The Standardization of Geographical Names in Brazil:
Some challenges and accomplishments

Centro de Referência em Nomes Geográficos - IBGE

28th Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names
Recommendations for national standardization (I/4):

-Avoidance of more than one name for one feature
-Avoidance of unnecessary changing of names

It is recommended that the names be in accordance with:

- current and local usage (VII/5)
- current spelling rules, as much as possible

Bearing in mind that...a standardized name is a name that has the official sanction of a legally constituted entity
Difficulty to combine these principles due to:

- frequent changes in spelling rules

- discrepancies between local use and legislation creating the feature (especially localities)

- difficulty and sometimes impossibility of obtaining the original text of the legislation or a reliable copy of it
EXAMPLES
Frequent changes in spelling rules

Uraricoera River – important watercourse in the north of Brazil (Amazon Region)

**Rio Uraricoera** (old spelling, traditional use: consistent everyday use, literature, Constitution of the state as intangible cultural heritage of the State of Roraima)

**Rio Urariquera** (current spelling rule, used in some pieces of legislation, some charts, and some other instances of everyday use)
Difficulties related to spelling in texts of laws

Copy of part of the legislation creating a municipality in the State of Ceará

LEI No. 3.920, DE 25 DE NOVEMBRO DE 1957

Eleva à categoria de Município o distrito de Moraújo.

O GOVERNADOR DO ESTADO DO CEARÁ

Faz saber que a Assembleia Legislativa decretou e eu sanciono e promulgo a seguinte lei:

Art. 1º - Fica criado o município de Moraújo, com sede na vila do mesmo nome, desmembrado do município de Coreaú e elevado à categoria de cidade.

§ 1º - A linha divisória do município de Moraújo:

a) À leste, com o município de Senador Sá:

Começa no ponto mais alto da serra da Coiana e daí vai diretamente ao cerro Bom Sucesso e ao Morro do Camelo.

b) À direita, com o município de Massapê:

Começa no morro do Camelo e daí vai em linha reta à Cabeça do Morro e deste ponto segue em rumo certo ao Morro de Ouan e daí ao topo da Ladeira da Caraquinha nos limites dos municípios de Massapê com Moruoca.
A different copy of the same legislation. Both copies are valid.
Copy of the legislation creating a municipality: Different spellings in the same document

LEY NO 2.671 DE 22 DE DEZEMBRO DE 1961

Cria o Município de Pitimbú e dá outras providências.

O GOVERNADOR DO ESTADO DA PARAÍBA:

Faço saber que o Poder Legislativo decreta e eu san-ciono a seguinte Lei:

Art. 1º - É criado o Município de Pitimbú, com sede na atual vila do mesmo gome, que fica elevada à categoria de ci-
dade.

Parágrafo único - O município de Pitimbú, constituído pelo território do antigo distrito, tem os seguintes limites:
Municipality of Granjeiro/ Grangeiro – spelling in the law not updated

Spelling in the law that creates the municipality: Grangeiro
Spelling according to the current rules: Granjeiro

Confusion in general and local usage:

Sample taken from the City Hall’s website

Copy of part of a municipal law: different spellings in the same text
Granjeiro

Changes in spelling rules causing alteration in meanings of names

Municipality of Paraty – name originated from an indigenous expression

Spelling according to transcription system: Paraty - from Parati’y = river full of parati (kind of fish)

Spelling after a change in rules: Parati – name of a kind of fish

Spelling restored after a lawsuit made by the population, not in accordance with spelling rules at the time: Paraty

Coexistence of the two forms

OBS. According to today’s spelling rules, the form Paraty is correct
Discrepancy between the legal use of the name and its use by the people.

Municipality of Januário Cicco/ Boa Saúde

Name in the law that creates the municipality: Januário Cicco
Name according to the current local usage: Boa Saúde
Advances towards standardization

**Project Nomes Geográficos do Brasil**

- participation in the 24th and the 25th Sessions of the United Nation Group of Experts on Geographical Names


- Brazil’s participation in international training courses on toponym

- creation of the Reference Center on Geographic Names of the Coordination of Cartography of the IBGE (2007)

- creation of the Comitê de Nomes Geográficos – CNGEO (2008): an attempt to establish a Brazilian geographical names authority
Geographic Names Database of Brazil – BNGB

www.bngb.ibge.gov.br

-intended to facilitate the standardization of names and the dissemination of their standardized forms (I/4, II/32)

-55,000 names (Municipal boundaries dataset 2005, Continuous Cartographic Base of Brazil, millionth – version 2.1)
Projeto Nomes Geográficos do Paraná – PNGPR
(Geographical Names of the State of Paraná)

- created and carried out by the Reference Center on Geographic Names of
  the IBGE and the government of the Brazilian State of Paraná

- development of specific methodology for the collection of geographical
  names during fieldwork for new mappings and for the update of names

- development of methodology for office treatment of names

- so far, the names in the 1:50,000 mapping of 29 municipalities, out of 399
  in the State of Paraná, have been collected and standardized.
Thank you for your attention

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