

Shifting Toponymies

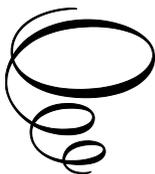
Shifting Toponymies:

*(Re)naming Places,
(Re)shaping Identities*

Edited by

Luisa Caiazzo and I.M. Nick

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INTRODUCTION

Place-names are an integral part of our daily our lives. However, far from being objective and static pointers, more often than not, they are dynamic tools of inscription. They are used by individuals and groups, both large and small, to (re)write the stories of our lives; and as such, they are framed within perspectives that have the power to (re)shape both our surroundings and our identities. This book examines the shifting tides in the complex relationship between places, identities, and toponyms to unveil the multilayered embeddedness of (re)naming practices. This strong focus on the meaning potential of toponymic decisions and inscriptions stems from the fact that place-names are a privileged medium of expression. As demonstrated by recent developments in toponomastics studies, place-names constitute both an instrument and a vehicle for conveying identity, values, and visions of the world across space and time.

Indeed, over the past three decades or so, place-naming research has undergone a significant renaissance, which has resulted in the emergence of a critical literature devoted to exploring both the social context and the ideological dimensions of naming (Azaryahu 1996; 2011; Berg and Kearns 1996; Vuoltenaho and Berg 2009). Within this shift, naming is conceptualized as an always active, frequently contentious practice. From this vantage point, scholars in the social sciences and humanities have focused on investigating the power relations inherent in and reified by toponomastic decision-making. This scholarly attention drawn to the power and politics of (re)naming has in turn fuelled a growing interest in place-names as a site of negotiation between language, power, and ideology. Hence, when conceived as a textual practice, (re)naming processes are not only instrumental to, but also simultaneously constitutive of multiple intersecting discursive constructions. This multifaceted communicative potential is reflected by the diversity of theoretical contributions and case studies that have explored toponymic discourses as they relate to national, local, racial, and ethnic identity within the politic context of collective memory and history.

Despite the diversity of the studies that have been conducted in these areas, what many of these studies share is an emphasis on the “meaningfulness” of namescapes—a significance that plays an especially critical key role in the colonial and post-colonial experience (Ashcroft

2009). The cultural importance of place (re) naming for the negotiation of identity and identification processes in colonial and post-colonial settings is inextricably tied to ideological discourses of political appropriation (Clark 2017; Nick 2017). It is within these contexts that toponyms may provide insights into “the belief and value system of the name-givers, as well as political and social circumstances at the time of naming” (Tent and Slatyer 2009, 5). Notably, the power-laden character of (re) naming is relevant throughout the linguistic landscape—from the names of countries, regions, and districts, to the names of cities, neighborhoods, streets, and alleyways (Laundry and Bourhis 1997, 25). The names that are used to transform a space to a place can also (re) shape the identities of the people who reside both inside and outside that topography (Duncan 1990; Azaryahu 1996). It is for this reason, that a great deal of modern (post)colonial toponymic research has paid particular attention to individual and group identity (trans)formation as part of the “symbolic resistance” exercised by marginalized peoples’ movements for political empowerment (Alderman 2008). Much of this work has also explored the ways decision-makers have strategically utilized names to trigger meanings and promote literal and figurative investment (Caiazzo, Coates and Azaryahu 2020). The thread that runs through these critical approaches to the study of toponyms is embedded in the discursive function of place-names. As this work has demonstrated, the echoing connotations that reverberate around place-names may be either used or abused to introduce or strengthen particular views of the world and the people who live within it. Place-names are far from neutral markers of space: they are subjective instruments of linguistic positioning and persuasion.

As the title suggests, this book examines the process-like nature of (re) naming practices as it related to the intricacies of (re) naming places and (re) shaping their identities. Responding to the call for critical approaches to toponomastic inquiry, the chapters that appear in this volume cover a wide range of disciplinary perspectives and toponymic topics. Taken together, they converge to reveal toponyms as porous material through which competing versions of history may flow. The investigatory breadth of this publication includes examinations of place-names in Asia, Europe, North America, and the Pacific, from the ancient past to the recent present and near future. With regard to the osmotic interaction between place-names and identity, the chapters in this edited collection take language and linguistics as a primary focus of examination at the same time that insights from other disciplinary fields such as geography, history, sociology and psychology, politics and philosophy are integrated.

Esterino Adami highlights the cultural and symbolic meanings associated with India's Delhi Metro, a cultural site of representation where identities and ideologies are linguistically realised. He argues that a part of this representational power stems from the names chosen to mark the different metro stations. These naming choices are far from being neutral descriptions. They are symbolic encodings that make specific and deliberate contributions to the construction or affirmation of certain ideologies. In other words, these names do not just provide information about transportation stops along the metro lines. They also trigger schemas of and make powerful cognitive suggestions to travelers. Drawing on a diversity of texts, Adami demonstrates how the names of the underground stations help to construct the city's multiple identities and unveil the nationalist, sociocultural, and economic interests.

Luisa Caiazzo's chapter focuses on the crucial role that (re)naming has played in India. Within this dynamic nation, (re)naming is a defining practice that has contributed to redrawing the country's namescape. Since Independence, the power of names to mark and/or reconfigure national identity can be seen in the struggle undergone by the Constituent Assembly in attempting to select a name for the newly born Republic of India. As envisaged in Article 1 of the Constitution, two different names were suggested: *India* and *Bharat*. This legislation essentially placed the two names on equal footing with one another in their acceptability to designate the "new" country. For many years, the two names appeared to co-exist peacefully until recent public controversy erupted over the best name for the nation. This chapter tackles this (re)naming debate and presents the competing "meanings" ascribed to the toponyms in the online news.

In his chapter, **Mirko Casagrande** focuses on the role that maps may play in performing identities through geographical conventions and onomastic choices. Even though maps are often considered to be objective topographic and toponomastic records, they may actually serve as cartographic forms of censorship by highlighting certain people and places while hiding others. This chapter focuses on the relative (in)visibility of Indigenous communities and languages in cartography and demonstrates how the names that appear on maps may be used to foster or question hegemonic representations of the world. More specifically, by utilizing a critical cartography approach which views maps as forms of discourse, this chapter examines the presence or absence of Indigenous and non-Indigenous toponyms used by Google Maps and Apple Maps for Inuit communities in the *Nunavut* region of Canada. As this examination demonstrates, recent campaigns by the Inuit peoples to have the traditional

names in their heritage languages included on map space is a crucial element in their movement to reclaim their ancestral lands and identities.

The chapter by **Oliviu Felecan** demonstrates how the practice of (re) naming places has helped reshape the sociocultural, ethnic, and ideological identity in another geopolitical environment: Romania. As this chapter details, over the past century and a half, governmentally prescribed changes in settlement names have involved concomittant changes in public identity. As Felecan argues, Romania's toponymic developments mirror the political evolution of the country as it has moved from gaining its independence and establishing itself as a national state to negotiating its newfound post-Communist identity within the European community. These dramatic shifts in political ideologies have been progressively written and erased, fortified and replaced, in the nation's toponymic tapestry.

Paul Geraghty also takes a diachronic view in exploring the history of English-based place-names in Fiji. Special attention is paid in this chapter to the period between the late 1860s and early 1870s, known as the "Cotton Boom." As Geraghty describes, this time in Fijian history was characterised by the steady influx of large numbers of English-speakers who immigrated to the Islands in hopes of purchasing land and establishing cotton plantations. This immigration wave was accompanied by significant increases in the number of English-based toponyms. However, as Geraghty explains, this toponymic development was surprisingly short-lived. Once the Boom ended and the immigration dissipated, the newly-given place-names faded as quickly as they had come. Nevertheless, the establishment of these toponyms, no matter how temporary, shows how people can use place-names to transform a space that was once foreign to them into a place they call home

The interdependence of names and identity is considered from a different standpoint by **Alberto Manco**, who foregrounds the relevance of metalanguage in the scientific classification of place-names. Manco argues that the continued widespread use of different metalinguistic labels in toponomastic studies not only makes effective communication between researchers difficult, but it may also lead to unnecessary errors in the historical re-construction of ancient peoples and places. Using numerous historical examples, Manco demonstrates how the same toponyms have been variously classified due to a lack of consistency and clarity in the terminology used to name place-names. To avoid such unwanted disparities, Manco argues in favor of increased transparency and regularity in the metalanguage used for toponymic research.

The social embeddedness of names is tackled by **Anna Mongibello**. More specifically, Mongibello explores the differential use of Indigenous place-names in online newspaper articles published in the British Columbian media between 2012 and 2017. The articles collectively cover the case of the *Ktunaxa* nation vs. British Columbia: a court battle over the proposal to construct the *Jumbo Glacier Ski Resort* in the heart of lands considered sacred by the *Ktunaxa* nation. While the Indigenous community names this place *Qat'muk* [where the grizzly bears go to dance], the non-Indigenous community typically refers to the area as *Jumbo Valley*. This chapter examines the ways these contrasting toponyms are used in the online news discourse for journalistic positioning. As Mongibello explains, the contrasting usage of toponyms can help us understand the construction of political identities as they are mediated through the linguistics of place.

In the first of her two contributions to this volume, **I. M. Nick** explores the ways in which toponyms were used during the Third Reich to mark topographical spaces designed for the systematic incarceration, exploitation, and annihilation of millions deemed unworthy of living: the Nazi concentration camps. This chapter specifically focuses on the various toponyms used in the *Buchenwald Concentration Camp* where 56,000 people were murdered and a quarter of a million people were enslaved. This sociohistorical case study demonstrates how these toponyms were systematically used for the reification and dissemination of public ideologies of superiority and entitlement, oppression and bloodshed, during the Nazis' reign of terror. After the Second World War and the fall of the Reich, these very same toponyms have become powerful tools for keeping the memory of the Holocaust alive.

The power of toponymy to preserve collective memory is the subject of the second chapter contributed by **I. M. Nick**. The focus of this examination is the US American West. Popular historical accounts of this region between the late nineteenth and early twentieth century are typically dominated by tales of intrepid pioneers, ranchers, miners, and homesteaders who, thanks to their courage and perseverance, helped build the nation. What these accounts far too frequently omit to mention is the fact that many of those original trailblazers were of African(-American) and/or Native American heritage. However, their ground-breaking contributions are often commemorated in the place-names of early settlements. At the core of this chapter are the eponymous toponyms that were given to the so-called "all-Black towns" established in Oklahoma's legendary "*Twin Territories*." By telling the story of how these communities came to be named, Nick sheds much needed light on the

remarkable accomplishments of people of color in the United States and highlights how place-names can be used to (re)store social history.

Francesco-Alessio Ursini contributes to the long tradition of Italian toponomastics with a chapter on the past and present cultural identities conveyed by Italian place-names. As Ursini demonstrates, these toponyms often have complex and variegated origins that relate to the historical labyrinth of peoples, languages, and identities that are part of Italy's rich cultural heritage. From the Etruscans and Romans to the Celts, Longobards, and Arabs, varying cultures have left their mark upon Italian culture-- a fact which is clearly reflected in Italian toponymy. Despite this fact, most Italian speakers today are probably unaware of this undeniably rich multi-cultural heritage. However, as Ursini shows, over the millennia, these intersecting influences have contributed to the formation of Italy's many regional identities as well as her treasured toponymic tapestry.

Sara Louise Wheeler's chapter examines the roots of the popular pro-Welsh slogan: *Cofiwch Dryweryn*. As Wheeler details, this rallying cry for Welsh pride and identity was originally a toponymic eponym that first took on significance after the purposeful flooding of the village *Capel Celyn*. In the 1960s, the Welsh community in the *Tryweryn* Valley was destroyed to provide water for an English city. Since then, *Cofiwch Dryweryn* [Remember *Tryweryn*!] has become synonymous with counter-hegemony in Wales. Post-Brexit, the power of this toponymic eponym has grown exponentially as a linguistic symbol of the deeply divided United Kingdom. This chapter, like those before it, provides additional thought-provoking insights into the intersection between place-names and spatial identities.

Luisa Caiazzo
I. M. Nick

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CHAPTER ONE

CONSTRUCTING LINES, CONSTRUCTING PLACE-NAMES: THE CASE OF THE DELHI METRO

ESTERINO ADAMI

1. Introduction

In cultural, and symbolic terms, the image of the railway in India—the contemporary, urban version of which is represented by the Delhi Metro—covers a plurality of meanings including: the power of mobility, the sense of modernity, and the social and economic connections between communities (Adami 2018; Aguir 2011; Azad, Kumar, and Paramjit 2014; Baber 2010; Butcher 2011). Many of these issues are also culturally and linguistically reproduced by the Delhi Metro. It is not a coincidence that the grandiloquent slogan of the Indian Railways, “Lifeline of the Nation,” was adopted and adapted by the Delhi Metro in the calque-form “Lifeline to the City” to indicate sentiments of pride, efficiency, and strength. In Butcher’s words (2011, 237): “it became a point of social interaction as well as reflecting boundaries of difference and exclusion.” From this perspective, the Delhi Metro is not only an example of modern India’s expanding infrastructures which, thanks to an innovative underground service, have helped to improve public transport and tackle air pollution and street congestion. The Delhi Metro is also a cultural site of representation in which identities and ideologies are linguistically realized.

Typically, the imagery of the railway (and metro) lends itself to processes of metaphorization in which the complexity and articulation of a vast transport system are mirrored in a network of correspondences that have great cultural significance (Adami 2018). These organic links effectively trigger a host of metaphors. As Gupta explains (2014, 180):

If one thinks of the city of Delhi as a social text, then we citizens are the individual units that make it up. 'Delhi' exists because we continually reproduce ideas of Delhi in our minds. The metro trains act as the veins of this system which facilitate our movement to different parts of the geographical Delhi where we go and engage in a plethora of actions and relations with other 'Delhites' like us.

This type of embodied mapping conceptualizes the metro as a biological system. A part of the Delhi Metro's representational power involves naming. Of particular interest here are the criteria used for regulating the naming and re-naming of the metro stations. Such choices are not neutrally descriptive. Rather, they often encode specific references that deliberately contribute to the construction or affirmation of certain ideologies, which, in turn, are naturalized through the very nature of naming.

Superficially, the selection of names for metro stations may appear to be unbiased and "because of the relatively greater space between stops and the regional scale of most rapid transit systems, neighbourhoods and landmarks can be just as effective reference points" (Douglas 2010, 182). However, its rhetorical structure may actually hide different layers of meaning. Hence, I argue that the Delhi Metro's naming procedures reflect specific ideological visions within the complex and sometimes contradictory background of the transformation of India, the effects of globalization, the upholding of tradition, the role of English, and the influence of Hindu nationalistic movements. Indeed, the names of metro stations are not merely referential. They also trigger schemas and suggestions in travelers' minds through allusive elements (Carter 2004; Jeffries 2010; Stockwell 2002) and thus partake in ideological discourse.

The present study¹ draws from several texts—newspaper articles, tourist guidebooks, and websites—and adopts an interdisciplinary approach that combines the tools of postcolonial critique, linguistics, cognitive stylistics, anthropology, and tourism studies (Ashcroft 2009; Augé 2008; Butcher 2011; Douglas 2010; Jeffries 2010; Stockwell 2002). The purpose of the study is to investigate the construction of the city's multiple identities as expressed by the underground station names. The analysis of metro naming and re-naming can uncover subtle operations of nationalistic, sociocultural, and economic promotion meant to enhance certain viewpoints.

As has been argued, naming represents a site for negotiation between language, power, and ideology. It therefore frequently plays a key role in the colonial and postcolonial experience (Ashcroft 2009). In a broader sense, according to Jeffries (2010), naming functions as a textual practice

that can package a series of connotations that may introduce or strengthen certain worldviews, with the ultimate end of persuading or manipulating. The potential of naming for metro systems has been further highlighted by Douglas (2010, 177), who points out that:

[...] something as simple as the name of a station could have important effects on the identity (both locally and externally) of the community area in which it is located, for the benefit of community members and other transit users alike.

As metro station names are significant indicators of social and cultural apparatuses at work, the task of choosing names for the Delhi Metro stations is a complex one. On the one hand, it is aimed at helping travellers find their way. On the other hand, it can revive the cultural associations of an area.

Talking about the collective imagination of the train in India, Aguiar holds that “as a permeable and mobile space, the railway enables challenges and alternations to communities even as it helps foster them” (2011, 173). This assertion can be applied to the perception of the metro in the Delhi area. It is also particularly valid with regard to station naming, since the Delhi Metro and local communities are connected in a complex, reciprocal relationship of contact and transformation, which is reflected in the linguistic material of station names.

It may also be observed that several naming strategies function through pragmatic mechanisms in that they link locations to commercial or industrial references. In this way, they may challenge the boundary between the private and the public. As a result, private companies can sometimes purchase names for stations and, in so doing, expand their visibility, role, and influence. The case of the *Noida City Centre* station in southeast Delhi, now renamed *Wave City Centre Noida* (“The Hindu” 2016; “Hindustantimes” 2016) exemplifies the contemporary transformations, or rather the “commodification,” of station names that may be used to advertise brands and businesses. The new name incorporates a direct reference to the Wave Group, an important Indian business conglomerate whose diverse investments include manufacturing, real estate, and entertainment.

2. Delhi Metro: The Context

To provide the necessary contextualization for this investigation, it is important to first briefly describe the public transport underground system that serves Delhi and the peripheral towns of Faribadad, Gurgaon, Noida,

and Ghaziabad in the National Capital Region of India. Through its seven colour-coded lines, the Delhi Metro currently comprises 160 stations and is considered the world's twelfth largest metro system. Opened in 2002, Delhi Metro is operated by the state-owned company, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation Limited (DMRC); the Government of India; and the Government of Delhi. It offers connections with Indian Railways, Delhi Ring Railways, Noida Metro, and the privately financed Rapid Metro in the southern suburb of Gurgaon.

While there are plans for future extensions, at the moment, Delhi Metro is composed of the following lines:

- Line 1/Red Line, from Rithala to Shaheed Sthal Metro Station
- Line 2/Yellow Line, from Samayapur Badli to HUDA City Centre
- Line 3/Blue Line, from Dwarka Sector 21 to Noida Electronic City
- Line 4/Blue Line, from Yamuna Bank to Mohan Nagar via Laxmi Nagar
- Line 5/Green Line, from Brigadier Hoshiyar Singh to Inderlok, and its minor branch from Ashok Park Main to Kirti Nagar
- Line 6/Violet Line, from Kashmere Gate to Raja Nahar Singh (Ballabhgarh)
- Line 7/Orange Line (Airport Metro Express Line), from New Delhi railway station to Dwarka Sector 21 via Indira Gandhi International airport

The progressive construction and implementation of the Metro has reduced traffic congestion (Baber 2010, 478) and affected other social aspects as well:

[...] the shifting dynamics of land use associated with large transportation structure implies the need to concentrate on the interaction of people with transportation as there is an intricate relationship between population who survive and function close to the conveyance system. (Azad, Kumar and Paramjit 2014, 1)

With this thought in mind, critically examining the Metro as material culture allows us to investigate the social and linguistic work that is done via naming and thereby bring to light hidden views and beliefs. Thus, besides facilitating the transportation system, the names of the Metro stations convey a plethora of meanings in which tangible and intangible issues overlap in the construction of discourse and its worlds. From this interdisciplinary perspective, the Metro is a significant context which is well-worth investigating because it “plays a role in replicating the city’s normative social obligations of space-use to manage this diversity, situating it into the cultural framework of a highly stratified city” (Butcher 2011, 243).² Yet, the imaginative power of the metro is also signalled by

the names given to its stations via specific naming procedures that I will take into account in the next section.

3. What's in a (Metro Station) Name?

This segment will examine the linguistic construction of Delhi Metro station names within the Indian cultural framework and imagination. The evocative nature of naming affects both the collective and the individual spheres. The connotations of names chosen for the station may be perceived as either opaque or transparent depending on the Metro user's stored knowledge, cognitive schemas, and experiences. As Marc Augé (1997, 270) points out, "we all bring to the metro our own preoccupations of the moment, and sometimes a few of our memories, a bit of our personal history that is awakened by the name of a particular station." This cognitive configuration considers language production and reception as the interaction between participants engaged in the communicative act. From this perspective, station names may not only be variously interpreted, they may also contribute to the affirmation of persistent "naturalized" ideologies.

A starting point for considering the naming patterns adopted by transportation authorities lies in their linguistic and semiotic capacity to create sense in that "signs are explicitly intended to increase neighbourhood identity while simultaneously promoting a common civic pride" (Douglas 2010, 181). In much the same way that station names are chosen in other cities around the world, those of the Delhi Metro may range in reference from streets, parks, and monuments to important historical and mythical figures. The pattern "proper name + locative reference" is especially productive and has various subtypes such as "name of a political, cultural, or historical figure + locative expression." Examples include *Nerhu Place* (Violet Line), *Tagore Garden* (Blue Line), and *Mandi House* (at the intersection of Blue Line and Violet Line). This last example is particularly interesting in that it incorporates an onomastic layer that designates "a building named Mandi House, once owned by the raja of Mandi" (Bhanot and Banerjee 2014, 131). Another naming pattern is "geographical reference + locative reference." This pattern is typically realized by a noun phrase whose head is a generic locative item (e.g. market) premodified by a geographical term. An intriguing example here is *Kashmere Gate* on the Yellow Line, which utilizes the now antiquated spelling of the place name *Kashmir*. The Gate itself is a historical monument that was constructed by military engineer Robert Smiths in 1835. Another station name that follows this pattern is *Yamuna Bank*. The stop shares the name of the city's river as well as an ancient river goddess

who is believed to be the daughter of the sun in traditional Hinduism (Piano 2001, 247).

Yet another recurrent onomastic prototype features general lexical items. Illustrative examples are *Botanical Garden* (Blue Line), *Golf Course* (Blue Line), *Race Course* (Yellow Line), and *Green Park* (Yellow Line). Each of these station names makes reference to a specific location in Delhi. However, through their generic elements, they also create associations in the minds of Metro users. These associations are then interpreted in relation to the position of other referents found within the situational context.

An interesting aspect of the Delhi Metro station names is related to the continuing existence of English lexical items that date back to the colonial period. Although now obsolete in British English, the presence of these lexemes in the station names of Delhi's modern Metro demonstrates how such terms can reflect linguistic, cultural, and social history. This point is illustrated by names such as *Kailash Colony* (Violet Line) and *Civil Lines* (Yellow Line). Both of these station names contain fossilized elements of Victorian English that are still commonly used in Indian English. Whereas the lexeme "colony" in Indian English is "synonymous with 'locality' or 'place'" in standard British English "colony" no longer has this meaning and has long since been replaced by "estate" (Nihalani, Tongue and Hosali 1979, 51). Likewise, the name *Civil Lines* is said to originate from an expression referring to the "British residential enclave" (John 2013, 3)—a residential settlement built for senior officers during the British Empire in various colonial territories similar to another archaic locative form such as "white town." In spite of the processes of re-naming pre-colonial names that has taken place across many ex-colonial parts of Asia and Africa (see the case of *Mumbai/Bombay*), this spatial reference with its anachronistic lexical element and suggestive colonist overtones has not been altered.

A further feature of Indian English that is manifest in many of the Delhi Metro station names is the great variety of acronyms and abbreviations (Sailaja 2009, 82-3). Examples on the Yellow Line include the stations of *INA* and *AIIMS Chowk*, which respectively stand for Indian National Airways, a private airline that was eventually merged with others to constitute Indian Airlines in 1953; and the All India Institute of Medical Sciences. On the Orange Line, the station *ITC Maurya* takes its name from a prestigious hotel "named after the Mauryan dynasty associated with the 'Golden Age' of art, culture and architecture in India" (Bhanot and Banerjee 2014, 148). Thanks to the combination of various referential layers, names such as these may foster the mythical construction of the past and implicitly project a vision of the country's unity and rootedness.

In some station names, it is also possible to identify Hindi spatial references (McGregor 1997) such as *nagar*, a term meaning “town.” This lexeme can be found premodified by either proper names or toponomastic references. It is found in examples like *Uttam Nagar West*, *Uttam Nagar East*, *Moti Nagar*, *Laxmi Nagar*, *New Ashok Nagar* and *Kirti Nagar*—all along the Blue Line. On the Yellow Line, another station name with a complex network of religious and historical references can be found. The *GTB Nagar* station takes its name from the Sri Guru Tegh Bahadar Ji, the ninth of the Ten Gurus of Sikhism. The place featuring this station name also has strong colonial ties. Previously called *Kingsway*, this area was originally part of the architectural transformation the city underwent when it became the new capital of colonial India in 1911. This was also the time when *Coronation Park* was inaugurated. That was then. Now, as Bhanot and Banerjee (2004, 24) explain, the park is:

[...] something of a forlorn mausoleum of imperial statuary, since statues of several Raj viceroys and officials were removed from different public places in Delhi and placed here after India became independent.

In an early effort to mark this historical independence, a new name was officially given to the locality in 1970. This name was subsequently adopted by the metro station in an effort to reinforce the sense of a neighborhood identity. Colonial history is not the only motivator of station naming for the Delhi Metro. Religious allusions also can be identified. The station name *Kalkaji Mandir* (Violet Line) designates a temple (*mandir* in Hindi). The station name commemorates the temple dedicated to the cult of the Hindu Goddess Kali, built around the end of the eighteenth century.

Another similar example incorporates the Hindi word *chowk* that commonly denotes a “marketplace” or less frequently a “courtyard,” “road junction,” or “roundabout.” This word is used in various station names. *Rajiv Chowk*, at the juncture between the Blue Line and the Yellow Line, is, for example, named after Rajiv Gandhi. *Chadni Chowk* (part of the Yellow Line) is located in a very busy area of Old Delhi; and *Patel Chowk* (Yellow Line) harkens to the name of a previous group of village leaders. The same lexeme is sometimes combined with an acronym, as in the case of *IFFCO Chowk* (Yellow Line). This station name refers to the Indian Farmers Fertilisers Cooperative Limited, the largest fertilizer cooperative federation based in the country.

As these and other examples demonstrate, station names across the Delhi Metro display a remarkable degree of linguistic creativity. In many names, this creativity is exhibited through novel affixation (Sailaja 2009, 80-82). Take, for instance, the suffix *-pur* (or *-pura*), which indicates a

“city” or “settlement.” This suffix is extensively used across the Indian subcontinent. Derived from *pura*, the Sanskrit term for “city,” this suffix is found in station names like *Sultanpur* and *Chhattarpur* (both on the Yellow Line).

In these and the above-mentioned cases, the station names come from Delhi Metro officials. In other cases, metro station names have come from travelers. A case in point is *Central Secretariat*, a station on the Yellow Line that serves the capital’s seat of power, namely the Parliament Building and the President of India’s official residence, Rashtrapati Bhavan. The official name of this station is sometimes shortened to the *Secretariat* or *Central*, as well as *Parliament Station* or *Kendriya Terminal*, after a local bus stop. Such manipulation of names exhibits conversational creativity (Carter 2004). Here as elsewhere, alongside the official system of naming prescribed by the establishment, there are also alternative unofficial names that result from “other forms of power, embedded in subjective understandings of social order and identity” (Butcher 2011, 244).

4. Station Names and Ideology

From a cognitive point of view, language is a tool to construct, mediate, and convey human experience. As such, it has a representational role in the attempt to understand, conceptualize, and reproduce reality through a range of stylistic means (Stockwell 2002). Moreover, re-naming may be viewed as a form of perceptual modality that gives rise to conceptual shifts in meaning and frames the point of view of the text’s producer. With suitable adaptations, such an approach may be extended to the investigation of the evocative power of Delhi Metro station names in their projection of meaning and construction of values. It is from this standpoint that I will now deal with some specific cases, starting with the debate that took place around the name of a new station on the expanding Blue Line in 2009. The controversy involved two naming options: *Commonwealth Games Village* and *Akshardham*. The former made reference to a sports facility built for the 2010 Commonwealth Games to be hosted by Delhi. The latter made reference to the name of a large local temple that was “inaugurated in 2005 after five years of construction, carving and landscaping” (Bhanot and Banerjee 2014, 138).

The ensuing clash of the choice between a secular or religious reference has to be framed within the Indian cultural context. On the one hand, there is the drive to promote traditional, indigenous, and sacred values, which in this case were associated with an ideological affirmation

of Hinduism. On the other hand, there was the desire to promote the Commonwealth Games (a name that may still trigger painful colonial memories and thereby generate social tensions). In the end, the final decision was made to use the name that favoured the connection with the Hindu temple, with the official explanation that the site was a place of public worship. At the same time, the name also conveyed a subtle message of patriotic self-celebration within the broader context of contemporary Hindu renaissance and *Hindutva*. Critics of this choice contended that the name not only related to Hindu identity (Piano 2001, 83); it may also have served a broader nationalistic agenda.

Religious associations often surface in the thorny discussions about the choice of station names. A further example is the *Satguru Ram Singh Marg* station (Green Line). The station was originally to be called *Patel Nagar West*, but was eventually named to commemorate the pioneer of the Swadeshi non-violent, non-co-operation movement (Lahiri 2012), following the suggestion of the Namdhari sect of Sikhs. However, as some critics of this name choice contend, rather than emphasizing Indian religious pluralism, this name connotes visions of supremacy.

Whichever position one takes in this debate, it is evident that giving a station a particular name is an affirmative act of power and an identity-building project that can be rhetorically exploited by political parties, religious associations, or commercial bodies to legitimize a specific view or ideology. Lahiri (2012) reports on another remarkable case dealing with the Yellow Line connecting Delhi with the satellite town of Gurgaon in the southeast. Because of the proximity of the *Garden Estate Housing Complex* to a new station, the Metro authorities opted for the near-homonymous name *Garden Estate*. However, in March 2008, the Haryana government officially requested the station to be named *Guru Dronacharya*. The request was granted and the station was renamed. Although this case appears on the surface to be straightforward, there were many underlying factors at play. The social entanglements of the new name arise from a literary source: the Hindu epic *Mahabharata*, in which the figure of Dronacharya is depicted as an archery teacher of the Pandava and Kaurava princes (Piano 2001, 65). The character is quite complex. According to journalist Tripti Lahiri: “he’s a figure who is both revered as an exemplary teacher and seen as a symbol of the mistreatment of low-caste Hindus by higher castes” (“The Wall Street Journal” 2012). A short time after the re-naming of the station, perhaps due to the sensitivities connected to the name, the Metro authorities decided to restore the original name of *Garden Estate*. However, this action also resulted in several

complaints from the Haryana government. Eventually, the name *Guru Dronacharya* was officially agreed upon.³

The opinions of religious groups, sects, and communities over station naming decisions is often persuasive. For example, Lahiri (“The Wall Street Journal” 2012) recounted the request made by the Brahma Kumaris, a monastic order for women. The members of the order asked that a station be named after Saraswati, the river goddess of wisdom, poetry, and music (Piano 2001, 190). A similar proposal was issued by the Lal Dwara Mandir [the temple of the red door]. This group asked that the name of the *Jhandewalan* station (the Blue Line) be modified because it was close to the above-mentioned temple. They requested that Metro authorities change the station name to *Jhandewalan Lal Dwara*. This petition was, however, rejected.

Nevertheless, this and the other examples demonstrate that debates about station naming are crucial to questions of identity. Decision-makers must therefore consider both the obvious and subtle influences that originate from various powers and sectors of the establishment. It was with this goal in mind that a special committee was created in 2010 to regulate and process the many name requests for new stations. As this committee no doubt discovered, such petitions are very sensitive and may engender exacerbating discussions. The depth of the emotions connected with these often protracted discussions was illustrated by Lahiri (“The Wall Street Journal” 2012) with the following comment made by an exasperated resident. Authored by a person who called him/herself “Angry India,” the provocative comment read: “why don’t we just call all the stations across India Rajiv/Sonia/Rahul/Priyanka Gandhi station?” Such frustration testifies to the tensions behind the naming operation specifically for Delhi’s underground network, but also for public facilities in general. Moreover, it signals the linguistic verve and provocative humor commonly apparent in online protest campaigns over public names (Nayar 2011).

As Douglas (2010, 177) affirms: “urban planning and design decisions have been used to promote both local identity and civic cohesion.” This statement holds true for Delhi station naming as well. However, naming and re-naming are not only driven by communal identity issues. They may also reflect a commercial identity. Such is the case with many of the station names used for the Delhi Metro. As many companies have found, these names can function as forms of powerful advertising, especially when used to label lines with high numbers of passengers (e.g. the Blue and Yellow lines). Since 2013, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation authorities have increasingly capitalized on this opportunity to secure a portion of the urban market and have turned the naming process into a new pay-for-use

service to generate new and consistent revenues. As a result, new names are chosen and crafted not for cultural, historical, or religious reasons, but rather as vehicles for publicity, visibility, and business. In an article published in “The Times of India” (2015), Keelor documents the practice of semi-renaming. Particularly in the growing Noida area, a constellation of fast-developing firms has been exploiting the opportunity to pay to have their business icon and brand name advertised in station names. An example in the Noida area comes from the Wave Group. Active in manufacturing, beverages, and entertainment, this company has managed to secure the naming rights for stations like *Noida Sector 18*, which was rebranded as *Wave Sector 18 Noida* (“The Hindu” 2016; “Hindustantimes” 2016).

To a certain extent, some of these (re)named or semi-(re)named stations are akin to the idea of “language in unexpected places” mentioned by Pennycook (2012). There are also traces of stories and histories at play in their material and imaginary format. However, the commodification and marketization of station naming via corporate auctions also involves an added dimension of the metro onomasticon—one based on financial and capitalist principles. These new sociocultural factors help to propagate a new form of ideology alongside the routine economic forms and fluxes of power that may negatively affect the identity of local communities. Despite this potential danger, thanks to the profitability of place-naming, one can expect that this route for naming stations will soon extend to transport rail systems other than Delhi Metro, like the private Rapid Metro in Gurgaon and the Noida Metro currently under construction. This development may mean that (re)naming may eventually become a principally commercial endeavor used to sponsor business and the private sector as a whole. The new names will gradually transform into linguistic items that have a promotional function and will be interpreted in juxtaposition with advertising slogans: their textual nature will therefore move closer to genres associated more with advertising than with toponymy.

Economics drives not only the incidence but also the extent of (re)naming. From a financial point of view, there is a difference between “(re)naming” and “semi-(re)naming,” because the former requires the metro authorities to “change the name from everywhere—signages, server systems for tokens and cards, maps, pamphlets and inside the train” (“Hindustantimes” 2016): an undertaking that costs millions of rupees. Semi-(re)naming, by comparison, simply involves adding to the previous name rather than complete substitution. Although both operations have been applied to the Delhi Metro network, semi-(re)naming seems to be

currently particularly popular and has progressively altered the names of various stations. Examples of semi-(re)named stations, based on data reported by journalists Goswami (2016a; 2016b) and Joshi (2016), are presented in the following table:

Line	Original Station Name	New station name
Blue Line	<i>Dwarka Sector 10</i>	<i>Punjab National Bank (PNB) / PNB Dwarka Sector 10</i>
Violet Line	<i>ITO</i>	<i>JK Tyre ITO</i>
Violet Line	<i>Jasola</i>	<i>Jasola Apollo</i>
Yellow Line	<i>MG Road</i>	<i>Syska LED MG Road</i>
Blue Line	<i>Noida Sector 18</i>	<i>Wave Sector 18 Noida</i>

Table 1-1. Examples of Delhi Metro naming and (re)renaming.

Despite the popularity of this type of advertising among businesses, the reactions from regular passengers are not always positive, as in the case of the semi-(re)naming of *Vishwavidyalaya*. The station serving the Delhi University district is now also called *Honda 2 Wheelers Vishwavidyalaya*. As journalist Mallica Joshi reports (2016): “angry posts on social media have been dominating students’ timelines [...] with many questioning the ‘takeover’ of public spaces.” This type of response is indicative of how public place-names may be perceived. The economic exploitation via re-naming in this case clashed with the collective idea of public services and places. In spite of such potential negative social reactions, the bid to win the naming rights for a Metro station has become a popular form of advertising for powerful brands and trademarks. However, as yet, the resulting proliferation of new names has not affected the central Delhi districts and has been limited to the peripheral or suburban zones since “Delhi’s policy does not allow DMRC to change names of stations for branding or simply put, revenue generation” (Goswami 2016). Thanks to this policy, the naming landscape of the city has been partially safeguarded, as protecting this area and the names attached to it is implicitly considered to be crucial to the Delhi sense of identity, the cohesion of society, and their collective culture.

5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have analyzed the intertwined themes of naming and (re)naming metro stations in the greater Delhi area to discuss the ideological potential of such operations and how they may affect