DOI: 10.30816/ICONN4/2017/86

# Sacred and profane in Russian urbanonyms

Tatiana Sokolova
Kutafin Moscow State Law University (MSAL), Russia

**Abstract**: Sacred and profane names are typical for commercial names, placed on city signs which demonstrate Russian and foreign names, legal and vulgar names, religious and nonreligious names, natural and artificial words, usual and nonce words in the names of cafés, restaurants, shops, residential complexes, travel agencies, beauty salons and other urban facilities. The paper reveals the capabilities of naming examination (a new kind of forensic linguistic examination arising at the intersection of linguistics, law, onomastics and forensic expertology) in identifying the sacred and the profane in Russian urban commercial names and in showing their advantages and disadvantages.
**Keywords**: sacred, profane, urbanonym, naming, commercial names, naming examination.

## Introduction

The space of modern Russian urbanonyms is huge and variable. There are Russian and foreign names, legal and vulgar names, religious and nonreligious names, natural and artificial words, usual and nonce words in the names of cafés, restaurants, shops, residential complexes, travel agencies, beauty salons and other urban facilities. We affiliate all such urban names with the field of commercial naming, which, according to the fair observation of Paula Sjöblom (2016: 453–455), is the broadest one and includes various types: company names, product names, brand names, trade names, etc. Modern Russian urbanonyms provide ample opportunities for studying the phenomenon of *sacred* and *profane names* under linguistic, sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic, cognitive, semiotic and legal aspects, as well as in line with naming strategies (Rosenbaum-Elliott *et al*. 2015).

This article uses the terms *sacred* and *profane* in a wide sense: *sacred* does not only mean 'religious, holy, sanctified, defined by the sacred concept of *God*', but also 'spiritual, inviolable, coveted, indestructible, dear' (paradoxical as it may seem, in the post-Soviet space of Russia, Soviet, communist, essentially anti-religious notions, abbreviations, and symbols are perceived as sacred by a part of the population). Accordingly, *profane* means not only 'blasphemous, wicked, defiling religious values', but also 'secular' and 'gross, vulgar, obscene, crude'.

It is *sacred* and *profane* urban names that often realize "two important functions of commercial names, i.e. bearing identity, on the one hand, and producing a good image, on the other" (Sjöblom 2013: 2).

BDD-V4465 © 2017 Editura Mega, Editura Argonaut
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.143 (2026-11-19 13:50:09 UTC)

At the same time, it is *sacred* and *profane* urban names that often generate conflict situations in society and become the subject of discussion in the media, while also being involved in legal relations. In this case, *sacred* and *profane* urbanonyms become the object of naming examination:

> Naming examination is procedurally regulated linguistic research of names as speech products, culminating in the conclusion on the issues the resolution of which requires the application of special knowledge in linguistics, onomastics, forensic speech studies and legal expertology (Sokolova 2016: 32).

The purpose of this article is to reveal the capabilities of naming examination in identifying factors of urbanonymic conflictogenity, related to *sacred* and *profane* urban names, and to show its role in the protection of intellectual property rights in the procedural and non-procedural regime, including in the mainstream of reconciling strategy.

Commercial names of Moscow and other Russian regions, obtained by means of continuous sampling from a variety of sources (websites, blogs, directories, etc.), from forensic practice (Institute for Intellectual Property, Court for Intellectual Property Rights, Moscow City Commercial Court, etc.), as well as collected by the author as a result of observations and interviews, served as the material for the research.

For the processing and analysis of the corpus of commercial names, contentious scientific methods of observation and comparison and linguistic methods of semantic, lexicographic and contextual analysis of urbanonyms were used. The structural-semantic, word-formative, formant, functional-stylistic approaches and the method of semantic and pragmatic interpretation were also applied to identify *sacred* and *profane* factors of names.

For the analysis and interpretation of specific cases of forensic practice, the case-study strategy (Titscher *et al*. 2000: 73–79), allowing to thoroughly analyze the legal-linguistic phenomenon in its interrelation with the urbonymic context, was used. For the analysis of specific cases, the methods developed by legal expertology were used (Rossinskaia *et al*. 2016: 98–129).

Most of the material analyzed in the article consists of Russian names containing their original spelling in Cyrillic, but their transliteration and translation are given in brackets, e.g. *Троица* (*Troitsa* 'Trinity').

## Urbanonyms as commercial names

Urbanonyms, i.e. names of cafés, restaurants, shops, residential complexes, travel agencies, beauty salons and other urban facilities, have a commercial value. Their main function is to attract consumers of goods and services. It is this commercial value that determines their specificity:

> A commercial name is meant to be seen, and visibility costs money. A good name is a good way to show and sell things, because of the fact that the heart of a proper name is

BDD-V4465 © 2017 Editura Mega, Editura Argonaut
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.143 (2026-11-19 13:50:09 UTC)

> to identify its referent, to single it out, make it unique and distinguish it from all others. All of these factors are also central objectives of marketing (Sjöblom 2014: 93).

However, the legal status of such urbanonyms may be different. A trademark, a service mark, a company name and a trade name (in the Russian legal terminology, *kommercheskoe oboznachenie* 'trade designation') may be displayed on the institution's sign. According to the Civil Code of the Russian Federation, these are different means of individualization, each of which has its own specifics under legal and linguistic aspects (see more in Sokolova 2012: 263–279, Sokolova 2013: 369–378, Sokolova 2014: 354–369). It should be noted that, unlike the terminology of a number of European countries, analyzed by Paula Sjöblom (2014: 93–94), the Russian legislation does not have the official terms *product name* and *brand* in the sense of 'means of individualization, intellectual property'; the phrase *product name* does not usually have the proprial status (for example, *dairy products*, *confectionery products*, *sausage products*), and the term *brand* is used in a broad sense as a 'set of associations, consumer representations that add value to the products and services of its owner'. Indeed, the concept of *brand* intersects different means of individualization: trademark, service mark, company name. Since the very word *brand* entered the Russian language along with the denoter, its meaning is identical to the English one and, in a broader sense, to the international one: "A brand is a widely known, financially valuable name which includes the image of the surplus value offered by the products" (Sjöblom 2014: 94).

According to Russian legislation, trademarks and service marks are to go through name-giving examination and be registered with the Rospatent, Federal Service for Industrial Property (FIPS), company names are subject to registration with the Federal Tax Service of Russia, but no examination is required. Trade names are not normally subject to registration and do not undergo any examination until they become objects of criticism from city authorities, journalists, other right holders or ordinary citizens. In addition, names of different means of individualization may turn out to be similar, and then the proceedings take place in arbitration courts and Court for Intellectual Property Rights.

Any urban name from the above categories can turn out disputable, conflictogenic, sacred or profane and become the object of naming examination. Naming examination is the analysis of a name as a unit of language and conversational speech (at all levels – lexical, semantic, morphemic, word-formative, phonetic, grammatical), as a part of a specific onomastic system (subsystem), and at the same time, as a means of identification of an object from the legal point of view. Such examination can be carried out not only at the stage of legal proceedings, but also outside procedural forms, during the settlement of the conflict.

## Profane commercial names

There are several terms for "profane" commercial names in Russia: *scandalous, antisocial, immoral, shocking* (Vorozhevich 2016: 53–61). If these are trademarks or

BDD-V4465 © 2017 Editura Mega, Editura Argonaut
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.143 (2026-11-19 13:50:09 UTC)

service marks, it is already at the registration stage that most of such names are removed and therefore not allowed on urban signs, as according to Art. 1483 of the Civil Code of the Russian Federation, in Russia it is impossible to register a designation that is contrary to public interests, the principles of humanity and morality. Similar restrictions exist in the legislation of other countries as well (see Werkman 1974, Teutsch 2016 *et al.*). Such "scandalous" designations can be offensive, obscene, containing anti-state, nationalist slogans, obscene or slang words and expressions.

**Profane names insulting the feelings of believers**

A separate group in legal and linguistic discourse contains signs that can offend the feelings of believers. For example, commercial names such as *Великий Пост* (*Velikii post* 'Lent in the Christian church, a period of penitential preparation for Easter') are not allowed in relation to the product "contraceptives", and *Исповедальная* (*Ispovedal'naya*, from the word *исповедь* (*ispoved'*) 'confession, repentance of one's sins in the presence of a priest') cannot be used for the product "vodka". Nor can *Курбан-Байрам* (*Kurban-Bairam* 'a sacred festival of sacrifice among Muslims') be employed for the product "canned pork", since pork is banned for consumption by Muslims.

However, a whole series of words from the religious sphere have secular significance or have acquired it over time, are used not only in the sacred sense as a part of religious rituals, but also in everyday spoken language: *angel, heaven, hell* and many others.

***The Troitsa case***

The name *Троица* (*Troitsa* 'Trinity') used as a trademark and commercial designation was at the center of legal and linguistic disputes.

In the Explanatory Dictionary of the middle of the last century, the word *Троица* was marked as "religious" and was interpreted as follows: "in the Christian doctrine, a triune deity uniting three persons, three hypostases, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit" (TSU 1940); but in the modern dictionary, the word *троица* is already given as a polysemous one:

> 1. One of the basic tenets of the Christian religion, the doctrine of a single God existing in three persons; a triune deity (God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit). 2. In the Orthodox Church: one of the Twelve Great Feasts, celebrated on the fiftieth day after Easter; Trinity Day, Pentecost (in memory of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, as a result of which they "started speaking different languages, without learning them"). People used to go to church on Trinity day. 3. *Playful*. Three people connected by friendly relations, often spending time together (BTS 2000: 1346).

The desacralization of the word *троица* is also confirmed by the dictionary of synonyms: *триада* (*triada* 'triad'), *тримурти* (*trimurti*), *трио* (*trio*), *триумвират* (*triumvirat* 'triumvirate'), *трое* (*troe* 'three'), *тройка* (*troika* 'triplet') (Aleksandrova 2011). In addition, in Russia, the word *Троица* has acquired a toponymic meaning:

BDD-V4465 © 2017 Editura Mega, Editura Argonaut
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.143 (2026-11-19 13:50:09 UTC)

many settlements, which arose in the 16th-17th centuries, are named in the same way after the Trinity in connection with the construction of churches consecrated in honor of the Holy Trinity. For example, the Moscow region alone has 17 villages named *Троица*, according to the Toponymic Dictionary by E. Pospelov (2008: 516-517).

In this regard, a question arose in the field of naming: would an urban beer stall with the name *Троица*, located in a settlement called *Троица* or selling *Троица* beer, offend the feelings of believers? Rospatent decided that it would not and registered such a trademark.

The word *троица* also appeared as a commercial designation on urban signs, but caused an ambiguous response of residents of different cities. For example, some of the Orthodox residents of the city of Tuapse (a port on the Black Sea coast of the Krasnodar territory of Russia) were dissatisfied with the name of the café *Троица пицца* (*Troitsa pitstsa* 'Trinity Pizza'), which opened in the station square. The naming examination of this commercial designation did not reveal signs of insulting the feelings of believers in the name, since the word *троица* in the name does not have a sacred meaning. Moreover, it is asemantic; it was chosen based on the model of formation of the place name according to consonance (compare: *пицца-синица* (*pitstsa-sinitsa*), *птица пицца* (*ptitsa pitstsa*). On the graphical and graphemic level, no signs of religious significance were revealed either.

***The Buddha case***

A wide public response was caused by the appearance of *Будда* (*Budda* 'Buddha') in names of cafés, restaurants, and bars. In this regard, a resident of St. Petersburg organized an online campaign against "Buddha-bars" in Russia:

> – Images and statues of Buddha should not be somewhere where people drink and have fun. Nor where they dance in open dresses. For us, the believers, Buddha is a teacher. His name is simply unacceptable as a name of a night entertainment establishment.
> – We launched a petition, it was signed by several thousand people. Then we filed an appeal to the Prosecutor General's Office and the prosecutor's offices in different Russian cities, which happened to have places with the same name (https://www.change.org/p/запретите-будда-бары-по-всей https://vk.com/ban_buddha_bars).

The reaction of the prosecutor's offices, city authorities and owners of the "Buddha" institutions in different regions of Russia was different. Thus, the prosecutor's office of the Republic of Buryatia (where the people traditionally profess Buddhism) carried out a check and did not find any entertainment establishments belonging to the category "Buddha Bars" in this territory. In the city of Tyumen (Siberia), the owner of the place called *Будда-чайная* (*Budda-Chainaya* 'Buddha tea-house') agreed voluntarily to rename it.

The prosecutor's office of the Krasnoyarsk Krai carried out an inspection of the *Buddha lounge bar* in the city of Krasnoyarsk and stated, "In the indicated entertainment establishment where citizens are given the opportunity to drink alcohol, the head

BDD-V4465 © 2017 Editura Mega, Editura Argonaut
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.143 (2026-11-19 13:50:09 UTC)

of OOO Lounge Bar has placed objects of religious veneration, statues of Buddha, as well as iconographic images of the Buddha. In addition, the name of the founder of the religion is indicated on the signboard of the bar" (https://www.Sibnovosti.ru). According to the results of the trial, an order was issued: the administration had to change the signboard, remove all the paraphernalia and pay a fine of 100,000 rubles.

Naming examination found that, apart from extralinguistic grounds, there are objective linguistic grounds for such a decision. The word *Будда* entered the Russian language precisely as a sacred one:

> [Skt. *buddha* 'enlightened'] In Buddhism: the supreme deity who, in the course of many rebirths, has achieved absolute perfection and is able to show others the path to religious salvation. Named after the founder of Buddhism and the religious teacher Siddhartha Gautama, the son of a king of a small state in the middle of the Ganges (about 544 BC) (BTS 2000: 100).

The word does not have any other meaning, nor has it acquired synonyms in the Russian language. It retains a purely sacred meaning, therefore its use as a commercial designation is unacceptable.

**Sacred names of culture**

Every culture has a number of names that have acquired special value for each native speaker. In a number of countries, such sacred names are protected by law from profanity, commercial replication, or use to the detriment of public interest. According to Art. 1483 of the Civil Code of the Russian Federation, "State registration of designations identical or similar to the degree of confusion to official names and to images of particularly valuable objects of the cultural heritage of the peoples of the Russian Federation or objects of the world cultural or natural heritage as trademarks is prohibited" (http://base.garant.ru/10164072/77/#block_40076#ixzz4spMfkzTr).

In Russian culture, it is first and foremost the name *Pushkin* that has a special cultural sacred value. It becomes a part of the cognitive basis of every Russian from childhood. Alexander Sergeevich Pushkin (1799-1837) was a great Russian poet, prose writer, playwright, the founder of modern Russian literature and the canonizer of the Russian literary language. Pushkin's significance in Russian culture is shown in Dostoevsky's aphorism "Pushkin is our everything", which is confirmed by the *Russian Associative Dictionary* (of 102 responses to the stimulus, there are 2 refusals, 1 negative answer "I hate it"; while the majority of respondents associate this name with poetry, literature, Pushkin's works (77), as well as with features of his appearance (*curly*, *whiskers*), character (*lively*, *intelligent*, *cheerful*), and biographical facts (*in Tsarskoe Selo*, *in the south, killed*) (Karaulov *et al*. 2002).

We emphasize that the frequency index of the occurrence of the name *Pushkin* is very high and according to the *New Frequency Dictionary of Russian Vocabulary* it is 94.8, which is second only to *Putin* (95.7). However, the index of textual distribution

BDD-V4465 © 2017 Editura Mega, Editura Argonaut
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.143 (2026-11-19 13:50:09 UTC)

in the case of *Pushkin* is higher (coefficient D = 89); that is, Pushkin's name is found in almost all the texts of the National Corpus of the Russian language and is evenly distributed over texts of various fields (Lyashevskaya and Sharov 2009).

Is it possible to use such a sacred name in commerce?

***The Café Pushkin case***

In 1999, *Пушкинъ* (*Pushkin*) café was opened in Moscow. The name is given in an emphatically archaic spelling (with the letter "Ъ" at the end, which, although it did not stand for any sound, was written according to tradition preceding the reform of 1918), thus corresponding to the concept of the place, "the revival of Russian noble cuisine of the past centuries" (https://cafe-pushkin.ru/istoriya/).

In 2006, Rospatent officially registered the trademark *кафе Пушкинъ* (*Café Pushkin*), but there were objections to this controversial urbanonym expressed in the media and Internet forums. In response, in 2015 the head of the Federal Agency for Culture and Cinematography M. Shvydkoi wrote a letter in which he confirmed that the disputed trademark did not contradict the public interest in any way. However, by 2016 the conflict had escalated: the limited liability company YugStroiSistema filed an objection against the granting of legal protection to the trademark *КАФЕ ПУШКИНЪ* (*Café Pushkin*), and the case was referred to the Chamber for Patent Disputes.

The arguments of objection amounted to the fact that the disputed trademark could mislead consumers, since the location of the restaurant is not in the immediate proximity of the monument dedicated to Pushkin, and the name could give rise to a misconception about the presence of any connection with A.S. Pushkin. In addition, registration is contrary to the public interest and is an act of unfair competition, as it allows the right holder to prohibit other persons from using the word *Pushkin*.

On November 18, 2016, the Chamber for Patent Disputes considered the objection and came to the following conclusions:

> – the monument is not a geographical indication of the place of origin of these services and does not confirm the presence or absence of any person's connection with A.S. Pushkin, depending on the proximity to his monument;
> – this trademark is also not contrary to public interest, principles of morality and humanity, as there are no instructions or documents indicating a negative attitude of the public to the restaurant and the use of the name of the great writer in its name.

Based on the aforementioned, the collegium rejected the objection and upheld the legal protection of the trademark *КАФЕ ПУШКИНЪ* (https://www.fips.ru).

Naming examination has established the following: the model of naming cafés and restaurants using precedent names is international and productive. The communicative naming strategy is successful if the name is directly related to the institution's concept. Thus, the commercial name *Кафе Пушкинъ* foregrounds a whole complex of cultural and historical connotations. The restaurant located on Tverskoy Boulevard (a

BDD-V4465 © 2017 Editura Mega, Editura Argonaut
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.143 (2026-11-19 13:50:09 UTC)

place that was of significance for Pushkin), its interiors and menus (originally Russian and French dishes) reflect the correlation of the name with a certain epoch, the first half of the 19th century, which is characterized by a close relationship of the Russian and French cultures.

**Sacred Soviet values**

At the present stage of Russian history, many words and symbols of the Soviet era are perceived as sacred by a part of the society, first of all, veterans of the Second World War and pensioners who dedicated their whole life to work for the benefit of the Soviet Motherland. Therefore, the emergence of commercial names that deny Soviet values leads to conflict; for example, the opening of a kebab house *Антисоветская* (*Antisovetskaya* 'Anti-Soviet') in Moscow provoked a sharp conflict (see more Kryukova 2012: 254-258). On the other hand, the use of Soviet neologisms in commercial naming has become one of the fashion trends; the *CCCP* (*USSR*) abbreviation (*the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*, the official name of Russia from 1922 to 1991) is used especially often.

The network of cafés *Чебуречная CCCP* (*Cheburechnaya SSSR* 'USSR Chebureks-house') has acquired a particular popularity. Such retro-nomination is connected with the sacralization of the past, the foregrounding of good memories of the Soviet past, which is emphasized by the advertising text on the website of the chain of cafés:

> DEAR COMRADES!!! [note the Soviet-style form of greeting]. While the whole country is obsessed with imperialistic fast food, which is alien to us, we are glad to welcome you on our website, and we invite you to visit our ЧЕБУРЕЧНАЯ СССР cafés. In a relaxed and cozy atmosphere, you will immerse yourself in the era of the Soviet Union. Will you not agree that it was not so bad at that time? So, let's remember how it was! (http://chebureky.ru)

It is noteworthy that young people, for whom life in the USSR is not part of their biography, may be the target audience of such a place. In these cases, names often undergo a structural or semantic transformation (the name of one construction firm *C.C.C.P.* (*S.S.S.R.*) stands for *Soyuz Servis Stroi Remont* 'Union Service Construction and Repair'; another firm named *CCCP* (*SSSR*) stands for *sukhie stroitel'nye smesi Ryazani* 'dry construction mixes of Ryazan'; the *C.C.C.P.* (*SSSR*) fitness-club is deciphered as *Soyuz sportivnykh sooruzhenii Rossii* 'the Union of Sports Facilities of Russia'). The article by M. Golomidova (2009: 332-348) gives an example of a pub that received the provocative name *Ленин@жив* (*Lenin@zhiv* 'Lenin is alive'). And if Rospatent refused to register the trademark *CCCP* (*SSSR*), recognizing it as contradicting public interest (Decision of the chamber on patent disputes 2015), on urban signs, in commercial designations that do not undergo examination, this abbreviation is often encountered and triggers mixed reactions from residents.

**BDD-V4465 © 2017 Editura Mega, Editura Argonaut**
**Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.143 (2026-11-19 13:50:09 UTC)**

**Profane names that violate the stylistic norms of the Russian language**

Urbanonyms violating stylistic norms of the modern Russian language have a high degree of conflictogenity. This is evidenced by publications in the media and active discussions in social networks and forums on the Internet, as well as citizens' appeals to the Federal Antimonopoly Service.

In Krasnoyarsk, there is a sushi-and-rolls delivery service called *ЁбиДоёби* (*ЁbiDoёbi*). One of the organizers of the project said:

> Together with our partner, we just sat down and looked through a million names of sushi delivery services already existing in Krasnoyarsk. They are not different from each other, they are parts of names of Japanese dishes or some other typical words. Then we took a Japanese dictionary and looked for something memorable, this is how our name appeared (https://www.ёбидоёби.рф).

The translation of *ЁbiDoёbi* from Japanese means 'Day of the week – Saturday', but the namers chose a provocative inappropriate name sounding similar to obscene Russian words.

The Architecture Department of the city of Krasnoyarsk took measures to prohibit the use of the signboard of the sushi-and-rolls delivery company *ЁбиДоёби* and addressed the Federal Antimonopoly Service (FAS) for the Krasnoyarsk Krai. However, the FAS expert council recognized the legitimacy of the signboard. In this case, the phrase expert council misleads enforcers and the public, since it does not consist of experts with special knowledge and does not conduct expertise. In this case it was not a decision of the expert council on ethics that was necessary, but a naming examination that would reveal linguistic signs of non-conformity of the company name with the norms of morality, since *ЁбиДоёби* is a language unit containing the root of a word denoting the process of copulation, that is, belonging to obscene lexicon (Kveselevich 2003: 204-205).

The delineation of the vocabulary to which a particular designation refers is often disputable, and the forensic expert practice in such cases is controversial. For example, the trademark *Ёшкин кот* (*Ёshkin Kot* 'Yoshka's cat, fudge! f.!') was not registered, since Rospatent considered this expression a euphemism used instead of an obscene swear expression.

The Hot Urban Argo dictionary (2014: 42) interprets this expression as a "substitute for swearing". The phraseology dictionary presents it as an expression of any emotion, as well as a euphemism for an obscene swear expression (Spravochnik po frazeologii 2013). However, a member of the media-linguistic commission of the International Committee of Slavists E.S. Kara-Murza commented on Rospatent's decision differently:

> We have a certain scale of swearing, a scale of consonance of popular Russian expressions with obscene ones, which people are very fond of. This name is minimally

BDD-V4465 © 2017 Editura Mega, Editura Argonaut
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.143 (2026-11-19 13:50:09 UTC)

correlated with the alleged obscene prototype, it can rather be associated with some fairy-tale characters. I think that here it was not necessary to find fault with this creativity ("Eshkin kot" priznali brannym brendom).

This stylistic qualification is confirmed by the Dictionary of Modern Vocabulary, Jargon and Slang (http://argo.academic.ru/): *ёшкин кот* is a phrase used to express emotions of disappointment, surprise, misunderstanding. It approximately corresponds to *чёрт возьми* (*chërt voz'mi* 'hell!'), *блин* (*blin* 'damn!').

Commercial designations that do not need to be registered widely use variations of this expression: *Ёжкин кот* (*Ëzhkin kot* 'Yozhka's cat', pet store in St. Petersburg), *Ешкин кот* (*Eshkin kot* 'Eshka's cat', grocery store in Moscow), *Ёшкин Кот* (*Ëshkin Kot*, disco bar in Moscow). The name of the pet store *Ёжкин кот* (from *ёж* 'hedgehog') was created on the basis of a language game by means of dephraseologization. At the same time, all three versions of the name emphasize "Russianness", the national identity of such commercial names.

The precedent of naming in the city of Yoshkar-Ola (the capital of the Republic of Mari El within the Russian Federation) no longer confirms a national, but a local identity and, at the same time, the leveling of the obscene semantics of the expression *Ёшкин кот* in modern Russian. In 2011, a sculpture called *Йошкин кот* (*Ioshkin kot*) appeared there as a symbol of the city, from the everyday shortened humorous name of the city *Йошка* (*Ioshka*) with the help of the possessive suffix *-ин* (*-in*) and phonetic play (the words *Йошкин* and *Ёшкин* are spelled differently, but they sound the same); as well as on the basis of dephrageologization – the bronze sculpture is a huge cat sitting on a bench. In 2013, the second sculpture *Йошкина кошка* (*Ioshkina koshka* 'Yoshka's [female] cat') and the eponymous café appeared, as well as the hostel called *Йошкин Кот* (www.booking.com/Hostel-Yoshkin-Kot) and the club of cat lovers named *Йошкин Кот* (http://www.yoshkincat.ru/).

These examples show the general trend of the modern Russian language: profane ceases to be perceived as scandalous. It enters the colloquial vocabulary and is actively used in commercial naming.

## Concluding remarks

The sphere of urbanonymic commercial naming reveals a mixture of the sacred and the profane, as well as multidirectional processes: desacralization (the ordination of the holy, the sacred, the dear, the meaningful for the spiritual life of the society), on the one hand; the transition of the profane (the antireligious, the scandalous, the obscene) into the habitual, on the other hand.

In forensic expert practice, deciding in each case of using the sacred and the profane in commercial naming is difficult and disputable. This is due to the fact that the issue of the contradiction of this or that designation to the principles of humanity and morality is rather subjective and often depends on the principles to which the judges themselves adhere. One of the ways to solve this problem is to turn to the help

BDD-V4465 © 2017 Editura Mega, Editura Argonaut
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.143 (2026-11-19 13:50:09 UTC)

of an expert with special knowledge in the field of linguistics, onomastics, and forensic expertology.

Thus, in order to overcome subjectivity and unprofessionalism in evaluating sacred and profane names, to protect the right to freedom of verbal creativity of entrepreneurs, on the one hand, and the right of townspeople to a comfortable urban environment, on the other hand, naming examination that can be conducted in the procedural and preventive mode is necessary.

## References

Aleksandrova, Z.E. 2011. *Slovar' sinonimov russkogo yazyka. Prakticheskii spravochnik* [Dictionary of synonyms of the Russian language. Practical guide]. Moscow: Russkii yazyk. (rus) http://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/dic_synonims/180844 (accessed August 10, 2017).

Appendix to the decision of the Federal Service for Intellectual Property. Conclusion based on the examination of the objection. https://www.fips.ru (accessed August 5, 2017). (In Russian)

BTS 2000. *Bol'shoj tolkovy`j slovar' russkogo yazy`ka* [Comprehensive explanatory dictionary of the Russian language]. S.A. Kuznecov (ed.). S.-Peterburg: Norint. (In Russian)

*Civil Code of the Russian Federation*. http://base.garant.ru/10164072/77/#block_40076#ixzz4spMfkzTr (accessed August 2, 2017). (In Russian)

*Decision of the Chamber on patent disputes* of September 9, 2015 on the results of the examination of the objection. http://www.consultant.ru/ (accessed August 2, 2017). (In Russian).

"Eshkin kot" priznali brannym brendom ["Ëshkin kot" recognized as a swear brand]. http://primmarketing.ru/news/2016/09/12/cat/74895/ (accessed August 7, 2017). (In Russian).

Golomidova, M.V. 2009. Verbal'nye simvoly SSSR v sovremennoi kommercheskoi nominatsii. In *Sovetskoe proshloe i kul'tura nastoyashchego* [Verbal symbols of the USSR in modern commercial naming. In *Soviet Past and Culture of the Present*], N.A. Kupina and O.A. Mikhaiilova (eds.), Vol. 2, 332–348. Ekaterinburg: Izdatel'stvo Ural'skogo universiteta. (In Russian).

Karaulov, Yu.N., G.A. Cherkasova, N.V. Ufimtseva, Yu.A. Sorokin and E.F. Tarasov. 2002. *Russkii assotsiativnyi slovar'* [Russian associative dictionary], 2 vols. Moscow: AST-Astrel'. http://www.tesaurus.ru/dict/dict.php (accessed August 10, 2017). (In Russian).

Kryukova, I. 2012. Russian Names as a Matter of Linguistic Conflict. *Onoma*. Vol. 47: 247–261.

Kveselevich, D.I. 2003. Tolkovyi slovar' nenormativnoi leksiki russkogo yazyka [Explanatory dictionary of profanities in the Russian language.] Moscow: Izdatel'stvo AST. (In Russian).

Lyashevskaya, O.N. and S.A. Sharov 2009. *Novyi chastotnyi slovar' russkoi leksiki* [New frequency dictionary of Russian vocabulary]. Moscow: Azbukovnik. http://www.dict.ruslang.ru/freq.php (accessed August 10, 2017). (In Russian).

Pospelov, E.M. 2008. *Geograficheskie nazvaniya Moskovskoi oblasti: toponimicheskii slovar'* [Geographical names of the Moscow Region: toponymic dictionary]. Moscow: Ast: Astrel'. (In Russian).

Rindau, E. 2014. *Goryachee gorodskoe argo: russko-russkii razgovornik* [Hot Urban Argo: Russian-Russian phrase book]. Moscow: TORUS PRESS. (In Russian).

Rosenbaum-Elliott, R., L. Percy and S. Pervan. 2015. *Strategic Brand Management.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rossinskaya, E.R., E.I. Galyashina and A.M. Zinin. 2016. *Teorija sudebnoj jekspertizy (Sudebnaja*

BDD-V4465 © 2017 Editura Mega, Editura Argonaut
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.143 (2026-11-19 13:50:09 UTC)

*jekspertologija): uchebnik* [Theory of forensic expertise (forensic expertology): a textbook], E.R. Rossinskaya (ed.). Moscow: Norma Infra-M. (In Russian).

Sjöblom, P. 2013. Lumia by Nokia, iPhone by Apple: Global or Local Features in Commercial Names? In *Names in the Economy: Cultural Prospects*, P. Sjöblom, T. Ainiala and U. Hakala (eds.), 2–14. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Sjöblom, P. 2014. Commercial Names and Unestablished Terminology. In *Names in Daily Life. Proceedings of the XXIV ICOS International Congress of Onomastic Sciences.* [Els noms en la vida quotidiana: Actes del XXIV Congrés Internacional d'ICOS sobre Ciències Onomàstiques], Seccio 1, Joan Tort i Donada and Montserrat Montagut i Montagut (eds.), 92–98. Barcelona: Biblioteca Tècnica de Política Lingüística.

Sjöblom, P. 2016. Commercial Names. In *The Oxford Handbook of Names and Naming*, C. Hough (ed.), 453–464. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

*Slovar' sovremennoi leksiki, zhargona i slenga* [Dictionary of modern lexicon, jargon and slang]. http://argo.academic.ru/1578/%D1%91%D1%88%D0%BA%D0%B8%D0%BD (accessed August 5, 2017). (In Russian).

Sokolova, T. 2012. Examination of Trade Marks and Company Names as the Means of Individualization in Russia. Theoretical and Methodological Approaches to the Problem. *Onoma* 47: 263–279.

Sokolova, T. 2013. Naming Expertise of Moscow Urbanonyms. In *Name and Naming: Proceedings of the Second International Conference on Onomastics: Onomastics in Contemporary Public Space*: *Baia Mare, May 9–11, 2013*, Oliviu Felecan (ed.), 369–378. Cluj-Napoca, Mega: Argonaut. http://onomasticafelecan.ro/iconn2/proceedings/3_14_Sokolova_Tatiana_ICONN_2.pdf (accessed August 7, 2017).

Sokolova, T. 2014. Unconventional Anthroponyms in Moscow Urban Names. In *Unconventional Anthroponyms: Formation Patterns and Discursive Function*, O. Felecan and D. Felecan (eds.), 354–369. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Sokolova, T.P. 2016. *Naming Examination: Organization and Production: Monograph* [Nejmingovaja jekspertiza: organizacija i proizvodstvo: monografija]. Moscow: Jurlitinform. (In Russian).

*Spravochnik po frazeologii.* 2013. [Phraseology handbook]. http://frazeolog_ru.academic.ru/142/%D1%91%D1%88%D0%BA%D0%B8%D0%BD_%D0%BA%D0%BE%D1%82 (accessed August 7, 2017). (In Russian).

Teutsch, A. 2016. Names and Law. In *The Oxford Handbook of Names and Naming*, C. Hough (ed.), 465–476. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Titscher S., M. Meyer, R. Wodak and E. Vetter. 2000. *Methods of Text and Discourse Analysis.* London: Sage publications.

TSU *Tolkovyi slovar' russkogo yazyka.* [Explanatory dictionary of the Russian language.] D.N. Ushakov (ed.). Moscow: Gos. in-t "Sov. entsikl."; OGIZ; Gos. izd-voinostr. inats. slov. 1935–1940. (4 vol.) http://www.ushdict.narod.ru/ (accessed August 4, 2017). (In Russian).

Vorozhevich, A.S. 2016. Amoral'nye i asotsial'nye tovarnye znaki. *Intellektual'naya sobstvennost'. Promyshlennaya sobstvennost'* [Immoral and antisocial trademarks. *Intellectual property. Industrial property*] 9: 53–61. (In Russian).

Werkman, C.J. 1974. *Trademarks: Their Creation, Psychology and Perception*. London: Longman.

**BDD-V4465 © 2017 Editura Mega, Editura Argonaut**
**Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.143 (2026-11-19 13:50:09 UTC)**

## Online resources

https://www.change.org/p/запретите-будда-бары-по-всей (accessed August 1, 2017).
https://vk.com/ban_buddha_bars (accessed August 1, 2017).
https://www.Sibnovosti.ru (accessed August 1, 2017).
https://cafe-pushkin.ru/istoriya/ (accessed August 1, 2017).
http://chebureky.ru/ (accessed August 2, 2017).
https://www.ёбидоёби.рф (accessed August 4, 2017).
www.booking.com/Hostel-Yoshkin-Kot (accessed August 6, 2017).
https://www.yoshkincat.ru/ (accessed August 6, 2017).

**BDD-V4465 © 2017 Editura Mega, Editura Argonaut**
**Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.143 (2026-11-19 13:50:09 UTC)**