**NAMES ON MAPS** (slide 1)

**Names are a necessity**

We need names on maps, otherwise they don’t work (slide 2)- in order to refer to one of the symbols here without using names is rather awkward. But adding names does not always help (slide 3) as we see here in East Asia – we have added the local names, and some of us might know the Cyrillic script, and read Rossia and Vladivostok, but that is about the limit, and so we need conversion systems, that allow us to read the names in our own Roman alphabet (slide 4). Here we already are presented with a difficulty, as we have to choose for each non-Roman writing system from one of many conversion systems into the Roman alphabet. As we aim for univocity, one of those conversion systems should be selected and declared the standard, so that we end up in each writing system with one and only one specific spelling for the name of each geographical object. The area with non-Roman alphabet in the world might not be the largest (slide 5) but with China and India included it refers to the most densely populated parts of the world. As of now, we do have UN-accepted standard conversion systems from Arabic, Amharic, Greek, Cyrillic, Chinese, Inuit and Thai, but not yet for Japanese, Korean, and Indian languages.

But that is not all, there are more issues: (slide 6). Here you see the Near East, and the names, written in the Roman alphabet, look familiar to you – but even so, these are not the official names, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Cyprus are names adapted to the English language, they are not the result of being processed in an officially accepted conversion system. If the latter would have been the case, the names (slide 7) would not have been Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Cyprus, but Sūriyah, Lubnān, al-Urdun, Misr and Kipros. The former ones are conventional names or exonyms, some of them dating from Antiquity or the Middle Ages, before the present societies established themselves there.

This fact, that maps need names, recent, standardized names to allow us to refer to the geographical objects shown on the map unambiguously, does not only apply to small-scale maps, but also to large-scale topographic maps, like the maps produced in mapathons or missing maps sessions (slide 8). The maps would have coordinates, but that does not really help in orientation, and with added names (slide 9) they would work much better.

**Fieldwork for collecting names**

Unfortunately, geographical names cannot be collected during an evening’s missing maps session, more time is needed for collecting and validating them. It used to be the work of the topographers, employed by a country’s national survey, to collect the names when they were in the field surveying the area. Here (slide 10) you see the result of the names collecting work of a topographer. In the field, he has produced this name sheet, the names collected by him are added by hand, written in black. With the help of existing maps and aerial photographs, the topographers would check what had changed since the last survey, measure in the new buildings and streets, and note their names. Topographers not only collect names, they would also indicate the functions of official or industrial buildings (here underlined in red: e.g. water purification plant, municipality hall, factories, swimming pool, churches of different creeds, post offices). Some of the generics are abbreviated, these are rendered here in yellow. A selection of spot heights would be added to the maps (these have been underlined in green here, and what you also see on this name sheet is an indication of the sources for the names, rendered as codes for the informants. Somewhere on the map margin the addresses or phone numbers and functions of these informants would be given. In order to show the extent of named objects, there surface areas have been hatched. Finally, there is an indication of the numbers of inhabitants of the towns, villages and hamlets, here rendered in blue rectangles. The population number of a town would determine the size of the lettering used to render its name, so that one could see from the place name size on the map, in which population range the town would be.

Not only would the topographers include these names on a map, but they would also list them on special name forms, where different variant spellings of the same name form encountered in the field by these topographers might be included (slide 11). These name forms also would allow to write down the coordinates of the named object or feature, different spellings, used by different informants, whose name and address also would be registered, data on the pronunciation and on the history or meaning of the name. These name forms would be handed over to the linguistic experts in the names bureau back in the office, and they would determine the final spelling of the name to be used on the map (slide 12, nom adopté). Of course, it is not only the spelling of the name of the object, but also its location and extent which is relevant. Here, on a transparent sheet, to be positioned over the map, one may see the extent of the area the name refers to (slide 13).

You may think ‘that’s it, now we can proceed – but that is hardly the case. There are still some issues that crop up, on which some decision should be made, and that decide which from various possible name forms or name variants we should apply to the relevant objects on the map (slide 14).

-Names in dialect form or in standard form? It depends a bit on one’s viewpoint: do people want to be able to pronounce the geographical name from the map in such a way that the local population will understand them (that would mean in their local dialect form) or in the official orthography for that language? Many people would opt for the former, but unfortunately, dialect spellings are seldom standardized, and many people might find it easier to pronounce the standardized spellings in a language that these dialect ones. In Swiss topographic maps they go for dialect forms, except fort the names of bus and train stations, as these would be incorporated in bus and train schedules and should be spelled correctly in the standard language.

-Names in high or low language form? In many South-East-Asian languages there exist two versions simultaneously: one version which one speaks to those with a perceived higher social status, and one to those with a perceived lower status. In Javanese, for instance the first version is caked Kromo and the latter version Ngoko (slide 15). Different geographical name variants exist for both language versions. Apparently, when the names were collected first to be incorporated on maps, the status of the name collectors was perceived higher than those of the informants, for the names in the left hand column, the kromo names, have become the official ones in use.

Names as used by male or female speakers? (slide 16) South of Java, in Arnhem Land in Northern Australia, male and female aboriginals have their own name forms for the same geographical features, so one must decide which version of the names, the male or female one, should be used on maps. In many societies, also in western ones, young people tend to use their own abbreviated name forms, like Essef or LA in California. Nowadays, at least in Western Europe, it has become too expensive to send out people into the field for topographic surveys, and that means, that the existence or use and validity of the names on the maps is not checked any more in the field. As an alternative, western topographical surveys now tend to use crowd sourcing techniques instead and have developed apps with which the population can comment on the validity of existing names on maps, or suggest new names. As not the whole local population would be able to use the new apps, there will be an age bias in the new names being sent in to the topographic surveys for incorporation in the maps.

I have been doing fieldwork in the Sudan, and there are areas there where different groups of nomads would be passing by at different times, each with their own set of names for the same objects. In 2003 I was in Khartoum during a cease fire between the northern and southern forces, and for relief operation the UN asked us to match the names used by the government forces with those used by the rebels, so that the aircraft with relief food could be sent to the correct locations. In the same vein we have to make the choice between the use of majority or minority language group names. In the Netherlands, Dutch is the national language, but in the province of Frisia, the Frisian language is spoken, although its capital has a Dutch-speaking majority. Should we then place the Dutch name variant Leeuwarden or the Frisian name variant Ljouwert on the map? Again, decisions should be made in advance regarding such issues.

Then there is the time-component: during specific periods in the year, specific phenomena will occur at specific locations in the Arctic, like stretches of open water, or snow drifts, that are named by local fishermen or hunters. During Carnival time in Western Europe, towns will be called differently by the local population.

Local names or exonyms? Finally, there is the decision whether to use local names or exonyms: use Krung Thep or Bangkok, Peking or Beijing, Slask or Silezia, al-Qahira or Cairo, Polska or Poland (slide 17). The argument for using exonyms (Name used in a specific language for a geographical feature situated outside the area where that language has official status, and differing in its form from the name used in the official language of the area where the geographical feature is situated.) is that the names have been adapted to the receiver language and are therefore easier to pronounce. On the other hand, they do not improve international communication and orientation. In (slide 18) next slide you can see that there are enormous differences between different sets of exonyms, and people have to be aware of them. There has been developed some sort of common understanding that exonyms are regarded as acceptable for country names and for object beyond a single sovereignty, such as sea names or large mountain range names, but that for place names local name versions should be used.

Lately, map servers like Google have also started to adapt the names presented on their maps to the audience, so if one has a Dutch webmail-address, Dutch exonyms are automatically applied (slide 19), which makes it difficult to use these map servers like Google map for navigation purposes – as the names on the map will no longer match the name signs in the field, displayed on signposts.

**Office procedures**

After having been collected, names have to be processed, inspected by linguists to assess whether they are being spelled correctly. In Britain, for instance, the Ordnance Survey, responsible for producing topographic maps, has special experts that check whether Welsh and Gaelic names have a correct orthography, and correct them, if necessary. Then these standardised names are being published, either in gazetteers, that is alphabetic lists of place names, with additional information, (such as (slide 20) language, prefixes, suffixes, articles, gender, type of feature, date of standardization or change) or in name servers. As it must be possible to exchange these data, they must be presented in some standardized form, in order to be compatible with INSPIRE, and this allowed European national topographic and cadastral agencies to pool their names data and allow users to search for geographical names in a virtual European Names database, by linking all national names servers in Europe (the EuroGeoNames project), with its name model: slide 21). So, for Europe we have things pretty much under control, presently in the European Location Framework, only the names density in the various national names databases is still rather uneven. The same can be said for North America

But what to do with other areas, without effective topographic surveys and geographical names servers? There exists no official global database or names server for geographical names as yet (the United Nations has started one up, but this only contains place names of cities of over a hundred thousand inhabitants) – there are only commercial ones and open source ones with limited official names (slide 22)

The largest commercial names server, GeoNames, is based on the foreign geographical names collected by the American Army. Sometimes these have been checked by the respective national governments, sometimes not. Other times, the information on these commercial servers just is not correct (slide 23), like here where Utrecht University is rendered as a catholic university.

We have the following problems with these commercial name servers: they do not indicate their sources, so that it is difficult to check whether these sources are up to date. According to the literature, a national topographic agency like the NGI in Brussels 4-5 % of the names change every year (different spelling, different object category, different location, etc.); according to the road navigation route planners like TomTom, 15% of the names changes each year – they have much more additional data attached to each name, so that the chance for a change in any of these additional data is more likely. With these high values for yearly percentages of change, information on the updating frequency or on the last date the files have been updated is crucial. The status of the name is not indicated, that means that it is not clear whether these names are the official ones or not – and that might be a problem especially for administrative names, like names of municipalities, arrondissementen, Kreise, or statistical enumeration areas. It is my understanding that for the third world the names in commercial servers are a bit traditional, that is not all vestiges of colonial naming have been removed. I have already referred to the fact that exonyms play a larger role in them as well.

Finally, but this is also happening in Europe for official national name servers, the coverage is rather uneven. In some countries names for gazetteers or name servers might have been derived originally from 1:1000 map series (Cyprus), in other countries from 1:200 000 map servers (Turkey), This is valid for Europe, in many parts of Africa and South America the differences in coverage are even greater. So the message is: participating in these missing maps events is great, but for the maps to really have an impact and be serviceable for the objectives envisaged, you need ground information about the names of the objects depicted. Aerial photography or satellite imagery is a splendid help, but is does not give the complete picture needed for the required maps.