

Toponymy of Rio de Janeiro State, Brazil: From Historical to Current Maps – Research and State of Art

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Extended Abstract

This paper, developed by the Laboratory of Cartography's team, from the Department of Geography of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, aims to present the research project on Toponymy of the State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and spans from the beginning of its territory nomination to the current days.

The State of Rio de Janeiro is one of the 26 States of the Federative Republic of Brazil and currently has 92 (ninety two) installed municipalities and 188 districts. Distributed among those municipal districts there are approximately hundreds of villages or settlement nuclei and thousands of others place names, such as farms, rivers, mountains, beaches, lakes and lagoons, roads, natural parks. The study of this toponymy presents a portrait of the occupation of the state, from the early times of the 16th Century to the current days, allowing important cultural, linguistics and anthropological aspects on a geographical and historical approach.

The research is covered by a multi and interdisciplinary structure in which some areas are continuously intertwined, such as cartography, historical cartography, linguistics, anthropology, GIS, spatial data infrastructure, geography, history and toponymy evidently.

The applied methodology consists in structuring distinct phases, allowing the construction of a toponymic spatial-time database, where the toponyms are extracted from historical and current maps. From this database, the following information is defined for each toponymy: spatial positioning,

linguistic study, toponymic motivation, toponymic evolution and its genealogy, as well as the socio-anthropological and cultural factors.

The project has the support of a vast historical and current cartographic documentation, written documents and field works, in which were created different methods for the extraction of place names. The cabinet works include the historical-geographical study, anthropological and cultural aspects and genealogy of place names, seeking the approval and certification to be included into the database called Geographical Names Database of the State of Rio de Janeiro (BNGERJ).

In order to picture the magnitude of the project relating to the worked volume of the handled information, so far have been cataloged and worked 57 historical maps on different scales ranging from 1: 150,000 to 1: 1,000,000; 387 sheets of topographical and municipal maps, ranging from 1: 50000 to 1: 2000 scale. There were extracted approximately 90,000 place names, of which 40,000 are in the classification process.

In addition to the field works that allow doubts clarification and certification of all place names, one municipality will be chosen from the current 92 of the State, which will enable to develop a deep toponymy collection process, in situ, within its limit. This procedure will allow comparative studies mainly on the social and cultural aspects of the area.

The research started in 2011 and still in the process due the large volume of information to be handled, as well as some financial support difficulties. Since every time it turns out an expansion of study possibilities and applications, the research is still on its way and there is no set deadline. In this aspect, is intended to suggest the creation of toponymic nucleus on each of the State municipalities.

In parallel with the research work, the metadata for place names and spatial data infrastructure that will be applied to the project is in its final phase of development.

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