

**Twenty-fifth session
Nairobi, 5–12 May 2009**

Item 10 of the provisional agenda

Activities relating to the Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers

**The Data Base of Geographical Names in Brazil - BNGB and the
Process to Spread Place Names to Brazilian Society^{*}**

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THE DATA BASE OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES IN BRAZIL - BNGB AND THE PROCESS TO SPREAD PLACE NAMES TO BRAZILIAN SOCIETY

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1. Introduction

In Brazil, although a board has been approved at 1961, in the Third Brazilian Meeting of Consultation about Cartography, even today the resolution that created the Board on Geographic Names didn't almost anything to normalize this aspect so much important to the Brazilian Cartography, which is its Geonimy. In a way, the geographical names in Brazil stay entirely without protection and very vulnerable to the eventual politician, specially the municipal government. It happens because there isn't a board or commission that regulates the national Geonimy, of an unequivocal form.

The municipal government when publish its laws, it runs over the Federal Laws which regulate the matter related to the Onomastic, specially the toponomastic, as the National Orthographical Vocabulary, whose manager is the Brazilian Literary Society, and, at last, who should give the final verdict in any changes connected to the alterations in the geographical names, because this Society was the national signatory of the Orthographical Agreement with Portugal.

It become necessary, therefore, to start in our country, as soon as possible, activities that can facilitate researches in this human knowledge area, as so much important but neglected, as yet relegated into a unjustifiable second plan, fact that don't occur in others counties, as we already said.

Today, the collective of the Brazilian's Geonimy¹ is recognized like an important cultural patrimony of the nation, specially into a context of world-wide nets of protection of the intellectual propriety of single names, throughout the geographical indications.

It is very important to empathize and to repeat that the absence of the standardization of the Geonimy produce, among other consequences, the need of subsidies to documentation and disputes about territorial and agrarian questions.

2. THE PROCCES OF CONSTRUCTION OF THE DATA BASE OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES OF BRAZIL – BNGB

The stage of uprising and analysis of the requirement pointed out an heterogeneous environmental in several aspects: the nature and the font of the information, the users and the technologies employed of which utilization was already consolidated in the institution.

Regarding to the data font, it was verified a big volume of independents and heterogeneous fonts, as much in their structures than in the platform in which are storage. The fonts considerate, at first, to set up the BNGB are: topographical mapping 1:25.000 a 1:250.000 (images of the orbit); municipal mapping; integrated basis of the International Sheet to the Millionth (CIM) digital (bCIMd); products of geographical mapping (all of this mapping are of responsibility of Coordination of Cartography of the IBGE); cadastral survey of urban places (responsibility of the Coordination Territorial Structures – CETE/IBGE); data of naturals resources (raised by the Coordination of Natural Resources– CREN/IBGE) and geographical (pointed out by Coordination of Geography – CGEO/IBGE); sector institutions externals to IBGE, national and international; and pre-existent literature on the theme.

Whereas these fonts are produced by a diversity of institutions, as internals than externals to IBGE, and the integration between them is precarious, the information generated passed to constitute banks of data isolated and with distinct formats, which represent a great challenge to the process of compatibility of the information in the stage of loading of the BNGB.

On account of the multidisciplinary nature of the project, the Work Group is constituted by people of several knowledge areas like Cartography, Geodesy, Geography, Geology, Journalism and Linguistic. This plurality of users and the consequent change of the viewpoint, it strengthens the complexity of the project thus the extent of convergence of the objectives remains distant, beyond the problems of scope, meaning and volatility.

The diversity of several institutions that are productive of information that support the BNGB, it also carries on to a diversity of technologies employed to the development and available of these information. So, about 70% of these information are found storage in the ambient Access, and in files in the Shapefile and DGN format, and the remaining distributed through the ambient Oracle, in Excel and in traditional means (paper). The diversity is present too in the employment of ambient of Systems of Geographical Information (SGI), with the use of ArcView, Arc/Info, MGE and Geomedia.

2.2 The definition of the Architecture of the BNGB

¹ **Geonimy** is here understood as a standardized **Toponymy** increased of attributes which characterize it like an ethnographical, etymological and historical conjunct, geographically related and insured in a temporal context. The **Geonomies** constitute a cultural patrimony of inestimable worth to the nation because further on reflecting its standards of occupation and its linguistic diversity, they bring a high quality to its cartographical information.

According to the multiplicity of the objectives that guide the construction of the BNGB, the its conception is been treat under three big aspects: (1) Geocartographical aspects, which contemplate the identification of the geographical name like a code, official geographical name (and variants), geographical coordinated, geometry and classification of the cartographic element; (2) Historical and Geographical aspects, which contemplate the historical of the territorial pertinence and the cartographical “involution” of the geographical name; (3) Linguistics aspects, which contemplate ethimology, orthography, grammatical classification and bibliographical reference of the geographical name.

The intention is that this data base, the BNGB, will support the Reference Center of Geographical Names in Brazil and join with Committee of Geographical Names at the National Commission of Cartography, will to change it in the future on the Authority of Geographical Names in Brazil.

3. The main activities of the Reference Center of Geographical names in Brazil.

Nowadays, we have load at BNGB about 55.000 geographical names from the mapping all national territory from 1:1.000.000 scale. We need to load in BNGB more 3.225.0000 geographical names from mapping from 1:250.000, 1:100.000, 1:50.000 and 1:25.000 scale.

In the first view approach, we estimate more 300.000 these geographical names can not standard in Brazil, only to count with these names from systematic Brazilian mapping. If we count the updating of geographical names, from the several census searching, the number of geographical names will increase of considerable manner.

We are working hard to load these geographical names, before the National Commission of CONCAR start its job.

In the realm of inner activities, we can praise increasing structure towards stronger bonds for establishing a National Network of Geographical Names, with IBGE (Brazil’s Geographical Institution) leadership. We looked forward to establishing partnerships in some institutions of the Brazilian federation political units such as the states of Paraná, Ceará and Pará. The last one is regarded as the most important state of Amazon Region where several geographical names related cases occur with names given by local aborigines. Seminars were carried out in these states to captivate people’s sensibility.

The main purpose of these seminars was showing the relevance of the standardization of Brazilian geographical names and had an excellent local interest. The highlight of these seminars was the importance of commitment and engagement of these states institutions as elements and future parts of the recently created Geographical Names Committee , in the realm of Cartography National Commission of Planning Ministry. It is intended that this Committee becomes Brazil’s Authority on Geographical Names. Moreover IBGE is looking forward to working together with INPI (Brazil’s patent authority) aiming the upgrading of the number of protected products registration by geographical indications produced from standardized geographical names.

4. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The implementation of the Project of Geonimy of Brazil will permit to restorer, with basis on concepts renovated, the value of the sociocultural and historical of the geonomies, to react the interest to the preservation and redemption of the brazilian geonimy, beyond to reinsure Brazil into the agenda of other countries that participate of the internationals discussions and produce activities and regular reports about the theme.

One of the scopes of these projects of researches, which aim at emphasize and auxiliary in the materialization of the importance of the Geonimy of Brazil, to set the Geonimy in its real place, it translate in the implantation of a Bank of the Geographical Names of Brazil (BNGB). This bank of data will be fundamental for its importance, it will be to the evolution of the research of the geographical names of Brazil, because contemplate the principals fonts of information, associated legislation, date of operation, motivation, etymology, historical, orthographically and historical variants, alternatives names, indication of protection of the intellectual proprieties, guarantees, position, relevant observances of its representation, further on other attributes.

Of diverse sub-product potentials of the BNGB stand out the available of the consult interactive and specialized, lists and/or toponomastic maps from classes of dictionaries of the geographical names, gazetteer, etc. For its national and international importance, it is understood that the BNGB must be assumed as an institutional project of IBGE, insured in the production of the de data of Geosciences.

The consolation of the research's net in Geonimy has support in the expertise of its components in the sciences of mapping, production of data and geospatial information, linguistic, philology and research in Geosciences. Some institutions interesting to create the net of research in the Geonimy of Brazil are: IBGE, Brazilian Literary Society, Universities, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Institute Antonio Houaiss, Brazilian Philology Society, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture, DSG, (Army), DHN (Navy) e ABNT.

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