialist Memory Policy? The experience of Ukrainian cities". *Geographia Polonica* 93, no. 2: 139–161.
- Golomidova, Marina. 2020. "Municipal Toponymic Policy as a Tool for Translation of Regional Identity: A Case of Modern Kazan (Russia)". *Journal of Geography, Politics and Society* 10, no. 3: 42–54. <https://doi.org/10.26881/jpgs.2020.3.05>
- Hui, Dennis Lai Hang. 2019. "Geopolitics of Toponymic Inscription in Taiwan: Toponymic Hegemony, Politicking and Resistance". *Geopolitics* 24, no. 4: 916–943. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2017.1413644>

- Kadmon, Naftali. 2004. "Toponymy and Geopolitics: The Political Use—and Misuse—of Geographical Names". *The Cartographic Journal* 41, no. 2: 85–87. <https://doi.org/10.1179/000870404X12897>
- Kangaspuro, Markku, and Jussi Lassila. 2017. "From the Trauma of Stalinism to the Triumph of Stalingrad: The Toponymic Dispute Over Volgograd". *War and Memory in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus*. Edited by Julie Fedor, Markku Kangaspuro, Jussi Lassila, and Tatiana Zhurzhenko. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 141–170. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-66523-8\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-66523-8_5)
- Katchanovski, Ivan. 2006. "Regional Political Divisions in Ukraine in 1991–2006". *Nationalities Papers* 34, no. 5: 507–532. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00905990600952939>
- Kaşıkcı, Mehmet Volkan. 2019. "The Soviet and the Post-Soviet: Street Names and National Discourse in Almaty". *Europe-Asia Studies* 71, no. 8: 1345–1366. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2019.1641586>
- Kearns, Robin A., and Lawrence D. Berg. 2002. "Proclaiming Place: Towards a Geography of Place Name Pronunciation". *Social & Cultural Geography* 3, no. 3: 283–302. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1464936022000003532>
- Kołodziejczyk, Dorota, and Cristina Șandru. 2012. "Introduction: On Colonialism, Communism and East-Central Europe—Some Reflections". *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 48, no. 2: 113–116. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449855.2012.658242>
- Korpan, Nataliia, and Mykhaïlo Kurdiukov. 2022. «Я руками, ногами й душею за зміну»: що жителі Московської думають про перейменування вулиці [I Am for a Change With my Hands, Feet and Soul: What the Residents of Moscow Street Think about Renaming Their Street]. *20 Khvylyn*. Accessed December 3, 2022. <https://vn.20minut.ua/Podii/ya-rukami-nogami-y-dushevu-za-zminu-scho-zhiteli-moskovskoyi-dumayut-p-11584020.html>
- Kovalov, Maksym. 2022. "When Lenin Becomes Lennon: Decommunization and the Politics of Memory in Ukraine". *Europe-Asia Studies* 74, no. 5: 709–733. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2022.2078478>
- Kuczabski, Alexander, and Alina Boychuk. 2020. "Decommunization of Urban Toponymy in Ukraine: Causes and Consequences". *Journal of Geography, Politics and Society* 10, no. 4: 8–16. <https://doi.org/10.26881/jpgs.2020.4.02>
- Kudriavtseva, Natalia. 2020. "Reconfiguring Identities Within the Cityscape: Ideologies of Decommunization Renaming in Ukraine". *Ideology and Politics Journal* 15, no. 1: 63–82. <https://doi.org/10.36169/2227-6068.2020.01.00004>
- Kudriavtseva, Natalia, and Mykola Homanyuk. 2020. "Contested Names in the Toponymic Landscapes of Post-Soviet Space". *Ideology and Politics Journal* 15, no. 1: 4–10. <https://doi.org/10.36169/2227-6068.2020.01.00001>
- Kutsenko, Denys. 2020. "Experience of Implementing Decommunization Laws in Eastern Ukraine: A Kharkiv Case". *Journal of Geography, Politics and Society* 10, no. 3: 55–64. <https://doi.org/10.26881/jpgs.2020.3.06>
- Kuzio, Taras. 2020. "Empire Loyalism and Nationalism in Ukraine and Ireland". *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 53, no. 3: 89–90. <https://doi.org/10.1525/cpcs.2020.53.3.88>
- Lazarus, Neil. 2012. "Spectres Haunting: Postcommunism and Postcolonialism". *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 48, no. 2: 117–129. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449855.2012.658243>
- Light, Duncan. 2004. "Street Names in Bucharest, 1990–1997: Exploring the Modern Historical Geographies of Post-Social Change". *Journal of Historical Geography* 30, no. 1: 154–172. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0305-7488\(02\)00102-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0305-7488(02)00102-0)
- Light, Duncan, and Craig Young. 2014. "Habit, Memory, and the Persistence of Socialist-Era Street Names in Postsocialist Bucharest, Romania". *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 104, no. 3: 668–685. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00045608.2014.892377>
- Light, Duncan, and Craig Young. 2017. "The Politics of Toponymic Continuity: The Limits of Change and the Ongoing Lives of the Street Names". *The Political Life of Urban Streetscapes: Naming, Politics, and Place*. Edited by Reuben Rose-Redwood, Derek Alderman, and Maoz Azaryahu. Abingdon: Routledge, 185–201.
- Lindsay, Neil, and Hong-Key Yoon. 2021. "Toponyms on the Ice: The Symbolic and Iconographical Role of Antarctic Research Base Names". *Polar Record* 57, no. e22, 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S003224742100022X>



- Listewnik, Marta. 2021. "A fo bont, bid ben: Colonial and Postcolonial Ideologies in Debates on Renaming the Second Severn Crossing". *Linguistics Vanguard* 7, no. s5: 20200102. <https://doi.org/10.1515/lingvan-2020-0102>
- LUN City. 2022. "ЛУН Місто створив карту дерусифікованих вулиць" [LUN City Created a Map of De-Russified Streets]. Accessed December 15, 2022. <https://petition.e-dem.ua/vinnysia/Petition/View/2394>
- Males, Liudmyla. 2016. Дискурс декомунізації в Києві [Decommunization Discourse in Kyiv]. *Sotsiologichni Studii* 9, no. 2: 16–21.
- Males, Liudmyla, and Artemiy Deineka. 2020. "Diskurs dekomunizatsii Kieva v opyte pereimenovaniij" [The discourse of Kyiv's decommunization in the frame of toponymic renaming]. *Ideology and Politics Journal* 15, no. 1: 115–147. <https://doi.org/10.36169/2227-6068.2020.01.00006>
- Malikov, Azim. 2018. "The Politics of Memory in Samarkand in Post-Soviet Period". *International Journal of Modern Anthropology* 11, no. 2: 127–145. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325150482\\_The\\_politics\\_of\\_memory\\_in\\_Samarkand\\_in\\_post-Soviet\\_period](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325150482_The_politics_of_memory_in_Samarkand_in_post-Soviet_period)
- Manucharyan, Nelli. 2015. "The Reflection of Communist Ideology in the Street Renaming Policy in Soviet Yerevan (1921–1939)". *Analytical Bulletin* 8: 122–155.
- Marin, Anaïs. 2012. "Bordering Time in the Cityscape. Toponymic Changes as Temporal Boundary-Making: Street Renaming in Leningrad/St. Petersburg". *Geopolitics* 17, no. 1: 192–216. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2011.574652>
- Melnchuk, Anatoliy, and Oleksiy Gnatiuk. 2019. "Public Perception of Urban Identity in Post-Soviet City: The Case of Vinnytsia, Ukraine". *Hungarian Geographical Bulletin* 68: 37–50. <https://doi.org/10.15201/hungeobull.68.1.3>
- Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine. 2022a. "Створено Експертну раду МКІП з питань декомунізації та дерусифікації" [The Expert Council of the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy on Issues of Decommunization and de-Russification has Been Created]. Accessed December 15, 2022. <https://mkip.gov.ua/news/7262.html>
- Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine. 2022b. "ТОП-10 найбільш вживаних в Україні 'російських' урбанонімів, рекомендованих до перейменування Експертною радою МКІП" [TOP-10 'Russian' Hodonyms in Ukraine Recommended for Renaming by the Expert Council of the MCIP]. Accessed December 15, 2022. <https://mkip.gov.ua/news/7468.html>
- Moore, David Chioni. 2001. "Is the Post- in Postcolonial the Post- in Post-Soviet? Toward a Global Postcolonial Critique". *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 116, no. 1: 111–128. <https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2001.116.1.111>
- Nash, Catherine. 1999. "Irish Placenames: Post-colonial Locations". *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 24, no. 4: 457–480.
- Palonen, Emilia. 2008. "The City-Text in Post-Communist Budapest: Street Names, Memorials, and the Politics of Commemoration". *GeoJournal* 73, no. 3: 219–230. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-008-9204-2>
- Pettai, Eva-Clarita, and Vello Pettai. 2015. *Transitional and Retrospective Justice in the Baltic States*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rose-Redwood, Reuben. 2008a. "From Number to Name: Symbolic Capital, Places of Memory, and the Politics of Street Renaming in New York City". *Social & Cultural Geography* 9, no. 4: 431–452. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649360802032702>
- Rose-Redwood, Reuben. 2008b. "'Sixth Avenue is Now a Memory': Regimes of Spatial Inscription and the Performative Limits of the Official City-Text". *Political Geography* 27, 8: 875–894. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2008.11.002>
- Rose-Redwood, Reuben, Derek Alderman, and Maoz Azaryahu. 2010. "Geographies of Toponymic Inscription: New Directions in Critical Place-Name Studies". *Progress in Human Geography* 34, no. 4: 453–470. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132509351042>
- Rose-Redwood, Reuben, Derek Alderman, and Maoz Azaryahu. 2017. "Contemporary Issues and Future Horizons of Critical Urban Toponymy". *The Political Life of Urban Streetscapes: Naming, Politics, and Place*. Edited by Reuben Rose-Redwood, Derek Alderman, and Maoz Azaryahu. Abingdon.: Routledge, 309–319.

- Różycki, Bartłomiej. 2017. "Renaming Urban Toponymy as a Mean of Redefining Local Identity: The Case of Street Decommunization in Poland". *Open Political Science* 1: 20–31. <https://doi.org/10.1515/openps-2017-0004>
- Šakaja, Laura, and Jelena Stanić. 2011. "Other(ing), Self(portraying), Negotiating: The Spatial Codification of Values in Zagreb's City-Text". *Cultural Geographies* 18, no. 4: 495–516. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474474011414636>
- Saparov, Arsène. 2017. "Contested Spaces: The Use of Place-Names and Symbolic Landscape in the Politics of Identity and Legitimacy in Azerbaijan". *Central Asian Survey* 36, no. 4: 534–554. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02634937.2017.1350139>
- Shatokhin, Mykhailo. 2022. "Дерусифікація та вшанування української спадщини в назвах вулиць Вінниці" [De-Russification and Commemoration of Ukrainian Heritage in Vinnytsia Street Names]. *E-DEM*. Accessed November 18, 2022. <https://petition.e-dem.ua/vinnytsia/Petition/View/2394>
- Shevel, Oхана. 2016. "Decommunization in Post-Euromaidan Ukraine: Law and Practice". *Ponars Eurasia – Policy Memos*. Accessed October 22, 2021. <https://www.ponarseurasia.org/decommunization-in-post-euromaidan-ukraine-law-and-practice/>
- Swart, Mia. 2008. "Name Changes as Symbolic Reparation after Transition: The Examples of Germany and South Africa". *German Law Journal* 9, no. 2: 105–120. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S2071832200006337>
- Sysjö, Timo, Onat Ülker, and Nurevşan Tokgöz. 2021. "Assembling a Critical Toponymy of Diplomacy: The Case of Ankara, Turkey". *Geopolitics* 28, no. 1: 416–438. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2021.1912022>
- Tucker, Brian, and Reuben Rose-Redwood. 2015. "De-Colonizing the Map? Toponymic Politics and the Rescaling of the Salish Sea". *The Canadian Geographer/Le Géographe Canadien* 59, no. 2, 194–206. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cag.12140>
- Ukrainian Institute of National Memory. 2022a. "Перейменування вулиць Києва: пропонуємо вдосконалити процедуру та зберегти ряд назв" [Renaming the Streets of Kyiv: We Suggest Improving the Procedure and Preserving a Number of Names]. Accessed October 21, 2022. <https://uinp.gov.ua/pres-centr/novyny/pereymenuvannya-vulyc-kyyeva-proponuyemo-vdoskonalyty-proceduru-ta-zberegty-ryad-nazy>
- Ukrainian Institute of National Memory. 2022b. "МКІП та УІНП оприлюднили рекомендації щодо пам'ятних об'єктів, пов'язаних з історією та культурою Росії й СРСР" [The Ministry of Culture and Information Policy and the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory Have Published Recommendations on Monuments Related to the History and Culture of Russia and the USSR]. Accessed November 21, 2022. <https://uinp.gov.ua/pres-centr/novyny/mkip-ta-uinp-oprylyudnyly-rekomendaciyi-shchodo-pamyatnyh-obyektiv-povyazanyh-z-istoriyeyu-ta-kulturoyu-rosiyi-y-srsr>
- Ukrainian Institute of National Memory. 2022c. "УІНП та МКІП розпочали серію круглих столів 'Дерусифікація, декомунізація та деколонізація у публічному просторі'" [The Ukrainian Institute of National Memory and the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy Started a Series of Round Tables "De-Russification, Decommunization and Decolonization in Public Space"]. Accessed October 21, 2022. <https://uinp.gov.ua/pres-centr/novyny/uinp-ta-mkip-rozpochaly-seriyu-kruglyh-stoliv-derusyfikaciya-dekomunizaciya-ta-dekolonizaciya-u-publichnomu-prostorii>
- Velychenko, Stephen. 2002. "The Issue of Russian Colonialism in Ukrainian Thought: Dependency, Identity and Development". *Ab Imperio* 1: 328–367. <https://doi.org/10.1353/imp.2002.0070>
- Vinnytsia Historical Society. 2022. "Публічне звернення істориків до мешканців Вінницької міської територіальної громади» [Historians' public appeal to residents of the Vinnytsia urban territorial community]. Facebook. Accessed December 03, 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/historyofvinnytsia/photos/a.1043501872359899/5104131476296898/?type=3>
- Vuolteenaho, Jani, and Lawrence D. Berg. 2009. "Towards Critical Toponymies". *Critical Toponymies: The Contested Politics of Place Naming*. Edited by Jani Vuolteenaho and Lawrence D. Berg. Farnham: Ashgate: 1–18.
- Wanjiru, Melissa Wangui, and Kosuke Matsubara. 2017. "Street Toponymy and the Decolonisation of the Urban Landscape in Post-Colonial Nairobi". *Journal of Cultural Geography* 34, no. 1: 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08873631.2016.1203518>

- Yeh, Yun Tsui. 2013. "Erased place names' and nation-building: A case study of Singaporean Toponyms". *Asia-Pacific Research Forum* 59: 119–155.
- Yeoh, Brenda S. A. 1992. "Street Names in Colonial Singapore". *Geographical Review* 82, 313–322.
- Yermolaieva, Viktoriia, and Yevheniia Honcharuk. 2018. "Скільки вулиць та міст перейменовано у рамках декомунізації?" ["How Many Streets and Cities Were Renamed as Part of Decommunization?"]. *Hromadske Radio*. Accessed November 18, 2022. <https://hromadske.radio/podcasts/rankova-hvylya/skilky-vulyc-ta-mist-pereymenovano-u-ramkah-dekomunizacii>
- Young, Craig, and Sylwia Kaczmarek. 2008. "The Socialist Past and Postsocialist Urban Identity in Central and Eastern Europe. The Case of Łódź, Poland". *European Urban and Regional Studies* 15, no. 1: 53–70. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0969776407081275>
- Young, Craig, and Duncan Light. 2001. "Place, National Identity and Post-Socialist Transformations: An Introduction". *Political Geography* 20, no. 8: 941–955. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0962-6298\(01\)00039-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0962-6298(01)00039-7)

## Notes on the Contributors

**Oleksiy Gnatiuk** is Assistant Professor at the Department of Economic and Social Geography at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv in Ukraine. His current research interests, among the other aspects of human geography, include critical study of post-socialist and post-communist place names and naming in Ukraine. His research examines identity-building, memory politics, and political performativity.

**Anatoliy Melnychuk** serves as Associate Professor at the Department of Economic and Social Geography at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv in Ukraine. In the field of onomastics, his research deals with commodification of place names as well as the phenomena of de-communization and decolonization of toponymy in Ukraine.

**Correspondence to:** Oleksiy Gnatiuk, Department of Economic and Social Geography, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv; 60 Volodymyrska Street; 01033 Kyiv, Ukraine. Email: [Oleksii.gnatiuk@knu.ua](mailto:Oleksii.gnatiuk@knu.ua)