

STREET RENAMING AS CULTURAL RESISTANCE: DECOMMUNIZATION AND IDENTITY IN RURAL UKRAINIAN SETTLEMENTS

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Abstract

This study examines the renaming of streets in rural communities of Ukraine, which represents one of the essential aspects of the decommunization process initiated by a series of 2015 laws banning the use of communist and National Socialist totalitarian regime symbols. Henri Lefebvre's theory of the production of space is employed to analyze how street renaming in rural areas of Ukraine is not just an administrative procedure but a transformative practice actively generating new social meanings and values. Additionally, the study applies Pierre Bourdieu's concept of social space and symbolic power to demonstrate how street renaming disrupts the established symbolic order and challenges Soviet/Russian narratives entrenched in toponyms. Renaming streets with references to Ukrainian military heroes, historical personalities, national events, and cultural symbols enables rural communities to assert their hierarchy of values and alter the dynamics of symbolic power in both the symbolic and physical spaces. In this study, we applied a controlled NLP classifier based on a transformer language model, adapted for thematic classification tasks, to analyze 23,536 changes in the names of rural streets. All changes were encoded into 10 thematic categories. The results indicate that despite the dominance of neutral or descriptive names, a significant portion of renaming falls into the category of names that identify culture. In western regions, names honoring historical and cultural figures, as well as elements (symbols) of national/cultural identity, are more common. Notably, a small number of all renaming is dedicated to commemorating those who lost their lives as a result of the ongoing war, underscoring the active participation of rural communities in the decommunization process in post-colonial conditions.

Keywords: cultural resistance, identity, decommunization, decolonization, machine learning.

Introduction

The official legislative process of decommunization in Ukraine began in 2015 following the adoption of several laws aimed at dismantling communist symbols and renaming objects with Soviet-regime names (Gerchanivska, 2024). Before these legislative acts, Ukraine had already experienced efforts to distance itself from its communist past, particularly after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 (Kobchenko, 2016). However, it was the 2015 decommunization laws that significantly accelerated the transformation of street names across the country, and by 2016, 51,493 streets had already been renamed (Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, 2016). After the full-scale invasion by Russia, this process gained momentum, with about 76% of Ukrainians in 2022 supporting the idea of renaming streets with Russian-related names, while a 2024 study demonstrated that the majority of Ukrainians (88%) positively viewed naming streets after fallen soldiers, military personnel, and veterans (Rating Group, 2022, 2024).

This toponymic transformation is not only a matter of administrative decisions but also a form of symbolic resistance, an official attempt to reshape Ukraine's cultural and value hierarchy and establish a new historical and cultural narrative. Renaming streets represents an important symbolic step, showcasing the break with the Soviet past and the embrace of Ukrainian identity (Chuprinova et al., 2024). These measures are particularly crucial in rural areas, where Soviet names often lingered the longest. Affirming local Ukrainian identity through new street names can be regarded as a grassroots act of cultural resistance. This context underscores the importance of street renaming in Ukraine's cultural and historical memory

post-2015, laying the foundation for studying how these changes occur at the local level.

The significance of decommunization in Ukraine is closely tied to decentralization reforms, which empowered local communities to actively participate in renaming streets and other public spaces. Granting autonomy to local self-government bodies provided the institutional framework for villages and towns to make decisions about renaming streets. This expansion of powers allows villages and towns to construct their own spaces and reflect their historical and cultural contexts (Salnikova et al., 2021). These reforms shifted citizen engagement in spatial planning, resulting in a reorientation from purely material issues to addressing social, political, and professional needs (Salnikova & Khanin, 2022).

Considering the context of decommunization, an important question arises: How do the practices of renaming streets in rural settlements in Ukraine serve as indicators of cultural resistance? Most existing studies on post-Soviet toponymic changes focus on urban centers and the 'politics of memory', often emphasizing official narratives and commemoration at the urban level (Demska & Levchuk, 2020; Gnatiuk, 2023). By contrast, the rural dimension of decommunization remains understudied, creating a gap in the scholarly understanding of Ukrainian identity transformation. Rural communities were not passive executors of decrees; in many cases, they actively participated in selecting new names that aligned with local culture, historical and cultural memory, or national sentiments. These renamings at the village level are indicators of grassroots identity changes, demonstrating how citizens interpret the legacy of Soviet cultural dominance and resist it. Thus,

the research problem lies in uncovering the patterns and meanings behind these village-level street name changes. Specifically, this research *aims* to examine how street renaming becomes an act of cultural resistance, a way for local communities to symbolically reject colonial (Soviet) narratives and assert their own. Analyzing street names before and after renaming enables tracing the process of rethinking cultural and national identity. The focus on rural areas offers a new approach to analyzing decommunization by showcasing how the struggle for historical and cultural memory unfolds in everyday practices. Thus, the research connects cultural practices at the micro level with the broader aspect of cultural resistance in Ukraine.

Materials and Methods

The First Post-Soviet Renaming (early 1990s): unlike Ukraine, which started the process with some delay, other post-Soviet republics quickly renamed their public spaces after gaining independence in 1991. Immediately following the fall of Soviet rule, countries such as Poland, Latvia, and Romania dismantled communist monuments and restored pre-Soviet names to streets, cities, and landmarks (Ochman, 2025).

This first wave of renaming and monument removal represented more than just administrative changes—it was a conscious movement away from the communist past. Names and places that once reflected Soviet ideological dominance were stripped of their sacrality and reinterpreted to reflect national identity and historical continuity. It is worth noting that Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia already had their own national identities, recognized their belonging to a nation, and viewed their culture as superior to that of the Russian occupier (Annus, 2011). Thus, in the Baltic capitals (Riga, Tallinn, and Vilnius), this process began swiftly. Streets and squares that had previously borne the names of Soviet figures were among the first to be renamed. These changes signified not just the erasure of the Soviet past but a broader redefinition of urban identity. This interaction between physical space and symbolic meaning forms the basis for the theoretical reinterpretation of renaming practices as acts of resistance (Czeczynski & Sooväli-Sepping, 2015).

The research is based on sociological and postcolonial theoretical frameworks, which view the renaming of streets as a symbolic struggle over space and identity. Henri Lefebvre's theory of the production of space provides an important theoretical premise: space is not merely a neutral background but a social product that is continuously shaped and contested by social factors (Lefebvre, 1991). From this perspective, naming and renaming streets is part of the production of social space; each name conveys specific values and histories into the space. The authority to name space is inherently political. Here, we employ Bourdieu's (1989) concept of symbolic power, which argues that the right to name and classify the social world is a

significant form of power that can create and sustain symbolic hierarchies and shape perceptions of reality (Patterson, 2006). In the context of Ukraine's decommunization, the state's ability to rename 'Lenin Street' to 'Heroes of Ukraine Street' illustrates this symbolic power, establishing a new vision of history and identity with official legitimacy. At the same time, Bourdieu's concept of habitus suggests that local populations possess internalized dispositions and memories that mediate how they respond to such changes (Wacquant, 2005). Renaming is a two-way process: it is imposed top-down as an act of power, but it is also interpreted, utilized, or even resisted by ordinary people in everyday life. A postcolonial perspective enhances this analysis, enabling Soviet names to be viewed as instruments of imperial narrative and renaming as an act of decolonization. In many ways, the decommunization of toponyms in Ukraine parallels classical postcolonial affirmations of space: the removal of markers of the former empire to establish an autonomous cultural identity (Latysh, 2023).

This study is significant on multiple levels. Empirically, it contributes to a detailed understanding of the decommunization process in Ukraine at the grassroots level and reveals how small communities actively participate in the reconfiguration of national and cultural memory. While decommunization is often discussed in terms of laws and public debates, our focus on street names in villages uncovers the everyday face of historical changes, how national policy is implemented (or localized) in rural areas. This research perspective expands knowledge about memory and identity in post-Soviet societies. The study also advances the discourse on decommunization and decolonization. By considering the renaming of Ukrainian streets as an example of postcolonial identity assertion, we emphasize the continuity between the removal of Soviet symbols and the broader shedding of colonial legacies (Gnatiuk, 2018).

The combination of Henri Lefebvre's and Pierre Bourdieu's spatial theories with postcolonial theories allows us to examine how the renaming of streets in rural Ukraine functions as a form of cultural resistance and rethinking of identity. The use of computational sociology methods in the research, particularly machine learning, underscores the importance of these spatial practices in reconstructing value hierarchies within local communities. Analyzing street renaming as conscious acts of decolonization, the study highlights the role of everyday practices in asserting sovereignty and shaping national identity, especially in the context of war. This research contributes to a comprehensive understanding of how local actions, such as renaming streets, serve as crucial aspects of cultural struggle and development, reflecting manifestations of identity and values in rural areas.

The analysis utilizes a robust dataset obtained from geodata.online, a platform offering up-to-date address data for Ukraine. This dataset includes 23,536 renamed streets across 8,580 settlements, covering all regions of the country. The initial stage involves cleaning and processing the data using OpenRefine (<https://openrefine.org/>), an open-source tool. OpenRefine facilitates the detection and correction of inconsistencies, duplicates, and formatting errors, ensuring the standardization of street names and their suitability for further analysis. At this stage, the Key Solution Method was implemented using the Keying Function (Fingerprint). This approach enabled the creation of unique identifiers for street names, improving the process of identifying duplicates and ensuring data merging.

Following the data cleaning process, similar records were merged using several advanced methods. Initially, the Nearest Neighbour Method was applied in combination with the Levenshtein Distance function with a radius of 1–2 (used for block sizes ranging from 15 to 8) to merge nearly identical street names. Another Nearest Neighbour Method was also applied using the PPM (Prediction by Partial Matching) Distance function with a radius of 1, which proved particularly effective for block sizes of 15 and smaller. Additionally, the Key Collision Method was applied using the Beider-Morse Function to detect phonetic similarities and eliminate any remaining discrepancies.

After the data merging, a text classification method was employed to distribute street names into thematic groups. This classification is performed using a machine-learning-based classifier grounded in natural language processing technology. The classifier is designed to identify and group street names by themes such as historical/cultural figures, cultural elements, descriptive names, military-related names, and more. To enhance the reliability and accuracy of the classification, an iterative verification process was implemented, during which assigned categories were reanalyzed and adjusted. This algorithm not only reduces misclassifications but also gradually improves the overall quality of categorization.

All calculations and computational procedures were conducted using the R programming language. The overall methodology, combining automated processing with systematic quality monitoring and specialized merging methods, ensures that the subsequent analysis of street renaming in rural Ukraine is based on a reliable and accurately classified dataset.

Results and Discussion

The classification of street names after renaming covers the following categories:

5. **Military and defense units:** Streets named after specific military units, brigades, battalions, or significant military formations in Ukrainian history

(e.g., *127th Brigade, 129th Territorial Defense Brigade, Aidar, Azov*).

6. **Commemorative dates and events:** Streets dedicated to significant historical events or important dates (e.g., *1st of May, 24th of August, 9th of March*).

7. **Descriptive/environmental:** Streets named based on their physical features, landscape characteristics, natural elements, or appearance (e.g., *Chestnut, Sunny, Pine*).

8. **Historical figures:** Streets named in honor of individuals significant in Ukrainian or world history, politics, or science (e.g., *Mykhailo Hrushevskiy, Ivan Mazepa, Academician Vernadskiy*).

9. **Cultural figures:** Streets named after prominent figures in literature, art, music, theater, and culture (e.g., *Lesia Ukrainka, Ivan Franko, Taras Shevchenko*).

10. **Functional-professional:** Streets named after professions, industrial functions, or the practical purpose of the locality (e.g., *Builders, Railway, Energetics*).

11. **Russian-Ukrainian war:** Streets named after civilians and soldiers who died as a result of the Russian-Ukrainian war (from 2014 to the present) (e.g., *Heroes of the ATO, Heroes of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, Ruslan Marchenko*).

12. **Geographic/toponymic:** Streets named after cities, regions, rivers, mountains, or other geographical objects (e.g., *Carpathian, Western, Dnipro*).

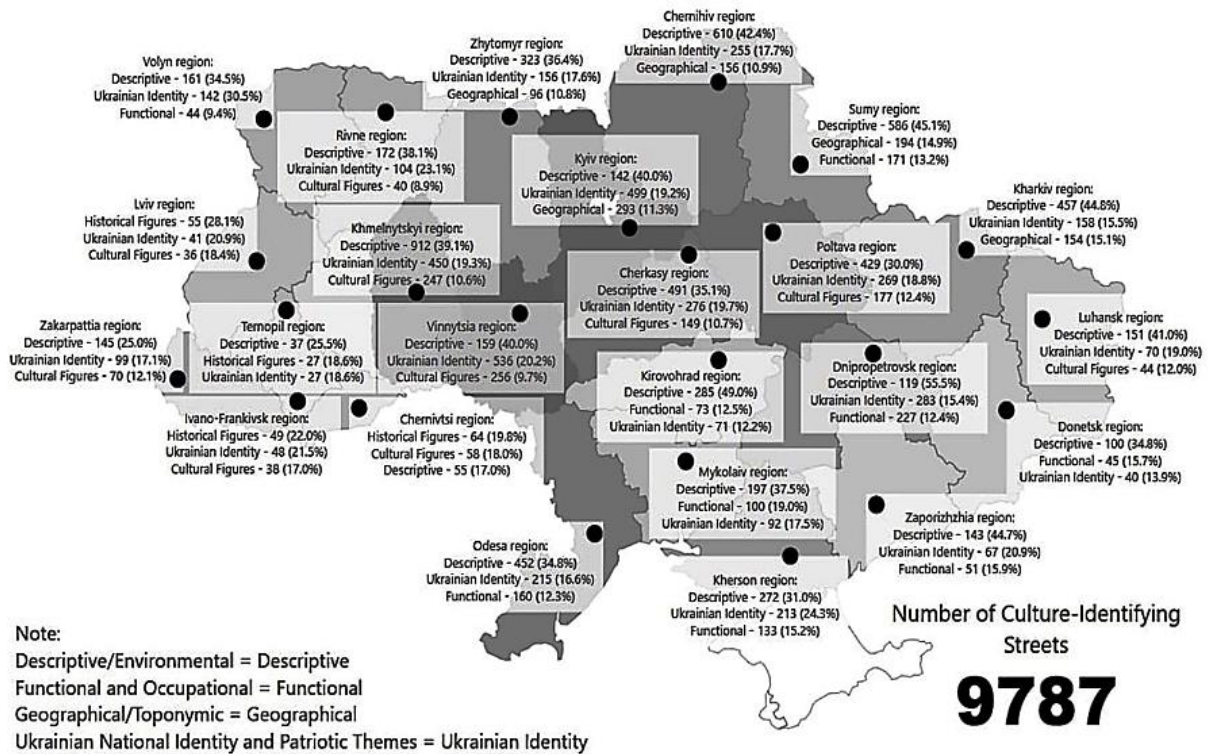
13. **Religious and spiritual:** Streets associated with religious or spiritual themes, institutions, saints, religious leaders, or traditional religious holidays (e.g., *Holy Intercession/Trinity, Saint Nicholas*).

14. **Ukrainian national identity and patriotic themes:** Streets symbolizing Ukrainian national identity, unity, independence, as well as significant symbols or markers of Ukrainian identity (e.g., *Independence, Unity, Ukrainian Renaissance*).

The analysis revealed that the most commonly renamed streets were Centralna (Central) (5.31%), Myru (Peace) (4.41%), Vyshneva (Cherry) (3.81%), Soniaczna (Sunny) (2.24%), and Sadova (Garden) (2.22%), reflecting a neutral nature in their original names. Regions leading in the number of renamed streets include Vinnytsia region – 2,650 streets (11.3% of the total), Kyiv region – 2,604 streets (11.1%), Khmelnytskyi region – 2,330 streets (9.9%), Dnipropetrovsk region – 1,837 streets (7.81%), and Chernihiv region – 1,437 streets (6.11%). On average, each region accounts for 981 streets, with a median of 730. The minimum number of renamed streets was in Ternopil region – 145 (see Table 2).

The higher frequency of street renaming in eastern and central regions compared to western regions can be explained by historical differences in Soviet influence and colonial legacy. Eastern and central Ukraine experienced more extensive and prolonged Soviet rule, which led to a greater prevalence of Soviet symbolism in public spaces.

Figure 1
Distribution of Street Name Categories by Region



This necessitated large-scale renaming initiatives. In contrast, western regions were relatively less affected by Soviet influence and, therefore, had fewer Soviet-era street names that required renaming (Gnatiuk, 2018). Most street renamings were driven by the use of descriptive characteristics or elements of the environment (38.8%), while names reflecting national identity or patriotic themes accounted for 18.4% (see Table 1).

Table 1
Categories of Renaming Distribution

<i>Category of Renaming</i>	<i>%</i>
Descriptive/Environmental	38.8
Ukrainian National Identity and Patriotic Themes	18.4
Functional-professional	10.3
Geographical/Toponymic	9.3
Cultural Figures	8.4
Historical Figures	6.2
Russian-Ukrainian War	4.6
Religious and Spiritual	2.7
Commemorative Dates and Events	1.1
Military and Defensive Units	0.4

The analysis of renaming data highlights both general trends and regional differences across Ukraine. The predominant trend is the frequent choice of descriptive street names. For example, in the Dnipropetrovsk region, descriptive names account for 55.5% of the renamings, whereas in the Kyiv and Vinnytsia regions,

this figure is around 40%. This trend indicates that local communities often prefer practical, easily recognizable names that reflect local geography or natural landmarks.

At the same time, street names emphasizing Ukrainian national identity and patriotic themes often rank either first or second in various regions, comprising 15% to 24% of the total renamings. This reflects deliberate efforts to strengthen national identity and symbolically distance modern local spaces from their colonial legacy. In regions such as Ivano-Frankivsk and Lviv, the ‘Historical Figures’ category is particularly prominent, accounting for 22.0% and 28.1% of renamings, respectively. This trend underscores regional priorities in commemorating individuals important to Ukraine’s historical narrative.

Other categories, including cultural figures and functional or professional names, while not dominant overall, demonstrate the influence of local historical and cultural identity on the renaming process. These data suggest the renaming process is largely driven by practical and neutral aspects. However, efforts to incorporate national, cultural, and historical symbolism are important, as this reflects a broader strategy of rethinking and reconstructing public spaces in a post-Soviet context, see Figure 1.

Due to the low representation of certain categories, we grouped them into two broader groups. The first group includes street names that are culturally, historically, and socially significant, while the second group includes neutral names:

- Names that identify culture: Military and defense units, commemorative dates and events, historical figures, cultural figures, the Russian-Ukrainian war, religious and spiritual themes, Ukrainian national identity, and patriotic themes.

- Names that neutralize ideology: Descriptive/environmental, functional-professional, geographic/toponymic.

The distribution for the two grouped categories of street renaming (Culture-Identifying and Ideologically-Neutral) is 58.4% / 41.6%, respectively. The data analysis emphasizes regional differences in the approaches of local communities to the decommunization process. The Culture-Identifying category encompasses efforts aimed at embedding cultural, historical, and patriotic symbolism into rural spaces. For example, in the Ivano-Frankivsk region, 81.2% of renamed streets reflect identity-oriented values. Conversely, in the northern and eastern regions, the Ideologically-Neutral category prevails. In the Dnipropetrovsk region, 75.3% of renamed streets fall into the neutral category, indicating a preference for practical, non-ideological approaches to renaming (see Table 2).

Overall, regional differences in street renaming strategies across Ukraine can largely be explained by the various historical, political, and cultural contexts highlighted by Gnatiuk (2018). According to the author, renaming processes reflect different regional approaches deeply rooted in the historical narrative, political preferences, and collective memory of each region. In the western regions (such as Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Chernivtsi), the predominance of street names in the Culture-Identifying category reflects the cultural-historical continuity with the Ukrainian People's Republic (UPR) and, to some extent, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UIA). These regions actively use renaming as a tool to emphasize national heritage and strengthen a distinct national and cultural identity. In contrast, in the northern (Sumy region) and eastern regions (notably, Dnipropetrovsk region), the predominance of neutral names (descriptive or common toponyms) supports the author's observation about efforts aimed at depoliticizing toponymy. In these areas, neutral and less controversial symbols, such as references to local geography, have historically been preferred to ease political or ideological tensions in communities with diverse ethnic compositions and electoral preferences.

Table 2

Categories of Renaming Distribution by Region (N – Ideologically-Neutral; C – Culture-Identifying)

Region	Main	Count	%	Region	Main	Count	%
Ivano-Frankivsk	N	42	18.8	Mykolaiv	N	333	63.4
	C	181	81.2		C	192	36.6
Volyn	N	241	51.7	Odesa	N	739	57.0
	C	225	48.3		C	558	43.0
Vinnytsia	N	1454	54.9	Poltava	N	703	49.1
	C	1196	45.1		C	728	50.9
Dnipropetrovsk	N	1384	75.3	Rivne	N	234	51.9
	C	453	24.7		C	217	48.1
Donetsk	N	176	61.3	Sumy	N	951	73.2
	C	111	38.7		C	349	26.8
Zhytomyr	N	502	56.5	Ternopil	N	61	42.1
	C	386	43.5		C	84	57.9
Zakarpattia	N	259	44.7	Kharkiv	N	724	70.9
	C	321	55.3		C	297	29.1
Zaporizhzhia	N	217	67.8	Kherson	N	518	59.1
	C	103	32.2		C	359	40.9
Kyiv	N	1551	59.6	Khmelnyskyi	N	1313	56.4
	C	1053	40.4		C	1017	43.6
Kirovohrad	N	407	69.9	Cherkasy	N	723	51.7
	C	175	30.1		C	675	48.3
Luhansk	N	212	57.6	Chernivtsi	N	93	28.8
	C	156	42.4		C	230	71.2
Lviv	N	23	11.7	Chernihiv	N	889	61.9
	C	173	88.3		C	548	38.1

Given that the distribution of street names across the two categories varies by region, a Chi-squared test of independence was conducted to determine whether there is a significant association between regions and naming groups (see Table 3). The resulting p-value < 2.2e-16 was

significantly lower than the commonly accepted significance threshold (0.05), allowing the rejection of the null hypothesis of independence. Thus, certain regions statistically significantly favor Culture-Identifying street names compared to Ideologically-Neutral ones.

Table 3

Pearson's Chi-squared test

	Values
χ^2 (Chi-squared)	1067.9
Degrees of Freedom (df)	23

To further explore regional differences, standardized residuals from the Chi-squared test were analyzed, which allowed the identification of the following patterns:

15. *Regions with significantly higher prevalence of Names that Identify Culture* (positive residuals > 2): Lviv region (13.32), Ivano-Frankivsk region (12.05), Chernivtsi region (10.88), Poltava region (7.36), Zakarpattia region (6.81), and Cherkasy region (5.24). Positive residuals in these regions indicate a frequency of street names that identify culture higher than expected, predominantly observed in western regions. This pattern suggests a strong regional tendency toward cultural identification, reflecting historical, political, and sociocultural influences.

16. *Regions with significantly lower prevalence of Names that Identify Culture* (negative residuals < -2), indicating a greater prevalence of 'neutral' names: Dnipropetrovsk region (-15.33), Sumy region (-11.09), Kharkiv region (-8.28), Zaporizhzhia region (-3.43), Chernihiv region (-2.74), and Mykolaiv region (-2.36). These regions demonstrate significantly lower cultural identification through street names, with a pronounced preference for Ideologically-Neutral names, particularly in the Dnipropetrovsk and Sumy regions. However, despite this tendency toward neutrality in some regions, the street renaming process in Ukraine is closely tied to the formation of cultural and national identity. Street names serve not only functional purposes but also represent symbolic meanings that reflect collective and historical memory.

Street renaming in Ukraine acts as a form of cultural resistance, analogous to how language choice functions as resistance on digital platforms (Burdin, 2023). In a study on the Ukrainization of YouTube content, the preference for Ukrainian-language videos was interpreted as an active form of cultural resistance against the dominance of Russian content. Similarly, the selection of new street names affirms cultural and national identity. While the majority (58.4%) of renamed streets have neutral names, a significant 41.6% exhibit distinct cultural, historical, or social themes, reflecting an awareness of heritage and identity in the renaming process. Notably, nearly 5% of all renamed streets were dedicated to honoring fallen heroes and civilian victims of the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war, embedding collective memory of these sacrifices into rural public spaces. This practice of commemoration, replacing Soviet-era street names with those of Ukrainian soldiers, national figures, and war victims, represents a vital element of cultural memory and a significant step toward decolonization (Verbytska, 2015). Like the conscious

choice of language, renaming streets with cultural, historical, or social significance serves as a form of self-expression. This practice not only represents a hierarchy of societal values but also actively contributes to constructing and representing identity.

The ongoing processes of decommunization and decolonization in Ukraine have resulted in deliberate removal of Soviet/Russian toponyms and their replacement with names emphasizing Ukrainian culture, history, and wartime sacrifices. This shift reflects society's efforts to cleanse public spaces of colonial symbols from the past. While most renamed streets now have neutral names, many symbolically reconstruct resistance, challenging the cultural and symbolic dominance previously rooted in Soviet-era naming practices.

Importantly, the renaming of streets using national and patriotic themes, prominent historical and cultural figures, heroes, and civilians highlights the critical role of local initiative in these collective efforts to confront the colonial past. Even within the framework of a national decommunization program, local communities and authorities retain the discretion to choose new names independently. Thus, numerous rural communities emphasize their distinct regional identity and history through their naming choices. This bottom-up approach underscores that collective memory in Ukraine is shaped not only by centralized decisions but also by local values and priorities.

Honoring heroes, recognizing historical tragedies, and selecting culturally significant names contribute to strengthening collective memory at the community level. However, evident regional differences—where some regions adopt symbolic, memory-related names while others prefer practical, neutral ones—demonstrate that there is no universal strategy for decolonizing rural spaces. These differences reflect the unique historical, political, and social narratives of each region.

Conclusions

1. Renaming streets in rural Ukraine serves as a significant form of cultural resistance. The use of cultural, historical, and social themes in new street names reflects a rejection of colonial Soviet narratives and affirms culture and national identity. Rural communities actively participate in this process, choosing not only neutral names but also those that reflect culture, collective memory, and patriotic sentiments, emphasizing the local nature of resistance.
2. The process of renaming streets in rural areas reflects both national trends and regional differences. Despite the predominance of descriptive and neutral names (58.4%), a considerable portion of names (41.6%) hold cultural, historical, and social significance. This duality highlights that the renaming process combines practical considerations with deliberate symbolic actions that integrate Ukrainian culture and history into everyday life.

3. Regional differences, revealed through statistical analysis, reflect historical, cultural, and political characteristics in Ukraine. Western regions, such as Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Chernivtsi, predominantly choose Names that Identify Culture, emphasizing historical continuity with the UNR and UPA. In contrast, northern and eastern regions favor neutral and depoliticized names, reflecting regional strategies aimed at reducing ideological tensions.

4. The renaming process actively contributes to the formation of collective memory and national narrative, particularly in honoring the memory of Ukrainian soldiers, civilian victims of the Russian-Ukrainian war, and prominent historical or cultural figures. Approximately 5% of renamed streets commemorate individuals who died in the war, embedding this knowledge into collective and historical memory.

5. Street renaming in rural Ukraine symbolizes societal efforts toward decommunization and decolonization. Local communities play a crucial role

in shaping their own symbolic space. This reflects that collective/historical memory and identity construction in Ukraine are closely tied to local dimensions.

6. Overall, the process of renaming streets with the involvement of rural communities contributes to the development of rural spaces. It not only enhances social cohesion but also fosters the formation of collective/historical memory and encourages active community participation in constructing their own cultural and symbolic space.

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