

International toponymic use: Between politics and national claim

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The use of toponyms on an international scale is not always based on criteria of impartiality, legality and justice, but it is often subject to political considerations both at the level of the states themselves and that of the international community sometimes even within the UN!

In this paper we will study some cases from around the world, which illustrate these assertions. We will use this to support our point of view, both from the toponyms mentioned in various cartographic documents and from the various uses recorded in international relations.

At first glance, we can say that the cartographic documents, in particular the Atlas, are editorial products, whatever the type of maps or Atlas, they all answer, a guideline of their publishers and according to the target audience, they provide a representation of the political or ideological conceptions of a given country, society or culture. They show significant choices type of projection chosen, giving more importance to a particular region of the world, choice of perspectives, putting a particular region at the center of the map and giving others a marginal or dependent status; choice of the linguistic varieties chosen in the legends, allocation of such territory to a particular political entity; preferring such denomination at the expense of another, a position in territorial or denominational conflicts

In our presentation, we will not raise the problem of the use of exonyms, such as 'Pékin' or 'Beijing', 'Algiers' or 'el Djarair', 'el Namssa' (in Arabic) Autriche (in French) Austria (in English) or 'Österreich' (endonymous) etc. Neither transcription nor transliteration as recommended by the United Nations Group on the Standardization of Geographical Names.

We will cite some examples highlighting the complexity of this topic.:

- Case of the dénomination of States
- Some independent States which are members of the United Nations have dénomination challenged by other states and admitted to the United Nations under other names !

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EXAMPLE OF MACEDONIA

Macedonia, in long form 'the Republic of Macedonia' is a state of Southern Europe; Independent since 1991, it is one of the States of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Member of the United Nations since 1993; but it was recognized not as the Republic of Macedonia, its official name, but under the name of The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and this in the wake of Greece's opposition. This country believes that the name 'Macedonia' belongs to the Greek heritage because they are related to the Macedonians and that the Slavs, the majority population now in this country, arrived in the region only in the 7th century! And consequently they can not be worth this heritage!

EXAMPLE IN AFRICA

After independence, several countries changed the name of their country and their agglomerations: either by recovering the old name or by proceeding to assume a new name generally coming from the patrimony of the country.

SOME EXAMPLES

- Dahomey becomes Benin
- La Haute Volta' which becomes Burkina Faso
- Gold Coast which becomes Ghana
- Congo becomes Zaire to become a new Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Rhodesia which becomes Zimbabwe
- South West Africa: On June 12, 1968, the name of Namibia, in preference to that of Kalanami (contraction between Kalahari and Namib), was given by the United Nations to the whole territory; Still in use at this time.

SOME UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS TO CHANGE NAMES

- South Africa: in Azania
- Northern Cameroon (Anglophone party): The Republic of Ambazonia is the name given by the English-speaking independantists of Cameroon to the former Southern Camerrooms, (not recognized).
- Somaliland, in long form the Somaliland Republic is a former British territory located in the Horn of Africa, (not recognized also, but many countries have woven commercial relations with it like United Arab Emirates for the construction of a port in Berbera and its use in of a naval base and air, or with Ethiopia by the " commercial use of this port)

OTHER DÉNOMINATION'S EXAMPLE

Between Morocco and Spain: concerning the islands known in Morocco 'Ile Leila' formerly and historically 'Tourah' and for Spain it is Persil (Perejil): It is a small islet located almost 200 m from the Moroccan coasts, under Spanish sovereignty but disputed by Morocco !



OTHER EXAMPLES IN ASIA

Sea of Japan or *Sea of Korea* or *East Sea*? tention not territorial but denominative. On the one hand, Korea, which claims and advocates simultaneous international use, notably by the name of the *East Sea* and *Sea of Japan*, and Japan, which refuses any denomination other than 'Japanese sea'!

OTHER EXAMPLES OF DENOMINATIONAL AND TERRITORIAL TENSIONS BETWEEN JAPAN AND KOREA

The Dokto Islands or Takeshima! Dokdo Islands (Solitary Islands) for the Koreans, Takéshima (Bamboo Islands) for the Japanese;



INTERNATIONAL USE

Rocher Liancourt western name (French name in reference to the Duke of Liancourt (1747 - 1827), having served as a model for the English names Liancourt Rocks, Spanish rocas de Liancourt, Italian rocce di Liancourt, Dutch Rotsen van Liancourt, Portuguese rochas de Liancourt. The use of this appellation, persists in particular to avoid appearing to take sides between the two countries.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE IN ASIA



Senkaku Islands in Japanese and Diaoyutai Islands in Chinese or Diaoyu by some international media. A series of incidents around these islands revive the territorial conflict in particular since 2014, around this archipelago and provoke diplomatic and nationalist tensions between the two countries.

CASE OF MYANMAR (BURMA): A denomination recognized by the United Nations but not by a part of the international community, in particular Western, unlike the denomination of republic of Macedonia recognized by almost the entire international community but not by the UN!

As far as this denomination by countries refuses to use in Myanmar denomination claims these put forward by the countries which refuse to use the name of Myanmar, there is one which pretends that this country is governed by a military junta and consequently the initiative to change the name of the country has not been a democratic action and does not have the support of the people!

Among the theses put forward by the countries that refuse to use the name Myanmar is the one claiming that this country is governed by a military junta and therefore the initiative to change the name of the country has not been a democratic action and does not have the support of the population!

Can it not be recalled that several African countries, governed by dictatorial military juntas, have made changes in the names of their respective countries without, however, encountering this kind of refusal!

OTHER EXAMPLES IN AFRICA

Western Sahara: a country under Moroccan occupation for one and the other, Moroccan territory, Sahrawi Arab Republic, Western Sahara or Moroccan Sahara? The UN uses 'Western Sahara' because it is a territory included in the list of 'Non-Self-Governing Territories awaiting decolonization'.

EXAMPLE IN LATIN AMERICA



The Islas Malvinas (Malvinas Islands) (in memory of Saint-Malo: a French commune located in Brittany) is an appellation used by Argentina. The Falkland Islands for the English and others (Remembering Anthony Cary, 5th Viscount of Falkland, a small town in southeastern of Scotland)

On the Argentine maps it is also mentioned: "Argentine territory administered by Great Britain".

CONCLUSION

These examples relate only to denomination's problems. What are the territorial conflicts between the different states of even greater gravity. There are about, in the world more than 150 different territorial and almost in as many countries! In addition to the countries that still claim independence, as in the case of Western Sahara and Palestine, as well as in other regions of the world ... These examples show a few facets of the emotional depth that the peoples have with the denominations notably at the level of the States and the also selective use of these names by the other countries thus expressing a political position. To use either name: is not to take a stand for one or the other country; even if it does not use one or the other, is it not also a political position?