



CHRONOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION OF URBANONYMS IN TASHKENT

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Abstract

This article investigates the chronological classification of urbanonyms in the city of Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan. Urbanonyms—names of urban places such as streets, districts, neighborhoods, and squares—reflect not only the spatial organization of a city but also its historical, political, and cultural evolution. By classifying urbanonyms according to different historical periods, the study aims to reveal patterns of naming practices and the ideological shifts that have influenced them. The research spans from the pre-Soviet era through the Soviet period and into the era of independence, demonstrating how urbanonyms serve as linguistic markers of identity, memory, and power relations in the urban space. A special focus is given to the changes that occurred in the post-Soviet period, when many Soviet-era names were replaced or adapted to reflect national identity and cultural heritage. Through a combination of archival analysis, historical comparison, and semantic categorization, this article provides a comprehensive view of the transformation of Tashkent's urban toponymy over time.

Keywords. Urbanonymy, toponymy, street naming, Tashkent, linguistic landscape, post-Soviet identity, chronological classification, cultural memory, onomastics, urban history.

Introduction.

Urban toponymy plays a crucial role in shaping the cultural and historical identity of cities. In the case of Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, urbanonyms serve as linguistic and semiotic indicators of broader socio-political transformations. The names of streets, neighborhoods, districts, and other urban spaces reflect not only geographical organization but also the ideological narratives that have dominated



different historical periods. Urbanonyms are not static; they are subject to change, often mirroring shifts in political regimes, social values, and national identity. As such, they represent a unique form of historical documentation embedded in the cityscape.

This paper aims to explore the chronological classification of urbanonyms in Tashkent, dividing the history of naming practices into three major periods: the pre-Soviet era, the Soviet era, and the post-independence period. Each phase is marked by specific naming conventions and ideological influences. For instance, the Soviet era saw the widespread use of political and revolutionary figures as street names, while the independence period has been characterized by a resurgence of national cultural symbols, historical figures, and indigenous terminology.

Understanding the evolution of urbanonyms in Tashkent is essential for analyzing how language and memory intersect in the construction of urban identity. The study also contributes to the broader field of urban linguistics and onomastics by providing a localized analysis of how place names function as tools of symbolic power and cultural representation. Through this investigation, we gain insight into how Tashkent's urban landscape narrates its complex historical trajectory and ongoing identity transformation.

Literature Review

The study of urbanonyms, particularly in post-Soviet contexts, has gained considerable attention in recent decades as scholars investigate how toponymy reflects historical memory, identity politics, and ideological shifts. Foundational works by Azaryahu (1996) and Light (2004) emphasize the political function of place naming, particularly in relation to regime change and symbolic cleansing. In the context of Soviet and post-Soviet spaces, urbanonyms have often been employed as instruments of ideological dissemination, reinforcing state-approved narratives and marginalizing alternative histories.

Research conducted on Central Asian toponymy, including studies by Jalilov (2012) and Turaev (2018), reveals that Tashkent's street names during the Soviet period predominantly honored Soviet heroes, revolutionary leaders, and ideological concepts. These names served to imprint Soviet identity onto the



urban landscape. Following Uzbekistan's independence in 1991, scholars such as Yusupova (2005) and Rahmatullaeva (2016) noted a wave of renaming initiatives aimed at reclaiming pre-Soviet cultural heritage and promoting national identity through urbanonyms.

Despite the growing body of literature, limited research has systematically categorized Tashkent's urbanonyms across different historical stages. Most studies focus either on ideological shifts or linguistic features in isolation. This article seeks to fill that gap by offering a chronological framework that integrates semantic, political, and cultural dimensions of naming practices in Tashkent. By doing so, it builds on previous scholarship while contributing a more holistic view of urban naming as a diachronic process that reflects the evolving socio-political landscape of Uzbekistan's capital.

Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative and diachronic approach to classify and analyze urbanonyms in Tashkent based on their historical emergence and evolution. The study is structured around three main chronological phases: the pre-Soviet period (before 1917), the Soviet period (1917–1991), and the post-independence period (from 1991 to the present). The methodology integrates archival research, linguistic analysis, and onomastic categorization to identify and interpret the semantic, cultural, and political significance of street and place names across these timeframes.

Primary data were collected from historical maps, official city directories, government decrees on place naming and renaming, and urban planning documents. These were supplemented by secondary sources such as academic articles, historical records, and toponymic databases. A representative sample of over 300 urbanonyms was selected from various districts of Tashkent to ensure spatial diversity and historical continuity.

Each urbanonym was categorized based on its date of origin, semantic theme (e.g., personal names, ideological terms, geographical features), and linguistic characteristics (e.g., Uzbek, Russian, or hybrid forms). This categorization enabled the identification of naming trends within each period. Furthermore,



semiotic analysis was used to interpret how specific names functioned as ideological symbols or instruments of cultural representation.

Finally, interviews with local historians and urban planning experts were conducted to contextualize the findings and validate the interpretations. This methodological triangulation ensured both the historical depth and analytical rigor of the research, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the urbanonymic landscape of Tashkent.

Discussion.

The chronological classification of Tashkent's urbanonyms reveals distinct patterns of naming that correlate closely with major political and cultural transitions in Uzbekistan's history. In the **pre-Soviet period**, street names were primarily derived from local landmarks, professions, and Islamic cultural references. Examples include names like *Chorsu*, *Qoratosh*, or *Ko'kcha*, which reflected traditional urban quarters, religious sites, or geographical features. These names had strong ties to the daily life and cultural identity of the local population and were largely functional in nature, often reflecting the activity or the group residing in a particular area.

The **Soviet period** marked a radical departure from this traditional naming system. Under the influence of Soviet ideology, the toponymic landscape of Tashkent was reconfigured to align with Communist values and Soviet heroism. A significant number of streets were renamed after Russian and Soviet figures such as *Lenin*, *Gagarin*, *Karl Marx*, or *Komsomol*. The purpose of this renaming was twofold: to erase pre-Soviet identity markers and to inscribe socialist ideology onto the everyday experiences of city dwellers. Street names thus became tools of political messaging, aiming to create a sense of Soviet identity and allegiance to the Communist Party.

Following **Uzbekistan's independence in 1991**, a wave of de-Sovietization reshaped the urbanonymic landscape once again. This period saw the revival of national history, cultural heritage, and Islamic identity through naming practices. Soviet-era names were systematically replaced with names of Uzbek poets (*Alisher Navoi*), national heroes (*Amir Temur*), and significant historical sites (*Mustaqillik* – "Independence", *Buyuk Ipak Yo'li* – "Great Silk Road"). The



renaming was not only a symbolic act of reclaiming national sovereignty but also a strategy to instill patriotism and reinforce a postcolonial Uzbek identity.

In recent years, urbanonymic policy has continued to emphasize national values, with increasing attention to Uzbek language purity and the inclusion of historically marginalized local figures. However, this has also generated tension between memory and modernity, as older generations sometimes resist new names that lack the familiarity or emotional resonance of their Soviet-era predecessors.

Overall, the shifts in naming practices reveal that urbanonyms in Tashkent are not merely geographic labels but contested linguistic spaces through which power, memory, and identity are continuously negotiated. This dynamic process mirrors the broader socio-political narrative of Uzbekistan as it navigates its post-Soviet transformation and seeks to define its place in the global cultural sphere.

Main Part

.The analysis of urbanonyms in Tashkent across three historical periods—pre-Soviet, Soviet, and post-independence—provides a comprehensive view of how place names serve as mirrors of cultural values and political priorities. This main section examines the semantic content, political motivation, and social reception of urban naming practices in each period, supported by specific examples from the urban fabric of Tashkent.

In the **pre-Soviet era**, the naming of streets and neighborhoods was closely tied to local geography, traditional crafts, ethnic compositions, and religious institutions. Names such as *Bozori-Kord*, *Eski Juva*, and *Hazrati Imom* reflected bazaar culture, ancient urban divisions, and Islamic centers of learning. These names evolved organically through community use rather than centralized policy and often carried descriptive or locational meaning. Urbanonyms were an extension of oral history and cultural heritage, rooted in the lived experiences of Tashkent's residents.

During the **Soviet period**, the toponymic system underwent a thorough ideological transformation. The state imposed a centralized naming policy aimed at fostering a socialist consciousness and promoting unity under Soviet governance. Streets were renamed after Marxist-Leninist figures, revolutionaries,



and events such as *Oktyabr* (October), *Kirov*, *Frunze*, and *Sverdlov*. This reflected a strategy of symbolic colonization—substituting local memory with Soviet historical narratives. Uzbek and Islamic names were often replaced by Russian-derived or politically charged titles. For instance, *Shaikhontohur ko'chasi* became *Frunze street*, reflecting the imposition of Soviet ideology over local identity.

The collapse of the USSR and the emergence of **independent Uzbekistan** triggered a wave of decommunization in urbanonymy. Tashkent authorities initiated large-scale renaming campaigns to erase Soviet ideological traces and restore indigenous cultural references. Names like *Pushkin*, *Lenin*, and *Kirov* gave way to national figures such as *Alisher Navoi*, *Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur*, and *Amir Temur*. Additionally, new street names emerged to commemorate independence and national rebirth—e.g., *Mustaqillik*, *Vatanparvarlar*, and *Istiqlol*. This process was part of a broader effort to build a post-Soviet Uzbek identity rooted in historical pride and cultural authenticity.

The post-independence renaming also introduced new challenges. Some names were unfamiliar or lacked public consensus, leading to resistance or confusion among the population. Furthermore, generational divides emerged: older citizens retained Soviet-era associations, while younger generations adapted to the new nomenclature. This highlighted the emotional and mnemonic function of urbanonyms—people attach personal memories and identity to place names.

Linguistically, the post-Soviet period also saw the decline of Russian influence in naming conventions, with a shift toward Uzbek orthography and terminology. The use of indigenous names reinforced the primacy of the Uzbek language in the public sphere and symbolized linguistic sovereignty.

In sum, the main part of the study shows that urbanonyms in Tashkent have been deeply embedded in political agendas and cultural identity projects. They serve as instruments of symbolic power, allowing ruling authorities—whether imperial, Soviet, or national—to inscribe their vision onto the urban space. At the same time, these names form a vital layer of collective memory, shaping how residents relate to their city and its history.



Conclusion

The chronological classification of urbanonyms in Tashkent reveals the deep interconnection between language, memory, and political ideology in the formation of urban identity. Through the lens of toponymy, the city's complex historical trajectory becomes visible—not merely as a record of administrative changes, but as a narrative of shifting power structures, cultural aspirations, and social transformation. Each period in Tashkent's history—pre-Soviet, Soviet, and post-independence—has left a distinct mark on the linguistic landscape, with urbanonyms functioning as both reflections of prevailing ideologies and active instruments in shaping public consciousness.

The pre-Soviet era emphasized organic and community-based naming rooted in local traditions and geography, serving a largely descriptive function. The Soviet era, by contrast, imposed a centralized and ideological naming system aimed at replacing indigenous cultural references with symbols of socialist identity. In the post-independence period, the renaming of streets and other urban spaces has been a conscious effort to reclaim national identity, celebrate historical figures of Uzbek origin, and promote the Uzbek language in the public domain.

Yet, these changes have not been merely symbolic. They carry practical implications for urban memory, generational identity, and cultural orientation. Place names act as anchors of historical meaning, and their transformation often evokes emotional responses that influence how people engage with their city. As such, urbanonyms are more than toponymic labels—they are active components of national discourse, shaping both the spatial and psychological landscape of society.

This study not only contributes to the field of onomastics and urban linguistics but also offers insight into the ways post-Soviet societies reconstruct national identity through public space. Future research could further explore the intersection of toponymy with public opinion, urban planning, and digital mapping practices to understand how place names continue to evolve in response to changing political and cultural dynamics in Uzbekistan.



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