

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE POST-SOVIET CITY NARRATIVE THROUGH THE
TOPONYMIC SPACE: THE CASE OF KHARKIV, 1991-2016**

By

Varvara Podnos

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Supervisor: Professor Ostap Sereda

Second Reader: Professor Oksana Sarkisova

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Abstract

This research project is dedicated to the study of construction of the toponymic narrative of Kharkiv, an Eastern Ukrainian city, from 1991 to 2016. The analysis includes the changes of toponymy which happened within the given period, contextualized with the state changes of memory politics, in particular in its representation of the Soviet past. The roles of actors of different levels – state and local authorities and the city activists – in the process of symbolic marking of the city space are also considered within the scope of the research.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Introduction.....	1
1. How Urban Toponymy is Entangled with Symbolic Power, City Narrative, and Memory Politics: Theoretical Framework	4
1.1. Realization of Symbolic Power through the Urban Space: The Case of Street Naming	4
1.2. Street Naming as an Object of Memory Studies.....	8
1.3. Sources and Analytical Strategy	10
2. From Soviet City to What? Toponymic Changes of 1991-2014	14
2.1. Complexities of the Ukrainian Case of Nationalizing State: Memory Politics in 1991-2014.....	14
2.2. Different Models of early-1990s Toponymic Changes in Ukrainian Cities	19
2.3. Toponymic Changes in Kharkiv in 1991-2002: Between Freedom and Constitution Squares	23
2.3.1. Conclusion	34
2.4. Toponymic Space as a Source of Creation of Local Historical Narrative: Changes in Kharkiv, 2002-2014	36
2.4.1 Institutionalization of the Toponymic Commission of Kharkiv City Council and Creation of the Framework for the Toponymical Changes	37
2.4.2. Toponymic changes in Kharkiv, 2002-2014.....	41
2.4.3. Conclusions	49
3. Three-time Decommunized: Changes of Kharkiv Toponyms in 2015-2016.....	51
3.1. The Political Context of the Process	51
3.2. The Actors of Decommunization Process in Kharkiv	57
3.3. Renaming Projects of 2015-2016.....	61
3.4. Conclusion	75
Conclusion	78
Bibliography.....	82

Introduction

The post-1989/1991 Central and Eastern Europe has been of great significance and interest for different scholars. The states, which were previously parts of the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc, are thoroughly researched from the perspectives of sociology, history, cultural, political, and other social sciences. Different discourses are being created and maintained around these states, from transition and 'return to Europe' narratives to "actually-existing post-socialism". The post-soviet (or post-communist/socialist, depending on the research scope and personal preferences of the authors) world becomes an important point for the understanding of international cultural transfer, memory studies, developmental studies, etc. What about cities? How did they go through the fall of the regime? What were the changes and differences made to the urban space and culture within the post-soviet states?

Transformations of political regimes usually lead to the change of symbols in urban space. In terminology of Pierre Bourdieu, the legitimation of the new symbolic order, provided by the new regime, happens in the situation of removal and change of the markers of the past. In the case of post-soviet countries, the governments of newly created nation states searched for the sources of legitimizing their regimes, and the symbols of previous times could have been removed through the city space. As such, the monuments were demolished, and streets and cities renamed. In this case the change of the street names or the toponymy of the city stands as an interesting case among other practices of (de)commemoration. When there is a need to change a street name, a new name should be proposed and introduced at the same moment. Unlike the cases of demolitions or removal of monuments, when the empty space might not be filled with any new symbols soon, the streets require to be named in order to perform their functions of orientation and distinguishing between the set of similar objects. Therefore, I claim in this work, that the changes of

toponymy are a great source for studying how the politics of memory and the newly created narratives of history of a national state are incorporated to the symbolic space of the cities.

Back in 1990s, such changes were not ubiquitous, as the state authorities were not the only holders of symbolic power in terms of the symbolic space of the cities. The local authorities internalized the frameworks, provided by the state, or create their own frameworks of ordering the space of the city. Together with this, the dwellers of the cities also gain authority over the space where they live. However, the authorities of both level had more instruments for the provision of changes.

When in 2015 the Law “On the Condemnation of the Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) Regimes, and Prohibition of Propaganda of Their Symbols” was adopted by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, the mass campaign on removal of names of Soviet and Communist leaders began. Together with this, the discussions over the reasons for the existence of a number of these symbols and names all over Ukraine revoked. Before, the politics of memory of Ukrainian governments tended to incorporate the narratives of Soviet past into the newly created narrative of the history of Ukraine as an independent state rather than fully reject them. Therefore, the Soviet symbols were legitimate to be used in the space of post-soviet Ukraine. However, the regional difference weighed a lot in terms of the preservation of such symbols. The presented by Yaroslav Hrytsak and Viktor Susak case of L’viv, where the local authorities together with the group of local experts started removing Soviet names from the streets of their city straight after the change of the regime in 1991, was conceptualized as “the construction of the national city”, regarding the incorporation of the national historical narrative into the space of this city.¹

¹ Yaroslav Hrytsak and Victor Susak, "Constructing a National City: The Case of L'viv," in *Composing Urban History and the Constitution of Civic Identities*, ed. John Czaplicka, Blair A. Ruble, and Lauren Crabtree (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2003).

In this thesis I aim to discover how the narrative of the post-soviet city was constructed, where the changes introduced were not directly tied to the emerging narratives of national history. The case of Kharkiv, the second biggest city in Ukraine, located close to the border with Russia, serves as an example of this concept. As the regional differences matter for the kind and process of change of the symbolic space of Ukrainian cities, to understand the characteristics of the post-soviet transformations it is important to observe different cases from different regions. Till now the case of Kharkiv remained underresearched, as compared to L'viv or Kyiv. Therefore, with this research I want to contribute to the field of studies of the symbolic politics of Ukrainian cities that was introduced and changed after the independence.

1. How Urban Toponymy is Entangled with Symbolic Power, City Narrative, and Memory Politics: Theoretical Framework

The following chapter provides main theoretical implications for studying street naming as an instrument for the holders of symbolic power to introduce their narrative to the city space. The case of commemorative naming – when streets are named after some people or events – is represented here as a project of politics of memory, which is a set of measures, taken by authorities to introduce the legitimate versions of history to the city space. Taking into account this framework, the sources and analytical strategy for the research of Kharkiv toponymic changes in 1991-2016 is presented.

1.1. Realization of Symbolic Power through the Urban Space: The Case of Street Naming

City is a system of signs, which demonstrates power and prestige, status and influence, victories and defeats.² Therefore, it can be perceived and, consequently, studied as a medium, used by actors, who have legitimate power, to disseminate their views, ideas, and agenda. A symbolic space of a city, as this system of signs can be referred to in bourdieusian perspective of power relations within the society, therefore, is influenced by various actors – its dwellers, local and state authorities, tourists and visitors.³ It is constituted with the objects of social world, which are filled with different connotations and meanings, constructed by the various groups of influence. Buildings, roads, advertisements, monuments, streets – all of these objects are at the same way being influenced by the users of the space, and in the same time remain the containers for the narratives and stories of

² John R. Short, "City as Text," in *The Urban Order: An Introduction to Cities, Culture, and Power* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2003), 390.

³ Bourdieu, Pierre. "Social Space and Symbolic Power." *Sociological Theory*, 7, no. 1 (1989): 14.

those groups. Therefore, the city space is a reflection of various meaningful constructs of those, who have the power to interact with this space. Consequently, urban space is being used by different governments to set up their agenda symbolically around the citizens, as well as to show these symbols to the newcomers and travelers. After the changes of regimes, therefore, the changes in the symbolic space can be made in order to legitimize the new authorities and their agendas.

As Emilia Palonen claims, “the city-text is a site of politicking”.⁴ In other words, continuing the bourdieusian notions of the realization of power-related practices in the actual social space, an urban environment becomes a place for different groups to carry out their symbolic activities in order to gain authority over the space and the community, which lives there. According to Bourdieu, the power of nomination is one of the main phenomenon for groups in power to declare their command over the space.⁵ Creation of a specific language, which happens through this process, makes the group powerful in terms of the discourse, which they create. This discourse, in turn, structures the everyday lives of the people, as naming serves not only for definition of specific objects and people, but also for recognition of them, for appreciation or exclusion from the space of interaction. Therefore, the symbolic space of the city is a space of legitimized images, provided by current holders of symbolic power. These groups create a symbolic framework, in which some of the represented constructs and people fit, and some do not.

An exceptional group of objects of urban space to be analyzed in this context are the toponymical objects or place names. Basically, they are interesting for researching as they have several functions performed in the city. Place names are foremost used to denote

⁴ Emilia Palonen, "The city-text in post-communist Budapest: street names, memorials, and the politics of commemoration", *GeoJournal* 73, no. 3 (2008): 219.

⁵ Pierre Bourdieu, "The Production and Reproduction of Legitimate Language," in *Language and Symbolic Power*, ed. John B. Thompson, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991): 45.

similar objects (streets etc.) and to navigate dwellers and newcomers in the city space. However, apart from this they do also have a symbolic function to perform – same as the other object of cities symbolic space they may serve as containers for some meanings and stories. Hence, they are also used by the legitimate actors who hold the power over the urban space to incorporate their agenda and main symbols into the space of everyday life of people. Most importantly, in the situation of change of the legitimate authorities, when it comes to the changes in the symbolic space of the cities, unlike in the case of monument demolitions, when one name is repealed the other must occur as soon as possible since the street cannot perform well being nameless. Priscilla Ferguson argues that “because nomination makes a fundamental gesture of possession, the naming of streets affords one more opportunity to affirm, or to contest, control [of] the city”, therefore pointing out that the names in the city are a perfect example of appropriation of the space by the legitimate holders of power.⁶

The toponymical space of the city plays a crucial role for empowered groups to realize their frameworks and to disseminate their agenda throughout the city. According to Maoz Azaryahu, one of the main researchers in the field of studies of commemorative street names, the space of commemoration, created through the street names dedicated to certain historical events and figures, introduces the legitimate and recognized version of history into the everyday life settings.⁷ It is a very important notion, as the toponymical space, which by its primary function serves as the system of navigation and distinguishing of similar objects, becomes a very useful tool for incorporating socio-political agenda of a symbolic power holder. The process of authorization of a certain pantheon of heroes comes

⁶ Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, "Reading City Streets," *The French Review* 61, no. 3 (1988): 386.

⁷ Maoz Azaryahu, "The power of commemorative street names," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 14, no. 3 (1996).

easier through the toponymical space, as everyone in the city uses street names, but “hardly anyone pays attention to their specific historical meaning and to the fact that they belong to the structures of power”.⁸ In other words, the power connotation of street names is covered by their primary functions, making it easier for the symbols introduced to be accepted by the general public and the newcomers to the city space. One of the most important things about street naming as a symbolic marking practice is that they need to be legitimated by all actors, which have power in the symbolic space of a city. What I mean by this is that the unofficial names, which are created by the local dwellers as slang, exist mostly in the mental maps of these people and serve as a specific local knowledge, which is not to be shared specifically with the newcomers.⁹ They are not reflected on maps or in any written sources available for wide public, except perhaps for the specific touristic leaflets. On the contrary, the official street names are inscribed in the street signs, written on maps and in various documents. Consequently, the official city narrative is being preserved better and is also represented for a wider public. I draw this distinction because unlike the commemoration through material objects – memorials, statues, images, which can be created, preserved, and presented by the smaller local communities, the street names require the legitimacy from the local and state administrations in order to remain existent. In other words, this practice requires to be correspondent with the commemorating frameworks of three levels – the dwellers, the local administration, and the state. I do not mean to imply that these frameworks are for sure different, neither I claim that they are the same. What is important here is that various agent groups are involved into the process of the creation of

⁸ Azaryahu, 321

⁹ Laimute Balode. “Unofficial Urbanonyms of Latvia: Tendencies of Derivation.” In *Names and Their Environment' Proceedings of the 25th International Congress of Onomastic Sciences*, 1:69–79. (Glasgow: University of Glasgow, 2016): 70.

this part of the city narrative. It also means that this process should be analyzed with regards to all of the agent groups, who take part in it.

Moreover, the change of toponymical space of the city should be analyzed from the perspectives of different actors, who take part in the process. The groups of influence of the space of a particular city should be defined through the analysis of decisions made on the changes of the toponymic space. The analysis of the legislative framework will provide information on legitimizing practices of authorities (both local and state) to establish their symbolic agenda in the city. The very place names are an important source of analysis – they provide data on the symbolic framework, embedded into the built environment. They represent the mentioned above “authorized version of history”, which is legitimate for an existing regime and groups of influence.

1.2. Street Naming as an Object of Memory Studies

As it is shown in the previous subchapter, in the field of critical toponymy studies the narrative created through the street naming is considered to reflect the “authorized versions of history”¹⁰ on the space of a city. Remembering that only the city administration and the state have the legislative power to change the toponymical space officially, this process should be treated as a part of the project of *memory politics* which the authorities are implementing on the territory. In this research, the term memory politics is used to define the symbolic strategies of authorities of different levels to incorporate the narratives of history into the space over which they have power. In this case, street names can be treated as a set of *lieux de mémoire*¹¹, the embodiments of historical narratives into the built

¹⁰ Maoz Azaryahu, "The power of commemorative street names," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 14, no. 3 (1996): 321.

¹¹ Pierre Nora. "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux De Mémoire." *Representations*, no. 26 (1989): 7-24.

environment, created by the groups in power in order to structure the narrative of memory of heroes, events, and other elements of the historical narrative.

Together with this, the situations of change of the toponymical space, in particular the process of renaming, can be considered as an attempt of actors in power to change the patterns of commemoration and, more generally, the narrative of collective memory of a community. However, collective memory itself is an ambiguous theoretical concept to use in a historical research. Coined by Maurice Halbwachs in 1925, it originally was applicable for both for collective production of memory narrative by communities and individual frameworks of reception of them.¹² To overcome this ambiguity, Egyptologist Jan Assman proposed to distinguish between communicative and cultural memories, concepts derived from the original theory of collective memory, where the first one refers to the scope of communicated everyday memories of people who belong to different groups, and the second one refers to the scope of memories, which serve as an identifying and unifying point for the cultural community.¹³ I assume that the place names might serve as a bridge between the everyday experiences and cultural memory, as the narratives, which include the pantheons or sets of personalities and events, actual for the certain group, are introduced into the everyday settings, though bringing these divided concepts together. However, it is important to notice that each society is not homogenous, and, therefore, there cannot be one particular symbolic set which will work out for each of the groups within a society. Moreover, coming back to Bourdieu's notion on the interconnection of power-relations and naming – the given symbolic framework might be sourced with the notions of cultural and communicative memories.

¹² Maurice Halbwachs. *On Collective Memory*, trans. by Lewis A. Coser. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

¹³ Jan Assman, and John Czaplicka. "Collective memory and cultural identity." *New German critique* 65 (1995): 125-133.

Nevertheless, the official set of street names is provided only under the acceptance of local and state authorities. Therefore, the changes of the street names resemble the versions of memory, which are constructed or approved by these groups. Therefore, this study is not about the construction of the memorial narratives, which are shared by all members of the city community. Neither it is a study of identity, community, or nation building through the changes of narratives of memory, the concept which I find too vague to apply to the certain use of commemorative practices. Together with this, I feel cautious about generalizing the notions of sharing of cultural memory by the dwellers of a city, which consists of different communities and groups of people. For sure, the application of a certain symbolic framework over the city space by the holders of symbolic power leads to the creation of at least partially unified set of commemorated heroes and events, reproduced through the urban space. However, in this case the practices are not equal to their reception. As historian Patrick Hutton noted when writing about the politics of commemoration as a separate field for research, “while memories evolve, these artifacts [results of commemorative practices] remain anchored in fixed times and places”, continuing that the interest in studying them lies in the perspective of their changes over time.¹⁴ Agreeing with this position, I claim that the street naming as a commemorative practice should be analyzed as a power practice of symbolic appropriation of the space with the use of means of the changing cultural memory.

1.3. Sources and Analytical Strategy

As it was mentioned before, the study of history of construction of the toponymic narrative of Kharkiv should include analysis of actors of different levels, involved to the

¹⁴ Patrick H. Hutton. *The Memory Phenomenon in Contemporary Historical Writing: How the Interest in Memory Has Influenced Our Understanding of History*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016): 50

process. Therefore, this study is based on a variety of sources in order to show the realization of interests of different actors in the space of Kharkiv.

The main body of sources for this research comprises the decisions made in Kharkiv on the changes of toponymic space. These included the decisions of the City Council and its Executive Committee, the available records of the sessions of the City Council¹⁵, the records of Toponymic Commission of the City Council¹⁶. Decisions of State Regional Administration were also taken into account. The documents from 1991-1998 were accessed from the Archival Department of Kharkiv City Council, the later documents were accessed from an online Uniform City Register of Acts of the Kharkiv City Council. The decisions of the Regional State Council were accessed online through the official website. This group of sources provided information on the actual changes of toponyms – introduction of new ones and renaming of existent street names. I classified the names into two main categories, according to the process of their implementation – the renamings and the new names. It is important to distinguish between these wide groups as the motivation for these processes is different. The introduction of new names to the previously unnamed streets or new built environment is more functional in a sense that these places need to be officially marked to be furtherly used in mapping, documenting, and people's orientation in the space. On the contrary, the process of renaming defines the need to remove some of the previously made symbols from the city space. Hence, the renaming process shows both the unwanted symbols, and the new legitimate symbols. In the case of the new names, only the new symbols are

¹⁵ The records were available only from 1995. When I requested information on the availability of transcripts from other periods, the official response of the Department of Access to Public Information of Kharkiv City Council stated that the transcripts of sessions of Kharkiv City Council are working documents and are not stored after the publication of official records of the sessions.

¹⁶ The Toponymic Commission office did not respond to my request on access to their data. The archival materials had only three excerpts from their records. Together with this, the excerpts from 2015 and 2016 were disseminated by the City Council together with their decisions online.

available for exploration. Nevertheless, both of these groups represent the strategies of symbolic marking of the city.

Within these groups I searched for the specific thematic clusters. Scholars of place-naming studies consider that the space of commemoration, created through the street names dedicated to certain historical events and figures, introduces the legitimate and recognized version of history into the everyday life settings.¹⁷ Therefore, I selected the cluster of ‘history’ within the street names of Kharkiv, which comprises of various commemorations to people and events. I attached the returned historical names to this cluster too. The other names, “neutral” or “banal”¹⁸ – those, which did not commemorate some period in history, people, or events – comprised the second analyzed cluster. Both of them were rather interesting to be explored in comparison; the ratio of both types in different periods of time and in both renamed and newly named cases might reveal the part of the strategy of the legitimate agents of naming – in most cases, local administration – to mark the space of the city. Notwithstanding, not only the number of cases within each cluster mattered. Therefore, the thematical analysis within each of them was conducted.

Together with this, I was searching for the representation of interests and motivation of all the actors, included to the process of change of the toponymic space of Kharkiv. It was provided with the analysis of the available records of City Council, its Executive Committee, and Toponymic Commission. Together with this, the official statements of local authorities regarding the changes of toponymy, published on the official website of Kharkiv City Council, were included to the analysis in search for motivation for the changes.

¹⁷ Maoz Azaryahu, "The power of commemorative street names," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 14, no. 3 (1996).

¹⁸ Reuben Rose-Redwood, and Derek Alderman. 1. “Critical Interventions in Political Toponymy”. *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies* 10 no.1 (2011): 3.

Not only officials were taking part in the process of changes of Kharkiv toponymic space in 1991-2016. Therefore, the role of non-governmental actors – the civic activists and general public is also reviewed. The data on the participation of these actors is collected from the decisions of the City Council (where the involvement of some actors was indicated). For the period of 2015-2016, where the level of involvement of non-governmental activists was the highest, the Facebook group posts, and the documents of the activist toponymic group, accessed through the personal communication with one of its coordinators, are analyzed.

To go beyond the analysis of text in order to grasp the motivation and practices used by two main groups of local actors – activists and the administration, two expert interviews were conducted; with the member of official Toponymic Commission, and with the member of activist toponymic group, which was operating in 2015 – 2016. I chose to interview this people regarding their positions in the organizations; the questionnaires were structured within three main topics: personal motivation and paths of this people to engage into the process of changes of toponymic space of Kharkiv, the organizational structure and decision-making patterns of these bodies, the relations with other actors of the process, and the meaning of toponymic space of Kharkiv for them.

State level politics of memory was mainly accessed through secondary literature, together with analysis of the legislative acts which were influencing the symbolic space of Ukrainian cities. The Laws were accessed through the official site of Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.

2. From Soviet City to What? Toponymic Changes of 1991-2014

In this chapter I present two periods of change of toponymic space of the city – those, which happened in 1991-2002, and those in 2002-2014. Such periodization is applied because in 2002 the procedure of (re)naming streets in Kharkiv was formulated, and the mass naming of new streets was introduced. On the contrary, the changes of 1991-2002 were smaller in number, and were not guided by some specific documents. Together with this, the changes of politics of memory of the government are discussed to show how the state authorities were influencing the symbolic space of the cities.

2.1. Complexities of the Ukrainian Case of Nationalizing State: Memory Politics in 1991-2014

After 1989-1991, similar to the Soviet government which made changes of place names in its member republics since 1920s, the governments of the newly created independent states started changing the symbolic space of their cities after the dissolution of Soviet Union in 1991. As in scholarly discourse the process which was undergoing in the Soviet times is named ‘sovietization’, then the following process of changes made after the dissolution can be referred to as ‘desovietization’. Importantly, the process of change of toponymical space does not necessarily occur right after the change of the regime. More probably, it takes place when the new regimes search for discursive legitimacy is notably high.¹⁹

The process touched upon different countries of the former USSR and the Eastern Bloc. In the latter the process was marked mainly with almost complete removal of

¹⁹ Maoz Azaryahu. "The Power of Commemorative Street Names". *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 14 no.3 (1996): 318.

Soviet/Communist place names, mostly as their new governments were seeking to recreate their pre-Soviet history through the toponymical space and put new narratives of independent states into it. For example, in Bucharest the process of post-socialist changes of toponymic space lead to the renaming of 288 streets in 1990-1997, with the main trends of re-commemorating pre-Soviet period of history and appraisal of 1989 revolution.²⁰ In Budapest the main themes of commemoration after the 1989 were the revolution of 1956, Hungarian Independence, and return of the street names from the 19th century and interwar period.²¹ However, in the case of the former Soviet republics, the changes were not so straight-forward and fast, at least not in all of their cities. The movement for the return of historical toponymy to the cities of Soviet republics, which started in Perestroika, lead to the renaming of a number of cities and streets within them.²² However, the question of actual renaming, not returning the names which existed before, was more complicated.

Rogers Brubaker claimed that for the post-socialist nationalizing states the introduction of the new pantheon of heroes, legitimized by the new holders of symbolic power, into the public commemoration space, together with the linguistic policies and re-writing of national historiography, were main discursive practices of implementation of the nationalizing projects into the everyday lives of the citizens.²³ The Ukrainian case, on the contrary, did not have a single 'version of history' which was to symbolically transform the urban space. Historian Georgiy Kasyanov claims that while the changes in historiography started by the 'sovereignizing' of the local Ukrainian history in the late 1980's, the

²⁰ Duncan Light. "Street Names in Bucharest, 1990–1997: Exploring the Modern Historical Geographies of Post-Socialist Change". *Journal of Historical Geography* 30 no.1 (2004): 154-172.

²¹ Emilia Palonen, "The city-text in post-communist Budapest: street names, memorials, and the politics of commemoration", *GeoJournal* 73, no. 3 (2008): 219-320.

²² John Murray. *Politics and Place-Names: Changing Names in the Late Soviet Period*. Birmingham: Department of Russian, University of Birmingham, 2000:156.

²³ Brubaker, Rogers. "Nationalizing States Revisited: Projects and processes of Nationalization in Post-Soviet States," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34, no. 11 (2011):1787.

nationalization of history began in the 1990s.²⁴ The state needed to create the legitimizing myth for its existence. According to Ukrainian historian Volodymyr Kravchenko, in 1990s there were two main traditions in Ukrainian history: post-soviet (official) national-state tradition and revisionist western-oriented tradition, which mainly differed on the questions of relations with Russia, sources of Ukrainian statehood, and the development of national(ist) movement(s).²⁵ If in revisionist historiography the pantheon of heroes of Ukrainian history should have been reviewed and changed, bringing to front the heroes of national liberation, then the post-soviet model there was more of a compromise between the Soviet historiography of Ukraine and the newer sources. The main point of this observation is that as the country became independent, the versions of history became important political instruments in national self-identification of people, as well as the division of political platforms and groups.

In the case of nation states, the politics of memory as a legitimizing practice can be proclaimed by the government to consolidate the citizens by the notion of national identity and shared past. In the case of the first president of Ukraine, Leonid Kravchuk, this task was done through adoption of the already written in the beginning of 20th century scheme of national renaissance, developed by Mykhailo Hrushevsky.²⁶ The narrative, provided with this scheme rooted Ukrainian history in the times of Kievan Rus'. The myth of Cossack past and "Cossack nation" was also actively used within it. The framework created by this narrative was forcing the re-writing of the history of Soviet Ukraine, where the former was described as a victim of the totalitarian regime – the repressive politics of the Soviet was highlighted in

²⁴ Georgiy Kasyanov. "Nationalized' History: Past Continuous, Present Perfect, Future." Essay. In *A Laboratory of Transnational History. Ukraine and Recent Ukrainian Historiography*, edited by Georgiy Kasyanov and Philipp Ther, 7–24. (Budapest - New York: CEU Press, 2009): 9.

²⁵ Volodymyr V. Kravchenko. *Ukraïna, imperiâ, Rosiâ: Vybrani Statti z Modernoi Istorii Ta Istoriohrafii [Ukraine, Empire, Russia: Selected Studies in Modern History and Historiography]*. (Kyiv: "Krytyka", 2011): 391-455.

²⁶ Kravchenko, 465-466.

this period. However, the public did not receive such polarized view on their recent past.²⁷ The historical legacy of the Soviet Union was a more complicated issue. Despite this, the Soviet historical projects, for example the myth of the Great Patriotic War was still ongoing. The politics of memory of Kravchuk's period was aimed at consolidating the citizens over the idea of nation, however lead to the growth of differences between the regions.

The politics of memory of the elected in 1994 Leonid Kuchma was aimed at reconciliation of Soviet and national-Ukrainian narratives within a single narrative. One of the instruments for that was "nationalization" of Soviet holidays; an outstanding case of this was commemoration of the Victory day and the general development of the myth of the Great Patriotic War. Together with this, his politics in defining new national heroes was built on the appeals to those prominent Ukrainians, who were also praised in the Soviet historical canon – Khmelnyts'kyi, Shevchenko – therefore commemorating figures, which were acceptable in all regions of the country.²⁸ However, under his presidency regions gained more power in making their own regional historical politics too. In terms of changes of symbolic space, as Volodymyr Kravchenko noted, it meant the growth of number of local markers in the public space.²⁹

Viktor Yushchenko, who became President after the protest of Orange Revolution in 2004, was as Kravchuk 10 years before him creating the nation-state historical myth of Ukraine. However, in myth which was created under his presidency, Ukrainian nation was

²⁷ Taras Kuzio. "Ukraine: Coming to Terms with the Soviet Legacy." *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 14, no. 4 (1998): 6-9.

²⁸ Viktoriia Sereda. "Istoricheskiy Diskurs i Natsional'noye Proshloye v Ofitsial'nykh Rechakh Prezidentov Ukrainy i Rossii [Historical Discourse and National Past in the Official Speeches of the Presidents of Ukraine and Russia]." In *Natsional'no-Grazhdanskiye Identichnosti i Tolerantnost'. Opyt Rossii i Ukrainy v Period Transformatsii [National Civil Identities and Tolerance. Experience of Russia and Ukraine in the Transformation Period]*, edited by Leokadia Drobizheva and Evgeniy Golovakha, 69–96, (Kiev: Institute of Sociology, NAS of Ukraine; Moscow: Institute of Sociology, RAS, 2007): 78.

²⁹ Volodymyr V. Kravchenko. *Ukraina, imperiia, Rosiia: Vybrani Statti z Modernoi Istorii Ta Istoriohrafii [Ukraine, Empire, Russia: Selected Studies in Modern History and Historiography]*. (Kyiv: "Krytyka", 2011): 470.

presented even more victimized than before. The main historical topics which were given the greatest attention were the development of the narrative of the *Holodomor* of 1932-1933 a genocide of Ukrainian people made by the totalitarian Soviet regime, and the development of the heroic narrative over the history of OUN-UPA. Importantly, for the purposes of research of these topics an official governmental body – the Institute of National Remembrance – was established in 2006.³⁰ Citing from the resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers, the main tasks of the Institute were to raise public awareness of the national history; to commemorate the victims of genocides and political repressions, and the participants of the national liberation struggle; to provide the research of the national liberation struggle of Ukraine in 20th century; and to implement the governmental policy on the restoration of the memory of Ukrainian people. According to the Statutes of the organization adopted in two months after the establishment of the Institute, it was given a number of functions, among which were the development of proposals on the commemoration of the above-mentioned events, creation of monuments and museum expositions. I emphasize the establishment of this institution as it was the first instance of Ukrainian government creating a specific executive body for dealing with the memory politics.³¹ However, similarly to the Kravchuk's project of creating the generalizing exclusive narrative of Ukrainian history, this one was also rather contested within the regions of Ukraine. If the narrative of *Holodomor* was not that controversial, then the heroization of the members of OUN-UPA, who in Soviet Ukrainian canon were

³⁰ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. "Postanova Vid 31 Travnja 2006 r. #764 Pro Utvorennja Ukrayins'koho Instytutu Natsional'noyi Pam'yati [Resolution of May 31, 2006 #764 On the Establishment of the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance]." Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Last modified July 9, 2014. <http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/764-2006-n>.

³¹ The establishment of such institution was based on the experience of some post-socialist countries, such as Poland and Czech Republic, where such institutions were created in the early 1990s to investigate the Soviet operations on the territories of these countries.

considered as collaborationists, was met in the critically, especially in Eastern and Southern regions of the country.³²

Being a direct opponent of Yushchenko since the Orange Revolution, his successor Viktor Yanukovich, who became the President of Ukraine in 2010, was denying the previous strategy of memory politics. The Institute of National Remembrance established by Yushchenko was liquidated as an executive body³³ and transformed to a research institution.³⁴ Volodymyr Kravchenko claims that the politics of memory under Yanukovich was highly influenced by the neo-Soviet ideology, exemplifying it with the growing glorification of the memory of the Great Victory at that time.³⁵

Overall, there was no single developed politics of memory in the period of 1991-2014. It changed with the presidents and governments, each trying to incorporate different visions on Ukrainian history into the public discourse and legislation. However, it can be seen that all of these models were incorporating the Soviet past rather than neglecting it.

2.2. Different Models of early-1990s Toponymic Changes in Ukrainian Cities

Ukrainian historian Andriy Portnov mentions that symbolic changes in Ukrainian cities in 1990s occurred mostly with the specific role of the local authorities, as the state leaders throughout the period were mostly trying to omit the contested questions in their

³² Oleksandra Gaidai. *Kam'yanyy Hist'. Lenin u Tsentral'niy Ukrayini [Stone Visitor. Lenin in Central Ukraine]*. (Kyiv: K.I.S., 2018.): 8.

³³ President of Ukraine. "Ukaz Prezydenta Ukrayiny Pro Optymizatsiyu Systemy Tsentral'nykh Orhaniv Vykonavchoyi Vlady [Decree of the President of Ukraine on Optimization of the System of Central Executive Authorities]." Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Last modified January 21, 2004.

³⁴ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. "Postanova Vid 12 Sichnya 2011 r. #8 Pro Utvorennnya Ukrayins'koho Instytutu Natsional'noyi Pam'yati [Resolution of January 31, 2011 #8 On the Establishment of the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance]." Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Last modified July 9, 2014. <http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/764-2006-n>.

³⁵ Volodymyr V. Kravchenko. *Ukraina, imperiia, Rosiia: Vybrani Statti z Modernoi Istorii Ta Istoriohrafii [Ukraine, Empire, Russia: Selected Studies in Modern History and Historiography]*. (Kyiv: "Krytyka", 2011): 481.

politics, not to create the conflict situation between the regions, as well with the neighboring countries.³⁶ Hence, in the situation of absence of general state laws or rules on the way how the symbolic space should be treated after the declaration of independence, each City Council (accompanied or opposed by the local activists) were making the changes on their own, though embodying specific local, political, and historical context into the space of the city. The process of desovietization was not only moving with different pace in Ukrainian cities, but also creating different models of city narratives and commemorative practices.

There was no extensive research done to study the changes of toponymic space of Ukrainian cities in early 1990s with the exception of examples of Kyiv and L'viv.

Kyiv – the capital city of the Ukrainian SSR and then the independent Ukraine – established a special Commission on Naming for the changes of toponymy formed by the City Council in 1991, which included not only governors and deputies, but also historians, architects, and civil activists.³⁷ The main characteristic of the toponymical changes of this period, as Ukrainian historian Yaroslav Hrytsak claims when comparing Kyiv and L'viv cases, was a few of proposals on renaming the Soviet toponyms, which were mostly located not in the central districts of the city – the changes were mostly done to the city center. As a capital and, therefore, the place of power demonstration not only of local government, but of a country-wide government too, the city received the symbolic markers of independence straight after the declaration on 24 August 1991 – Kyiv City Council at its special extraordinary session, held on August 26, 1991, renamed the Zhovtnevoi Revolutsii (October

³⁶ Andriy Portnov. "Memory Wars in Post-Soviet Ukraine (1991–2010)." Essay. In *Memory and Theory in Eastern Europe*, edited by Alexander Etkind, Uilleam Blacker, and Julie Fedor, 233–54. (New York: Pallgrave McMillan, 2013).

³⁷ Yaroslav Hrytsak and Victor Susak, "Constructing a National City: The Case of L'viv," in *Composing Urban History and the Constitution of Civic Identities*, ed. John Czaplicka, Blair A. Ruble, and Lauren Crabtree (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2003): 156–7.

revolution) square to maidan Nezalezhnosti.³⁸ In the following years, a number of streets were also renamed, mostly returning the historical names to the places in the city center. As such, the names of Rosa Luxemburg³⁹, Vladimir Lenin⁴⁰, Sergo Ordzhonikidze⁴¹ and others were removed from the city center. Overall, the changes in Kyiv were resembling the politics of national-state history writing of that time – the city was proclaimed the capital with the thousand years of history, which was represented through the extensive return of the pre-Soviet names.⁴² Together with this, the names of Bohdan Khmelnytskyi⁴³, Pylyp Orlik⁴⁴, Vyacheslav Chornovil⁴⁵ were introduced to the city space, exemplifying the official canon of heroes, who were connected to the Ukrainian national state building in different times.⁴⁶

One of the best researched cases of early 1990s symbolic changes in Ukraine is L'viv – one of the central cities of Western Ukraine. Since 1990, after the first democratic elections held in the Soviet Union was in the process of “construction of a national city”, as Hrytsak names it according to the types of renamings which followed. As he claims, the question of removing the Soviet symbolic from the city space was a priority for the newly elected City Council. It is important to mention that “Soviet” was directly opposed with “Ukrainian” here; the “national city” was to reflect the “national history” and to remove “the Soviet image of

³⁸ Executive Committee of Kyiv City Council of People's Deputies. “Decision #524 of 26.08.1991 on the renaming of Zhovtnevoi Revolutsii square and the “Zhovtnevoi Revolutsii” metro station”. Kyiv State Archive, P-1/8/3862, 90.

³⁹ Polish socialist and Marxist philosopher, 1871-1919.

⁴⁰ The leader of the Russian revolution.

⁴¹ Georgian Bolshevik, who was close to Joseph Stalin.

⁴² Andriy Portnov. Portnov, Andriy. *Uprazhneniya s Istoriyey Po-Ukrainski (Zametki Ob Obshchestvennykh Izmereniyakh Funktsionirovaniya Istorii v Postsovetskoy Ukraine) [Exercises with a History in Ukrainian (Notes on the Public Dimensions of the Functioning of History in Post-Soviet Ukraine)]*. (Moscow: O.G.I., 2010.): 99.

⁴³ Hetman of Right-bank Ukraine, the leader of the Cossack uprising of 1648-1654, which in modern official Ukrainian historiography is named as a National-Liberation War of Ukrainian People.

⁴⁴ Cossack starshina, the author of the first Constitution written in Europe

⁴⁵ A Ukrainian politician, dissident, in the Soviet Union, one of the leaders of the movement for Ukrainian independence in 1980s.

⁴⁶ Volodymyr V. Kravchenko. *Ukraina, imperiia, Rosiia: Vybrani Staty z Modernoi Istorii Ta Istoriohrafii [Ukraine, Empire, Russia: Selected Studies in Modern History and Historiography]*. (Kyiv: "Krytyka", 2011): 469-478.

the city”.⁴⁷ The guidelines on the creation of proper names also included non-ideologized requirements such as the referral to living people (which is still prohibited according to the Ukrainian legislation) or using same names for different streets. Therefore, the special advisory group of experts was gathered, where the five out of six members were professional historians, which submitted 550 proposals of renamings from 1990 to 1997. The names which were proposed and later adopted were, according to Hrytsak, “promoting a national historical version of Ukrainian historical memory” – therefore commemorating historical figures which were prohibited by the Soviet version of Ukrainian history as Volodymyr Vynnychenko⁴⁸ or Petro Doroshenko⁴⁹. However, the names which were included into the Soviet-Ukrainian canon were partially preserved – Taras Shevchenko, Ivan Franko, and Lesia Ukrajinka street names remained, despite being given to the streets within the Soviet period. There was a return of historical – pre-Soviet – names as well. Hrytsak writes that the L’viv expert group on renamings thought that their example should be followed by all Ukraine.⁵⁰ This example shows how the local administration together with experts used its symbolic power to legitimize the narrative which is actual for them. Unlike Kyiv case, where the canon introduced to the street-name narrative contained mostly figures from Soviet-Ukrainian historical image, the L’viv experts wished to introduce another, non-Soviet and national history to the city space.

As seen in previous examples, the symbolic politics in Ukrainian cities after the dissolution of Soviet Union differed. In L’viv case there was a strong wish to remove the

⁴⁷ Yaroslav Hrytsak and Victor Susak, "Constructing a National City: The Case of L'viv," in *Composing Urban History and the Constitution of Civic Identities*, ed. John Czaplicka, Blair A. Ruble, and Lauren Crabtree (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2003): 152.

⁴⁸ Ukrainian politician, one of the members of Central Rada, the head of the General Secretariat of the Rada in 1917-1918. Emigrated to Germany in 1920s.

⁴⁹ Cossack leader, Getman of Right-bank Ukraine in 1665-1672.

⁵⁰ Yaroslav Hrytsak and Victor Susak, "Constructing a National City: The Case of L'viv," in *Composing Urban History and the Constitution of Civic Identities*, ed. John Czaplicka, Blair A. Ruble, and Lauren Crabtree (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2003): 156.

“Soviet image of the Ukrainian city” and to introduce the re-discovered pantheon of heroes into the place names. The Kyiv case shows a more moderate version, with more historical/pre-Soviet names returned to the city center, and the introduction of local history into the space. What was going on in Kharkiv, the second biggest city in Ukraine at this period and was it similar to any of these two models?

2.3. Toponymic Changes in Kharkiv in 1991-2002: Between Freedom and Constitution Squares

Similar to the other big cities in Ukraine, in Kharkiv the Soviet nomenklatura mostly remained in power following the first Soviet democratic elections of 1990.⁵¹ The post of city mayor was obtained by Evgenii Petrovich Kushnariov, who was previously the head of the organizational department of the city committee of the KPU (Communist Party of Ukraine). He was said to be supporting the democratic changes in the KPU and was one of the creators and the elected chairman of the Democratic Platform of the Communist Party of Ukraine.⁵² In December 1990 he was also made the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the City Council.

On August 26, 1991, the City Council of People’s Deputies gathered for a special extraordinary session, on which the actions of GKCHP were condemned. The agenda consisted of three points:

1. On the priority measures which should be taken by the City Council due to the political situation.
2. On holding elections of the city mayor.

⁵¹ Volodymyr Kravchenko, *Kharkov/Kharkiv: Stolitsa Pogranich`ya* [Kharkov/Kharkiv: The Capital of the Borderland] (Vilnius: European Humanitarian Institute, 2010): 285.

⁵² *Regions of Ukraine: Chronicle and Heads*. Vol. 2. Kharkiv Region (Sapporo: Slavic Research Center of Hokkaido University, 2002): 21.

3. On the establishing of a national yellow-blue flag on the building of the City Council.⁵³

The decision which followed the session contained, apart from the information on the political situation in the country (however, not mentioning the declaration of independence), the set of measures mentioned in the first point of the session. Among those connected to economic and political issues, in point 2.16 it was decided to rename all toponyms named after Felix Dzerzhinsky, the first leader of the Soviet secret services. This decision was the first toponymical change in the independent-Ukrainian Kharkiv, which happened two days after the declaration of Independence of Ukraine.

The following names should have been changed:

- Dzerzhinsky square – into Freedom (Svobody) square. This change was planned to be approved by the city referendum on December 1, 1991. However, in October 1991 the City Council canceled this decision and requested the Executive Committee to complete the renaming-related works.⁵⁴
- Dzerzhinsky street – the decision said to “return the historical name”; was named Mironositskaya by the order #92 of the head of the City Council later in September⁵⁵;
- “Dzerzhinsky” metro station – into Universytet station;
- Dzerzhinsky district. In October 1991 Evgenii Kushnariov reported to the City Council that the interim deputy commission of the district came up with the proposal to rename it to Nahornii and was going to present it at the nearest session of the deputy

⁵³ Archival Department of Kharkiv City Council. Foundation 1, description 9, case 138: 5-11.

⁵⁴ 8th session of the 21st Kharkiv City Council of People's Deputies of Kharkiv Region. “Decision of 30.10.1991 on City Referendum.” Uniform City Register of Acts of the Kharkiv City Council. Accessed May 14, 2018. <https://doc.citynet.kharkov.ua/ru/profile/document/view/id/312090>.

⁵⁵ 8th session of the 21st Kharkiv City Council of People's Deputies of Kharkiv Region. “Decision of 02.10.1991 on the progress in the implementation of the decision of the Seventh Session of the Kharkiv City Council of People's Deputies "On Priority Measures of the City Council Resulting from the Political Situation". Uniform City Register of Acts of the Kharkiv City Council. Accessed May 14, 2018. <https://doc.citynet.kharkov.ua/ru/profile/document/view/id/311930>.

council.⁵⁶ However, the district remained Dzerzhinsky until 2016, when it was renamed to Shevchenkivs'ky;

- and FED factory, which name transcribed as Felix Edmundovich Dzerzhinsky – according to the information on the fulfilment of the decision, the personnel of the factory decided to remain the FED name, but from that moment it would have be transcribed as Fotoapparaty I Elektricheskie Dreli (Cameras and Electric Drills).

Maria Takhtaulova in her dissertation research on the development of Kharkiv toponymy writes that the period of 1990's in Kharkiv was mostly consistent of transformations of existent place names, not creating new ones due to the absence of mass housing development, which makes a great difference of the process from the naming policy of Soviet period.⁵⁷ Moreover, the process did not only involve the already built parts of the city but was mostly concentrated on the city center. Former Dzerzhinsky square was built as a part of a new Soviet center of Kharkiv, accompanied with a complex of government office buildings.⁵⁸ The mentioned metro station was also located at this square. The Kharkiv regional office of KGB was located on former Dzerzhynsky street.

Despite the lack of information on the number of deputies who were for or against this decision, there are additional documents which show that Freedom was not the only proposed name for the city's main square. There was an appeal of deputies of Kyivsk'y district to the special extraordinary session, which contained a request of renaming Dzerzhynsky square and metro station to Independence (Nezalezhnosti). Importantly, this name was written in Ukrainian while the rest of the text – in Russian. Moreover, these

⁵⁶ Archival Department of Kharkiv City Council. Foundation 1, description 11, case 54.

⁵⁷ Maria Y. Takhtaulova, "Historical Evolution of Kharkiv Address Urbanonymic Network (from the Middle of XVII Century till XXI Century)" (PhD diss., Zaporizhzhya National University, Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2016): 137.

⁵⁸ Volodymyr Kravchenko. "Kharkiv: A Borderland City." In *Cities after the fall of communism: reshaping Cultural Landscapes and European Identity*, by John Joseph. Czaplicka, Nida M. Gelazis, and Blair A. Ruble. (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2009): 226

deputies demanded the removal of Lenin monument from the square. There is a note in the record that there was a vote for the monument removal proposal, which failed (55 deputies were for the removal, 67 – against, 2 did not vote).⁵⁹

When remembering it, one of the members of the Kharkiv Toponymic Commission (who has been the member since the late 1980's, when this body was one of the committees of the City Council⁶⁰), local historian, and since 2016 the honorary citizen of Kharkiv, Sergey Kudelko mentioned:

there was a fight for the renaming of this [Freedom] square, as it was previously named Dzerzhynsky. Two forces collided: national-patriotic forces demanded to name it Independence square, while the democratic forces wanted it to be Svobody.⁶¹

In October 1991, when reporting on the implementation of the previous decision, City Council informed that the first results of the commission's work "shown that the military and revolutionary themes prevail in the names of squares, streets, etc., and there is no toponymical logic".⁶² Further they mentioned that the "return of its history to the city", as well as the revision of commemorated names will be costly, and that the question on financing will be introduced to the new session. The special official body – the Toponymic Commission – was "revived"⁶³ to continue the changes of the place names.⁶⁴ Together with the above renamings, it was requested to "develop the program of returning the historical names to districts, squares, streets, etc. and the concept of new ones"⁶⁵.

⁵⁹ Archival Department of Kharkiv City Council. Foundation 1, description 9, case 138: 15-16.

⁶⁰ Interview with Sergey Kudelko, Kharkiv, 12 April 2018.

⁶¹ Interview with Sergey Kudelko, Kharkiv, 12 April 2018.

⁶² Archival Department of Kharkiv City Council. Foundation 1, description 9, case 138.

⁶³ There are no available documents on the existence of such commission and its institutional belonging. However, there were mentions of the "Commission on renaming of existing [streets] and naming of new streets" in the decisions of the Executive Committee of the City Council of People's deputies in 1979 #754 and in 1989, decisions #37-39. In later (until 1991) documents, no mention of commissions of such kind was made.

⁶⁴ Archival Department of Kharkiv City Council. Foundation 1, description 11, case 54.

⁶⁵ Archival Department of Kharkiv City Council. Foundation 1, description 9, case 138.

However, the claim to work on the return of historical names to the streets of the city remained mostly not realized. The changes introduced from 1991 to 1994 were primarily connected to the memorials – there was a number of them created to Ukrainian intelligentsia, for example Grigorii Skovoroda⁶⁶ and Grigorii Kvitka⁶⁷. According to Volodymyr Kravchenko, all of these images were to some extent included in Soviet historiography which made them more comprehensible by the city public.⁶⁸

Nevertheless, the changes were small in number, which is likely to be because of the difficult socio-economic situation in which the region found itself in the beginning of 1990s. Moreover, as Kravchenko claims, the democratic moods of perestroika changed by that of nostalgia for the Soviet period, connected to both the socio-economic crisis and the pro-Russian sympathies, supported by the Russian media. The symbolic politics under the President Kuchma, who was elected in 1994, were mostly directed to the “smoothing” of the conflict with the symbols of the Soviet past, together with the strengthening of regionalization of cultural politics.⁶⁹ In case of Kharkiv this resulted in the “boom” of commemoration of the Communist party and Komsomol actors, as well as the scientists, cultural actors, and sportsmen in Kharkiv.⁷⁰

On June 27, 1995, 4 years after the previous renamings, the City Council (still headed by Evgenii Kushnarev) issued a decision, according to which three existing objects were renamed⁷¹:

⁶⁶ Philosopher and poet of Cossack origin, who lived in XVIII century. Was appraised in the Soviet Union as an educator and his philosophy as opponent of the tsarist regime. He died not far from Kharkiv, in the village which was named Skovorodynivka after him in 1922.

⁶⁷ Writer and journalist, who was born near Kharkiv and lived there in 1778-1843.

⁶⁸ Volodymyr Kravchenko, *Kharkov/Kharkiv: Stolitsa Pogranich`ya* [Kharkov/Kharkiv: The Capital of the Borderland] (Vilnius: European Humanitarian Institute, 2010): 286.

⁶⁹ Volodymyr Kravchenko, *Kharkov/Kharkiv: Stolitsa Pogranich`ya* [Kharkov/Kharkiv: The Capital of the Borderland] (Vilnius: European Humanitarian Institute, 2010): 287.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 289.

⁷¹ Archival Department of Kharkiv City Council. Foundation 1, description 11, case 54: 145-146.

- The 8th Conference of Soviets street – was renamed in remembrance of Borys Chychybabin, Soviet dissident poet, who lived at this street in 1951-56;
- Herzen⁷² lane – was renamed to Valentyn Bondarenko lane. Valentyn Bondarenko was an astronaut who died while training for the flight, and who lived on this street; this street was the first to be renamed on the outskirts of the city.
- Yakov Sverdlov⁷³ street – was “returned the first-historical name” Poltavskiy Shliakh street. In a month, this street was decided to be divided in two – Poltavskiy Shliakh and Zaliutins’ka, after the name of location of this street.⁷⁴

Uritsky⁷⁵ square was called off and the buildings there were joined to the Netchenskaya embankment, and four names of commanders of Armies, who took part in the “liberation of the city from the German fascists” – Ivan Managarov, Vasyl’ Kruchonkin, Mykhailo Shumilov, and Mykola Gagen – were proposed to be assigned to undefined new streets.

Just as in 1991, the renamed objects were mainly located in the city center, except for the Valentyn Bondarenko lane. Two main differences observed were the presence of civic organizations in proposing new names, and the use of names of people. The Kharkiv branch of the all-union society Memorial proposed to rename the 8th Conference of Soviets street after Borys Chychybabin.⁷⁶ Moreover, in their letter to Evgenii Kushnarev, the then chairman of the City Council, they also proposed to rename Lenin street to Andrey Sakharov, and Krasnoznamennaja (Red-flagged) street to Petro Grigorenko.⁷⁷ Both of them were Soviet dissidents, human-rights activists. Grigorenko was an ex-general of the Soviet Army and one

⁷² Alexandr Herzen was a XIX century Russian writer, a critic of Russian Empire.

⁷³ Yakov Sverdlov was a Bolshevik, the head of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee in 1917 – 1919.

⁷⁴ Archival Department of Kharkiv City Council. Foundation 1, description 11, case 57: 73.

⁷⁵ Named after Moisei Uritsky, the chief of Petrograd Cheka in March-August 1918.

⁷⁶ Since the 1988, when this branch of the all-Soviet society was created, they proclaimed one of their aims to restore the memory of people repressed by the Soviet regime, through commemorating in monuments and street names as well.

⁷⁷ Archival Department of Kharkiv City Council. Foundation 1, description 11, case 54.: 150.

of the founders of Ukrainian Helsinki Group in 1977. He also had a connection to Kharkiv – he studied there in the Institute of Technology (now – Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute).

Importantly, this claim was accompanied with justifications. Firstly, the memorial members wrote in their letter that they “consider it necessary to commemorate the famous human-rights activists” in the street scape of Kharkiv. The wish to rename Krasnoznamennaja to Petro Grigorenko was also justified through its location – it led to the Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute, where Grigorenko studied. Also, Lenin street was said to be located next to Lenin avenue, which was causing troubles with orientation; as well, one toponym dedicated to Lenin left would have been enough to their mind; Krasnoznamennaja and 8th Conference of Soviets streets were suspected “not to have any historical value”; together with this, Memorial’s members claimed, that the proposed streets to be renamed are short and the change of signs wouldn’t be costly. Only one of these propositions – Chichibabyn street – was accepted.

The Kharkiv Regional Committee of Veterans of War did also send their justifications and a proposition to name the streets after the Soviet Army commanders who took part in the liberation of the city in 1943 Shumilov, Managarov, Kruchonkin, and Gagen mentioned above. They proposed to give these names to streets on the outskirts of the city, newly built or nameless. Moreover, the Committee did fight for their wish to commemorate the commanders specifically through the street names. The first proposal of the Toponymic Commission was to create a memorial tablet for all of them, located near the monument of the Unknown Soldier. In their letter, the members of the Committee considered this decision “to be received as an insult and undervaluation of merits of the Armies in liberation of Kharkiv and Kharkiv region”⁷⁸. A month later after this letter, the decision on new streets was issued. In 1997 there appeared streets named after Managarov and Shumilov on the

⁷⁸ Archival Department of Kharkiv City Council. Foundation 1, description 11, case 54: 151.

outskirts of the city⁷⁹. Kruchonkin and Gagen streets also appeared in Kharkiv, but years later – in 2004⁸⁰ and 2012⁸¹ respectively.

Despite the fact that there was only one historical name returned, the importance of the historicity of names in the city was still highlighted. There was a discussion over the Poltavskiy Shliakh street name on the session of City Council, and after the proposition for it to be Poltavskaya, the Evgenii Kushnarev, the then Mayor and the Chairman of the session, said:

If we go on the path of restoration of historical justice then we do not have rights to change the [historical versions of] names, and if we go the path of withdrawal of some symbols and replacement of them with new ones, then it is a completely other way. I am wary of the second path, as it there will be the repetition, the life will be changing, and all of this would be removed, but historical symbols, which does not have ideological overtones, will remain.⁸²

Later in the discussion, Kushnarev also mentioned the importance historicity in the context of the city's coat of arms and flag, which were to be created until 1996 as the city joined the League of Historical Cities of Ukraine.⁸³ It is worthy to note that the agreed coat of arms was a returned one from the times of Russian Empire.⁸⁴

The next year, in 1996, there was only one renaming in Kharkiv. Radian'skoi Ukrainy (Soviet Ukraine) square, considered to be a part of the historical center of the city and one of

⁷⁹ 20th session of the 22'd Kharkiv City Council of People's Deputies of Kharkiv Region. "Decision of 27.02.1997 on the names of streets in Kharkiv." Uniform City Register of Acts of the Kharkiv City Council. Accessed May 14, 2018. <https://doc.citynet.kharkov.ua/ru/profile/document/view/id/327640>.

⁸⁰ 20th session of the 24'th Kharkiv City Council of Kharkiv Region. "Decision of 28.04.2004 #40/04 on the Naming of New Streets in Kharkiv." Uniform City Register of Acts of the Kharkiv City Council, Last modified April 28, 2004. Accessed May 14, 2018. <https://doc.citynet.kharkov.ua/ru/profile/document/viewhtml/id/177590>.

⁸¹ 20th session of the 6'th Kharkiv City Council of Kharkiv Region. "Decision of 24.10.2012 #907/12 on the Ordering of the Names." Uniform City Register of Acts of the Kharkiv City Council, Last modified October 24, 2012. <https://doc.citynet.kharkov.ua/ru/profile/document/viewhtml/id/611422>.

⁸² Archival Department of Kharkiv City Council. Foundation 1, description 11, case 57: 29.

⁸³ No information is available on what this League was.

⁸⁴ Volodymyr Kravchenko, *Kharkov/Kharkiv: Stolitsa Pogranich'ya [Kharkov/Kharkiv: The Capital of the Borderland]* (Vilnius: European Humanitarian Institute, 2010): 295.

the first squares ever created in Kharkiv, was renamed to the Konstytutsii (Constitution) square the very next day after the adoption of the Constitution of Ukraine.⁸⁵ Sergey Kudelko remembers:

You think this was fast [about the renaming of Svobody square, which was made two days after the declaration of Independence of Ukraine]? No, I will give you another example. Constitution (Konstytutsii) square was named the next morning after the adoption of the Constitution [of Ukraine]. The then chairwoman [of the Toponymic Commission] called us and said: “If you can drop in in the morning...” I had an opportunity to drop in, and I did. The others arrived, the quorum was present, and the decision was made to rename the square. But once again, there was an initiative from the city administration, this was not Toponymic Commission... Toponymic Commission responds to requests but does not initiate any renaming.⁸⁶

So, in absence of almost half (eight out of seventeen) members of the commission the decision was made and directed to the City Council.⁸⁷ Here as well, the word ‘historical’ was used – the justification for the renaming stated that the adoption of Constitution was a “historically important event” which needed commemoration. However, the return of the ‘historical’ – the pre-Soviet – names Nikolaiivs’ka/Nikol’s’ka (after the church of st. Nikolaii which was located at this square until 1930) or Yarmarkova (the very first name of the square, given because local fairs (yarmarky) were held at this square)⁸⁸ were not considered in the process of renaming. At the same time, the metro station located at this square remained Radians ’ka (Soviet) until 2015.

One more important decision was made in September 1996 – Kharkiv City Council issued a decree according to which the decisions which should be made over the place names were to be adopted by the decree of the City Council.⁸⁹ It was an attempt to make the process

⁸⁵ Archival Department of Kharkiv City Council. Foundation 1, description 12, case 60.: 292.

⁸⁶ Interview with Sergey Kudelko, Kharkiv, 12 April 2018.

⁸⁷ Archival Department of Kharkiv City Council. Foundation 1, description 12, case 60.: 294.

⁸⁸ Maria Y. Takhtaulova, "Historical Evolution of Kharkiv Address Urbanonymic Network (from the Middle of XVII Century till XXI Century)" (PhD diss., Zaporizhzhya National University, Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2016): 49.

⁸⁹ Archival Department of Kharkiv City Council. Foundation 1, description 12, case 60.: 24.

of naming the city streets more open to the public, as they could have been able to attend the sessions of the City Council.⁹⁰ This was the first document for the 6 years of independence to regulate the process in the city. There is, however, no evidence of the involvement of general public to the discussion on the later (re)namings except for the notions of public appeals to rename the streets, which were mentioned in the decisions of the City council. Besides, the call to returning historical names was also not incarnated – after the 1996, the names were mostly given to the newly built streets – the development of the city lead to the creation of new streets, which, in turn, needed to be named.

In December 1996, Evgenii Kushnarev was appointed as a head of Presidents Administration and moved to Kyiv.⁹¹ Since then the post of the mayor was obtained by Mykhailo Pylypchuk – firstly as an acting mayor, and since 1998 as an elected mayor. Pylypchuk was a deputy mayor under Kushnarev since 1991. Therefore, such closeness of the two mayors might lead to an assumption that there was not going to be any changes to the symbolic politics introduced.

Indeed, in 1997 five new street names occurred – Rokytna, Svitankova, and Nansen, and two more named after the Army commanders, which were proposed in 1995 – Managarov and Shumilov.⁹² According to the record of Toponymic Commission, Rokytna and Svitankova were named “in accordance with the floral landscape”, and Nansen to commemorate Fridtjof Nansen, who visited Kharkiv in 1923 as a head of International Committee of Helping the

⁹⁰ Maria Y. Takhtaulova, "Historical Evolution of Kharkiv Address Urbanonymic Network (from the Middle of XVII Century till XXI Century)" (PhD diss., Zaporizhzhya National University, Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2016): 135.

⁹¹ Regions of Ukraine: Chronicle and Heads. Vol. 2. Kharkiv Region. (Sapporo: Slavic Research Center of Hokkaido University, 2002): 50.

⁹² 20th session of the 22'd Kharkiv City Council of People's Deputies of Kharkiv Region. "Decision of 27.02.1997 on the names of streets in Kharkiv."

Starving. In the case of the later, the City Council was said to receive the appeals of citizens and civic society organizations to name the street after this person.⁹³

In 1998, the street near the Institute of Problems of Machine Construction was recommended to be named after Akademik Pidhornyy, who was its director in 1971-1996. In 2000, as an approval for the response of the personnel of Kharkiv Tractor Plant (Kharkivskyi Traktornyi Zavod), Pivnichna (Northern) street was renamed after Panteleimon Svystun, who was a first director of the plant, executed in 1938 and rehabilitated in 1956.^{94,95} After this, the moratorium was put on all the changes of toponymic space of Kharkiv by the City Council because all-state census was held from July 1, 2001 to July 1, 2002.⁹⁶ However, despite this interdiction, in February 2002 six more new streets were named.⁹⁷ Apparently, this decision was made because the census was already finished, as it was held on 5.12.2001.⁹⁸ Out of the six streets, only one was named after a person – Oleksandr Golovachov, twice Hero of the Soviet Union, a military commander during the Second World War, who took part in the operations which ended in the liberation of Kharkiv in 1943. The other names were given not commemorative names such as Gorbanivska and Luchkivska. No information on why these particular names were given was provided. After this, there were no new names introduced until the issuance of the first register of Kharkiv toponyms in December 2002, which will be discussed in the next subchapter.

⁹³ Archival Department of Kharkiv City Council. Foundation 1, description 12, case 428.: 88.

⁹⁴ Archival Department of Kharkiv City Council. Foundation 1, description 14, case 16.: 159.

⁹⁵ According to the Robitnycha Gazeta (28.12.88, p.2), one of the first events of Kharkiv society “Memorial”, which was one of the actors for the renaming process in 1990s, was held in memoriam of Svystun in 1988.

⁹⁶ 21th session of the 23'th Kharkiv City Council of Kharkiv Region. “Decision of 27.04.2011 on the Temporary Suspension of Decisions on Renaming Streets, Lanes, Avenues, Squares, Parks, Squares, Bridges and Other Structures Located in the Territory of the City of Kharkiv.” Uniform City Register of Acts of the Kharkiv City Council, Last modified April 27, 2001.

<https://doc.citynet.kharkov.ua/ru/profile/document/view/id/42030>.

⁹⁷ 29th session of the 23'th Kharkiv City Council of Kharkiv Region. “Decision of 28.02.2002 About Naming of New Streets in Kharkiv.” Uniform City Register of Acts of the Kharkiv City Council. Accessed June 4, 2018. <https://doc.citynet.kharkov.ua/ru/profile/document/view/id/395122>.

⁹⁸ All Ukrainian Population Census '2001. Last modified 2001. <http://2001.ukrcensus.gov.ua/>.

2.3.1. Conclusion

The number of renamings or introductions of new names in Kharkiv in the period of 1991-2002 was small – overall 8 old streets were renamed, and 12 new streets were named. Comparing to L’viv or Kyiv, nothing barely changed in the quantitative aspect. Neither was there a straight-forward and massive change of Soviet names and symbols to the national Ukrainian ones, as it was demonstrated in the L’viv case. The renamings were not carried under the motivation to establish a “national city” and to celebrate the independence of Ukraine. On the contrary, the set of renamed streets looks rather as an attempt to fit in the general process of changes, which were started by obtaining the independence, but not to introduce a lot of them.

Thematically, the new names were connected mostly to the local history of the city – all of the people after whom the streets were named lived and worked in Kharkiv and two streets were returned their historical names from pre-Soviet period. The names of Freedom and Constitution squares were symbolically the most connected to the political changes in the state. However, while the renaming of the later looks like the most exemplary case of the legitimization of the new political and symbolic order of Ukraine, then the second one seems rather neutral (remembering that there was a discussion over naming it Independence, not Freedom). Together with this, the names which were changed – especially Dzerzhinsky and Sverdlov – were already condemned in Perestroika period, so these changes did not represent the “national” change in Ukrainian historiography.⁹⁹ The names introduced into the city space were also connected to the Soviet-Ukrainian canon of heroes – those were commanders of Soviet armies, scientists and writers, not fighters for or supporters of Ukrainian independence

⁹⁹ For example, in Moscow, the squares named after them were reverted to their historical names in 1990. From Graeme Gill, "Changing Symbols: The Renovation of Moscow Place Names," *Russian Review* 64, no. 3 (2005): 480-503.

as in the case of L'viv. Together with this, we can trace the selectivity of the choice for street names when looking at the public and civic organization's requests. The City Council and its special body – Toponymic Commission – rejected to name the streets after Andrey Sakharov and Petro Grigorenko. There were no proper explanations on the reasons of such selectivity. However, it can be assumed that Grigorenko and Sakharov were more controversial figures due to their activities compared to Borys Chichibabyn, who was not engaged in any political organizations.

On the case of 1990s in Kharkiv we can rather see how the authorities, who might have not known how to act in the situation of the change of the regime were making decisions that affected an important central part of the city. Small in number, the first changes were introduced to those districts of the city where main governmental bodies, as well as other offices were located. Moreover, the first renaming of independent-Ukrainian Kharkiv introduced – Freedom square – was done to the square, which was not only the place for the regional administration and the biggest university in the city to be located, but also it was considered as the Soviet center of the city.

There was also a pattern of legitimization of names and the whole renaming process through the notions of historicity. The names considered legitimate were the pre-Soviet names or those with connection to the important historical events. However, despite the continuous claims for the importance of returning the historical names to the places, there were only two such instances for the 10-year period. Even the places which had some pre-Soviet names were given new ones instead. This leads to an assumption that the term “historical” was rather a discursive instrument used for legitimization of the decisions, not the real strategy of the city administration.

The main actors involved into the process of shaping the post-soviet image of Kharkiv were City Council and its executive committee, the Toponymic Commission (which despite

being the body of the City Council should still be observed as a separate actor of the process as their expertise and status were needed by the City Council to promote their own decisions, as in the case with Constitution square); the civil society organizations were also producing some proposals on the (re)namings to be made. As there is a limited number of documents available from the Toponymic Commission it is hard to trace the communication between them and the civil society activists. The notion of general public also arose in several decisions of the executive committee, apparently serving as one of the practices of legitimizing the importance of the decisions.

2.4. Toponymic Space as a Source of Creation of Local Historical Narrative: Changes in Kharkiv, 2002-2014

In July 2002 the moratorium on making decisions on changes of toponymical space was officially over.¹⁰⁰ By this time, the new mayor was elected in the city – Volodymyr Shumilkin, the then leader of the regional branch of People's Democratic Party.¹⁰¹ While he was obtaining this post, not only the changes happen to the toponymical space of Kharkiv, but also the symbolic framework of the city was institutionalized through the official documents on the operations of the Toponymic Commission.

¹⁰⁰ 21th session of the 23'th Kharkiv City Council of Kharkiv Region. "Decision of 27.04.2011 on the Temporary Suspension of Decisions on Renaming Streets, Lanes, Avenues, Squares, Parks, Squares, Bridges and Other Structures Located in the Territory of the City of Kharkiv." Uniform City Register of Acts of the Kharkiv City Council, Last modified April 27, 2001.

<https://doc.citynet.kharkov.ua/ru/profile/document/view/id/42030>.

¹⁰¹ The centrist Ukrainian party. Was created in 1996 from two other political parties – Working Congress of Ukraine and Party of Democratic Revival. One of the civic organizations "New Ukraine", which joined the party after its establishment, was headed by Evgenii Kushnarev. By 1998, the party divided into two wings – one which was in opposition to the then president of Ukraine Leonid Kuchma, and another which supported him.

2.4.1 Institutionalization of the Toponymic Commission of Kharkiv City

Council and Creation of the Framework for the Toponymical Changes

As it was mentioned in the previous subchapter, the Toponymic Commission – an advisory body, which aimed at researching and restoring the historical image of the city, was “revived” in 1991. Despite its further operations through the 1990s, there was no official documents which would have stated what was the aim of the commission, as well as how it should have been organized. Only in December 2002, together with the first Register of Urbanonyms, the official Statute of the Toponymic Commission was issued.¹⁰²

Its official name was from that moment the City Commission on Toponymics and the Protection of the Historical and Cultural Environment. According to the statute, the Commission was an advisory body, which was to be convened by the decision of the City Council to

research the requests and prepare proposals for the adoption by the city council, its executive bodies, of decisions on naming and renaming the elements of the street-road network, underground stations, public transport stops, parks, squares, and other objects of the urban environment; perpetuating the memory of prominent figures and events, the installation of monuments and memorials; preparation of proposals for the registration of newly discovered objects of heritage, measures for the conservation and effective use of object of heritage registered by the state; other activities related to the formation, protection and reproduction of the historical and cultural environment of the city.¹⁰³

As can be seen from the quote, the Commission was responsible for various activities connected to the preservation of historical heritage, and also to the development of the new image of the city. The members of the Commission should have been experts – historians,

¹⁰² 9th session of 24th Kharkiv City Council of Kharkiv region. “Decision of 25.12.2002 on the On the City Commission on Toponymics and the Protection of the Historical and Cultural Environment.” Uniform City Register of Acts of the Kharkiv City Council. Accessed June 4, 2018. <https://doc.citynet.kharkov.ua/ru/profile/document/view/id/60250>.

¹⁰³ Ibid

philologists, and others – the deputies of the City Council, and the representative of the executive bodies of the City Council. What is also important, the sessions of the Commission were said to be held without the people, who were asking for a certain renaming or commemoration. Therefore, The Toponymic Commission was created as a closed body of deputies and experts, who were to decide on the changes of the image of Kharkiv.

Throughout the period of 2002-2014 the Statute of the Commission was changed. The main changes which happened were the following:

- In 2005 the Commission was divided into three groups according to the topic of the request – the first of them worked with toponymy, the second – with the sculptures and artworks, and the third one – with the preservation of the historical and cultural heritage. However, only the full commission was to approve the requests of the City Council and its Executive Committee. Together with this, the required frequency of meetings of the Commission was lowered from once a month to once in three months.¹⁰⁴
- In 2006, the Commission was also said to be working with the renaming of districts (previously it was under the control of the Executive Committee of the City Council). Also, the Commission was to write protocols of their meetings. The excerpts from them were to be headed by the Secretary of the Commission to the executive bodies of the City Council and the people, who were making requests.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ 9th session of 24th Kharkiv City Council of Kharkiv region. “Decision of 25.12.2002 on the On the City Commission on Toponymics and the Protection of the Historical and Cultural Environment with changes and additions introduced by the decision of the Kharkiv city council XXXIII session of the IV convocation dated February 22, 2005 #11/05” Uniform City Register of Acts of the Kharkiv City Council. Accessed June 4, 2018. <https://doc.citynet.kharkov.ua/ru/profile/document/view/id/60250>.

¹⁰⁵ 7th session of 5th Kharkiv City Council of Kharkiv region. “Decision of 22.11.2006 on the On the City Commission on Toponymics and the Protection of the Historical and Cultural Environment.” Uniform City Register of Acts of the Kharkiv City Council. Accessed June 4, 2018. <https://doc.citynet.kharkov.ua/ru/profile/document/view/id/378222>.

The Statute was changed once more in 2015, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

As it was mentioned, the Commission should have been composed of both experts and deputies. The heading positions – the head, its deputy, and the secretary – were taken by the members of the executive bodies of the City Council. Interestingly, the secretary of the Commission was not changed since its official establishment – Oleksii Khoroshkovatyi obtained this position from 2002 to 2017. Almost the same situation is seen with the head of the Commission – since 2006 this position was obtained by Gennadiy Kernes (the then secretary of the City Council, and since 2010 the Mayor), who was a member of the commission since 2002. It is also interesting that he was the only Mayor to be the member of the Commission.

While the Statute and the composition of the Commission was changing through years, its main rules on the changes of the toponymic space of the city – “The Regulations on the Procedure for Naming and Renaming of Elements of the Urban Environment and Infrastructure, Perpetuating the Memory of Individuals and Events, and on Taking Measures to Protect the City's Historical and Cultural Environment” were barely changed since the first version was issued.¹⁰⁶ The crucial point of the Regulations for this research is the framework created by this document for the choice of new names. The framework contained of 4 main points (further is the quote from the Regulations):

- Kharkiv is one of the metropolises of Ukraine, which is a modern European state;
- Kharkiv is a regional center of Eastern Ukraine, a city with long historical and cultural traditions;
- historical-geographical and toponymic criteria, the use of the names of the past, taking into account local traditions and characteristics;

¹⁰⁶ 9th session of 24th Kharkiv City Council of Kharkiv region. “Decision of 25.12.2002 on the On the City Commission on Toponymics and the Protection of the Historical and Cultural Environment.” Uniform City Register of Acts of the Kharkiv City Council. Accessed June 4, 2018. <https://doc.citynet.kharkov.ua/ru/profile/document/view/id/60250>.

- adherence to the leading provisions of the protection of the historical and cultural environment.¹⁰⁷

It is also important to mention that according to the Regulations; the commemoration of political actors was to be done in “exceptional” instances. The criteria of “exceptionality” were, however, not furtherly described. On the contrary, the priority in commemoration was given to the “leading figures of science and culture, whose outstanding activities were connected to Kharkiv [and/or] Ukraine”.¹⁰⁸ What was meant by Ukraine being a “modern European state”, as well as Kharkiv being “the regional center of Eastern Ukraine” were not described either. However, the emphasis on the regional criterion was in line with the politics of memory developed under the presidency of Leonid Kuchma (who in 2002 was in his second President term). His regime was characterized by the strengthening of regional elites in order to gain political and economic stability.¹⁰⁹ It also influenced the development of regional differences in cultural politics, and commemorative practices. Together with this, Kharkiv since the early 1990s was developing its own regional historical narrative. Kharkiv historian Volodymyr Kravchenko in his research of the symbolic and cultural changes of Kharkiv noted, one of the reasons for this was the attempt of local historians to fit the history of the region to the newly created narrative of the national-state history of Ukraine.¹¹⁰ This was represented by the appeals to Slobozhanshchyna as to the “ethnically Ukrainian Cossack region”, highlighting of the establishment of the first University on the modern territory of Ukraine, as well as through presenting Kharkiv as a first capital of the Ukrainian SSR.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid

¹⁰⁸ 9th session of 24th Kharkiv City Council of Kharkiv region. “Decision of 25.12.2002 on the On the City Commission on Toponymics and the Protection of the Historical and Cultural Environment.” Uniform City Register of Acts of the Kharkiv City Council. Accessed June 4, 2018. <https://doc.citynet.kharkov.ua/ru/profile/document/view/id/60250>.

¹⁰⁹ Volodymyr V. Kravchenko. *Ukraïna, imperiïâ, Rosiïâ: Vybrani Statti z Modernoi Istorii Ta Istoriohrafii [Ukraine, Empire, Russia: Selected Studies in Modern History and Historiography]*. (Kyiv: "Krytyka", 2011): 469-478.

¹¹⁰ Volodymyr Kravchenko, *Kharkov/Kharkiv: Stolitsa Pogranych`ya [Kharkov/Kharkiv: The Capital of the Borderland]* (Vilnius: European Humanitarian Institute, 2010): 294.

However, as a consequence of regionalist politics of Kuchma, this ended not only in fitting Kharkiv into the general framework of the history of Ukraine as a state, but also in the attempts to highlight Kharkiv as a more prominent city not only in the region, but also in the whole country.¹¹¹ This notion, to my mind, might serve as a definition for the mentioned criterion of the Toponymic Commission. The need for connection of famous scientists and artists to the history of Kharkiv, mentioned in the Regulations, also fits into this framework. Therefore, Kharkiv was not developing as a “national city”, as Hrytsak named L’viv, but it was rather developing its own unique image, built on regional and, more to say, urban patriotism – the framework provided by the authorities was introducing local historical narrative, which praised Kharkiv as a motherland or a place of living for a number of renowned people.

Therefore, the Toponymic Commission created a framework, in which European and regional markers should have been fitted. Also, the continuing notion of the importance of historical tradition of naming and the use of names of past was highlighted. However, same as in 1990s, in 2002-2014 this criterion remained mostly a discursive practice, not a real implemented project.

2.4.2. Toponymic changes in Kharkiv, 2002-2014

Unlike in 1990s, when the number of overall changes was small, in 2002-2014 there were a lot of new street names introduced – 445, out of which only 43 were renamings. Out of the renamings, only two were returned historical names.

Before looking at what was actually changed in the city in the given period, it is necessary to mention what was not done. In 2007 Viktor Yushchenko signed an order on the

¹¹¹ Ibid, 295

measures which were to be taken due to the 75th anniversary of the Holodomor in Ukraine.¹¹² Among other points of the order, which were connected to commemorative practices (construction of memorial sites, production of documentaries and feature films, etc.), there was a point which proclaimed that the monuments to the people, who were involved in the organization of Holodomor, were to be dismantled, and the streets named after them to be renamed. When this order came into force, regional authorities were ordered to come up with the lists of the names which were to be changed.¹¹³ However, the decision was not supported by the local administrations of Southern and Eastern regions; as “local communities had a lot of mechanisms of resisting unpopular decisions of the central power”¹¹⁴. The research conducted by sociologists Viktoria Sereda and Oleg Mazuryk shown such resistance strategy on the example of Donetsk. There, the city administration at first claimed that there were more urgent issues to work on, later they made a list of to-be-renamed streets but claimed that there were no sufficient financial resources for the implementation of changes.¹¹⁵ There were also people, who directly protested the change – the Communist Party of Ukraine organized a rally against the renamings. As a result, no changes were made.

In Kharkiv, no changes were implemented under this Order too. The then mayor of the city, Mikhail Dobkin, promised to give the order to change the name of Kosior¹¹⁶ street, and proposed to name it after the newly built Oleksandrivs’ka church, which was located

¹¹² President of Ukraine. “Ukaz Prezydenta Ukrainy Pro Zakhody u Zv'yazku z 75-My Rokovynamy Holodomoru 1932-1933 Rokiv v Ukraini [Decree of the President of Ukraine on Measures in Connection with the 75th Anniversary of the Holodomor of 1932-1933 in Ukraine].” Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Last modified March 28, 2007. <http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/250/2007>.

¹¹³ Viktoria Sereda, and Oleg Mazuryk. “Polityka Pam'yati v Ukraini: Mizh Zahal'nonatsional'nym Ta Rehional'nym Rivnyamy [Memory Politics in Ukraine: between National and Regional Levels].” *Visnyk Kharkivs'koho Natsional'noho Universytetu Imeni V.N. Karazina* 1045 (2013): 103.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 103

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 104

¹¹⁶ Stanislav Kosior – general secretary of the Communist party of Ukraine, 1928-1938; Is considered to be one of the organizers of the Holodomor.

there.¹¹⁷ This change was not implemented that year, but only in 2015 – under the operation of another state law, which was supposed to remove Soviet names from the streets of Ukrainian cities – the Law “On the Condemnation of the Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) Regimes, and Prohibition of Propaganda of Their Symbols”. Apparently, the plans for the changes of the names existed, but were not implemented at that moment.

However, Kharkiv administration was resistant not only to the state memorial projects, provided by their political opponents¹¹⁸, but to some projects of their proponents too. When in winter 2007 Evgenii Kushnariov, the former mayor of Kharkiv and the Head of Kharkiv State Regional administration, died after being shot while hunting, the members of Party of Regions Vasiliy Salygin and Yulia Kovaliova proposed to rename Sumska – one of the central streets of Kharkiv – after Kushnariov.¹¹⁹ However, the then mayor Dobkin announced, that some other practice of commemoration will be made, without “breaking the part of history that is inextricably linked with the city of Kharkiv”.¹²⁰ Therefore, the preservation of different parts of toponymic narrative occurred – both local pre-Soviet history and the names of Soviet leaders were not changed.

When talking about what was actually changed in the toponymic space of Kharkiv in 2002-2014, the decisions can be divided into 4 main groups:

1. Naming of the streets in the newly built quarters,
2. Naming of the streets, which were unnamed before,

¹¹⁷ “Vulytsi Ne Povynni Nosyty Imena Orhanizatoriv Holodomoru [The Streets Should Not Bear the Names of the Organizers of the Holodomor].” UNIAN, Last modified October 24, 2007. <https://www.unian.ua/kharkiv/72705-vulitsi-ne-povynni-nositi-imena-organizatoriv-golodomoru.html>.

¹¹⁸ In that time, Kharkiv City Council was run by the majority of *Party of Regions*, which was a straight opponent of President Yushchenko’s *Nasha Ukraina* party.

¹¹⁹ “Glavnuyu Ulitsu Khar’kova Khotyat Pereimenovat’ v Chest’ Kushnareva [The Main Street of Kharkov Wants to Be Renamed in Honor of Kushnarev].” Korrespondent, Last modified January 25, 2007. <https://korrespondent.net/ukraine/events/176440-glavnuyu-ulicu-harkova-hotyat-pereimenovat-v-chest-kushnareva>.

¹²⁰ “Mer Kharkova Proty Pereymenuvannya Holovnoyi Vulytsi Mista [Kharkiv Mayor against Renaming the Main Street of the City].” Korrespondent, Last modified January 25, 2007. <https://ua.korrespondent.net/ukraine/283449-mer-harkova-proti-perejmenuvannya-golovnoyi-vulici-mista>.

3. Renamings of previously existent streets, and
4. The naming and renaming of streets in the territories of the urban-type settlements, which were attached to the city in 2012.

The decisions on the first group were mainly presented without any explanations on the reasons for the choice of the particular names.¹²¹ I do not provide each event of this group in chronological order as the pattern of naming was basically the same in all years of the given period. Also, those names were mostly neutral and were not commemorating any people or events. 97 names after plants, natural phenomena, and regional geographical objects were introduced. Together with this, 45 names commemorating people were introduced. Almost a half of them were used because there were streets named after these people nearby. As such, Suvorov¹²² entrance, Buhrymenko¹²³ street, Chkalov¹²⁴ lane and others were introduced. I extract this group among others as it mostly contained of the names, which came from the Soviet canon of heroes. For sure, the neighboring streets were named in the Soviet times, so they contained such names. Nevertheless, they were used by the City Council in the discussed period too. The second half of commemorating names was represented mostly by the cultural actors and scientists, for example Lev Landau¹²⁵, Oleksandr Molokin¹²⁶, Borys Grinchenko¹²⁷. All of these people were connected to Kharkiv in some way – they either were born, lived, or worked there in some periods of time. Soviet Army heroes, were also present within this group – Vasylii Kruchonkin¹²⁸ and Petr Pokryshev¹²⁹ were commemorated. Both

¹²¹ Decisions of Kharkiv City Council #164/03, 248/03, 40/04, 162/04, 180/04, 105/05, 227/05, 312/07, 99/08, 295/08, 82/10, 224/09. All found at the Uniform City Register of Acts of the Kharkiv City Council.

¹²² Aleksandr Suvorov, a Russian military leader of XVIII century.

¹²³ Vasylii Buhrymenko, a member of Comsomol, who among the others was leading the underground resistance group in Kharkiv at the time of Nazi occupation. Was executed by the Nazi in 1943.

¹²⁴ Valeriy Chkalov, soviet aviator, Hero of the Soviet Union.

¹²⁵ A Nobel Laureate in physics who lived and worked in Kharkiv in 1930s

¹²⁶ Architect, who lived and worked in Kharkiv in 1913-1951.

¹²⁷ Ukrainian writer, teacher, historian and ethnographer.

¹²⁸ A commander of Soviet Army.

¹²⁹ Soviet aviator, twice Hero of the Soviet Union.

of them were connected to Kharkiv – Pokryshev studied there, and Kruchonkin was a commander of the Army which took part in city's liberation in 1943. Together with this, the proposition to name the street after Kruchonkin was received by the City Council 10 years before (see previous subchapter).

The second group of names contained only of commemorative ones. Each of them was introduced by the special decision of the City Council. In 2004, the newly built street in the city center was named after Volodymyr Vernadsky, scientist and the first president of Ukrainian Academy of Sciences.¹³⁰ This decision also mentioned that the name was given because of the appeals of the Executive Committees of councils of the districts where this street was located.

In 2006, two streets were decided to be named after Mykola Kulish and Les' Kurbas, Ukrainian, playwrights and theater people, who lived and worked in Kharkiv in 1930s.¹³¹ Both of them are representatives of the "Executed Renaissance" – a group of Ukrainian intelligentsia executed or repressed under the regime of Stalin in 1930's. Unlike Vernadsky street, these two were located on the outskirts of the city.

The unnamed square in the city center was named after Yaroslav Mudry, one of the Kievan Rus' princes, in 2007.¹³² This choice was, however, rather justified not with the praise of the history of that times, but with the location of The Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University¹³³ on this square, and the appeal of the administration of the university to the City Council. The same situation happened in 2009, but this time with the appeal of a religious organization – a square in the historical part of the city was named Oleksandrivs'ka after the

¹³⁰ Archival Department of Kharkiv City Council. Foundation 1, description 15, case 261: 153.

¹³¹ Archival Department of Kharkiv City Council. Foundation 1, description 15, case 1065: 175.

¹³² Decision of Kharkiv City Council #313/07. Available at <https://doc.citynet.kharkov.ua/ru/profile/document/view/id/408665>. Accessed 15 May 2018.

¹³³ The university gained this name in 1995.

appeal of Nikodim, metropolitan of Kharkiv and Bohodukhiv.¹³⁴ The appeal was apparently made because Oleksandrivs'ka church was located in this square. The same year, the unnamed public garden in the city center was named Architects square.¹³⁵ The last of this group, a street named after Ivan Kozhedub, Soviet aviator and Hero of Soviet Union. He studied in the flight school near Kharkiv in 1940, and the National Air Force University is named after him.

The third group – the renamed streets – is interesting because it provides information on what names were removed from the space of Kharkiv. In 2004 Zelenskyi entrance was changed to Pioneer entrance, Urytsky square to Buhrimova Irina¹³⁶ square, Ter-Petrosian¹³⁷ lane to Sosnovyi (Pine) lane.¹³⁸ Interestingly, Uritsky square was supposed to be as a toponym in 1995 (see previous subchapter), however for some reason it remained in the Kharkiv Register of Urbanonyms. In 2009, together with other names introduced after the appeal of Nikodim, metropolitan of Kharkiv and Bohodukhiv, Khalturin¹³⁹ descent was renamed to Sobornyi (Cathedral).¹⁴⁰ The street named after Khalturin, however, remained in the city until 2016. This may lead to an assumption that the renaming was made not because the Khalturin was needed to be removed, but because the representatives of the church wanted the descent to be renamed (it led to one of the biggest cathedrals in the city).

¹³⁴ Decision of Kharkiv City Council #111/09. Available at <https://doc.citynet.kharkov.ua/ru/profile/document/view/id/462502>. Accessed 15 May 2018.

¹³⁵ Decision of Kharkiv City Council #172/09. Available at <https://doc.citynet.kharkov.ua/ru/profile/document/view/id/468147>. Accessed 15 May 2018.

¹³⁶ Soviet circus actress. Studied and worked in Kharkiv in

¹³⁷ Simon Arshaki Ter-Petrosian, Bolshevik revolutionary.

¹³⁸ Decision of Kharkiv City Council #47/04. Available at <https://doc.citynet.kharkov.ua/ru/profile/document/view/id/174540>. Accessed 15 May 2018.

¹³⁹ Stepan Khalturin, Russian revolutionary-terrorist, one of the organizers of the terrorist attack in the Winter Palace in 1880.

¹⁴⁰ Decision of Kharkiv City Council #111/09. Available at <https://doc.citynet.kharkov.ua/ru/profile/document/view/id/462502>. Accessed 15 May 2018.

¹⁴⁰ Decision of Kharkiv City Council #172/09. Available at <https://doc.citynet.kharkov.ua/ru/profile/document/view/id/468147>. Accessed May 15, 2018.

The renamings of 2009 were not justified by the need to remove some names from the toponymical space. Entuziastiv street in the district of Pyatikhatki was renamed to Akademik Synelnikov¹⁴¹ street, while the previously existed Synelnikov street in the city center was returned its historical name Lypova.¹⁴² The toponym commemorating the famous physicist was moved to the place where he worked, as the Institute of Physics and Technology was located in the district of Pyatikhatki.

In 2011 the historical name of Blahovishchenskyi [Annunciation] was returned to the Karl Marx square.¹⁴³ The neighboring Karl Marx street was not renamed until 2015. The return of the name was made after the appeal of deputy of Kharkiv City Council Maksim Museev¹⁴⁴. Gennadiy Kernes, the then mayor (and the head of the Toponymic Commission) said in an official interview:

There was a time after the revolution when everything was renamed, destroyed [...] I think it's time to put everything in place. The decision to rename the square of Karl Marx and to return its historical name was not my decision, but the decision of the Toponymic Commission. Blahovishchenskyi Square appeared in the 1740s. The final appearance of the square was acquired in the twentieth century. Where is the connection between its construction and Karl Marx? The Blahovishchenskyi Cathedral is one of the pearls of Kharkiv. I think this is the right decision to return the Blahovishchenskyi name to this area.¹⁴⁵

In 2013, one more historical renaming was made – Rosa Luxemburg¹⁴⁶ square was turned to be Pavlivskyi.¹⁴⁷ The members of the fraction of the Communist Party of Ukraine in the City

¹⁴¹ Soviet nuclear physicist, since 1944 the director of Kharkiv Institute of Physics and Technology.

¹⁴² Decision of Kharkiv City Council #224/09. Available at <https://doc.citynet.kharkov.ua/ru/profile/document/view/id/482689>. Accessed May 15, 2018.

¹⁴³ Decision of Kharkiv City Council #499/11. Available at <https://doc.citynet.kharkov.ua/ru/profile/document/view/id/573665>. Accessed May 15, 2018.

¹⁴⁴ By that time – director of “Kharkovpass” communal enterprise.

¹⁴⁵ “Maydanu Karla Marksa Povernuly Pervynnu Nazvu [Karl Marx Was Returned Its Original Name].” Official Site of Kharkiv City Council, Last modified November 16, 2011. <http://www.city.kharkov.ua/uk/news/maydanu-karla-marksa-povernuli-pervynnu-nazvu-10650.html>.

¹⁴⁶ Polish socialist and Marxist philosopher, 1871-1919.

¹⁴⁷ Decision of Kharkiv City Council #1338/13. Available at <https://doc.citynet.kharkov.ua/ru/profile/document/view/id/630153>. Accessed May 15, 2018.

Council protested against this decision on the session, however they did not reach any positive result.¹⁴⁸ The Secretary of Toponymic Commission mentioned, that this decision was initiated by Gennadiy Kernes, because the square was to be renovated and reconstructed.¹⁴⁹ What was even more important is that he mentioned that

the following year, Kharkov will be 360 years old, and we gradually and accurately return to its streets and squares the names that really should be returned.¹⁵⁰

As can be seen from two quotes above, there was a plan (or at least a claim) of the city administration to return historical names to some of the streets. However, there is no evidence of such actions until 2015, when the “decommunization” laws were adopted.

The last group of toponymic changes comprises of the names, which were given to the streets of newly attached territories of urban-type settlements in 2012. 45 of them remained unchanged (those were mostly neutral names), but 279 of them were renamed throughout 2012-2014.¹⁵¹

There was no single pattern of presented renamings – the main part of them were neutral names such as Tykha (Quiet) or Yasna (Light) street. The remaining 64 streets were commemorating people. There were mainly scientists and cultural actors (same as in the group of names in newly built quarters), most of whom were connected to Kharkiv – for example, painter Zinaida Serebryakova lived in Kharkiv in the beginning of the XX century,

¹⁴⁸ “Ploshchi Rozy Lyuksemburh Povernuly Kolyshnyu Nazvu - Ploshcha Pavlivs'ka [Rosa Luxemburg Square Was Returned Its Former Name - Pavlivs'ka].” Official Site of Kharkiv City Council, Last modified February 20, 2013. <http://www.city.kharkov.ua/uk/news/ploshchi-rozi-lyuksemburg-povernuli-kolishnyu-nazvu-ploshcha-pavlivska-22075.html>.

¹⁴⁹ “Ploshchu Rozy Lyuksemburh Mozhut' Pereymenuvaty Na Pavlivs'ku [Rosa Luxemburg Square Can Be Renamed to Pavlivs'ka].” Official Site of Kharkiv City Council, Last modified November 12, 2013. <http://www.city.kharkov.ua/uk/news/ploshchu-rozi-lyuksemburg-mozhut-pereymenuvati-na-pavlivsku-21967.html>.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid

¹⁵¹ Decisions of City Council #907/12, 1118/13, 1159/13, 1220/13, 1628/14, 1765/14, 1053/13, 1337/13, 1689/14. Accessed on May 15, 2018, from the Uniform City Register of Acts of the Kharkiv City Council.

and the biochemist Aleksandr Palladin was the head of the department of physiological chemistry of Kharkiv Medical Institute in 1925-1970. However, the names of people who did not have any reference to Kharkiv were also used – for example, Nezalezhnosty (Independence) street was renamed after Ivan Franko, Ukrainian writer and poet, and Nagorna (Upland) and Pokko¹⁵² streets were merged as a new Christian Rakovsky¹⁵³ street. Moreover, the Soviet Army references were also used – streets were named after the Soviet military men who took part in the liberation of Kharkiv in 1943.

2.4.3. Conclusions

To sum up, the changes of the toponymic space of Kharkiv in 2002-2014 were mostly influenced by the development and growth of the city, not the desire of City Administration to change something in the already existing toponymic ensemble. The official framework was created to use when choosing new names for the streets. Notably, adopted in 2002, it was never changed later, which might lead to an assumption that the change of administration, as well as the change of the Ukrainian government did not influence this part of the symbolic image of the city. On the contrary, it seems like the city was rather developing its own uniqueness, not the inclusion into the more general national narrative, as it was in the case of 1990s L'viv.

The heroes, praised through the toponymic space, were mostly scientists and cultural actors, who had any connection to Kharkiv. Moreover, the Soviet Army heroes, basically those, who took part in the liberation of Kharkiv in 1943, were also praised. Therefore, it can be concluded that the local narrative of the city which was being created was constituted mostly of Soviet Ukrainian heroes.

¹⁵² Sylvestr Pokko, the head of Kharkiv Gubernia CheKa in 1918-1919.

¹⁵³ Was a head of Sovnarkom of Ukrainian SSR in 1919 and in 1921-23.

As compared to the 1990s process, the changes of toponymics in this period were mostly justified with the need to name newly built streets, not to rename some of the previously existing ones. As well, the civic society organizations were less engaged to the process – there is evidence of only administrative or church representatives claims for some changes in the toponymic space.

3. Three-time Decommunized: Changes of Kharkiv Toponyms in 2015-2016

In the following chapter I will present the course of toponymic changes in Kharkiv which followed the adoption of the Law “On the Condemnation of the Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) Regimes, and Prohibition of Propaganda of Their Symbols” by Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine in May 2015. Under the operation of this Law city administrations had to remove all the symbols of “totalitarian communist regime”¹⁵⁴ from the urban space, as well as the names of soviet leaders and other people, related to the regime. The process which was later referred to in media and public as *decommunization* was the first instance of mass removal of Soviet symbols in all Ukrainian regions, as before some of them were reluctant to such prescriptions of the state authorities. In Kharkiv more than 300 objects, including street names and administrative districts, were renamed. I will look at this process from the perspective of different actors involved: state administration (represented by the State Regional Administration), local administration (City Council, Mayor, and the Toponymic Commission), and the activist group of Kharkiv Toponymic Group, which gathered in 2015 specifically for the implementation of the law “On the Condemnation...” in the city. In particular, I will show the projects of toponymic changes produced by each actor, and the way they were or were not implemented.

3.1. The Political Context of the Process

Up until 2015 there were no effective official policies which pushed the idea of straight prohibition of the Communist and Soviet symbols in Ukraine. Yushchenko’s attempt

¹⁵⁴ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. “Pro Zasudzhennya Komunistychnoho Ta Natsional-Sotsialistychnoho (Natsyst-S’koho) Totalitarnykh Rezhymiv v Ukrayini Ta Zaboronu Propahandy Yikh’n’oyi Symvoliky [On the Condemnation of the Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) Regimes, and Prohibition of Propaganda of Their Symbols].” Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Last modified April 9, 2015. <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/317-19>.

to clear the symbolic space of Ukrainian cities from the names of people, connected to the organization of the *Holodomor* in 2007 was met with resistance in southern and eastern regions (see subchapter 2.4.2) Under the presidency of Viktor Yanukovich, the previous politics were mostly forgotten, while the topic of the “Great Victory” and the memory of the Second World War were paid primary attention to.¹⁵⁵ In case of Yanukovich’s regime, an assumption can be made that these policies were developed because of the rapprochement with Russia also through recollection of the shared collective past. The glorification of Great Patriotic War was also a part of politics of memory of Leonid Kravchuk and Leonid Kuchma at the times of their presidency.¹⁵⁶ The establishment in 2006 of the Institute of National Remembrance as an official body which was to work out the coherent memory politics was not efficient enough, and at the times of Yanukovich was even reorganized as a research institution, not an official executive body (for the details of its operations before 2014 see chapter 2.1).¹⁵⁷

However, the start and escalation of the protests on the Maidan in Kyiv in 2013 led to the number of changes not only in the politics of memory, but in Ukraine’s politics in general. The movement started in November 2013 to protest against Viktor Yanukovych’s decision not to sign the association with the EU. However, after the police attack on the student protesters on 30 November, the protesters started demanding Yanukovych to resign. As Serhii Plokhii, professor of Ukrainian History in Harvard University, wrote in his recent book: “What had begun as a demand to join Europe turned into the Revolution of Dignity, which

¹⁵⁵ Georgiy Kasyanov. “Istorycheskaia Polytyka y «Memoryalnie» Zakony v Ukraine: Nachalo XXI v [Historical Politics and ‘Memorial’ Laws in Ukraine: Beginning of 21st Century].” *Istorycheskaia Ekspertyza. Zhurnal Retsezyi* 2 (2016): 32.

¹⁵⁶ Kataryna Wolczuk. “History, Europe and the National Idea: The Official Narrative of National Identity in Ukraine.” *Nationalities Papers* 28, no. 4 (2000): 682.

¹⁵⁷ Georgiy Kasyanov. “K Desyatiletiiu Ukrainskogo Instituta Natsional'noy Pamyati (2006 – 2016) [To the Tenth Anniversary of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory (2006 - 2016)].” *Historians.in.ua*, Last modified January 14, 2016. <http://www.historians.in.ua/index.php/en/dyskusiya/1755-georgij-kas-yanov-k-desyatiletiiu-ukrainskogo-instituta-natsional-noj-pamyati-2006-2016>.

brought together diverse political forces, from liberals in mainstream parties to radicals and nationalists”.¹⁵⁸ The later radical escalation of the conflict and the mass killings of the group of people, who were since then referred to as the Heroes of the Heavenly Hundred, lead to Yanukovych’s escape from Ukraine on February 21, 2014. The newly elected in May 2014 president Petro Poroshenko, Ukrainian businessman who was an active participant of Maidan, came to power when the war in Donbass already started. I assume that these events, together with the overall radicalization of the views of Ukrainians, lead to the seeking of symbolic legitimacy through the denial of the Soviet (in this case more – of connections to Russia) past and the removal of its images from the space of everyday interaction.

However, the desovietizing movement started even earlier. In December 2013, the statue of Lenin in the center of Kyiv was demolished by the crowd. Later, one of the members of All-Ukrainian Union “Svoboda” – Ukrainian nationalist party – Ihor Miroshnichenko stated that *Svoboda* takes responsibility for this incident.¹⁵⁹ The single event turned into a series of demolitions all over Ukraine, the so-called “leninopad” (“Leninfall”). Later, when Maidan ended, and the military operations started in Lugansk and Donetsk regions, the removal of Lenin monuments continued, as well as the discussions of “stepping away” from the symbols of Soviet past. In summer 2014 the Institute of National Remembrance was restored as an executive body of government by the decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.¹⁶⁰ According to the new Statute of the Institute, one of the main objectives of this body was the “implementation of state policy in the sphere of restoration and preservation of

¹⁵⁸ Serhii Plokhyi, *The Gates of Europe: a History of Ukraine*. (New York: Basic Books, 2017): 339.

¹⁵⁹ ‘Svobodivtsi’ Vzyaly Na Sebe Vidpovidal’nist’ Za Povalennya Lenina [‘Svobodivtsi’ Took Responsibility for the Demolition of Lenin].” Ipress.ua, Last modified December 8, 2013. http://ipress.ua/news/svobodivtsi_vzyaly_na_sebe_vidpovidalnist_za_povalenogo_lenina_35123.html.

¹⁶⁰ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. “Postanova Vid 9 Lypnya 2014 r. № 292. Pytannya Ukrayins’koho Instytutu Natsional’noyi Pam’yati [Resolution No. 292 of July 9, 2014. Questions of the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance].” Official Site of Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Last modified July 9, 2014. <http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/292-2014-n>.

the national memory of the Ukrainian people.”¹⁶¹ Under the management of the new head, Volodymyr Viatrovich, who previously worked in a non-governmental research center for the studies of the history of OUN(UPA), the Institute started working on the set of the laws, which were to order the politics of memory of the state regarding the reception of the Communist past.¹⁶²

In May 2015 the Law “On the Condemnation of the Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) Regimes, and Prohibition of Propaganda of Their Symbols” was adopted by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, under which all of the Soviet symbols (such as the coat of arms of the Soviet Union) should be removed from Ukrainian cities and villages.¹⁶³ Unlike in the 1990s, when the desovietization was mostly dependent on the region and the local administration’s points of view on the Soviet heritage, this time the changes were to happen to each single city and village. Each City Council needed to provide the list of streets to be renamed and the list of substitutes for them, as well as the names of the cities and villages should have been changed. According to the Law “On the Condemnation...”, Ukrainian city councils were given a six-month period to implement the aforementioned changes. If the decision was not taken within the proposed timeframe, then it would have been made by the city mayor within three months. If this had not been done too, the head of the Regional State Administration should provide the following decision.

¹⁶¹ Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. “Polozhennya pro Ukrayins’kyi Instytut Natsional’noyi Pam’yati [Statute of the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance].” Official Site of Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Last modified November 12, 2014. <http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/684-2014-п#n11>.

¹⁶² Georgiy Kasyanov. “Istorycheskaia Polytyka y «Memoryalnie» Zakony v Ukraine: Nachalo XXI v [Historical Politics and ‘Memorial’ Laws in Ukraine: Beginning of 21st Century].” *Istorycheskaia Ekspertyza. Zhurnal Retsezyi* 2 (2016).

¹⁶³ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. “Pro Zasudzhennya Komunistychnoho Ta Natsional-Sotsialistychnoho (Natsyst-S’koho) Totalitarnykh Rezhymiv v Ukrayini Ta Zaboronu Propahandy Yikhn’oyi Symvoliky [On the Condemnation of the Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) Regimes, and Prohibition of Propaganda of Their Symbols].” Verkh0vna Rada of Ukraine, Last modified April 9, 2015. <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/317-19>.

Ukrainian historian Georgiy Kasianov claims that this legislation (accompanied by three more laws, namely “On Perpetuation of the Victory over Nazism in World War II of 1939-1945”, “On the Legal Status and Honoring the Memory of Fighters for Ukraine's Independence in the Twentieth Century”, and “On Access to Archives of Repressive Agencies of Totalitarian Communist Regime of 1917-1991”) created the premises of new politics of memory in country, which he connects to the raise of interest of public to history and the civic patriotism together with the development of national/nationalistic¹⁶⁴ version of history, which tended to be inclusive – all of the stories, events, personalities, and symbols should have been connected by the main narrative, the narrative of Ukraine’s struggle for independence and the Soviet regime as an occupying and restricting obstacle for it.¹⁶⁵ The main myths represented by it were heroic Cossack and Kievan Rus’ past, the state of victimhood of Ukrainians under the occupying regimes of Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, and its continuous struggle for independence. Taking the basics of the narrative into account, the canon of this version of history comprised of the fighters for independence of different periods of past (from Kievan Rus’ princes to OUN-UPA members), the theorists and promoters of Ukrainian nationalism, the opponents of oppressive regimes – for example, dissident intelligentsia of 1960s. Also, the recent events of Maidan protests and the War in Donbass were also merged into this narrative successfully.

This, in turn, created the need for prohibition of the symbols of the Soviet regime as the main enemy in such narrative. Firstly, it is important to develop on what street names should have been renamed. The main sources for the identification of these names were the aforementioned Law “On the Condemnation...” and the recommendations of the Ukrainian

¹⁶⁴ I borrow this term from Kasianov, Georgiy. “How a War for the Past Becomes a War in the Present.” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 16, no. 1 (2015): 149–55.

¹⁶⁵ Georgiy Kasianov. “Istorycheskaia Polytyka y «Memoryalnie» Zakony v Ukraine: Nachalo XXI v [Historical Politics and ‘Memorial’ Laws in Ukraine: Beginning of 21st Century].” *Istorycheskaia Ekspertyza. Zhurnal Retsenziy* 2 (2016).

Institute of National Remembrance – there was no difference between them, just that the Institute provided the list of the names specially for the renaming premises.¹⁶⁶ Quoting from the Law, prohibited to commemorate were (the given quote is taken from the official translation of the Law):

... the names or nicknames of the persons, who held key management positions in the communist party (office of District Committee Secretary and higher), the persons, who held key management positions in the higher governmental and management bodies of the USSR, Ukrainian SSR (USSR), other union or autonomous Soviet republics, regional public authorities and governing boards, cities of republican status, staff of Soviet state security service bodies, as well as names of USSR, Ukrainian SSR (USSR), other union or autonomous Soviet republics and their derivatives, names related to the communist party activities (including assemblies of the party), anniversaries of the October coup of 25 October (7 November) 1917, exercising of Soviet authority over the territory of Ukraine or its individual administrative territorial units, persecution of the fighters for independence of Ukraine in XX century (except the names related to the resistance and driving the Nazi invaders from Ukraine or development of Ukrainian science and culture).¹⁶⁷

The Law was proclaimed to create “the legal framework for prohibition of propaganda of their symbols and establishing the procedure for removal of symbols of communist totalitarian regime”. For the symbolic spaces of the cities it meant that all of the toponyms, which included the names of mentioned above personalities, as well as the historical events and important dates for Soviet period, should have been removed from the space Ukrainian cities.¹⁶⁸ As already mentioned, to support the decommunization process, the Institute of National Remembrance provided a list with 519 names of people who were subjects of the Law. This list was to be used by local communities and administrations. Together with this,

¹⁶⁶ "The List of Persons Who Are Subjected to the Action of the Law on Decommunization." The Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance Official Site. Accessed May 23, 2018.

<http://www.memory.gov.ua/publication/spisok-osib-yaki-pidpadayut-pid-zakon-pro-dekomunizatsiyu>.

¹⁶⁷ Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. “Pro Zasudzhennya Komunistychnoho Ta Natsional-Sotsialistychnoho (Natsyst-S’koho) Totalitarnykh Rezhymiv v Ukrayini Ta Zaboronu Propahandy Yikh’n’oyi Symvoliky [On the Condemnation of the Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) Regimes, and Prohibition of Propaganda of Their Symbols].” Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Last modified April 9, 2015.

<http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/317-19>.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid

they produced a special manual for city councils, where the steps which needed to be taken when renaming the streets were followed by the aforementioned list.¹⁶⁹ Interestingly, the manual was published in 2014 – the public campaign on the removal of the aforementioned names started earlier than the adoption of the Laws.

According to the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance, by the end of 2016, 51,423 streets and 32 cities were renamed, and 2,389 Soviet-time monuments were removed.¹⁷⁰ It was the first time for the 24 years of Ukraine's existence as an independent state when such a policy was carried out on the governmental level and touched upon all the regions of the country.

3.2. The Actors of Decommunization Process in Kharkiv

Decommunization process was also implemented in Kharkiv. Since the local legislative framework did not change, in 2015 the decisions on the changes of toponyms were to be made by the City Council, with the recommendations of Kharkiv Toponymic Commission taken into consideration. However, the changes were made to the Statute of this body on June 26, 2015 – the thematic subgroups of the commission, created in 2006, were dismantled, the Toponymic Commission since then worked as a unified body.¹⁷¹

However, the Toponymic Commission was not the only advisory body of the City Council which took part in the changes of Kharkiv toponymy in 2015-2016. Straight after the

¹⁶⁹ YAK PEREYMENUVATY VULYTSYU. *Pravovi Zasady Pereymenuvannya Vulyts', Provulkiv, Prospektiv, Ploshch, Parkiv, Skveriv, Mostiv Ta Inshykh Sporud, Roztashovanykh Na Terytoriyi Naselenykh Punktiv [HOW TO RENAME THE STREET. Legal Principles of Renaming Streets, Alleys, Avenues, Squares, Parks, Squares, Bridges and Other Structures Located on the Territory of a Settlement]*. Kyiv-Chernihiv: Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance, 2014.

¹⁷⁰ Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance, "Decommunization," <http://www.memory.gov.ua/page/dekomunizatsiya-0>

¹⁷¹ 40th session of the 6th Kharkiv City Council of Kharkiv Region. "Decision of 24.06.2015 No 1935/15 On Approval of The Statute on the City Commission on Toponymics and the Protection of the Historical and Cultural Environment". Uniform City Register of Acts of the Kharkiv City Council. Accessed May 14, 2018. <https://doc.citynet.kharkov.ua/ru/profile/document/view/id/641584>

adoption of the Law “On the Condemnation...” a special workgroup was created by the order of Kharkiv Mayor Gennadiy Kernes to deal with the implementation of the new legislation.¹⁷² It included 39 people, among whom were heads of all district administrations of the city, deputies of city council, heads of communal enterprises and departments of city council, vice-mayors (*zastupnyki mis'koho holovy*), rectors of four main universities, and two local historians. Seven of them were also the then members of the Kharkiv Toponymic Commission, including historian Sergey Kudelko, former mayor and the vice head of “Khar’kovskiy metropoliten” (Kharkiv subway) communal enterprise Mykhailo Pylypchuk, the secretary of the Toponymic Commission Oleksiy Khoroshkovaty, and others.

The documents of the workgroup were not stored in open access to the public by the City Council, however there are photos of some of the documents provided by the Facebook page *Ukrains'kyi Kharkiv* (Ukrainian Kharkiv)¹⁷³, which members attended the meetings of the workgroup.¹⁷⁴ The project of the regulations of this group defined that there were to be eight subgroups, members of which will be working on the questions of defining different aspects of place names, property, and other elements of the appearance of the city which were to be “decommunized”. The group, which was to work on the place names was headed by Oleksii Khoroshkovaty – the then secretary of the Kharkiv Toponymic Commission.¹⁷⁵ According to the author of the post, Pavlo Klenenko¹⁷⁶, by July 3, 2015 the workgroup came

¹⁷² Kharkiv Mayor. “Order #64 of 02.06.2015 On the creation of a workgroup”. Uniform City Register of Acts of the Kharkiv City Council. Accessed May 14, 2018.

<https://doc.citynet.kharkov.ua/ru/profile/document/viewhtml/id/640908>.

¹⁷³ The description of the page is the following “Cultural and social life of Kharkov, its history and tourist attractions, its past, present life and the Ukrainian future.” The part of “Ukrainian future” is apparently opposed here to soviet-nostalgic or Russian sympathies, which are said to be common within Kharkiv administration and local dwellers.

¹⁷⁴ *Ukrains'kyi Kharkiv* Facebook community. Entry from 01.07.2015. Accessed May 23, 2018.

<https://www.facebook.com/openkharkiv/posts/991468820886639>

¹⁷⁵ *Ukrains'kyi Kharkiv* Facebook community. Entry from 03.07.2015. Accessed May 23, 2018.

<https://www.facebook.com/openkharkiv/photos/a.288478804518981.76378.210377838995745/991989280834593/?type=3&ifg=1>

¹⁷⁶ Independent journalist

up with 163 streets to be renamed (the list of the streets is not attached). “And this is in a city where Soviet artifacts are a legion!” – he further claimed; such indignation was supported by the comments of other members of the group.

The resistance of the activists did not only exist in the form of Facebook commenting. Simultaneously with the creation of the official workgroup, the activist community of Kharkiv Toponymic Group was created. The first meeting of the group was held on May 29, 2015, in the premises of Kharkiv branch of All-Ukrainian Prosvita.¹⁷⁷ One of groups coordinators, historian and the researcher of Kharkiv toponymy, Maria Takhtaulova, remembers:

I got there on the invitation of my Ph.D. supervisor — this was closely related to my dissertation, I was interested and joined. Everything was formed very spontaneously. There were several people - me, Serhii Zhukov [historian], Eduard Zub [historian], Eugene Levin [a member of the Board of Prosvita, a member of the Kharkiv Regional Board of the OUN-UPA Veteran Brotherhood named after Osip Dyakiv-Hornovoy¹⁷⁸, historian], Cheremskiy brothers¹⁷⁹. We started working on defining a certain direction: at the moment we had to find out what street names fall under decommunization. We divided the list of street names among three or four people and started working.

There were no general invitations to join the group. Although, of course, we invited people from Facebook patriotic groups, and the adjoined participants invited some people. Different people came at different times, representatives of Avtomaidan¹⁸⁰, ATO [Anti-Terroristic Operation¹⁸¹],

¹⁷⁷ The Taras Shevchenko all-Ukrainian Prosvita (Enlightenment) is a civil society organization, which was founded in the end of XIX century with educational purposes in Galicia. Aimed at development and preservation of Ukrainian culture. Was banned in 1939, having by that time more than a hundred of branches all over Ukraine. In perestroika times it was revived firstly as a Shevchenko Association of Ukrainian Language and in 1991 was reorganized to the all-Ukrainian Prosvita organization. The Kharkiv branch was set up the same year from the Stus Community of Admirers of Ukrainian Language.

¹⁷⁸ A nationalistic organization, registered in Kharkiv in 2004.

¹⁷⁹ Kostyantyn and Roman Cheremskiy — civic activists, members of the Kharkiv branch of Union of Ukrainian Youth, a national-patriotic youth organization; the description of organization on their official site states “We stand for the development of the Ukrainian State, prepare youth for work in various areas of state building; educate young people in the Ukrainian patriotic spirit based on idealistic and Christian grounds.” – “About Us.” Union of Ukrainian Youth - Kharkiv. Accessed May 23, 2018. <http://cym.org.ua/pro-nas/>.

¹⁸⁰ The unofficial organization of supporters of Euromaidan which emerged in 2013; was later transformed into a registered all-Ukrainian civil society organization

¹⁸¹ The definition of the measures taken by the Ukrainian government to combat the activities of illegal armed groups who participated in the War in Donbass; the term is commonly used to define the War in Donbass in general.

volunteers¹⁸². There was a group on Facebook created simultaneously with the beginning of our work, the information [about their activities] spread quite quickly.¹⁸³

Therefore, the core of the expert group was mostly represented by historians and/or the supporters of the Ukrainian nationalistic movement. However, the Facebook group joined together people with different political preferences, not only experts in history or toponymy, but also active members of Kharkiv community. What united them was the wish to be included into the process of “decommunizing” decision-making, which was provided by the City Council mostly nominally – the members of official workgroup were chosen personally by the City Mayor, as well as the composition of the Toponymic Commission. Apparently, people gathered to make their voice heard by the officials. There were also other minor activist attempts to influence the process of change of Kharkiv toponymy in 2015-2016. For instance, Kharkiv branch of All-Ukrainian Union “Svoboda” – Ukrainian nationalist party – created their own list of streets to be renamed, as well as the proposal for the new names. However, I argue that the main activist force engaged in the decommunization transformations in Kharkiv was the Kharkiv Toponymic Group, as they were, unlike others, the ones recognized by both local and regional state administration and their propositions were used by both of them in different periods of time. The list of new names proposed by Svoboda was quite similar to the one proposed by the Kharkiv Toponymic Group. Moreover, I assume that it was a strategy for all the interested activists and dwellers to create one body in opposition to the city council and the official Toponymic Commission in order to make the process of negotiation more resultative. This was also the position of the representatives of

¹⁸² Since the beginning of the war in 2014, the huge volunteer movement was set up in Ukraine to help and support (1) Ukrainian soldiers, (2) internally displaced people from Donetsk and Luhansk regions, and people who moved from Crimea after the Russian annexation. Being located closely to the territory of military action and occupied territories, Kharkiv became one of the centers of Ukrainian volunteer movement.

¹⁸³ Interview with Maria Takhtaulova, 11 April 2018.

the core of the Kharkiv Toponymic Group: when reacting to the release of the Svoboda proposal, Eduard Zub, one of the founding members of the group, wrote:

And I naively believed that the map [of the toponyms to be changed] should be unified, and not "ours" or "yours". Because when Mr. Hava¹⁸⁴ visited the "Prosvita" commission [apparently, the Kharkiv Toponymic Group] three weeks ago, we allegedly agreed to cooperate. By that time, he had only a plan of action. And we did have a completed list of toponyms to be renamed, which we generously shared... As a matter of principle, it is not a big deal, this [the list of toponyms] is still a common achievement. But it would be appreciated if the AGREED¹⁸⁵ list of proposals will go to the City Council. At least [agreed] between organizations of patriotic orientation. Maybe then its importance will be bigger.¹⁸⁶

Assuming from the following events – mainly that there were no further mentions of Svoboda's attempts to create their own list of renamings, and the Toponymic Group being the main representative of the public opinion, the consensus was made between these groups.

To sum up, the main actors of the process of toponymical transformations in 2015-2016 were the City Council's workgroup which dealt with the implementation of the Law "On the Condemnation...", the Kharkiv Toponymic Commission and the City Council itself, the Kharkiv Toponymic Group, and the Kharkiv Regional State Administration. In the next section I discuss the contested street names and the difference between the historical narratives produced by the actors of the process.

3.3. Renaming Projects of 2015-2016

As it was mentioned in the subchapter 3.1, there were three scenarios of decommunizing changes of the toponymic space of a city – firstly it should have been done by the city council; secondly, if not all of the prohibited symbols and names were removed, the decision was to be made by the city mayor; and thirdly, if all the representatives of city

¹⁸⁴ Oleksandr Hava, the vice-head of Kharkiv branch of Svoboda

¹⁸⁵ Original emphasis

¹⁸⁶ Eduard Zub's comment on Kharkiv Toponymic Group Facebook page, July 12, 2015 (6:34 PM), https://www.facebook.com/groups/704786309633508/permalink/723774207734718/?comment_id=723820081063464&comment_tracking=%7B%22tn%22%3A%22R9%22%7D

administration to some extent failed to implement the process to its fullest, the Regional State administration should have finished it. All of these scenarios were present in Kharkiv in 2015-2016 – the biggest share of the renamings was made under the decree of the city council, which was issued on November 20, 2015¹⁸⁷, then the decree of the City Mayor, issued on February 2, 2016.¹⁸⁸ Together with this, 52 streets were renamed under the decision of Kharkiv Regional State Administration in May 2016. Different kinds of toponyms were renamed, including the names of the administrative districts, metro stations, and the street names themselves. Overall, 297 streets, 5 administrative districts, 4 parks, and 1 metro station were renamed from November 20, 2015 to May 17, 2016.

The Law “On the Condemnation...” entered into force on May 21, 2015, and so the city councils were to define what should be changed in their cities till the November 21, 2015. In case of Kharkiv, as it was mentioned in the previous subchapter, by this time two decommunization projects were created – the one by the workgroup of the city council and the Toponymic Commission, and one by the activists of Kharkiv Toponymic Group. Following the chronological order, I will present the activist project first – their project was already finished by September 2015. Although not all of their propositions were taken into consideration both by the city and the regional administrations, I find it important to show the way they were pursuing the renaming process, as their group was one of the three main actors of changes in Kharkiv toponymy in 2015-16.

The Kharkiv Toponymical Group defined that 281 streets, 8 administrative districts, 5 parks, and 5 metro stations should be renamed.¹⁸⁹ The new names of the districts were

¹⁸⁷ Kharkiv Mayor. “Order #7 of 02.02.2016 On the renaming of toponymic objects in Kharkiv”. Uniform City Register of Acts of the Kharkiv City Council. Accessed May 14, 2018.
<https://doc.citynet.kharkov.ua/ru/profile/document/view/id/646779>

¹⁸⁸ Kharkiv City Council, Pro pereimenuvannia ob’iektiv toponimiky mista Kharkova. Rishennia 1 sesii 7 sklykannia Kharkivskoi miskoi rady Kharkivskoi oblasti Vid 20.11.2015 r. № 12/15 (2015).
<https://doc.citynet.kharkov.ua/ru/profile/document/viewhtml/id/644875>

¹⁸⁹ Kharkiv Toponymic Group. The list of proposed place names to be renamed. 2015.

mainly based on the geographical locations and the historical names of the areas where the districts were located. Thus, for example, Dzerzhynsky district was proposed to be named Sarzhyn (after the geographical location Sarzhyn Yar), Moskovs'kiy¹⁹⁰ to Saltivskiy (after Saltivka – the name of the microrail located in this district). The metro stations were to be renamed after the names of places where they are located, or the ‘Soviet’ parts of their names were to be removed – for example, Radians'ka (Soviet) station was proposed to become Maidan Konstitutsii (as I mentioned in the second chapter, the square itself was renamed in 1996, the next day after the adoption of the Constitution of Ukraine); Radians'koii Armii (Soviet Army) to Armiis'ka (which, to my mind, is not only a removal of the Soviet qualifier, but an altogether new reference to the contemporary Ukrainian army). Moving on to the street names, the group defined some basic principles of the creation of the list of the new names. Maria Takhtaulova, the coordinator of the group, mentioned that they utilized the principle of toponymic ensembles – when the new names are picked they should fit thematically to the already existing ones. An example of such proposed ensembles is (the former names are given in brackets): Skoropadsky street (former Bogunsky), Natieva (former Chapaev), Kirponos (former Parkhomenko), Kulchitsky (former Tukhachevsky), Vatutina, Hvardiis'ka, Suvorov, Nakhimov, Panfilivtsi, Peremohy (Victory), and Bagration streets together with Nakhimov and Ivan Bogun (former Bogunsky) lanes.¹⁹¹

I see this example as representative one not only for the way in which the Kharkiv Toponymic Group organized their work, but also for the canon of heroes applied when choosing new names. Ivan Bogun was a Ukrainian Cossack, a supporter of Bohdan Khmelnyts'ky; Oleksandr Natiev was a general of UNR (Ukrainian People's Republic) army; Mykhailo Kirponos was a Soviet army commander, the Hero of the Soviet Union; Serhii

190 It is worth mentioning that this name is not subjected to the operations of Law “On the Condemnation...”.

191 Kharkiv Toponymic Group. The list of proposed place names to be renamed. 2015.

Kulchytsky was a Ukrainian officer who died during the war in Donbass in 2014. On the other hand, the names to be removed (all of which are present in the list provided by the Institute of National Remembrance) seem to be more homogenous – all of them are defined as the participants of the establishment of the Soviet power in Ukraine, which makes them fall under the operation of the Law “On the condemnation...”. The heterogeneity of the proposed new names, however, shows the appreciation for different war heroes, who fought for Ukraine in different times, including the newest history of the war in Donbass.

The Toponymic Group also proposed to return 67 historical (pre-Soviet) names, which were mainly not named after concrete figures, but after professions or geographical location. Maria Takhtaulova mentioned in the interview, that to her mind it is important to name streets not only after people. However, she made an interesting remark that “

neutral-positive names like Vyshneva (cherry) are also suitable, but the area should be taken into account: if it is in the inner suburbs (pryvatnyi sector) - Vyshneva and similar names will be appropriate there; if these are central streets then there is a need to search for the appropriate scale of personality or event.¹⁹²

To my mind, this concept of the toponymical space shows the importance of the street naming after famous people, the implementation of the canon into the central areas of the city. I do not know if it was an agreed position in the Toponymic Group or not, however taking into account that Takhtaulova was a coordinator of the group, I am assuming that this point of view was at least considered as valuable.

However, this was just a project presented in October 2015 to the workgroup of the City Council and the Toponymic Commission, and as Takhtaulova mentioned they did not hope that their suggestions would be considered. Still, some of the names proposed by the activist group were considered by the workgroup of the City Council, but there were a few of

¹⁹² Interview with Maria Takhtaulova, April 11, 2018.

them. As Maria Takhtaulova remembers, “only eight names [out of 281 proposed] were taken for the streets, and about forty names were used to rename the different streets from what we proposed”.¹⁹³ However, comparing the projects we see that 24 propositions were fully accepted and implemented. All of those were historical (pre-Soviet) names. Together with this, 17 proposed names were used for other streets. Personalities were commemorated by this project, among whom were Mykhailo Grushevskiy, Ukrainian historian and political actor, the head of the Central Rada of Ukrainian National Republic; and the famous dwellers of the city -- Petro Hulak-Artemovskiy, a writer, who was a rector of Kharkiv University in the 19th century, architects Dushkin and Alyoshin, who worked in Kharkiv in 1930s, Soviet actors Leonid Bykov and Mark Bernes, who lived and worked in Kharkiv. The Toponymic Commission located most of these street names on the outskirts, while some of the propositions of the Toponymic Group were meant to be located at the city center. For example, the aforementioned Hulak-Artemovskiy was proposed to be located instead of Ivanov street, which is located in the very center of the city; instead, it was used to rename the Chervonoho Zhovtnya (Red October) street, which is located almost on the edge of Kharkiv.

¹⁹³ Interview with Maria Takhtaulova, April 11, 2018.



Figure 1. Difference in Locating Street Names proposed by the Kharkiv Toponymic Group

Also, some of the streets proposed by the Toponymic Group were not renamed in the first wave; for example, Oleksandr Ulianov¹⁹⁴ street, which was proposed to be named after Leonid Bykov, was renamed only in May 2016 by the decision of the Head of Kharkiv Regional Administration, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Getting the recommendations from the activist group was not the only incidence of Toponymic Commission and City Council communication with active local dwellers on the matter of further changes. As prescribed by the Law, city councils were to hold the public hearings to inform the people on the changes to be made, and to collect new propositions or objections. Such meetings were organized firstly in each district of Kharkiv – all at the same day on November 10, 2015 – and the next day the all-city hearings were planned to be held. However, according to the city council, these hearings were sabotaged by activists, who did

¹⁹⁴ Brother of Vladimir Lenin, who was prosecuted after the attempt of assassinating Alexander III in 1887.

not give a chance to speak to the members of the Toponymic Commission.¹⁹⁵ On the contrary, some visitors of the hearings claimed that the vote was falsified at the hearings, and the propositions of people were ignored; therefore, they protested against it. After Ihor Terekhov, the head of the workgroup on decommunization, closed the hearings and the lights were turned off in the Ukraine concert hall, where the meeting was held, the group of activists continued the hearings on their own, voted for the propositions of the Kharkiv Toponymic Group, and prepared their own protocol of the hearings, which was later followed to the City Council. The next day the hearings were rescheduled, however the same situation happened.¹⁹⁶ Nevertheless, the city administration proceeded to the decision-making process.

Overall, the process of renaming by the city administration was made in two steps. The first 173 streets, 1 metro station, and 5 parks were renamed on November 20, 2015, in a day before the end of the period in which, according to the Law “On the Condemnation...”, the city councils should have come up with their “decommunized” lists. When opening the discussion on the topic of renamings, city mayor Gennadiy Kernes defined this decision as a very important and very hard one, referring to the ‘difficulty’ because of the number of conflicts and controversial points of view towards this question.¹⁹⁷ The head of the decommunization workgroup and the first deputy mayor, Ihor Terekhov, presented the project of renaming. At this session it was also mentioned that the names of the administrative districts of the city, together with 75 more street names will be later revised. This meant that the following decisions, according to the Law “On the Condemnation...”, were to be made

¹⁹⁵ “U Kharkovi Namahayut’sya Zirvaty Hromads’ki Slukhannya z Pereymenuvannya Vulyts’ [In Kharkiv, Attempts Are Being Made to Disrupt Public Hearings on Renaming Streets].” Official Site of Kharkiv City Council, Last modified November 11, 2015. <http://www.city.kharkov.ua/uk/news/-29931.html>.

¹⁹⁶ “Hromads’ki Slukhannya Znovu Zirvani, Pochalasya Biyka [Public Hearings Are Again Sabotaged, a Fight Began].” Official Site of Kharkiv City Council, Last modified November 11, 2015. <http://www.city.kharkov.ua/uk/news/-29941.html>.

¹⁹⁷ 1-Sha Sesiya 7-Ho Sklykannya Kharkivs’koyi Mis’koyi Rady (20-11-2015) [1st Session of the 7th Kharkiv City Council (20-11-2015)]. Last modified November 20, 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CpcU1pDWY-c&feature=youtu.be&t=3146>.

by the order of the Mayor, not by the City council. This, in turn, meant, that the following decisions were not voted for by the City Council, and did not require the holding of public hearings. So, on February 2, 2016, in 3 months after the first project voted, the Mayor signed the order to rename 48 more streets and 5 districts. Therefore, the overall number of objects, renamed by the representative of local administration, was 222 streets, 5 districts, 4 parks, and 1 metro station.

The graph below shows the distribution of the names of the streets between historical name returned and new names giving. It is an important part of the analysis as the invention of new names apparently says more about the new legitimate canon introduced to the city space, while the return of historical names shows the extent to which the past (of the city or of the country, depending on the names) is important for the holders of the legitimate symbolic power. Also, since the renamings in the 1990s, the claims to “return the historical image of the city” were made in official documents. They, however, were mostly not implemented by the City Council, and hence seem to be more of a discursive practice of legitimation of the changes, than the real return of pre-Soviet historical images to the city. Therefore, it is interesting to compare the ratio of new and historical names to see if the tendency of the creation of new toponymic space and introducing new names to city space was preserved in the process of decommunization.

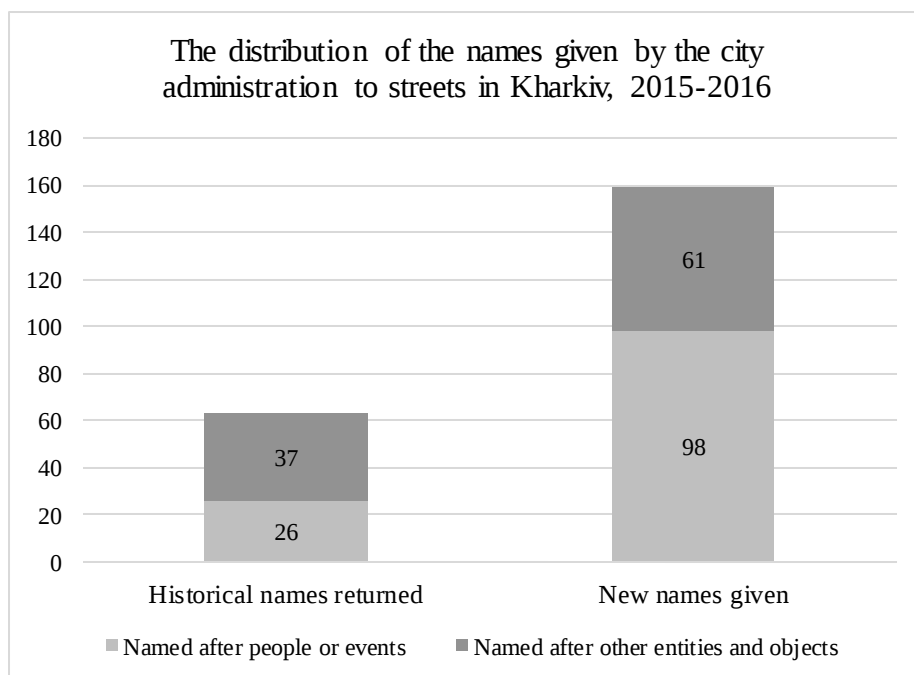


Figure 2. The distribution of the names given by the city administration.

Both groups are divided between the places named after people or events, and other entities or objects – as an analytical tool such division helps to grasp the notion of the canon of heroes (people and events) implemented, and to show the other names. As can be seen from the graph, the new names were mostly given after personalities and events, while the historical names consisted mainly of names unrelated to people. The part of the historical group named after people was mostly presented by the names of the first settlers of Kharkiv or the particular streets. Those are names like Chernovskiy lane, Molochna street, Morokhovetska embankment (which are named after people, who lived on these streets). However, the biggest share of historical names was not connected to people – there were streets named after the objects, which were (or still are) located nearby – for example, Karl Marx street was returned its historical name of Blahovishchenska [Anunciation] after the Blahovishchenskiy cathedral, which was located in the beginning of the street. According to Maria Takhtaulova's research, the streets named after local settlers represented the majority of street names in Kharkiv's pre-Soviet period from 1724 to 1916, while the second biggest

group was of the names, connected to the objects located nearby.¹⁹⁸ From this I assume that for the city administration, the importance of the narrative of the pre-Soviet history of the city was that to represent the historicity of the city, to point out that the city has its tradition of naming, which was partially preserved. However, assuming from the numbers, the creation of new, post-Soviet narrative of the city was a more prominent task to do. As can be seen from the graph, most of the streets were still given new names, not historical ones. This group was represented by two biggest groups of surnames of:

- famous scientists – for example, Lev Landau, a Nobel Laureate in physics who lived and worked in Kharkiv in 1930s, or Dmytro Volkov, a physicist who lived and died in Kharkiv;
- cultural actors – painters, musicians, actors: here the names of Ukrainian poets Volodymyr Sosiura, Yevhen Pluzhnik were commemorated together with names of painter Mykhail Vrubel, who spent some time of his life in Kharkiv;

In fact, almost all of the personalities, after whom the streets are being named, have lived, worked, or done some activities in Kharkiv, even if the period was short.¹⁹⁹ Sergey Kudelko said when reflecting on the process of coming up with the new names:

In this respect, we were very happy that we could show our Kharkiv citizens, that's why in many cases they were exactly Kharkov figures, those that are known to us, and which may be less known [in Ukraine].²⁰⁰

The representation of figures, who were not connected to local Kharkiv history, was low. Although, those were the names of famous historical and political figures such as Mykhailo

¹⁹⁸ Maria Y. Takhtaulova, "Historical Evolution of Kharkiv Address Urbanonymic Network (from the Middle of XVII Century till XXI Century)" (PhD diss., Zaporizhzhya National University, Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2016); 221.

¹⁹⁹ The notes on having lived or worked in Kharkiv were made in the excerpt from the records of the Toponymic Commission meeting, where they came up with the list of names to be changed and the replacement for them.

²⁰⁰ Interview with Sergey Kudelko. Kharkiv, 12 April 2018.

Hrushevskiy or Yaroslav Mudry. The street after the later, however, was rather named like this because the Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University is located at this street (the same situation happened to the square of Yaroslav Mudry in 2007. These personalities were the brightest examples of representation of all-Ukrainian political history in the toponymic space of Kharkiv.

However, almost no other personalities connected to the political history of Ukrainian state were represented. At the session of City Council in November 2015, Igor Terekhov – the head of the decommunization workgroup specifically mentioned that the workgroup avoided to use political personalities in the renaming process.²⁰¹ Although this characteristic of (re)namings is written in the Statute of Kharkiv Toponymic Commission (and was there since the first edition published in 2002) – according to it the use of names of political figures was allowed only in “extraordinary” situations – the special mention of it at the sessions appears to be a reminder on the unwillingness of the administration to include such names to the city space (see chapter 2.2). Later on, Gennadiy Kernes, when answering the question of one of the deputies on the proposition to rename some street after the 92nd Mechanized Brigade, the military unit which is located not far from Kharkiv, said:

[P]lease, send your proposal [to the workgroup], and in the future, it's not necessary that we give the name of 92 brigade to some street in this, let's call it, context. We have the attached territories in Kharkov, we will build a lot of things later, and I think, that we will pay attention to your request.²⁰²

So, the official position of the administration mostly denied commemorating people and events related to the newest political and military history of Ukraine. Overall, two streets

²⁰¹ 1-Sha Sesiya 7-Ho Sklykannya Kharkivs'koyi Mis'koyi Rady (20-11-2015) [1st Session of the 7th Kharkiv City Council (20-11-2015)]. Last modified November 20, 2015.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CpcU1pDWY-c&feature=youtu.be&t=3146>.

²⁰² Ibid

were named after the Maidan and Anti-Terroristic Operation (ATO) participants – Heroiv Nebesnoi Sotni (Heroes of the Heavenly Hundred²⁰³) square and Ihor Momot²⁰⁴ street.

An interesting group of renamings arose when it came to the names of administrative districts. In fact, those were not renamings, but re-definitions of the previous names. For example, the Zhovtnevii (October) administrative district remained with the same name, but according to the decree of the City Council it was now named after the “important holidays, which Ukraine celebrates in October”.²⁰⁵ Sergey Kudelko, the member of the Toponymic Commission, remembers:

The fact is that each renaming is a trauma, a trauma, which appears because you need to change everything. Therefore, for example, October district ... October is the day of the Ukrainian Cossacks, the Intercession, October is the Day of the Liberation of Ukraine [from fascist invaders] ... There are several dates the members of the Toponymic Commission suggested to do this as to rename in memory of other events, to cause fewer injuries. That is, there was such a proposal, to rethink it in another way.²⁰⁶

In a similar way, the name of Frunze district remained the same. According to the explanations provided in the decision of the Mayor, Frunze in this case stood not for Mikhail Frunze, head of the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR in 1925, but for Timur Frunze, Soviet aviator born in Kharkiv, the Hero of the Soviet Union (the fact that he was the son of Mikhail Frunze was not mentioned in the explanation). There was also an attempt to do the same re-definition for Dzerzhinsky district. Kharkiv Toponymic Commission proposed to name it after Vladyslav Dzerzhinsky, who was a neurologist and psychiatrist;

²⁰³ The Heavenly Hundred (Nebesna Sotnia) is the term used to describe 130 civilian protesters, who were killed during the protests on Maidan in winter 2015.

²⁰⁴ He was a Ukrainian military officer who died near Lugansk at the time of Anti-Terroristic operation in July, 2014.

²⁰⁵ Kharkiv Mayor. “Order #7 of 02.02.2016 On the renaming of toponymic objects in Kharkiv”. Uniform City Register of Acts of the Kharkiv City Council. Accessed May 14, 2018. <https://doc.citynet.kharkov.ua/ru/profile/document/view/id/646779>

²⁰⁶ Interview with Sergey Kudelko, Kharkiv, 12 April 2018.

and “condemned the deeds of Bolsheviks and his brother Felix”.²⁰⁷ However, this idea was not presented later, supposedly because of the negative reaction of the city public. Maria Takhtaulova says that “in search of another Frunze, in search of another Dzerzhinsky - it was in fact a profanation, not a process of a resultative work”.²⁰⁸ There were also such streets which were re-defined not renamed – Ivanov street was said to be named after Andriy Ivanov, one of the leaders of the Kiev Arsenal January uprising in 1918, but after Viktor Ivanov, Ukrainian Soviet physicist.

However, these “reinterpreted” street names did not exist for long. In May 2017, the then head of Kharkiv Regional State Administration, Ihor Raynin, issued an order, according to which 4 districts, 3 metro stations, and 52 streets were to be renamed, among which were 2 districts and 3 streets which were already renamed by the city administration.²⁰⁹ Apparently, the existence of remained to be renamed street names happened because of the differences in the definitive frameworks of Kharkiv administration and the state. As Gennadiy Kernes mentioned at the session of the City Council on November 20, 2015, 75 names of streets had “double interpretation” and were to be sent to Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University for the expertise.²¹⁰ Later on, 48 of them were renamed in February 2016. However, the official governmental body to provide such expertise was the Institute of National Remembrance. According to the official statements of the representatives of the Regional State Administration, their project, in turn, was coordinated by the Institute. Therefore, such

²⁰⁷ "Dzerzhinsky District Will Be Named after the Famous Physician and Opponent of Bolshevism [Dzerzhynskiy Raion Bude Nazvanyi Na Chest Vidomoho Medyka I Protivnyka Bilshovyzmu]," Official Site of Kharkiv City Council, November 13, 2015, accessed May 22, 2018, <http://www.city.kharkov.ua/uk/news/dzerzhinskiy-rayon-bude-nazvaniy-na-chest-vidomogo-medika-i-protivnika-bilshovizmu-29948.html>.

²⁰⁸ Interview with Maria Takhtaulova, April 11, 2018.

²⁰⁹ Kharkiv Regional State Administration. “Order #181 of 17 May, 2016 On the Renaming of Toponymic Objects of Kharkiv city”. Accessed May 22, 2018. <http://kharkivoda.gov.ua/content/documents/808/80788/files/160517-01-11-zagal-181-rozp.pdf>

²¹⁰ 1-Sha Sesiya 7-Ho Sklykannya Kharkivs'koyi Mis'koyi Rady (20-11-2015) [1st Session of the 7th Kharkiv City Council (20-11-2015)]. Last modified November 20, 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CpcU1pDWY-c&feature=youtu.be&t=3146>.

personalities as Oleksandr Ulianov²¹¹, Vanda Vasilevska²¹², Georgiy Zhukov²¹³, as well as such names as Sotcialistychna (Socialist), Chervonoshkilna (Red School) street names were removed from the toponymic space of the city. Importantly, all of the personalities were already mentioned in the list of people, who are subjected to the operation of the Law “On the Condemnation...”, created by the Institute of National Remembrance.

Regional State Administration worked together not with the official bodies, but with the local activists too. As Maria Takhtaulova mentioned, they were personally invited to join the process of renamings:

[W]e actually worked together with the Department of Public Relations [of the Administration], but this was under control by Mr. Rainin, everything was in place, and the proposals were welcomed, around seventy, perhaps even ninety percent were approved. They invited us after Kernes introduced his renaming in February, somewhere between March and April. ²¹⁴

As such, some of the propositions from the project of Kharkiv Toponymic Group were taken into consideration by the Regional Administration. Firstly, those were the names of the districts – Zhovtnevyi became Nemyshlianskiy (from the historical name of the area – Nemyshlia), Kominternivskiyi – Slobids’kiy. Moreover, some of the proposed street names were used, such as Ivan Bogun, V’yacheslav Chornovil²¹⁵, Mykola Manoylo²¹⁶. In general, the names proposed by the Regional Council were more modern in terms of the names of people used. Ihor Rainin mentioned in his interview after signing the order:

I am convinced that the new names of streets and settlements reflect the history of our region and correspond to the modernity. Moreover, in the process of "decommunization", we finally managed to perpetuate the memory of many people who are significant for our region, but until now

²¹¹ Brother of Vladimir Lenin, who was prosecuted after the attempt of assassinating Alexander III in 1887.

²¹² A deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, an agitator of the Politburo of the Red Army during the Second World War.

²¹³ Soviet military commander, Marshal; Minister of Defense of the USSR (1955-1957), member of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU (1957)

²¹⁴ Interview with Maria Takhtaulova, April 11, 2018.

²¹⁵ Ukrainian politician, dissident.

²¹⁶ Ukrainian opera singer who lived and worked in Kharkiv

were undeservedly forgotten. In Kharkiv there were streets named after the Heroes of Ukraine Evgen Kotlyar, Vladislav Zubenko, and Yuri Paraschuk²¹⁷, and three place names named after the participants of the ATO - Ruslan Plohodko, Mykola Topchiiy, Volodymyr Usenko²¹⁸. The National Guard Square, the Defenders' Area of Ukraine and the corresponding metro station and the Volunteers Street have also appeared, named in honor of the whole volunteer movement of the Kharkiv Region.²¹⁹

Therefore, it appears that the state framework for renamings was wider in terms of the names of the people connected to the recent situation in Ukraine. As shown in this chapter, Kharkiv city administration avoided to use such personalities. In the case of renamings, provided by the Regional State administration, the promoted by the government national canon of history is actively represented.

3.4. Conclusion

The consequences of the adoption of “decommunization” laws by Ukrainian government in May 2015 can be marked as the first fully implemented state-driven action aimed at removing the memories of the Soviet past from the symbolic space of all of the regions of the country. The nationalist historical canon of Ukraine striving for its independence was once more revived, which was connected to the conflict with Russia and the war in Donbass. The newly elected President Petro Poroshenko restored the special governmental institution – the Institute of National Remembrance – in order for them to shape the coherent memory politics in Ukraine. Therefore, this ended up in the adoption of 4 laws, which were aimed at revealing of crimes of the Soviet Regime, together with the removal of the names of people and symbols of the regime which, according to the official narrative, oppressed Ukrainians.

²¹⁷ Three of them are Kharkiv dwellers who died in winter 2014 during the Maidan protests in Kyiv

²¹⁸ The officers, who died during the war in Donbass.

²¹⁹ “Ihor Raynin Pidpysav Rozporyadzhennya pro Pereymenuvannya Ob'yektiv Toponimiky Oblasti [Igor Rainin Signed an Order to Rename the Toponymic Objects in the Region].” Official Site of Kharkiv Regional State Administration, Last modified May 18, 2016. <http://kharkivoda.gov.ua/news/80823>.

In terms of the changes of toponymic space of Ukrainian cities, the changes were drastic. More than 50,000 of streets were renamed, according to the Institute. Each city administration was obliged to make the prescribed changes, as if they were not to – the Regional State Administrations were given the authority to finish the process.

In Kharkiv, an overall number of 297 streets, 5 administrative districts, 4 parks, and 1 metro station were renamed from November 20, 2015 to May 17, 2016. The process involved different actors. The main drivers of changes according to legislation was the city administration. However, unlike in 2002-2013, when there were no mentions of civil society members to be included to the process of renamings, apart from the church representatives (see chapter 2.2), in 2015-2016 the big community of activists joined to work on the decommunization changes. Assumingly, such difference was connected to the growth of the civil society activism in the city at that time. The Kharkiv Toponymic Group, which was firstly gathered as a community of experts, grew to a more than 3000 people Facebook group, where people were discussing the changes to be made and proposing their versions of new names. Apart from this, the Kharkiv Regional State Administration also entered the process in March 2016, when the city administration did not manage to “decommunize everything which should have been decommunized”. Both the activist group and the State Regional Administration were rather resembling the politics of Institute of National Remembrance in terms of provision of the national historical narrative into the toponymical space of Kharkiv, as well as including commemoration of the newest heroes of this canon – the Heavenly Hundred, the army volunteers, and the people who took part in the War in Donbass.

However, the city administration was mostly reluctant to the changes which were connected to the newest history of Ukraine, as well all of the branches of political history as well. To sum up, the renamings which were made under the decisions of city administration were rather developing the localized canon of Ukrainian pre-Soviet and Soviet history – some

of the historical names originated in the times of Russian empire were returned, and the commemorated people were mostly scientists and cultural actors who lived or worked in the city in Soviet times. Overall, despite the difference in the mandatory renaming of objects named after Soviet and Communist leaders, the process of decommunization in Kharkiv were not very different from the changes in 2002-2012, when the streets were also mainly named after prominent scientists, actors, and writers. The regional framework, which Kharkiv has been developing since late 1990s, remained the same.

Conclusion

In 2016, the official city statistics showed that there were 2887 streets in Kharkiv.²²⁰ Within the period under research, 1991-2016, Kharkiv received 809 new street names, which is one third of an overall number. More than a half of them were new names. Therefore, unlike in the cities of Budapest or Bucharest, where mass renamings of streets were introduced after the change of the political regime, the post-soviet toponymic narrative of Kharkiv was mostly constructed through overspreading its symbolic framework over the unnamed territories.

This framework contained several patterns, which were applied as a criterion to the proposals of the new names to be incorporated into the city space. It was constructed by the local authorities when they were in the process of institutionalizing of Toponymic Commission – the body which was responsible for working with the proposals from within, and for the production of their own projects of (re)naming. The set of criteria highlighted the need for the names to be incorporated within two main perspectives: Kharkiv being a metropolitan city of Ukraine, which is a European state; and Kharkiv as a regional center with long history and a developed set of traditions. The preference was given to the commemoration of scientists and cultural actors, who had some connection to Kharkiv. Overall, from the analysis of the introduced changes in city's toponymy, the narrative of connection to Kharkiv was the most important marker of appropriateness of a certain name to be used in the city – in all of three observed periods, almost all of the people, whose names were commemorated either lived, worked, or did both in Kharkiv at some period of their lives. It was especially noticeable within the decommunization process, when the Toponymic Commission shared the excerpts from their records, in which the justifications were given to

²²⁰ <https://doc.citynet.kharkov.ua/ru/profile/document/view/id/652547>

the chosen names; there were only a few of them who were not connected to Kharkiv. Therefore, the city was developing its own pantheon of local heroes through the toponymic space; as Sergey Kudelko, the member of Toponymic Commission mentioned, “we were very happy that we could show our Kharkiv citizens. In many cases they were exactly Kharkiv figures known to us, and which could have been less known [in Ukraine].”²²¹ One more part of the framework was the discursive practice of justification of the need for changes in toponymic space by preservation or return of the historical names. It was mostly not implemented in any of the given periods, despite the claims of city administration and the mayors in 1991 and 2013. Therefore, the narrative of post-soviet Kharkiv was mostly built around the most modern part of city’s history.

The street renaming was also an important factor of the shaping of Kharkiv city narrative in that period. Those of 1991 and 1996, when the central squares of the city were named Freedom and Constitution respectively were to some extent in line with the attempts of the state government to legitimize itself through the history of independent Ukraine. However, especially the Freedom square renaming which happened in 2 days after the declaration of independence of Ukraine in 1991 seemed rather as an attempt to make a symbolic act in the decisive moment of political change. The symbolic remarcation of the space was needed for the city authorities to state their position within the situation of change. The renamings which happened in 2002-2014, on the contrary, were incorporating more of the local narrative into the space – the most prominent of them being the return of historical names of the streets in the old city center. The later were proclaimed to be the first ones out of the series of such renamings. Apparently, the planned return of historical names was finished during the decommunization in 2015-2016.

²²¹ Interview with Sergey Kudelko

The role of civil society actors in the process of construction of the toponymic narrative of Kharkiv differed within the period under research. If in 1990s there were several appeals for the city council from civic organizations, then in 2002-2014 only the church was represented in the decisions made as an actor of change. Their role was different too. The toponymic activism reached its peak in 2015, when the group of experts and active citizens gathered for the production of the project for the decommunization of the city. However, there was a conflict between them and the city administration. Nevertheless, their project was partially implemented by the city administration, and later by the state administration. The narrative of the project which they produced fitted in both narrative of local pride, produced by the previous changes of Kharkiv toponymy, and the narrative of national history, provided by the state.

Importantly, since 2002 the criteria for the choice of the street names were not changed. As they were still in use in 2016, I think it can lead to an assumption that the changes of state politics of memory did not influence the framework of the construction of toponymic space of Kharkiv to a large extent. Throughout the period of 1991-2016 each Ukrainian president worked out different politics of memory, which focused on either symbolic reconciliation with the Soviet past, or the denial and condemnation of totalitarian regime. However, the narrative of local pride and urban patriotism of Kharkiv turned out to be stronger and more important for the main holders of symbolic power in the city. The main share of names, introduced within all of three observed cases, was of people who lived in the Soviet periods, being scientists, artists. Together with this, until 2014 the memory of the Soviet Army soldiers, who took part in the liberation of Kharkiv in 1943 was also presented.

Continuing the notion of the connection of memorial strategies of the state and the symbolic framework produced by the city, except for the “decommunization” laws of 2015 there was no other all-state implemented projects of rewriting of historical narratives, present

within the city. Yushchenko's attempt in 2007 to remove the street names, connected to the organizers of the Holodomor, was mostly neglected by the regional authorities of East and South, among which were Kharkiv authorities too.

Therefore, the post-soviet city-text of Kharkiv, constructed in 1991-2016, was powered by different actors and their narratives. Despite activism and state projects, the main power of naming was through the whole period concentrated in the realm of city administration. The narrative constructed praised various Kharkiv dwellers, and both pre-Soviet and Soviet histories of the city. Unlike in the case of L'viv, which through constructing a "national city" tended to remove the remembrance of the Soviet past, the topographic narration of Kharkiv was largely constructed around the reconciliation of Ukrainian and Soviet memories of the city.

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