Eroding History and Creating Myths: The Name-Game in Urban Delhi

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Being named or naming something is a highly symbolic act, one that is recognized to have a great social significance. It has been a global tradition to name places, streets and spots after famous people, events or themes. But as cities evolve, the power centres controlling them transform and evolve, leading, as is common in India, to a continuous process of renaming and re-identifying, a process directly related to and reflecting the historical process of transformation in power regimes.
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Naming as a Social Process

To understand the significance of naming, one can take recourse to the phenomenological perspective of 'dwelling' (Tilley 1994:13) or 'Being in the world' as proposed by Heidegger (1962), as a starting point of analysis. The relationship between space and place, the former in an objective material sense of dimensions and location, and the latter in a phenomenological sense of 'lived space', has been the focus of much discourse already and need not be repeated. What has been an outcome is the realization that the physical characters of space are quite different from its cognitive properties that have historical, experiential, cultural and political derivatives that creates a different sense of place for the same space for different actors and is informed by temporal and political cum social processes.

The city is first and foremost a place of dwelling for its residents who experience it from various vantage points, depending upon who they are and where they are located in the social hierarchy and context. Here the perspective of Merleau-Ponty (2013) and others who focus on corporeality of experience enters into the discourse. The inhabitants of a city physically experience and therefore perceive it in a multitude of ways. Within the same intellectual framework, 'naming' is understood as a way in which 'dwelling' becomes meaningful. For every person, it is important to understand where she or he is located and name is the first key to such a location. Although there are several ways of understanding space (Tilley 1994: 15), what concerns us in this article is 'cognitive space', a space for understanding, of a lived relation to a meaningfulness of existence that is also intrinsically tied to one's identity and sense of being. In this cognition, naming is the primary component. It is by 'naming' that space becomes place, an entity that ceases to be a blank spot but becomes a recognized entity on a map, both physical and mental. Nameless spaces do not exist for us. 'The bestowing of names creates shared existential space out of a blank environment' (Tilley 1994: 18).

Naming a city and its constituent parts is first of all an act of 'creating' that city. One cannot have an unnamed city, and at the same time this name endows it with a character, a history and a significance. This last factor is open to interpretation in terms of what use one wishes to make of this name. What does a name signify? Is it just a way to locate something on the map? Does it evoke some political and historical association and most importantly what kind of identity does it bestow? Spaces are also not cognitively experienced as 'static', they are imbued with life through the narratives that are associated with it. Significant to the study of

every city is a narration of its origin, its history and its political ideological associations. As Tilley (1994: 33) says, 'narratives introduce temporality, making locales markers of individual and group experience'. Narratives are therefore intrinsically associated with identity. As we see globally, the names of the cities and its constituent parts reflect the construction and re-construction of its history. Changing names are an outcome of the contestation of the past with the present. As Guha (2009: 337) points out, we are all born into a shared past experience that we share with those who share the same space as us but they do not necessarily occupy the same place. The past always comes alive and becomes meaningful through its construction. National, ethnic and cultural identities are a result of collective sharing of narratives about one's past. For example, school children come to inhabit only that past that is written in their text books or what is narrated to them by the adults. A child not exposed to such narrations, formal or informal will probably grow up with no sense of history and consequently an identity that is differently formed from those who are enculturated into a particular narrative of the past.

In a simple society there may be greater uniformity in a collective past, but there too, tensions and contestations remain (Channa 2015). In a complex entity like a nation, itself a construct, there are many locations of identities supported by varieties of narratives, what Balibar (1991: 93) refers to as 'weft of a collective narrative', that build up images of a shared and past going into the building of the nation, recognized by a common name. Each generation may find that it may wish to contest the narrative handed down to it by the past generation and such contestations become quite radical in the situation of large-scale transformations to power, like being decolonized or changing from one regime to another with a different religious or political ideology.

Delhi, an ancient city with several layers, usually referred to as the seven cities of Delhi (Allen 2012: 7; Safvi 2019: 7) has seen several regime changes and gone through major political turmoil. It has been the capital of successive political powers from the ancient (mythical) Hindu kingdoms to the historical occupation by Islamic rulers of diverse origins and the colonization by the British to emerging finally as the capital of a democratic Indian republic. The post-colonial period too has undergone ideological transformations from a liberal socialist ideology to the present rule of a populist regime based on what is known as a 'Hindutva' ideology (Narayan 2021).

This article will provide a discursive space to describe how name changes reflect changing power structures, political ambitions and goals and also public participations in terms of agreements, indifference, rejection, acceptance and approvals that also reflect upon their stamp of legitimacy or its denial to the power structures that initiate these changes. At times, the very process of naming and renaming may create a political space for contestation and negotiation that is creative of power. At other times, past power regimes may be carried forward but with a changed significance in the new context. Names may remain only as sounds shorn of their referent that is long forgotten, or they may create new awareness by either a renewal of the past or its rejection and replacement.

Reconstructing the Past of Delhi
Delhi is a city with a long past. The oldest habitation site in Delhi is the Purana Qila or Old Fort that is also an archaeological excavation site, unearthing one of the oldest settlements of this

city. According to mythology, it traces its origin from Indraprastha, the city founded by the Pandavas on the shores of the river Yamuna as related in the epic Mahabharata (Vyasa 2009), centred on the central characters of the five Pandava Brothers. The archaeological site at the Old Fort also refers to the city of Indraprastha, and mentions the Pandavas and their wife Draupadi. The name Indraprastha is also carried by the oldest power station in Delhi as well as in recent times by the metro station in its vicinity. It is a name that signifies the time depth of the city and its multiple recurrence in various contexts indicates its popular appeal. At present it is also symbolic of the 'glorious Hindu past' of India, and of Delhi as well.

The historical location of the Hindu empires is mostly in Middle India and what is known as Bihar and Orissa in the present day. Delhi carries almost negligible Hindu names representing rulers, the exception being Prithviraj Road in New Delhi, commemorating the last Hindu emperor. Next to Delhi is the mythological site of Kurukshetra, a region that lay neglected for a long time, till it was rejuvenated during the resurgence of the Hindu nationalist emotions and is now a well-developed tourism spot close to the city of Delhi. This was the site of the epic Mahabharata war and at present houses a museum and other symbols of this war and the narrative supporting it. The site where present day Delhi is located witnessed several cities, depending on the caprice and fancy of various rulers, all Muslims, as the last Hindu to rule from North India was located in the twelfth century; a fact that has become a great source of embarrassment for the militant Hindus and those wishing to reconstruct Delhi's past. The struggle between the actuality of Delhi's Islamic past and the envisioned 'Hindu' future of India is reflected in Guha's observation that 'the project of making the past one's own is usually so charged with the tension of a struggle to wrench free on an inherited thraldom' (2009: 337).

The physical Delhi that exists today has grown up around the city built by the emperor Shahjahan in the seventeenth century that was called Shahjahanabad (Safvi 2019), and made the capital of the Moghul Empire by Shahjahan in 1648. Today this name has gone into obscurity as it is no longer mentioned in any official document, where it has been replaced simply by Delhi, separating it from the colonial city of New Delhi. The pin-codes of the city marks out Delhi from New Delhi, the latter now officially and globally recognized as the seat of power of the Indian nation. The residents of Delhi use the names Purani Dilli (or Old Delhi) for Shahjahanabad, some now using its pin-code, Delhi-6, as a synonym. Although most national level institutions, including the Parliament House and the President's residence, are located in New Delhi, there are some Delhi state level institutions such as the Delhi Secretariat that lies in Old Delhi. Even the British had their Vice-Regal estate in Old Delhi, near the Central Ridge (a part of the Aravalli Ranges that run through Delhi) that now houses Delhi University. The name Lutyen's Delhi also separates it out from the later extensions of New Delhi that took place after Delhi following the rapid urbanization and urban demographic expansion of the city. Most parts of Lutyen's Delhi were left as heritage structures till the present regime begun its redefinition of the power centre both symbolically and quite literally by redesigning and rebuilding most parts of what is known as the 'central vista', housing the power elite of Delhi who represent the Indian nation. But before coming to the present, let us take a look at the past.

Erasing the Islamic Presence

Various rulers had made Delhi their seat of power and each had built a city usually named after them. There is a degree of fuzziness in the exact record of these kingdoms. Safvi (2019: 7) mentions the Fifth city as that built by Sultan Feroz Shah Tughlaq who ruled from 1352-1388 C.E. The city does not exist but what does is now a cricket stadium known as Feroz Shak Kotla Grounds. As Allen (2012: 7) points out, most people of Delhi associate the name of Feroz Shah with the cricket stadium only. The shrine or Lat that exists in its vicinity has value only for those few who visit it for religious purposes. The earliest Islamic city was built by Qutub-ud-din Aibak in 1193 C.E. who is now only known by the victory tower he built, the Qutab Minar, a historical and tourist landmark of Delhi. The third city of Delhi was built at Siri by Sultan Ala-ud-din-Khilji. Today the people of Delhi know it as Siri Fort auditorium, a place to go to for an evening of entertainment. Very few will now associate it with a Muslim ruler or rule. The fourth and fifth are attributed to the eccentric ruler Muhammad bin Tughlaq who has been immortalized by the play Tughlaq written by the famed Indian playwright, Girish Karnad. It is through this play that has been staged even in the historical background of Feroz Shah Kotla that people of Delhi remember Tughlaq. These names are scattered over Delhi in bits and pieces but have lost their real significance as the narrative to keep them alive is mostly gone. It is interesting that many tourists visited the grave of Ala-ud-din Khilji, only after a popular Hindi film based on a mythical story about his association with a Rajput queen Padmavati was made. Suddenly the character became alive through the largely fictitious narrative of a popular film. These previous cities of Delhi have little significance for the general population of Delhi, for whom these names are just taken for granted relics from the past and represented by the numerous ruins and ancient monuments that dot Delhi. They are of interest only to the scholars and researchers and to some extent to the tourists. Only recently however, some hardcore Hindu ideologues are taking objection to the proliferation of Islamic names in Delhi, some even going to the extent of posting on social media that it seems that Delhi is the capital of Pakistan. However, for most citizens, such names, especially as they are shorn of their narratives and significance, are of no issue.

The real transformation of Delhi including its landscape and names came after the British established their sovereignty over India, by the suppression of what they called the Mutiny and Indians recognize as the First War of Independence (Chandra 1987). The sheer scale of the uprising that united Indians across India is seen as unprecedented in colonial history and led to mutiny by most Indian soldiers against their British officers. The rebels had reinstated the deposed Moghul king Bahadur Shah Zafar on the throne of Delhi for the brief period for which the uprising took place, from eleventh May to fourteenth September 1857, but long enough for the British to name the uprising largely as a Muslim rebellion and to take revenge on the Muslim population of Delhi. The local narrative tells us that a mass slaughter of residents of Delhi took place, of which the most horrifying testimony is the Khooni Darwaza, or the Gate of Blood, situated in the heart of the modern city, where it is said that all the male descendants of the last Mughal king were slaughtered and their bodies hung. This gate with the same name still stands in a central location of Old Delhi, now preserved as an archaeological monument next to another monument, the Delhi Gate. Delhi Gate is a prominent landmark of Delhi and is frequently referred to in terms of

directions and locations. The name Khooni Darwaza is much less used and even its narrative is largely obscured as it refers back to the role played by the Moghuls in the struggle for freedom.

After assuming power in 1857, when India became an official colony of the British Crown under Queen Victoria from being the fiefdom of a commercial East India or John Company (as it was popularly known), the British played a key role in transforming an Islamic and specifically Moghul city to one predominantly British and Hindu. What Safvi (2019: 372) calls 'a reign of white terror' effaced most relics of Moghul glory from Delhi. Historian Vasundhara Dalmia describes how the palace of the Moghul emperor was occupied by the British troops and turned into a barrack (2017: 22). The Qila-e-Mubarak (Safvi 2019: xxi) which Shahjahan had triumphantly entered is now known as the Red Fort simply because of the red stone façade, shorn of any reference to the glory of the emperor who built it. The main entrance to the fort, called Lahori Gate, was renamed by the British as Victoria Gate, a name that endured from 1857 to 1947, and, after India gained Independence, it went back to its original name and is till today known as Lahori Gate. Dalmia (2017: 22-26) has described at length the havoc and destruction caused by British troops as they blew apart most of the original Shahjahanabad, many fine buildings within and outside the fort were dynamited, including the beautiful palace of Jahan Ara the emperor's daughter. In its place a solid and plain Town Hall was built, that still stands with the same name. In front of it, Queen Victoria's statue was installed where she sat inspecting the new empire under her reign. A fountain was also installed that has given the name, Fountain to this location for perpetuity. The British cut through the Old City to make roads for their troop movement, and these were named Hamilton Road and Queen's Road. The former still retains its name and is a major commercial centre. Queen's way had retained its name till the sixties, when it was renamed as Janpath or the People's Path, in tune with India's socialist philosophy in those days. As described by Dalmia (2017), Safvi (2019) and others, Old Delhi was systematically converted to a Hindu area from a predominantly Muslim one when the British systematically excluded re-entry to the Muslims when they screened the people entering the city after it was totally evacuated in 1857. Hindu merchants were given high preference and allotted the *havelis*[1] (Varma and Shankar 1999) of the Muslims, who had been killed or driven out. Whatever remained of Muslim Delhi was almost totally eroded in 1947 when majority of Muslims left or were forced to leave the city after the creation of Pakistan on the basis of a religious divide.

The Congress ruled government immediately after de-colonization of the country, retained the historical significance of the Moghul Empire and its contribution to making of the city. Names of Mughal kings had adorned the most central and prestigious streets of New Delhi and a major street next to the central Delhi Gate is named after the last Mughal King, Bahadur Shah Zafar. The Old city had 13 gates in different directions that had been named when they were built and the names have not been changed. They include the Dilli (or Delhi) Gate in the heart of the city and major landmarks like Kashmiri Gate, Ajmeri, Lahori and Turkman Gate, the other gates have been demolished or have perished.

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[1] Havelis are a very specific type of residence originated in Moghul India and have an architecture that is suited both to the hot climate and the practice of seclusion of women.

The British occupied, but did not make Delhi their capital, that remained in Calcutta, a city they had built for themselves on the banks of the Hooghly River. Exasperated by the humid weather and mosquitoes, they shifted their capital to Delhi in 1911; only to leave it in 1947, when India gained independence.

So, we can mark several phases of Delhi's political history, an ancient Hindu past, that ended with the death of Prithvi Raj Chauhan in 1192 C.E., the last Hindu emperor of Northern India including Delhi, then a phase of Islamic rule of various dynasties, and then British rule for a relatively short period but with a powerful political presence, and finally the capital of a free democracy.

Post-Colonial Delhi

The Delhi of today has two major components, Old Delhi and New Delhi, marked by the two major railway stations named respectively Old Delhi Railway station and New Delhi Railway station. For the present article I am leaving out the later development of the NCR, or National Capital Region, that extends far beyond the confines of the core region of Delhi city. Old Delhi was earlier known more famously as Shahjahanabad, a name that is being deliberately forgotten as it refers to the founder Mughal emperor, Shah Jahan. In my younger days, we often used the name Shahjahanabad, but if you ask someone today, they will be ignorant of this very vital piece of information. It is overlooked by the Red Fort, the icon of Delhi, from whose ramparts the first flag hoisting of independent India was done by the first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

Slowly the identity of Red Fort is shifting from its Mughal origin to its link with India's independence and today it is seen as the symbol of Independence and its history is being retold giving more emphasis to the famous INA (Indian National Army) trial held there immediately after the Second World War. Briefly the trial was to court-marshal three Indian army officers who had deserted the British army to join the army of Subhash Chandra Bose the legendary freedom fighter known as Netaji. A battery of top Indian lawyers had fought the case, including Jawaharlal Nehru and it is one case where all Indian political parties had joined hands, including the Muslim League. The INA trial remains a symbol of patriotic fervour and the Independence struggle and in 2019, a museum dedicated to it has been opened in the Red Fort. It is to be noted that the present regime is projecting Bose as an alternate freedom fighting hero against the leaders of the National Congress like Nehru, as it is also well known that they never saw eye to eye; the former opting for the military path as against the non-violence of the Congress led by Gandhi. Another foreseen or unforeseen consequence of this museum and its projection as a symbol of nationalism also reconstructs Red Fort as a national monument rather than a symbol of the Mughal Empire and their seat of power. The political symbolism of Red Fort is critical to national identity so the manipulations are strategic to legitimise the largely Hindu identity of the central government.

Muslims have held high political and social position in India, which claims a secular Constitution posing no discrimination on the basis of religion and ethnicity, a stand that is increasingly becoming shaky with the surge in right-wing ideology. Although the nationalist Hindu movement originated in the nineteenth century (Walsh 2011: 167), it became manifest in 1992 with the demolition of the historic mosque Babri Masjid. It is likely that present generations

may slowly forget its link with Shahjahanabad, now referred to as Old Delhi (Purani Dilli). The old Delhi area is historically representative of the cultural religious pluralism of the city, having located within it, the iconic Sheesh Ganj Gurdwara of the Sikhs, the Lakshmi Narayan temple of the Hindus, a major Jain temple, a historic Christian church and the majestic Jama Masjid of the Muslims. But this cultural pluralism is being challenged by the Hindutva ideologists as not representative of the Hindu majority. Like all populist regimes they are opting for the popular voice as against the institutionalised political ideology (Laclau 1977: 150) creating a 'national-popular' movement. The Indian Constitution was visualized as an inclusive, humanist, non-partisan and socialist document by the Dalit visionary B.R. Ambedkar, but populist Hindutva ideology claims that it does not represent the people's voice, that it claims to be the 'Hindu' voice; but this so-called 'majority' came into power many years after the country became a democratic nation free of colonial rule with the formation of the BJP led government at the centre in 2014.

The Name-Game and its Implications

Most of New Delhi, also known as Lutyen's Delhi after the architect who planned it (Sir Edward Lutyen 1869-1944) had British names and symbols of the colonial empire strewn all over it. As a child I remember walking down Queen's way, looking at Queen Victoria presiding majestically over the Town Hall in central Chandni Chowk, just across the Red Fort, and seeing King George on his horse and Prince Albert at India Gate; going to the Irwin Hospital and Lady Harding hospital and shopping at Connaught Place. During the early part of the Congress regime, these symbols of colonial rule were the first to be dispensed with. Queen's way became Janpath (the people's way), the majestic statues of Queen Victoria, King George and others were dismantled from their pedestals and discarded into obscurity, Irwin hospital became Lok Nayak Jaiprakash Narain Hospital (LNJP for short), Lady Harding became Sucheta Kriplani, although the original name has been retained for the college, still known as Lady Harding Medical College. Connaught place abbreviated to CP, still retains its name although the central part, known as Connaught Circus has been renamed as Rajiv Gandhi Metro station, after the underground train station built there. Smatterings of colonial names remain, as Minto Road was renamed but the bridge remains as Minto Bridge.

The speedy erosion of colonial names was made easy as the British had departed from India completely and, also, they were identified as foreign rulers whose memory was uncomfortably associated with slavery and indignity. But Delhi presents an uncomfortable array of Islamic names, dotting every nook and corner, not erodible and which are associated with its history and with the people who belonged to its soil. For most residents, these names are not an issue and have been accepted as part of its multicultural and pluralistic character. Major streets here are also named after global leaders like Nelson Mandela and Benito Juarez. There is a road named after Copernicus in New Delhi. But with increasing stranglehold of right-wing politics and the global resurgence of extremism, efforts are now being made to erase some of these names, especially from prominent locations. Recently, a major road in Delhi was renamed Dr Abdul Kalam Road, from its earlier name, Aurangzeb Road, named after a great Mughal; on the plea that he was a tyrannical ruler, who persecuted the Hindus. The choice of a Muslim name was also strategic as

it belonged to a President who was selected by the right-wing BJP, and a person of impeccable credentials, a scientist who spearheaded India's successful missile programs and almost revered as a saint by most Indians. Many however viewed the elimination of the name of Aurangzeb as an erosion of history as he was one of the great Mughals, and roads in central Delhi had been named after them to recognize Delhi as a creation of the Mughal Empire. Apart from Aurangzeb, other roads are named after Babur, Humayun, Akbar and Shah-Jehan. There is also a central road named after Man Singh the Rajput prince who was brother-in-law to the great Akbar. Erasing these names is ironical, since present day Delhi still carries numerous signifiers of the influence of Islamic rulers and citizens that is impossible to erode by just removing some names. Shrines, mosques and ruins of Islamic structures proliferate in the city, many of which are preserved by the Archaeological Survey of India and several heritage preservation agencies. They are an integral part of the city's landscape and are literally inscribed in stone as forming the genesis and growth of the city. Yet the replacement of Islamic names by Hindu ones is a major project undertaken by the present regime.

How does this renaming affect the status and vision of a city? There are cities in the world like New York that hardly have any names, managing with an objective and efficient system of street and avenue names; but the significance of place names needs to be understood in the cultural context of Indian culture where names are significant in multiple ways the most important being the association of names with character and a spiritual significance. People are often named or renamed according to their ritual and spiritual status, like the renaming of religious persons, saints and monks as well as the ritual name giving ceremony of all infants. A name is supposed to add to the personality and aura of a person and even of a place. Names of various places in a city likewise are an important dimension of the representational and communicative aspect of a city; memorable events are often etched into the landscape through names, like Tees January Marg (30th January road) to mark the martyrdom of Mahatma Gandhi or Kurukshetra to mark the mythical battle of Kurukshetra in the Mahabharata. The significance of naming a street or place after a person means not just honouring the person but also to imbibe the personhood of the individual into that space. People believe that the character of a place is reflected in its name and is an important aspect of its visibility and significance. In this sense names are also both communicative and reflective of power. Whenever a political party is in power, one of its major projects is to have as many important places named after its leaders as possible.

When the BJP came to power, many years after the country became Independent from colonial rule, it found that most important sites such as airports and major places and institutions were already named after the Congress leaders. It would not be possible, politically to dismantle those names, which mostly represented the freedom struggle and the nation building leaders, like Mahatma Gandhi, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Indira Gandhi and Rajeev Gandhi among others. The congress had already replaced most of the British names, so the best that BJP could do was to replace some of the Islamic names; for example, Feroz Shah Kotla, the iconic cricket grounds of Delhi, was renamed after Arun Jaitely, a BJP stalwart but a minor leader at the national level. This renaming was one of the most criticised one as Feroz Shah Kotla is also a Sufi shrine and

represents a piece of Delhi's history. At least one former cricket player demanded that his name be removed from the stall named after him within the stadium.

Not only politics but religion too has left its mark etched deeply into the landscape of Delhi; not only Hinduism and Islam but Christianity and Sikhism have had a major role in Delhi's past. But what is most significant about Delhi is the dotting of its nooks and corners by the Sufi shrines, which draw ardent followers from among both Hindus and Muslims. Feroz Shah Kotla was one among them, and its renaming drew much flak. However, saints like Nizamuddin have a bridge as well as a railway station named after them. Nizamuddin Aulia remains a revered sacred entity of Delhi. The prestigious and highly visible Pragati Maidan, meaning quite literally, the Arena of Progress, and the site of major exhibitions, especially the India Trade Fair and the International Book Fair that are major international events and mark the social and cultural calendar of Delhi, has tucked away in one of its corners a Sufi shrine known as Matka Pir (Srivastava 2009: 106).

The right-wing regime is also moving away from the more liberal, globalized world-view of the post-colonial leaders of the Indian National Congress to a more parochial and essentialized point of view by trying to put even their minor leadership on a pedestal, while ignoring more cosmopolitan ones. Several international names grace the streets of Delhi reflecting the global view as well as ideology of social justice and liberal outlook of the earlier leaders, but there is a tendency to look inwards and engagement in self-projection by the present regime that has the feeling that it lost the race of time, having come to power only in the last few years.

Place names of Delhi reflect changing power regimes, political climates as well as a constructed history that is reflective of these changes. At some point immediately after Independence, the history of Delhi was reconstructed keeping in mind its colonial and Islamic past. Place names reflected the splendour of the Moghul era, as well as the trauma of the colonial regime. Since the British were active architects of New Delhi, they too left their mark on its physical and symbolic architecture, most of which have come tumbling down within a few decades of Independent India wishing to erase its colonial past. The secular and liberal Congress regime that had ruled India continuously from 1947 to 1977 (and then from 1980 to 2014 with only small intermittent falls from power) had an international outlook, as it included names like Nelson Mandela, Benito Juarez in its repertoire and the present regime, having come to power quite late in the day, is trying to squeeze in its own political presence. They are reconstructing a large part of Delhi in the name of modernization, but in the process getting rid of many of the architectural heritage of the past, that also represented the past power holders. The newly built structures also provide scope for a new spate of name giving.

A very important dimension of naming is in the strategic importance and symbolic signification of the site being named, for example the city airport is its most iconic international identity and its name carries a weight that is above most others, and like-wise the location of the state authority is another powerful symbol of national identity. The former is named after Indira Gandhi, one of the most powerful leaders of modern India also representing the longest ruling political party of India, the Congress; the highest symbol of state authority resides in the President's house or Rashtrapati Bhawan, simply named only by its status. On the other hand,

names languish in forgotten lanes and by-lanes, or obscure monuments that no one pays heed to. The significance and narratives of these names are lost and they are now absorbed into the narrative of new markers, mostly oriented to goods and markets or simply as locations on the GPS as people drive through in their vehicles.

Does the City Live Only Through its Name?

Delhi is a city with an ancient heritage and includes both myth and history in its heritage. Forgotten names do not always mean forgotten past, as it is also a city with a living heritage. Both British and Islamic cultural elements thrive in the pastry shops and local bakeries, the restaurants famous for serving Mughal cuisine and most importantly the mixed celebrations of festivals and rituals of multiple sources but which cause equal excitement and participation.

Political regimes cannot displace the sense of heritage that people carry in their own praxis. The people who throng the night markets at Meena Bazar during the days of the Muslim Ramzan include people from all religions and all walks of life who enjoy the lights and specialized cuisine. They include devout Muslims, young corporates who enjoy the thrill of a novel experience and the good food, the Hindus who are looking out for that delectable 'kabab' that only Muslims are known to make, the young Christians who likewise enjoy the experience of unique night life. Similarly, when it is time of Holi, the Hindu festival of colours and revelry, everyone throngs the streets and community centres throwing colours, singing and dancing. The entire city wears a festive look at Christmas vying with any western city of a majority Christian country. For many people driving by in their vehicles in the morning, it is the getting to work that is important and they do not care if they are passing a Hindu, Indian or Western name at that red light crossing. Some names have long transcended their original narratives and created new ones with changing times. For example, Khan Market, in the heart of New Delhi is known as the place for the jet setting crowd for buying fashionable clothes and eating at exotic food joints. In Delhi, the 'Khan Market crowd' now denotes a social class and has nothing to do with the person in whose name the market has been named, in fact most people have no information about it. Similarly, Gaffar market is a place where one goes to get one's mobile phone repaired or to buy a part for one's car. No one cares if it had been named after a Gandhian freedom fighter.

These new narratives, about what market is good for what goods, for example, creates new narratives that restructure that space into a new kind of place. As Tilley (1994: 32) points out, 'In relation to the past and written from the standpoint of the present, narrative structures play a similar role to metaphor—they describe the world in fresh ways, bringing new meanings and new senses'. Most of the city now reflects the metanarrative of the capitalist market place, transcending the earlier meanings inscribed in historical events and personalities. The market has created its own narrative that is engulfing large parts of the city indicative of the future of urban life. Urbanism has also introduced a large 'floating' population and migrants who may enter the city at a point of time that does not involve them emotionally in its history, like a long-time resident. Many of them are ignorant and disinterested in the narratives of the past and have no sentimental memories with names and places of the city. For them, the commercial and pragmatic narratives are more salient than the political/historical ones. Names may be just

'names' or have a more generalized significance. Therefore, as mentioned in the beginning of this article, responses and emotions to signifiers are situation specific and variable yet power regimes look for larger audiences and populist regimes even more so for seeking a legitimacy that is rooted in empiricism or assessing the majority opinion than in abstraction of official ideology (Pardo and Prato 2019: 15). The name game therefore may go on as regimes seek legitimacy in popular opinion transcending the legal and the official.

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