

Street Renaming in Post-Socialist Romania: A Quantitative Analysis of Toponymic Change

Mihai Stelian Rusu

Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu

mihai.rusu@ulbsibiu.ro

Paper Presented at the 2021 ASN World Convention, 5-8 May 2021

Do No Cite Without the Permission of the Author

Place, Power, and Political Change: The Geo-politics of Place-names

In the decades following the Soviet collapse, the wind of change that could be listened blowing along the Moskva riverbed “down to Gorky Park” – as the Scorpions’ insightful lyrics put it – has swept across Central and Eastern Europe bringing substantial sociopolitical renewal. The structural changes occurred during the period of postsocialist transformations¹ encompassed the institutional realms of politics, economy, and culture, as well as the social structures inherited from the former socialist societies. At the microlevel of the lifeworld, these currents of postsocialist change have also reshaped the structures of everyday life. Besides the replacement of the party-state system with political pluralism through democratization and of the centrally planned economy with market capitalism through privatization, the fall of state-socialism entailed a “reordering of the worlds of meaning” together with the “reconfiguration of space and time” (Verdery, 1999, pp. 33, 39).

These sweeping transformations, as well as the structural continuities that have survived the regime change, are well documented in the literature and will therefore not be of academic concern for the purposes of this paper (Hann, 2002; Svašek, 2008; Kürti and Skalník, 2009). It is the reconfiguration of space and time – to use Katherine Verdery’s inspired words – as revealed in postsocialist street name changes that will capture our scholarly attention. Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) together with the countries from the Former Soviet Union (FSU) have been hotbeds

¹ A note on terminology: we follow scholars who have insistently pointed out the teleological trappings implied in the notion of “postcommunist transition” so specific to the transitological school of thought (Rostow, 1970). Instead, we will employ throughout the paper the term “postsocialist transformations” to emphasize both the multiple pathways opened up by the disintegration of state socialism as well as the open-ended process of the transformations it entailed (as opposed to the linear trajectory and pre-defined destination implied by “transition”) (for a full critique, see Burawoy and Verdery, 1999).

of research for social scholars interested in understanding the toponymic effects of political change (Giraud and Houssay-Holzschuch, 2016). In this paper we set out to contribute to this strand of scholarship by charting the winds of postsocialist change blowing on Romania's urban street nomenclature. This examination of the patterns of toponymic transformation occurred in the country's cultural landscape will be prefaced by theoretical considerations on urban space and street names.

Streets constitute the material infrastructure of the urban social life. It is in these ordinary places of everyday life that people interact on a daily basis – exchanging goods in the marketplace, flirting with strangers within fleeting encounters, and sometimes by trading punches in fist fights. In rather extraordinary circumstances, these otherwise mundane socio-spatial settings of everyday life become the arenas of dramatic political action. Streets provide the material stage on which the revolutionary dramas are played out. No roads paved the way to more revolutionary actions than the cobbled streets of Paris, from the Revolution of 1789, through the long 19th century – the July Revolution of 1830, the February Revolution of 1848, the Commune of 1871 – to the students' protests of 1968 and the *Gilets jaunes* movement of 2019. Conversely, streets could also be turned into antirevolutionary devices, when they become the materialization of political technologies of power, such as urban planning. Whereas barricading the streets was a “revolutionary technique” pioneered by the Parisians in their sedition against authority (Douglas, 2007, p. 31), the Haussmannian reconstruction of the city under Napoleon III was a political project implemented to deem revolt impossible (Benjamin, 1999, p. 11) [1935]. As shown time and again in the case of Paris throughout the long 19th century (Hobsbawm, 1962), revolutions are made and unmade in the streets. Besides being the *locus* of political action, streets are also prime *targets* of political action. As such, streets are not only geographical sites of political struggle, they could equally be turned into political realms of historical memory (Nora, 1999). This becomes especially salient in the wake of a significant power shift, when the regime change is toponymically written into the streetscape.

A thriving corpus of scholarship, articulated under the banner of “critical toponymies,” has disentangled the connections between politics (power), linguistics (naming), history (the past), and geography (space) by documenting street name changes in times of political unrest and societal transformations (Vuolteenaho and Berg, 2009; Rose-Redwood, Alderman, and Azaryahu, 2018). Scholars working at the disciplinary crossroads of political sociology and socio-cultural geography

(Azaryahu, 1996, 1997; Alderman, 2002; 2008; Rose-Redwood, 2006; 2008; Rose-Redwood, Alderman, and Azaryahu, 2009, 2018) have compellingly argued that place/street-naming is an unmistakably political act of exercising the nominative power over the landscape. Assigning a nomenclature to a geographical space is certainly more than simply organizing the landscape for merely pragmatic reasons (such as efficient navigation and rational administration). Attributing names to a territory involves a process of toponymic inscription by which those endowed with the power of (re)naming implant into the landscape their political values, ideological ethos, and historical memories. It is through place/street-names that state formations and other forms of organized power construct regimes of spatial inscription and legitimate themselves through devising political geographies of public memory (Rose-Redwood, Alderman, and Azaryahu, 2010).

In this study we draw on the theoretical premises of critical toponymies to examine the changes in Romania's urban street nomenclature during the period of postsocialist transformation. The following section will establish the chronotopic background for this endeavor by setting out the historical (temporal) and regional (spatial) context relevant to the study of toponymic change in postsocialist Romania. As such, we will start by detailing the Soviet politics of place-names. We will then restrict the analytical scope to address the place-name politics within socialist Romania. After detailing the methodological approach underpinning the data collection process and the analytical strategy employed in this study, the paper proceeds with charting the cultural landscape of postsocialist toponymic change in urban Romania. The spatial analysis aiming at unpacking the regional patterns of street name changes will be complemented with a second analysis focused on unraveling the temporality of toponymic transformations unfolded during Romania's postsocialism.

Communism and the Soviet Politics of Place-names

“Nothing is so unpredictable as Russia's past,” goes a sardonic aphorism (Wertsch, 2004, p. 77). Indeed, the Soviet past's notorious instability was revealed time and again in history schoolbooks and, above all, in the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, both of which were constantly re-written in order to keep up with the wiggling Party line (Rusu, 2013). The future of the Soviet past remains as unpredictable (Adler, 2005), as the transitional politics of postsocialist memory waver between a “politics of anamnesis” and a “politics of amnesia” (Rusu, 2017). The Soviet Union's ever-shifting

liaison with its mercurial past was matched only by its convoluted relationship with geographical space. This is because, as one scholar rightfully put it, “since the October Revolution of 1917, the map of the Soviet Union has been in a continuous state of flux” (Bursa, 1985, p. 161).

After seizing state power, toponymy featured on top of the Soviet political agenda. As scholars working in critical toponymies have pointed out time and again, renaming the landscape in the aftermath of a significant power shift pertains to an all but necessary “ritual of revolution” (Azaryahu, 1997, p. 479). In times of major political change, to uproot the legacy of the former regime, “toponymic cleansing” achieved through renaming the geographical nomenclature constitutes a prerequisite of inscribing the values, ideology, and symbols of the new political regime onto the landscape. The Soviet Revolution made certainly no exception from this general rule. Quite the contrary, massive changes in place-names across the country were made, with six towns having their names changed during the very first year after the October Revolution.

In a seminal study foreshadowing the approach later consolidated in the field of critical toponymies, G. R. F. Bursa (1985) had delineated several phases of the political changes of the Soviet town names:

(1) The first wave of renaming place-names was launched in the immediate wake of the revolution and continued during the early 1920s. This initial phase was motivated by an “anti-tsarist drive” targeting the toponymic cleansing of any “reactionary” place-name from the Soviet geographical nomenclature (religious names included).

(2) Lenin’s death in January 1924 generated a flurry of renaming various towns in the memory of the leader. Within the year of his death, six towns have adopted some variation of Lenin’s name, including the former tsarist capital, which changed its name from Petrograd to Leningrad. Although the first place-naming after a living party leader dated back to 1919, it was after Lenin’s death that “the habit of naming towns after party leaders became very popular with the Soviet government” (Bursa, 1985, p. 167).

(3) The peak of this “age of [living] personalities” was reached in the 1930s, when the fashion of granting the names of living party leaders to at least a town had become a massive toponymic phenomenon in the Soviet Union. The 1930s peak was followed by a postwar anticlimax, as the Soviet government seemed “exhausted by the passion for renaming of the thirties and early forties” (Bursa, 1985, p. 177).

(4) The toponymic dossier was reopened in the wake of Nikita Khrushchev's 1956 condemnation of Stalin's cult of personality. A mass removal of personal names from the Soviet Union's geographical nomenclature followed suit and in 1957 the Central Committee of the Communist Party passed a decree forbidding the naming of towns (or any other geographical feature, streets included) after living persons (Bursa, 1985, p. 179). Stalin's name was uprooted from the Soviet map in 1961, after a government decree ordered the removal of the former leader in all its nominal permutations (among others, Stalingrad, named thus in 1925, was renamed Volgograd in 1961).

(5) The last two decades of the Soviet Union were a time of paucity of toponymic change. The political landscape fashioned and refashioned during the first half a century of socialism remained largely in place, subjected to minimal transformations, until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, which opened the flood gates of a rather inconsistent pattern of postsocialist toponymic change (Gill, 2005).

These place-name changes in the Soviet territory were echoed horizontally throughout the socialist bloc after the end of the Second World War (e.g., Bursa, 1994 documents the case of town names in communist Bulgaria). At a second level, the ebbs and flows of toponymic changes in geographical nomenclature were vertically reflected at the microscale of each city and town, where streets have also made the subject of recurrent renaming. Relevant case studies in this regard are the analyses which have documented street name changes in several capital cities of socialist states, in particular East Berlin (Azaryahu, 1986, 2011) and Bucharest (Light, Nicolae, and Suditu, 2002).

What these studies have shown is that the dynamics of toponymic changes revealed by G. R. F. Bursa (1985) in the geographical nomenclature of Soviet place-names which unfolded after the October Revolution until the fall of the Soviet Union (1917–1991) was played out similarly across the socialist bloc, at the macroscopic level of town names within each country, as well as at the microscopic level of street nomenclatures within each town. Whereas the pattern and sequence were largely the same, what has varied was the time scale, which outside the Soviet Union was reduced to less than half a century (1945–1989). This means that the *triptych sequence of socialist toponymic change* – consisting in (a) the revolutionary urge of constructing a communist political landscape followed by (b) a new wave of renaming during de-Stalinization, and then by (c) a fading away of the political passion for changing the geographical namescape as

the regime entered its mature phase – occurred in the socialist countries outside the Soviet Union at a much increased tempo.

In Romania, the socialist authorities were as keen as their Soviet counterparts in reconfiguring the country's toponymic system. After seizing complete state power in late 1947, a vast, all-encompassing operation was set in motion which revealed the *scalar politics of socialist toponymic change*: (1) at the most macroscopic level, the name of the country itself was changed into the Romanian People's Republic (*Republica Populară Română*, RPR) to reflect the political transformation from a dynastic monarchy to a socialist republic; (2) another macro-scalar program of toponymic change was embedded into the successive territorial administrative reforms started in 1950 and continued in 1952, 1956, and 1960 which reorganized the country according to the Soviet model in regions, raions, town, and communes (Sora, 2012). It was in this context that the names of I. V. Stalin and V. I. Lenin were granted to regions and to Bucharest's raions respectively.

Third, (3) reflecting a *mezzo-scalar* level of toponymic change was the nation-wide program carried out by the central government which targeted the names of towns and villages throughout the country. The city of Braşov (Kronstadt) was renamed Oraşul Stalin (*Stalin City*) in 1950 (Decree no. 211, 1950) and was now the seat of the Stalin Region (Pintilescu, 2009). The following year, the Decree 226 issued on 15 December 1951 brought massive changes in Romania's place names system. This toponymic revolution was driven by the desire to erase "the mismatch between the existing place name and the regime of popular democracy," that is to say, socialist ideology (Official Bulletin, 1951, pp. 1175-1176, own translation). Throughout the People's Republic, thousands of human settlements (mostly villages) were renamed in a bid to erase the legacy of the monarchy and the religious denominations. In their place, the socialist regime inscribed into the country's toponymic system its own ideological ethos, either personified in (a) *historical figures* such as leaders of social movements ranging from feudal and pre-modern riots (Gheorghe Doja; Horia, Cloşca and Crişan) to modern national revolutions (Tudor Vladimirescu; Nicolae Bălcescu) and (b) *the domestic socialist pantheon* (Elena Pavel, Vasile Roaită, Ada Marinescu, Filimon Sârbu, Leonte Filipescu, I. C. Frimu, and Ştefan Gheorghiu) or institutionalized in (c) *the political calendar of Romanian socialism* (23 August [1944], 6 March [1945], 30 December [1947], 11 June [1948]) and (d) *abstract political values and concepts* (Progresul, Libertatea, Victoria) (Nicolae, 2000). Many of these place names celebrating the heroes of early socialism were replaced after in the 1960s, after Romania took distance from

Moscow and entered the path of national communism (Verdery, 1991). Already in 1960, the city and region named after Stalin for a full decade were back-named into Braşov. The Decree nr. 799 from 1964 brought about a new wave of massive place names changes, with 879 localities renamed (Craiu, 2012). Although the decree removed the pantheon of socialist heroes from the landscape (e.g., the town Ştefan Gheorghiu was renamed into Isaccea, Tulcea, while the commune Filimon Sîrbu became Moviliţa, Dobrogea), the regime institutionalized the memory of its late leader, Gheorghe-Gheorghiu Dej, which gave its name to the town of Oneşti in 1965 to mark his death. (The Soviet Union also honored the legacy of the Romanian leader by renaming the town of Liski in the Voronezh region into Georgiu-Dezh, see Bursa, 1985, p. 183).

Finally, (4) a micro-scalar politics of toponymic change was pursued at the level of each locality. Here, a decentralized, but centrally-orchestrated, political action of revising the urban nomenclature including street names, but also the names of schools, factories, stadia, hospitals, libraries, and other geographical features, was carried out (Rusu, 2019a; Croitoru, Rusu, and Rusu, 2015, p. 147). No aspect of this urban nomenclature, however trivial or insignificant, was spared from the socialist authorities' nominal fervor. Besides changing the institutional namescape epitomized in schools, theatres, and other public entities, the socialist rulers exercised their nominative power over seemingly mundane socio-spatial settings such as bakeries and grocery shops (Light, Nicolae, and Suditu, 2002, p. 140). It is on these *micro-scalar politics of street name change* carried out at the level of each locality but embedded within a macroscopic, nation-wide process of political transformation, that we will focus our analytical attention in the empirical sections of this paper.

The Decree of 1964 regarding the renaming of villages was already a sign of ideological exhaustion on the toponymic front as the regime has reached political maturation. The turn towards nationalism injected fresh blood into an otherwise ideologically exhausted regime. But the new cultural politics of protochronism found less ground in street nomenclature than in other cultural arenas such as the arts and literary production (Verdery, 1991). The 1960s did bring about changes in the urban toponymies, which were aligned to the old-new tropes of nationalism prevailing during the interwar period. It was within this re-Russification/re-Romanianization process that the landscape was purged of the many symbols of the Soviet Union which were toponymically inscribed in the previous decades. The legal provisions issued during the 1960s regarding the (re)renaming of place/street names are indicative of these wider trends. In this regard, the Decree

no. 859 issued by the State Council in 1966 stipulated that street names should reflect the local economic, geographical, and historical particularities which meant that the regime was now promoting politically “neutral” and descriptive names. This curious depoliticization of the streetscape was further accentuated by the explicit prohibition of naming the landscape after living persons. Moreover, while the formal jurisdiction over naming the streetscape lied with the regional authorities (*Sfaturile Populare Regionale*), in the cases of streets named after personalities, the decision was taken at the central level by the State Council of the Socialist Republic of Romania (*Consiliul de Stat al Republicii Socialiste România, R. S. R.*).

After the regime change of 1989, purging the landscape from the material and symbolic artefacts of the former socialist order has been a priority on the new authorities’ political agenda. Changing the institutional namescape, including the street nomenclature, along with the removal of statues and of other communist symbols from public spaces became an imperative in the postsocialist authorities’ bid to mark the break with the past and to legitimize the new political order. The administrative process underpinning the street name changes in postsocialist Romania is detailed in Table 1 below in terms of the legal provisions and the institutional jurisdictions over the nominative power.

Table 1. Institutional jurisdiction and legal provisions over street naming, 1989–2019

Period	Institutional jurisdiction	Legal provision
26 December 1989 – 20 March 1990	Popular County Councils (<i>Consiliile Populare Județene</i>) and the Popular Council of Bucharest (<i>Consiliul Popular al Municipiului București</i>)	Decree no. 386 from 27 October 1977
21 March 1990 – 29 October 1990	The County Mayoralties (<i>Primăriile județene</i>) and Bucharest City Hall (<i>Primăria Municipiului București</i>)	Decree-Law no. 100 from 21 March 1990
30 October 1990 – March 1992	Prefectures (<i>Prefecturi</i>) and Bucharest City Hall (<i>Primăria Municipiului București</i>)	Amendment to the Decree-Law no. 100 from 30 October 1990
March 1992 – 29 August 2002	County Councils (<i>Consiliile Județene</i>) and the General Council of Bucharest (<i>Consiliul General al Municipiului București</i>)	Law no. 69 from 28 November 1991
30 August 2002 onwards	Local Councils (<i>Consiliile Locale</i>)	Ordinance no. 63 from 30 August 2002

The first ideologically motivated street name changes done in the immediate aftermath of the regime overthrow were ironically based on a law issued by the very socialist order (Decree no. 386 from 27 October 1977). It was only on 21 March 1990 that the Decree-Law no. 100 regarding

the attribution and changing of place names was published. In its preamble, the decree-law explicitly stated the ideological reasons underpinning the legal measure.

“Following the victory of the revolution of 22 December 1989 it is necessary to establish new norms of attributing and changing place names, given that an important number of localities, economic and socio-cultural units, and other objective have been named after political and historical events from the dictatorship, as well after persons from the former regime, which are not in accordance with the renewals of social and political life in Romania.”

A year later, the administrative reform of 1991 (Law no. 69 from 28 November 1991 regarding the local public administration) grounded the juridical premises for the creation of County Councils (*Consilii Județene*) as authorities of public administration at the county level. After their effective constitution following the first postsocialist democratic local elections held on 9 and 23 February 1992, the nominative power over the urban nomenclature was transferred from the Prefectures to the County Councils.

The next major legal threshold came a decade later, with Ordinance no. 63 from 30 August 2002 regarding the attribution and change of place names, which further decentralized the power over (re)naming the urban landscape by passing this responsibility to the Local Council (*Consiliul Local*). However, some leverage was nevertheless kept in place, as the Ordinance stipulated that the decisions drafted by local authorities which include naming or renaming an objective after personalities or historical, political, and cultural events can be adopted only after they have been approved by the naming commission (*Comisia de atribuire de denumiri*) functioning within the Prefecture of each county. In addition to documenting the changing legal framework regulating toponymic change, these judicial milestones will become relevant in analyzing the temporality of street name changes in postsocialist Romania, which was shaped by these shifting administrative jurisdictions over naming the urban landscape.

Data and Method

Scholarship done on the politics of streetscape in general and those studies documenting the street name changes in particular have been the driving force behind the “critical turn” in the field of toponymy. Researchers working in this strand of inquiry have extensively documented how street nomenclature is renamed after a significant political transformation in order to legitimate the change. Casting their empirical nets in cities around the globe, political sociologists and social and cultural geographers have produced impressive corpora of knowledge that form the core of critical

toponymic studies. However valuable this collection of studies is, it is not without its methodological shortcomings. Our critique leveled at extant scholarship on the politics of street names is structured along three main lines, referring to (1) a methodological predilection for single case studies, based on (2) qualitative approaches which are marked by (3) data limitations with empirical scopes restricted mainly to the historical, central core of the cities under investigation.

The large majority of papers published on street name politics, including the by-now classical contributions to critical toponymies in the postsocialist context (Light, 2004 on Bucharest; Gill, 2005 on Moscow; Palonen, 2008 on Budapest) are methodologically based on a *single case-study design*. Such studies masterfully chart the dynamics of toponymic change in various cities around the world, but nevertheless remain bound to exploring *particular* cities which are analyzed as disembedded from the wider social nexus. This casuistic approach grounded on a methodological particularism is further undermined by the proclivity of focusing almost exclusively upon capital cities. However, recent scholarship has offset this imbalance by taking stock of street name changes in other, regional cities (e.g., Chloupek, 2019 on Slovakia's multiethnic second city of Košice; Rusu, 2019b on the Romanian[ized] Saxon city of Sibiu/Hermannstadt).

Adding another wrinkle to the criticism already made, scarce attempts have been made to perform a *comparative analysis* of street name changes in multiple locations. An exception in this regard is Zoran Stiperski et al's (2011) study on urban nomenclature in eight Central European cities, including five non-capital towns. However, even when overcoming the *capitalcentric* bias by including into analysis various regional urban settlements, researchers still restricted their empirical scope only upon the central, historical core of these cities (e.g., Stiperski et al, 2011, p. 191). We argue that such methodological decisions reproduce the *central fallacy* observed when employing a single case-study methodology focused on the capital city at a different scale, by examining only the central streets of regional cities.

It was already hinted that *empirical exhaustivity* is not a hallmark of extant literature in critical toponymies. That is to say, with few exceptions – e.g., Mihai Stelian Rusu's (2019) longitudinal study of Hermannstadt/Sibiu between 1829–2019 – researchers have resorted to sampling criteria through which they have filtered out their data. This means that, even when focusing on a single case study, the analysis is based on an incomplete dataset (usually, only the central streets from the historical core of the cities are kept). Even scanty are the papers based on

complete datasets of street names at the national level. In reviewing the literature on the politics of place names, we came across only one such study, authored by Daniel Oto-Peralías (2017) and based on the complete Spanish street nomenclature consisting of more than 700,000 street names. Nevertheless, Oto-Peralías' work does not explore toponymic change, as it is interested in using street names as "socio-cultural data," more specifically as indicators of religiosity.

Moreover, most of the scholarship done in toponymic studies are qualitative in their methodological approach. In this regard, Jan Tent's (2015) numerical survey of all articles on toponymy published in *Names: A Journal of Onomastics* turns out to be revealing. Of the 316 toponymy papers appeared in *Names* between 1952–2014 (Volume 1 to 62), 223 employed qualitative methods (70.57%), while only 64 were quantitative (20.25%). Another collection of 29 papers resorted to mixed-methods (9.18%) (Tent, 2015, p. 67). The relative deficit of quantitative research is further aggravated by the fact that even when scholars of toponymy do resort to crunching numbers, the statistical analyses they perform are largely unsophisticated. This holds true even for some of the canonical works done in critical toponymies, where researchers have restrained their statistical apparatus to exploring toponymic change through univariate and descriptive statistics (Light, 2004; Gills, 2005; Stiperski et al, 2011).

Against the background of these methodological shortcomings and data limitations, this paper sets out to examine quantitatively the patterns of toponymic change in postsocialist Romania based on a complete dataset of urban street nomenclature at the national level. For this analytic purpose, what was needed was an empirical dataset comprising the entire street names as of 1989, together with the complete set of street renaming done afterwards. Several methodological challenges had to be overcome in constructing such a dataset. We started, first, (1) by compiling a complete dataset of street nomenclature as existing in 2018, based on data provided by the Romanian Permanent Electoral Authority (*Autoritatea Electorală Permanentă*). The Registry of Voting Stations (*Registrul secțiilor de votare din țară*) contains all the streets from across Romania which we have used to construct the complete national street nomenclature as of 2018 (over 100,000 streets, including rural roads). Rural settlements were excluded from the analysis since in many parts of the country (Transylvania and Moldavia in particular), villages do not usually have named streetscapes, whereas only in Wallachia and Dobruja these rural streets are consistently named. Keeping them in the overall sample would have produced regional discrepancies mainly due to these different street naming patterns in rural areas.

After excluding rural streets, we obtained a collection of 49,457 street names from all urban settlements in Romania. However, this was the current situation of Romania's urban street nomenclature as of 2018. For analyzing postsocialist toponymic change, especially when it comes to calculating the percentages of street name changes, we needed to have the street nomenclature as of 1989. This was especially relevant since in the last thirty years, the size of the national road network has increased significantly. By not removing the new streets opened and named after 1989, the percentages of toponymic change would have been substantially underdetermined. To identify the new streets, (2) we requested data from the municipalities of all urban settlements from Romania (320 cities and towns). After removing these streets developed and named during the period of postsocialist transformation ($N = 12,377$), we remained with a dataset comprising 37,080 entries covering the complete street nomenclature of urban Romania as of 1989.

Third, (3) we requested data regarding the street name changes after 1989 from all of the 42 Prefectures (*Instituția Prefectului*) and County Councils (*Consiliul Județean*). After adding these data to the dataset from which we have subtracted the street names newly named after 1989, we obtained the complete collection of street nomenclature existing before the regime change ($N = 37,080$), in which we knew exactly the current and former name of each street. It is based on this triangulated empirical dataset that we have performed the statistical analyses detailed in the following sections of this paper.

Charting Postsocialist Toponymic Change in Romania's National Urban Nomenclature

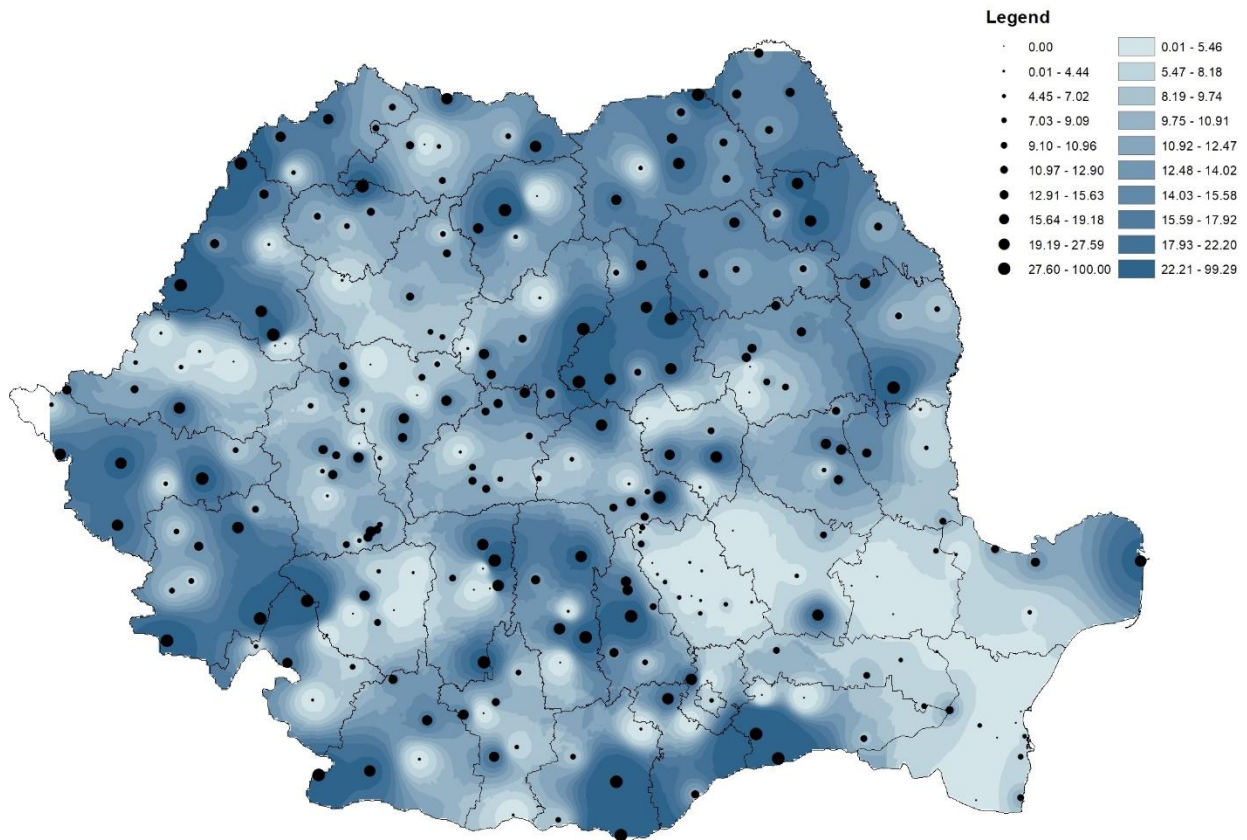
The Spatiality of Toponymic Change

Overall, after the regime change of 1989, we recorded 4,565 street name changes throughout Romanian cities and towns. Given the total number of 37,080 streets existing in urban Romania before the overthrow of the socialist order, the scope of toponymic change can be established at 12.31 percent. Against the lack of other similar studies on different national contexts, relevant comparisons with other countries from the Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the Former Soviet Union (FSU) cannot be made. The only available comparative frames of references are particular case studies conducted at city level. Some relevant benchmark for making sense of our findings is provided by the percentages of toponymic change calculated for Bucharest and other capital cities from the CEE and FSU region. Between 1990–1997, when the great majority of street renaming was done, in Bucharest only 6.6 percent of street names were changed (288 out of 4369)

(Light, 2004, p. 160). In East Berlin, there were only 80 street renamed following the dissolution of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) (Azaryahu, 1997, p. 484), while in Moscow, which was several times larger than Bucharest both in terms of population and the size of road network, by 1997 only 153 streets have been renamed (Argenbright, 1999, p. 14). These numbers reported in the literature suggest even smaller percentages of toponymic change in East European capital cities.

Our own calculations indicate a slightly lower percentage of street name changes occurred in Bucharest than the number reported by Duncan Light. During the entire postsocialist period, we recorded 297 toponymic revisions in Bucharest's 1989 streetscape totalizing 4,941 streets, which further diminishes the percentage to barely above six percent (6.01%). Compared to the overall national value of 12.31 percent, the extent of street name changes recorded in Romania's capital city is twice smaller. Such a significant difference has two important implications for the study of toponymic change: first, (1) it substantiates empirically the *capitalcentric* critique leveled against much of the scholarship done in critical toponymies by highlighting that the capital cities are not representative of countries as a whole. When extending the territorial frame of reference beyond the capital city, street name changes examined at the national level tell a significantly different story, at least quantitatively (in terms of the extent of changes brought to the urban nomenclature), if not qualitatively (regarding the ideological nature of street name changes). And secondly, (2) this counterintuitive discrepancy found between the capital city and the overall national picture casts doubt upon the centrality thesis implicitly grounding the extant scholarship, according to which capital cities should be the main target of toponymic change in the aftermath of a power shift.

Figure 1. The map of street name changes in postsocialist Romania



Source: author's own elaboration

The spatial patterning of street name changes in postsocialist Romania is provided in Figure 1 above. The map was generated with ArcGis software using the Inverse Distance Weighting (IDW) interpolation method. The darker the shades, the greater is the percentage of postsocialist toponymic revision calculated at the locality level. Data were structured in ten classes based on quantile method of classification. What we get by visualizing the data spatially using a Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping technology is a highly heterogenous postsocialist landscape of toponymic change. Despite the fuzzy picture, some regional clusters do stand out. We have already pointed out Bucharest's exceptional case, with a significantly lower percentage of street name changes in comparison to the overall national situation. White spots on this map of toponymic change in postsocialist Romania correspond to the regions of the Bărăgan Plain (Prahova, Buzău, Brăila, and Ialomița counties) and Dobruja (in the port city of Constanța, only 6.43 percent of the urban nomenclature was renamed). To complicate this already intricate picture,

several outliers from these regions also deserve to be mentioned. Whereas in Buzău and Tulcea, in the administrative seats of the counties with the same names, the percentage of street name change is 4.72 and 13.21 respectively, extensive toponymic revisions were made in two other, less administratively important, towns (Pogoanele, 20.83% and Sulina, 25%). Such findings further undermine the assumption that links the extent of toponymic change with the importance of a town in the national administrative system.

At the other end of the spectrum, Banat, Crișana (North-Eastern Transylvania at the border with Hungary) and the Szeklerland (*Ținutul Secuiesc*) stand out as regions consistently darker in the shades of toponymic change. Table 1 below, which complements the map with numeric data presenting the regional variation of street name changes, indicates Banat as the region with the most extensive postsocialist renaming. As the cradle of the Romanian Revolution of 1989, Banat and its regional capital in particular – Timișoara – were places where extensive renaming was done in the urban street nomenclature. The city of Timișoara, where the protests that eventually rippled throughout the country and overthrew the socialist regime started on 16 December 1989 (Siani-Davies, 2007), more than a quarter of the streetscape was renamed (26.37%). After the regime change, the local administration of Timișoara embarked on an ambitious project of institutionalizing the memory of the legacy of the revolution onto its urban landscape. As such, local authorities did more than simply granting the central avenues and squares, previously carrying denominations celebrating the communist order, with street names commemorating the Revolution, as was the common practice throughout the country; they also renamed previously politically neutral and descriptive street names which received the names of the martyrs fallen during the bloody events of December 1989. Fifty-three streets from across the city were renamed to carry the memory of the martyrs, a municipal decision that generated mixed reactions from the city residents (Crețan and Matthews, 2016). Similarly high percentages were recorded in another “martyr city”² from the Banat region (Lugoj, 28.44%).

² “Martyr city” is a title granted to localities as a recognition for their heroism and sacrifices during the Romanian Revolution of December 1989. At present, fifteen cities and towns from across Romania hold this status.

Table 2. Regional variations of postsocialist toponymic change

Region	Unchanged		Renamed		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Banat	1,820	79.37	473	20.63	2,293	100
Crișana–Maramureș	3,126	83.27	628	16.73	3,754	100
Oltenia	2,426	85.15	423	14.85	2,849	100
Moldova	5,327	86.46	834	13.54	6,161	100
Transylvania	7,800	87.78	1,086	12.22	8,886	100
Muntenia	5,650	89.64	653	10.36	6,303	100
Dobruja	1,985	92.58	159	7.42	2,144	100
Bucharest–Ilfov	4,381	93.41	309	6.59	4,690	100
Total	32,515	87.69	4,565	12.31	37,080	100

Source: Author's own calculations

Chi-square test: $X^2 = 452.482$, $df = 7$, $p < 0.001$

The Szeklerland (*Ținutul Secuiesc*) and Partium (*Crișana*, and the Bihor county in particular) are regional areas where ethnic power relations interfere with streetscape politics. Demographically, Hungarian communities here are either majority (56.82% in the Szeklerland) or constitute consistent minorities legally empowered with minority rights (24.02% in Bihor) (Romanian Population Census, 2011).³ The historically tense relation between Romanians and Hungarians came to be played out, among other sociospatial settings, into the street nomenclature, which was shaped by the *ethnopolitics of urban toponymies* specific of such ethnically-mixed regions. Table 3 below presents the distribution of postsocialist toponymic change in terms of the percentage of Hungarians in the locality's demographic composition. It shows that in those cities and towns where Hungarians constitute an absolute ethnic majority (above 50% in local demographics), the percentage of street name changes after the fall of communism is almost three times larger than in those localities with small or no Hungarian minorities (below the threshold of 20%) (29.25% compared to 11.53%).

³ The Romanian law of local public administration (*Legea administrației publice locale*, 2001) stipulates that in those localities where citizens belonging to national minorities are over 20 percent, local authorities have to ensure the use of that minority language in relation with them (art. 19). Another section of this law specifies that in these cases "local authorities will ensure that the name of the locality and those of the public institutions under their authority will also be inscribed in the maternal language of citizens belonging to the national minority (art. 76, section 4). However, no mention is made regarding street names.

Table 3. Ethnic patterning of toponymic change in postsocialist Romania

Proportion of Hungarians	Unchanged		Renamed		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Absolute majority (above 50%)	970	70.75	401	29.25	1,371	100
Legally empowered minority (between 20–50%)	1,903	86.34	301	13.66	2,204	100
Small or no minority (under 20%)	29,642	88.47	3,863	11.53	33,505	100
Total	32,515	87.69	4,565	12.31	37,080	100

Source: author’s own calculation based on Romania’s Population Census of 2011

Chi-square test: $X^2 = 386.984$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.001$

There are historical and political reasons that can account why in these ethnically-mixed areas the extent of toponymic change is significantly higher than in other areas with less ethnic diversity. Soon after seizing state power in the aftermath of the Second World War, the new communist authorities engaged in a thorough territorial and administrative reform modelled after the Soviet policy. In 1952, the Magyar Autonomous Region (*Regiunea Autonomă Maghiară*) was created in the Szeklerland, which granted formal autonomy to the Hungarian Transylvanian community within the “Stalinist political ecosystem” of the Romanian People’s Republic (Bottoni, 2018). This ethnically defined territorial unit, renamed Mureş – Autonomous Magyar Region (*Regiunea Mureş – Autonomă Maghiară*) in 1960, was eventually dismantled in 1968. This timing is far from arbitrary. During the mid-1960s, as the Romanian state started to distance itself from the political tutelage of Moscow, ethno-nationalism returned with a vengeance after it was repressed during the previous two postbelic decades.

With the rise to power of Nicolae Ceauşescu, during the 1970s nationalism with a strong ethnic undertow was thoroughly re-appropriated and integrated within the socialist framework to form the ideological mutant of national communism (Verdery, 1991; Rusu, 2015). It was under Nicolae Ceauşescu’s cultural politics of ethno-national communism that brutal measures of Romanianizing the cities of Transylvania, where Hungarians were still in majority, were pursued. Measures of “demographic engineering” (McGarry, 1998) was employed as the state directed the movement of Romanian workers in the industrial enterprises established in areas with Hungarian population to de-Magyarize these regions (e.g., Cluj/Kolozsvar, Târgu Mureş/Marosvásárhely).

Demographic engineering was pursued in parallel with cultural measures. Among the latter, the urban nomenclatures underwent a similar renationalization, as many Soviet names and symbols were replaced with Romanian ones, including in the former Hungarian dominated cities.

After the regime change of 1989, these cities inherited a street nomenclature with strident Romanian names that bore little if any significance to the long, pre-Romanian history of the local community. Toponymic revision and the ethnopolitics of street name changes that unfolded in these multiethnic regions were part of a process of reclaiming the city and asserting the local ethnic identity. However, such a re-Magyarization of the urban landscape was not without conflictual consequences. In some towns, these politics of urban toponymy have produced ethnic backlashes. In 2010, the local council of Sfântu Gheorghe (Sepsiszentgyörgy), the administrative seat of Covasna county, adopted three decisions through which 38 streets were renamed, many of which were granted the names of prominent Hungarian personalities. The 1st of December 1918 Street – one of the city's main avenues – was splintered in three arteries (Sándor Petőfi Street, Mihai Eminescu Street, and 1st of December 1989 Street) in what the Romanian minority perceived as an attempt at undermining the symbolism of the day of Transylvania's union with Romania. The Civic Forum of Romanians from Covasna, Harghita and Mureș (*Forumul Civic al Românilor din Covasna, Harghita și Mureș* – FCRCHM) contested the decisions in court, which canceled the renaming and ordered to restore the previously held names (Mediafax, 2011). After almost a decade of judicial disputes, during which time the local authorities have defied the court rulings, in 2018, the court issued a definitive ruling ordering the mayor to mark correctly the 1st of December 1918 Street (Mesagerul de Covasna, 2018).

The case of Pecica, a small town in Arad county, is paradigmatic in another regard. The commune became a town in 2004, and one of the criteria of urbanization was the administrative imperative to have named streets. For this purpose, local authorities had to devise a street nomenclature. To avoid ethnic conflict between the Romanian majority and Hungarian minority, the mayor convinced the local council to back up his proposal of numbering the streetscape. As a consequence, in 2001 a decision was passed that attributed Arabic numerals to each of the town's 120 streets (Iancu, 2016). The model of evading ethnic conflict first pioneered on the streets of Pecica has been taken over and implemented in other localities, such as in the village of Oșorhei (Bihar) in 2014. As the mayor of this village argued, numbers are universal and lack ethnic markers. Unlike in Sfântu Gheorghe (Covasna), where the judicial conflict over the streetscape was

eventually settled out in court but the ethnic tension sizzles on, numerals are thought to be the same for Romanians and Hungarians alike. However, as was ironically observed in media reports, “1” is still pronounced differently, “unu” [ˈu.nu] in Romanian and “egy” [ˈɛj.] in Hungarian. As opposed to street names, phonetics cannot be brought under administrative control. For this reason, a media outlet scornfully described the municipality’s policy of numbering the streetscape as implementing “bilingual numbers” (eBihoreanul, 2018).

Combining the visual data displayed in Figure 1 with the tabular statistics summarized in Table 1 above, roughly four main regional clusters can be delineated in terms of the extent of postsocialist toponymic change: (1) Banat and Crișana–Maramureș in the South- and North-Eastern parts of the country, where extensive street renaming has been done; (2) the Szeklerland in central Romania, where the Hungarian dominated local administration re-ethnicified the urban landscape and street toponymy; (3) the rest of Transylvania, Oltenia, Muntenia, and Moldova whose regional scope of toponymic revision revolve closely around the national averages; and (4) Bucharest–Ilfov and Dobruja, where the least street name changes were recorded after the fall of the socialist order.

The main conclusion emerging from these findings is the uneven distribution of toponymic changes that renders a highly heterogeneous cultural landscape in this regard in postsocialist Romania. Further probing based on more sophisticated statistical analyses need to be employed to disentangle and make sense of the spatiality of street name changes. What we have nevertheless pointed out are two aspects that shape the dynamic of street name changes in postsocialist urban Romania: (1) the *epicentric factor* with regards to the Romanian Revolution of 1989, which places the Banat region at the very heart of toponymic revision, and (2) the *ethnopolitics of urban toponymies*, which highlights that ethnic political struggles within the local administration were one of the driving forces behind the changes in urban street nomenclature, as revealed in the areas where large ethnic minorities have a say in local politics (Hungarians in particular).

The Temporality of Toponymic Change

Scholars working in critical toponymies have repeatedly contended that street names are configured at the intersection of geography (space) and history (time). Maoz Azaryahu in particular – the theorist of the “political semiotics” paradigm of reading urban nomenclature as “city-text” – has pointed out the “semantic displacement” underpinning the process of naming a

street with commemorative denominations. Commemorative street names not only conflate space and time (Azaryahu, 1996); “history becomes geography” as political authorities institutionalize a version of the past onto the street nomenclature through spatial practices of toponymic inscriptions that articulate a political geography of public memory (Rose-Redwood, Alderman and Azaryahu, 2009, p. 459). In a paper bringing together political geography and memory studies, Azaryahu (2012) further explored the “space-time matrix of public commemorations” enacted in the memory of Israel’s slain prime-minister Yitzhak Rabin. Along similar lines, other scholars have successfully employed Mikhail Bakhtin’s notion of “chronotope” in conceiving of the “cityscape as a multi-layered chronotopos for selective memory-building” (Marin, 2012, p. 194). What comes out of these theoretical considerations is the idea that the temporal dimension is indeed crucial in understanding the nature of place names as loci of memory.

In assessing the temporality of postsocialist toponymic change in Romania, we were inspired from another, more empirical, line of inquiry. In his now classic paper on street name changes in Bucharest between 1990–1997, Duncan Light (2004) has documented the temporal patterning of toponymic change by unravelling a specific pattern of the annual variations of street renaming operated in Romania’s capital city. He has shown that most toponymic revisions in Bucharest’s street nomenclature were performed in the immediate aftermath of the Revolution. Almost half of the street name changes were done in 1990 (42.4%), while the following years have brought increasingly less renaming. After 1993, “the process tailed off and by 1997 the ideologically motivated renaming of streets was complete” (Light, 2004, p. 160).

A similar study extended to the national scale was not possible due to the unavailability of data. In examining the *timing of postsocialist toponymic change* beyond Bucharest, we have resorted to a multiple case study design that would allow for regional comparisons to be made. As such, five major cities from across Romania’s various regions, for which data was available, were selected. To facilitate the reading of the results, presented in Table 4 below, data were organized in temporal periods instead of presenting them along annual variations. Overall, throughout the three decades of postsocialist transformations, in the five regional centers we have recorded 513 street name changes. Three-quarters of these renaming were made in the first years after the regime change (76.02% during the 1990-1994 period). Echoing the temporal dynamics we have observed in the case of Bucharest, toponymic changes continued a constantly decreasing trend, until the process was re-intensified after the administrative reform that transferred the power of naming the

urban streetscape from the county authorities (*Consiliile Județene*) to local councils (*Consiliile Locale*) in 2002. However, as the data in Table 4 show, local municipalities were slow to assume their new nominative power conferred upon them by the Government Ordinance of 2002 and to enact further changes into the street nomenclature. A new round of toponymic revisions came rather late, after 2010, when about five percent of postsocialist street name changes were made (4.87% during the 2010-2014 period). Afterwards, the process again subdued.

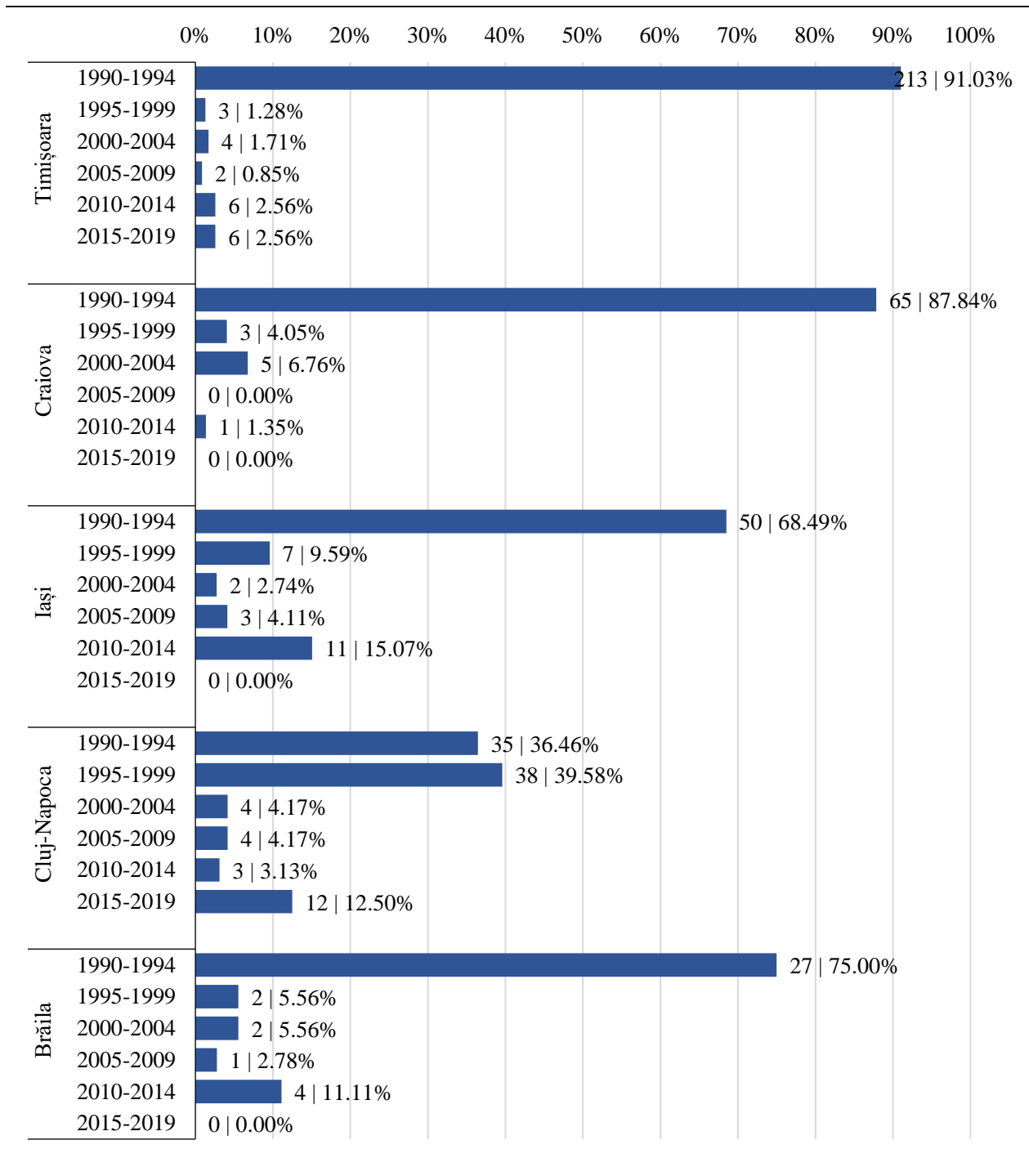
Table 4. Temporality of street name changes in five Romanian cities

Period	Timișoara (Banat)		Craiova (Oltenia)		Iași (Moldavia)		Cluj-Napoca (Transylvania)		Brăila (Muntenia)		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
1990-1994	213	91.03	65	87.84	50	68.49	35	36.46	27	75.00	390	76.02
1995-1999	3	1.28	3	4.05	7	9.59	38	39.58	2	5.56	53	10.33
2000-2004	4	1.71	5	6.76	2	2.74	4	4.17	2	5.56	17	3.31
2005-2009	2	0.85	0	0.00	3	4.11	4	4.17	1	2.78	10	1.95
2010-2014	6	2.56	1	1.35	11	15.07	3	3.13	4	11.11	25	4.87
2015-2019	6	2.56	0	0.00	0	0.00	12	12.50	0	0.00	18	3.51
1990-2019	234	100	74	100	73	100	96	100	36	100	513	100

Source: Author's own calculations

Figure 2 below presents these data graphically. A common pattern underlies the changes in urban nomenclature across these cities. With the solitary exception of Cluj-Napoca, where the toponymic revision gained momentum with considerable delay, in all the other cities the great majority of street name changes have been timed in the first years of postsocialism. Postsocialist change in Cluj-Napoca under the ultranationalist mayor Gheorghe Funar, whose tenure stretched from 1992 to 2004, was peculiar in the way ethnic power struggles shaped both local (street name) politics and the everyday experiences of ethnicity (Brubaker et al, 2006). In Iași, Cluj-Napoca, and Brăila we also have signs of toponymic revision after 2010, when local authorities started to modify the street nomenclature after the administrative reform than empowered them with the jurisdiction over naming the urban landscape.

Figure 2. Temporality of postsocialist toponymic change in five Romanian cities



Source: Author's own calculations

Street names are powerful means of politicizing the landscape; they are also vulnerable cultural artefacts. This duality consisting in street names' political instrumentality and ontological

fragility is rendered visible during times of political unrest, and especially following a regime change, when the new authorities rush towards renaming the landscape. This sense of political urgency also hovered over Romania's postsocialist elites, who have made much of the changes in urban nomenclature in the first couple of years after the overthrow of the socialist regime.

Conclusions

Street names occupy strategic positions within a society's namescape. It is through assigning names to streets and other geographical features – among other means of politicizing the landscape such as raising statues, erecting monuments, and urban planning – that political authorities appropriate space and render it into a canvas for inscribing their ideological ethos. Against these considerations, street names reveal the political stakes underpinning them as well as their vulnerable status especially following a significant power shift.

In this paper, we aimed at charting the winds of toponymic revision after the fall of state socialism. Overall, we found a relatively limited scope of name changes in urban street nomenclature across Romania. After the regime change of 1989, slightly above the threshold of ten percent of streets have been renamed (12.31%). Since no similar studies, carried out on the street nomenclature at the national level, are available in the literature, this empirical result cannot be situated in a comparative framework. What we have as comparative benchmarks, instead, are studies conducted on a much-limited scale. One such research, a longitudinal analysis of Hermannstadt/Sibiu's shifting namescape, has shown that the scope of street name changes within the socialist regime was significantly larger than the one that followed the regime change. In this regard, a quarter of the city streets (24.41%) were renamed between mid-1950s and 1980, whereas only a tenth of the streetscape (10.18%) was changed between 1990 and 2018 (Rusu, 2019b). This suggests that a broader toponymic revision had occurred at the national level too, as the Romanian regime started to distance itself from the Soviet Union and turned to the national ideology than after the fall of state-socialism.

Further underscoring the limited scope of postsocialist toponymic change in Romania's urban street nomenclature come from comparing it with what had happened in another sociospatial settings. A study of Romania's educational namescape focused on a sample of 182 centennial and quasi-centennial colleges (high schools throughout the country that have a history of a century or so) concluded that after 1989, 89 of these have changed their name (50.3%). This was done either

through a politics of nominal restitution which back-named the school with its old, pre-communist identity or through a politics of nominal innovation which renamed the educational unit with an entirely new name (Rusu, 2019a).

Toponymic change was assessed, first, along spatial coordinates, by mapping the regional variations of urban street name changes in postsocialist Romania. In this regard, what we found is a national landscape of toponymic change characterized by significant regional heterogeneity. Ethnicity constitutes of the factors that account for this uneven distribution of changes in urban namescapes across Romania. The importance of ethnopolitics are suggested by the empirical relationship documented between the extent of postsocialist toponymic change and the percentage of ethnic minorities in the local communities that served as our unit of analysis. Where Hungarians are forming an absolute majority (over 50%), the scope of street name changes was three times higher than in those localities with less than 20 percent Hungarians.

Secondly, we assessed the dynamic of postsocialist toponymic revision along temporal coordinates. When factoring time into analysis, a clear-cut pattern emerged indicating a concentration of name changes occurred in the first years after the regime change, followed by a continually declining trend. In some places, this tendency was slightly overturned after 2010, when local councils began to exercise their nominative power over the urban landscape, which until then was under the institutional jurisdiction of central and regional authorities (Prefectures and County Councils respectively).

Some limitations which are constitutive to this study should also be mentioned. These derive mainly from the quantitative approach employed in data collection and empirical analysis. The quantitative design underpinning this study set out to construct a complete dataset of street names and street renaming across urban Romania based on which to calculate the statistics of toponymic change. Such an approach centers the analytical focus on the formal nomenclature of urban streetscape in which the official memory of the historical past is inscribed by political authorities. In this, it neglects the informal, popular uses of street names which are the expression of a vernacular memory that co-exist in parallel with the formal names and can subvert the intentions of political authorities. While the former, formal street nomenclature, can be studied through a quantitative analysis of social documents, the latter, popular uses of street names, can be explored through qualitative probings drawing on interviews and oral history. In any case, the urban landscape is shaped by a plurality of nominative discourses emanating from various actors

distributed along the spectrum of power, ranging from the bureaucratic structures of state apparatus to the everyday context of ordinary life. This study has managed to capture only one facet – the formal aspect – of the toponymic change in postsocialist urban Romania.

“Walking down the street/ Distant memories/ Are buried in the past forever,” continues Scorpions’ song. As these lyrics suggest, streets are material *lanes of memory* into which a community’s historical past is politically engrained. This is made abundantly clear in the street names, which express a regime’s nominative power to inscribe a particular political ethos and historical memory onto the landscape. Indeed, by renaming a street, the historical memories associated with the defunct regime are buried in the past. It is at this point that we contend Scorpions’ otherwise insightful musical argument: memories are buried in the past through renaming, but not forever. Through an endeavor of *toponymic stratigraphy*, it is nevertheless possible to unearth the layers of political memories lying underneath the current public geography of remembrance epitomized by the urban street nomenclature.

References

- Adler, Nanci. 2005. The Future of the Soviet past Remains Unpredictable: The Resurrection of Stalinist Symbols Amidst the Exhumation of Mass Graves. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 57(8), pp. 1093-1119.
- Alderman, Derek. 2002. School Names as Cultural Arenas: The Naming of U.S. Public Schools after Martin Luther King, Jr., *Urban Geography*, 23(7), pp. 601-626.
- Alderman, Derek. 2008. Place, Naming and the Interpretation of Cultural Landscapes. In Brian Graham and Peter Howard (Eds.) *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 195-213.
- Argenbright, Robert. 1999. Remaking Moscow: News Places, New Selves. *Geographical Review*, 89(1), pp. 1-22.
- Azaryahu, Maoz. 1986. Street Names and Political Identity: The Case of East Berlin. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 21(4), pp. 581-604.
- Azaryahu, Maoz. 2011. The Politics of Commemorative Street Renaming: Berlin 1945–1948. *Journal of Historical Geography*, 37(4), pp. 483-492.

- Azaryahu, Maoz. 1996. The Power of Commemorative Street Names. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 14, pp. 311-330.
- Azaryahu, Maoz. 1997. German Reunification and the Politics of Street Names: The Case of East Berlin. *Political Geography*, 16(6), pp. 479-493.
- Benjamin, Walter. 1999. Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century. In *The Arcades Project*. Cambridge, MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, pp. 1-13.
- Vuolteenaho, Jani and Berg, Lawrence D. (Eds.) (1999). *Critical Toponymies: The Contested Politics of Place Naming*. Farnham: Ashgate.
- Bottoni, Stefano. 2018. *Stalin's Legacy in Romania: The Hungarian Autonomous Region, 1952–1960*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Burawoy, Michael and Verdery, Katherine. 1999. Introduction. In Michael Burawoy and Katherine Verdery (Eds.). *Uncertain Transition: Ethnographies of Change in the Postsocialist World*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, pp. 1-18.
- Bursa, G. R. F. 1985. Political Changes of Names of Soviet Towns. *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 63(2), pp. 161-193.
- Bursa, G. R. F. 1994. Creating a Political Landscape: The Art of Geographical Name Changing in Bulgaria. *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 5(3), pp. 534-568.
- Chloupek, Brett R. 2019. Public Memory and Political Street Names in Košice: Slovakia's Multiethnic Second City. *Journal of Historical Geography*, 64, pp. 25-35.
- Craiu, Ovidiu-Constantin. 2012. Structura socială a oiconimelor. Reorganizarea administrativ-teritorială a statului român prin decretul 799/1964. *Revista Română de Sociologie*, serie nouă, 23(1-2), pp. 115-132.
- Crețan, Remus and Matthews, Phillip W. 2015. Popular Responses to City-Text Changes: Street Naming and the Politics of Practicality in a Post-Socialist Martyr City. *Area*, 48(1), pp. 92-102.

- Croitoru, Alin, Rusu, Horațiu, and Rusu, Mihai Stelian. 2015. Tailoring a Fashionable Self: Sartorial Practices in an Emerging Market Context. *Social Change Review*, 13(2), pp. 137-158.
- Douglas, Carl. 2007. Barricades and Boulevards: Material transformations of Paris, 1795–1871. *Interstices: A Journal of Architecture and Related Arts*, 8, pp. 31-42.
- eBihoreanul, 2018. Numere bilingve: Primăria Oșorhei botează străzile cu numere, ca să nu bage zăzanie între români și unguri. *Bihoreanul*, online edition, February 21, 2018. Available online at <https://www.ebihoreanul.ro/stiri/ultima-or-31-16/numere-bilingve-primaria-osorhei-boteaza-strazile-cu-numere-ca-sa-nu-bage-zazanie-intre-romani-si-unguri-foto-139847.html>
- Gill, Graeme. 2005. Changing Symbols: The Renovation of Moscow Place. *Russian Review*, 64(3), pp. 480-403.
- Giraut, Frédéric and Houssay-Holzschuch, Myriam. 2016. Place Naming as *Dispositif*: Toward a Theoretical Framework. *Geopolitics*, 21(1), pp. 1-21.
- Hann, Chriss (Ed). 2002. *Postsocialism: Ideals, Ideologies and Practices in Eurasia*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Hobsbawm, Eric J. 1962. *The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789–1848*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.
- Iancu, Bogdan. 2016. Orașul din România unde străzile n-au nume. Cum s-a evitat un conflict între români și maghiari prin numerotarea străzilor cu cifre arabe. *Adevărul*, online edition, March 8, 2016. Available at adev.ro/pbfgp8
- Kürti, László and Skalník, Peter (Eds). 2009. *Postsocialist Europe: Anthropological Perspectives from Home*. Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books.
- Light, Duncan. 2004. Street Names in Bucharest, 1990–1997: Exploring the Modern Historical Geographies of Post-Socialist Change. *Journal of Historical Geography*, 30, pp. 154-172.

- Light, Duncan, Suditu, Bogdan, and Nicolae, Ion. 2002. Toponymy and the Communist City: Street Names in Bucharest, 1948–1965. *GeoJournal*, 56, pp. 135-144.
- Marin, Anaïs. 2012. Bordering Time in the Cityscape. Toponymic Changes as Temporal Boundary-Making: Street Renaming in Leningrad/St. Petersburg, *Geopolitics*, 17(1), pp. 192-216.
- McGarry, John. 1998. “Demographic Engineering”: The State-directed Movement of Ethnic Groups as a Technique of Conflict Regulation. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 21(4), pp. 613-638.
- Mediafax. 2011. Trei hotărâri ale CL Sf. Gheorghe privind schimbarea denumirilor unor străzi, suspendate de instanță. *Mediafax*, online edition, March 21, 2011. Available at <https://www.mediafax.ro/social/trei-hotarari-ale-cl-sf-gheorghe-privind-schimbarea-denumirilor-unor-strazi-suspendate-de-instanta-9420100>
- Mesagerul de Covasna. 2018. Primarul UDMR din Sfântu Gheorghe, obligat de instanță să marcheze corect strada 1 Decembrie 1918. *Mesagerul de Covasna*, online edition, November 26, 2018. Available at <http://mesageruldecovasna.ro/primarul-udmr-din-sfantu-gheorghe-obligat-de-instanta-sa-marcheze-corect-strada-1-decembrie-1918/>
- Nicolae, Ion. 2000. Changes of Romanian Place Names during the Communist Era. In Duncan Light and David Phinnemore (Eds.) *Post-communist Romania: Geographical Perspectives*. Liverpool Hope Press, 2000, pp. 1-6.
- Nora, Pierre. 1999. Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire. *Representations*, 26, pp. 7-24.
- Oto-Peralías, Daniel. 2017. What Do Street Names Tell Us? The ‘City-text’ as Socio-cultural Data. *Journal of Economic Geography*, 18(1), pp. 187-211.
- Palonen, Emilia. 2008. The City-Text in Post-Communist Budapest: Street Names, Memorials, and the Politics of Commemoration. *GeoJournal*, 73, pp. 219-230.
- Pintilescu, Corneliu. 2009. Orașul Stalin (Stalin City), 1950–1960: The Political Construction of an Urban Identity. *Histoire Urbaine*, 25(2), pp. 49-68.

- Rose-Redwood, Reuben. 2008. Indexing the Great Ledger of the Community: Urban House Numbering, City Directories, and the Production of Spatial Legibility. *Journal of Historical Geography*, 34, pp. 286-310.
- Rose-Redwood, Reuben. 2006. Governmentality, Geography, and the Geo-Coded World. *Progress in Human Geography*, 30(4), pp. 469-486.
- Rose-Redwood, Reuben, Alderman, Derek and Azaryahu, Maoz. (2010) Geographies of Toponymic Inscription: New Directions in Critical Place-Name Studies. *Progress in Human Geography*, 34(4), pp. 453-470.
- Rose-Redwood, Reuben, Alderman, Derek and Azaryahu, Maoz. (Eds.) (2018). *The Political Life of Urban Streetscapes: Naming, Politics, and Place*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Rostow, Dankwart A. 1970. Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model. *Comparative Politics*, 2(3), pp. 337-363.
- Rusu, Mihai Stelian. 2013. Topografii ale trecutului: structurarea și restructurarea conștiinței istorice românești prin manualele naționale de istorie. *Sociologie Românească*, 11(1), pp. 84–102
- Rusu, Mihai Stelian. 2015. *Memoria națională românească. Facerea și prefacerile discursive ale trecutului național*. Iași: Institutul European.
- Rusu, Mihai Stelian. 2017. Transitional Politics of Memory: Political Strategies of Managing the Past in Post-Communist Romania, *Europe-Asia Studies*, 69(8), pp. 1257–1279.
- Rusu, Mihai Stelian. 2019a. Mapping the Political Toponymy of Educational Namescapes: A Quantitative Analysis of Romanian School Names. *Political Geography*, 72, pp. 87-98.
- Rusu, Mihai Stelian. 2019b. Shifting Urban Namescapes: Street Name Politics and Toponymic Change in a Romanian(ised) City. *Journal of Historical Geography*, 65, pp. 48-58.
- Siani-Davies, Peter. 2007. *The Romanian Revolution of December 1989*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

- Sora, Florin. 2012. Organizarea administrativ-teritorială a Republicii Populare Române: înființarea raioanelor și regiunilor. *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie "A. D. Xenopol"*, 49, pp. 169-187.
- Zoran Stiperski, Lučka Lorber, Emil Heršak, Pavel Ptaček, Zygmunt Górka, Arkadiusz Kołoś, Jelena Lončar, Josip Faričić, Mirjana Miličević, Ana Vujaković, and Hruška, Anita. 2011. Identity Through Urban Nomenclature: Eight Central European Cities, *Geografisk Tidsskrift-Danish Journal of Geography*, 111(2), pp. 181-194.
- Svašek, Maruška (Ed). 2008. *Postsocialism: Politics and Emotions in Central and Eastern Europe*. Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books.
- Tent, Jan. 2015. Approaches to Research in Toponymy. *Names: A Journal of Onomastics*. 63(2), pp. 65-74.
- Verdery, Katherine. 1991. *National Ideology Under Socialism: Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceaușescu's Romania*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Verdery, Katherine. 1999. *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Wertsch, James V. 2004. *Voices of Collective Remembering*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.