



## ‘India, that is Bharat...’: One Country, Two Names

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# 'India, that is Bharat...': One Country, Two Names

Catherine Clémentin-Ojha

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## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

- 1 In *The Discovery of India*, a book that he composed in the Ahmednagar Fort during his years of captivity (1942-1946) and published in 1946, Jawaharlal Nehru (1946: 38-39) wrote:

Often, as I wandered from meeting to meeting, I spoke to my audiences of this India of ours, of Hindustan and of Bharata, the old Sanskrit name derived from the mythical founders of the race.<sup>2</sup>

- 2 When *The Discovery of India* was published, these names, Hindustan, Bharat (also Bharata), India, coexisted in the subcontinent. Of constant usage also was Hind, as in 'Jai Hind' (Victory to Hind), the battle-cry that Nehru, like several other political leaders, liked to proclaim at the end of his speeches.<sup>3</sup> To capture these various meanings today is not an easy task. It entails being aware of the simple and yet too often forgotten fact that words have a history of their own; they do not maintain the same signification throughout time. The terms with which we name reality participate in the construction of reality, in the perception that we have and give of it.
- 3 Take the name India. Since its ancient use by Greek (*Indikê*) and Latin (*India*) authors, it has been applied to a variety of territories as, for example, Yule and Burnell remind us in their famous *Hobson-Jobson*.<sup>4</sup> Or take the word Hindustan, which was already used in Persia in the third century B.C. to refer to the land lying beyond the Indus River.<sup>5</sup> Its definition too has always been accompanied by some confusion. A comparison of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century British maps shows that the size and political designation of the territory corresponding to Hindustan changed over time along with historical developments (Barrow 2011). It was associated with the land of the Moghuls as, for example, in *The History of Hindostan* by Alexander Dow (1792) or in the *Memoir of a Map of Hindoostan or the*

*Mogul Empire* (1793) by Rennell.<sup>6</sup> Did it then refer only to North India (the South being called Deccan) or was it equivalent to the whole subcontinent as in the maps of the British Empire by the 1840s?<sup>7</sup> And then in the compound of Hindustan the word 'Hindu' itself raised a difficulty of interpretation. It too had changed as everything changed around it. From being a geographic and ethnic term, it became a religious term, as in the late nineteenth century slogan 'Hindi, Hindu, Hindustan' that linked national identity to one language, one religious denomination and one territory or, as we will see later, in the sanskritized *Hindusthāna* (the Persian *-stān* and the sanskrit *-sthāna* both mean 'place') of the radical political activist Vinayak Damodar Savarkar's *Hindutva*, published in 1923, which referred to the land of the Hindus, to a people therefore, and not to a river.<sup>8</sup>

- 4 At the time of independence then, the names Bharat, India, Al-Hind and Hindustan coexisted to designate the Indian subcontinent. Those who, like Nehru, used them side by side understood their differences and knew how to interpret their contrasting usages, even if, given the complicated history of each, they did not agree on the nature of their differences. What they all agreed upon was that their meaning and usage were context—and language—sensitive.
- 5 In 1950, four years after the publication of Nehru's *Discovery of India*, the drafters of the Constitution of the larger of the two successor states of British India decided how the country should be known. In the opening article of the Constitution of India they wrote: 'India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States'.<sup>9</sup> Two names: one, India, associated with the foreigners whose rule was coming to an end; the other, Bharat (skt. *bhārata*, also *bhāratavarṣa*), perceived as native because it was found in ancient Sanskrit literature. Henceforward no other name besides these two was to be used legally. In this juridico-political conception, India and Bharat were to be interchangeable terms.<sup>10</sup>
- 6 What are we to make of the *equation* of Bharat and India in the Constitution? How did such a double-name formula come about? This is the main question dealt with here. My argument is that the Constitutional assembly's decision should be understood as the outcome of a long historical process with deep cultural roots. I will also make the point, though more briefly, that this process did not stop with the promulgation of the Constitution.
- 7 Critical to an enquiry of how Bharat could be equated with India at all, I contend, are preexisting definitions of Bharat, and also of Hindustan, found in different textual sources. I present some of them in the first part of the paper, focusing more particularly on the definition of *Bhārata* given by the *Purāṇas*. Then I consider the shift from the Puranic *Bhārata* to the colonial Bharat, when the old toponym became the 'indigenous' name for a budding nation exposed to the imported political and geographical conceptions of (British) India. I also briefly examine the pre-independence destiny of the word Hindustan. In the next part of the paper I analyze the arguments exchanged by the members of the Constitutional assembly when they adopted and discussed the double naming of the new nation. For this section I rely on the official recordings of the debates (in English) found on a website maintained by the Indian government.<sup>11</sup> Finally I thought it interesting to give a sample of contemporary reactions on the basis of information published in the printed press and on the internet. These indicate that to this day the Constitutional Assembly's decision to give their country two names remains a baffling subject for Indian citizens.

## ***Bhārata* is a native name, but a native name for what?**

- 8 *Bhārata* is indeed an old name. In the *Purāṇas* and other Sanskrit texts of the first centuries of the Christian era, it refers to the supraregional and subcontinental territory where the Brahmanical system of society prevails. It seems to have absorbed the older and spatially narrower toponym *Āryāvarta* (the land of the *Āryas*) described in the Laws of Manu.<sup>12</sup> We have hardly any historical evidence of the way in which the name *Bhārata* was used in actual life, in what circumstances and by whom. We are more assured in our knowledge of its religious and cultural imagination since we can rely on textual sources. We also have reasons to believe that the traditional depiction of *Bhārata* was transmitted over many generations down to the colonial period thanks to the fact that the recitation of the *Purāṇas* was part of the spiritual education sponsored by temples, and not only for the literate circles, since the *Purāṇas* were not meant to be their exclusive prerogative.
- 9 The main feature of Puranic *Bhārata* is its insularity. This insularity has two dimensions: one is spatial, the other is social. The territory of *Bhārata* is situated on *Jambudvīpa* or the ‘apple-tree island’ (*Jambosaeugenia*). Annular in its form, the island of *Jambudvīpa* is itself surrounded by six other similarly annular-shaped continents that are concentrically organized around Mount Meru, the *axis mundi* situated just beneath the polar star.<sup>13</sup> *Bhārata* is said to be situated between the sea in the south and the ‘Abode of snow’ (*himālaya*) in the north (see for example *Viṣṇupurāṇa* 2. 3.1-2).<sup>14</sup> Its shape cannot be clearly determined for it varies from text to text. It is described as a half-moon, a triangle, a trapezoid, or a bended bow, as in *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa*, 57.59, for example (Ali 1966: 109). In this *Purāṇa*, *Bhārata* is said to be surrounded by the ocean on the east, west and south and by the Himalaya (*himavant*) in the north, a description evoking a familiar shape. However geography is not the main concern here: the text also compares *Bhārata* to a tortoise floating on water and looking towards the east.<sup>15</sup> Though in the *Purāṇas* *Bhārata* is not per se an island but a section of the island of *Jambudvīpa*, it is nevertheless fairly isolated, being cut off from the main land by a high mountain and surrounded by seas. In some other ancient Indian texts it is coextensive to *Jambudvīpa*, as in the inscriptions of King Ashoka, and in the Buddhist (and Jain) literature.<sup>16</sup>
- 10 From the spatial perspective, *Bhārata* is thus a naturally bounded territory. It is also a territory on which a specific social order prevails. As a socialized territory it shelters an organization of time and modes of living whose specificities are essentially expressed in soteriological terms. We get some idea of what *Bhārata* represents by examining the notions with which it is correlated. It is on its territory alone, not in the other regions of the world, that time is properly divided into cosmic ages (*yuga*), that humans who celebrate rites (*karman*) correctly can expect appropriate consequences: there and there only can they reap the fruits of acts (also *karman*) committed in previous births; there and there only can they strive to obtain the permanent release from transmigration (*samsāra*), which entails the cessation of *karman*. Such considerations are summarized in the well-known classical characterization of *Bhārata* as the ‘land of works’ (*karmabhūmi*), as for example in the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*.<sup>17</sup>
- 11 In Brahmanical literature *Bhārata* is moreover associated with an internal principle of unity. Its naturally bounded territory is unified by a network of pilgrimage sites (*tīrtha*). It is organized around some key natural sites found within it. Its mountains and rivers in

particular are made objects of worship. Therefore one also finds the idea that the land of *Bhārata* itself is sacred.<sup>18</sup>

- 12 *Bhārata* then refers to a spatially delimited social order, but not to a politically organized entity.<sup>19</sup> In this respect, it differs from Hindustan, at least since Moghul times, and from (British) India, two toponyms correlated with political regimes. Nobody puts it better than P.V. Kane. In the third volume of his opus magnum the *History of the Dharmasāstra* (which was also published in 1946, like Nehru's *Discovery of India*), after reviewing the definitions of *Bhārata* in their original Sanskrit, this well-known historian of Hindu codes of law (Kane 1973: 134, 137) observed:

The *Viṣṇu* (II, 3, 2), *Brāhma*, *Mārkaṇḍeya* (55, 21-22) and other purāṇas proudly assert that Bharatavarṣa is the land of action (*karmabhūmi*). This is patriotism of a sort but not of the kind we see in western countries. Bharatavarṣa itself has comprised numerous countries from the most ancient times. [...] There was no doubt a great emotional regard for Bharatavarṣa or Āryāvarta as a unity for many centuries among all writers from a religious point of view, though not from a political standpoint. Therefore one element of modern nationhood viz. being under the same government was wanting.

- 13 And yet... Kane introduces a caveat: 'But it must be noted that from very ancient times there was always the aspiration among great kings and the people to bring the whole of Bharatavarṣa 'under one umbrella' (Kane 1973: 137).
- 14 And yet... *Bhārata* is said to be named after King Bharata, one of the 'mythical founders of the race' mentioned by Nehru. And yet...the king who conquers the whole of *Bhārata* is styled *samrāt*, universal sovereign.<sup>20</sup> Such conceptions contrast with most descriptions of *Bhārata* as having natural borders—borders of the sort not likely to move under the control of humans. They do raise the question of the immutability of its limits. Moreover, one important law code at least mentions the spatial expansion through conquest of *Āryāvarta*, the older and smaller Brahmanical territory. The often quoted 9<sup>th</sup> century commentary on Manu by Medhatithi (2.23) says:

If a kṣatriya king of excellent conduct were to conquer the Mlecchas, establish the system of four varṇas (in the Mleccha country) and assign to Mlecchas a position similar to that of cāṇḍālas in Āryāvarta, even that (Mleccha country) would be fit for the performance of sacrifice, since the earth itself is not impure, but becomes impure through contact (of impure persons or things).<sup>21</sup>

- 15 There is undoubtedly here an idea that the size of the Brahmanical territory can expand as more and more people are integrated into its settled social order and made to accept its norms of conduct. But besides telling us that the world is divided between the pure *Ārya* and the impure *Mleccha* and that the earth is not per se impure (two key Brahmanical representations), it is open to debate whether this commentary on Manu offers sufficient evidence for the historian to explain the actual extension of the hierarchical social system of the *varṇāśramadharmā* in political terms.<sup>22</sup> The notion of *samrāt* offers another ground for debate depending on its translation and interpretation. In its original context, it refers to a universal sovereign. A *samrāt* is the ideal 'Hindu' king who maintains the cosmic order (*dharma*), and whose ambition is to take the whole (Hindu) world under his unique umbrella so that *dharma* may prevail. In royal eulogies this goal is rhetorically claimed to have been achieved.<sup>23</sup> But *in practice* *Bhārata* was never politically unified by any known *samrāt*. It was never co-terminus with a political regime.

24

- 16 'Bhārata', then, as found in the Brahmanical tradition, belongs to a cosmological discourse that inscribes human activity within a grand spatio-temporal frame (*dvīpa, yuga*). It is associated with a vision of human beings, of their condition and experience and of their interpersonal relationships within a given social structure. Outside its territory non-order prevails. Nowhere does it refer to a country in the modern sense.

## **Bhārata becomes India's ancient name**

- 17 *Bhārata* is a discourse on space, but a discourse that does not allow a visual representation of that space. It is not possible, on the basis of that discourse, to draw a map in the modern sense of the word. To say that *Bhārata* denotes all regions comprised between the sea and the mountain range of the Himalaya is not to describe the shape of India as we know it from modern maps. The maps that associate India with a given space, that is to say with a precisely bounded space, are so familiar to us that we might easily forget that they were not introduced to the educated Indian public before the 1870s. By then, moreover, what became represented was not only a geographical space but also a *political* space enclosed in boundaries or administrative units drawn by the colonial power.<sup>25</sup> This new national space was inseparable from the equally new idea of 'country'.<sup>26</sup>
- 18 Manu Goswami has written eloquently on the conditions that allowed the emergence of new ways of viewing Indian past and has shown how the old Puranic conception of *Bhārata* acquired a new meaning for the Hindu intelligentsia during the colonial period.<sup>27</sup> Whereas *Bhārata* was conceived as a social order, a space where specific social relations and shared notions of a moral order prevailed, (British) India referred to a political order, to a bounded territory placed under the control of a single centralized power structure and an authoritarian system of governance. By the mid-nineteenth century what educated Hindus called 'Bharat' was the territory mapped and organized by the British under the name 'India'.
- 19 The old and native name *Bhārata* became a workable concept for the national cause despite the forcefulness with which the British conception of 'India'—and all it entailed in terms of spatial and political unity—was propagated and imposed. Now the reason why it retained its prestige for the educated Hindus is not only to be found in the uninterrupted transmission of the Puranic conception within their class. It is also due to the fact that from the mid-nineteenth century Orientalists gave '*Bhārata*' a very special place in their discourse. Thus in the first volume of his *Original Sanskrit Texts on the Origin and History of the People of India* published in 1858, John Muir, while describing the geographical conceptions of the Purāṇas, equated *Bhāratavarṣa* with India as a matter of course; needless to add that he made no attempt to identify the other equally fabulous *varṣas* of *Jambudvīpā* with any region of the world as we know it.<sup>28</sup>
- 20 To project *Bhārata* as the 'ancient name' of India was to transform it into a political conception. Muir was quite aware of the implications if one is to judge by what he wrote in 1860 in the preface of the second volume of *Original Sanskrit Texts*:

My primary object in this volume, as in its predecessor, has been to produce a work which may assist the researches of those Hindus who desire to investigate critically the origin and history of their nation, and of their national literature, religion, and institutions; and may facilitate the operations of those European teachers whose business it is to communicate to the Hindus the results of modern inquiry on the various subjects here examined. (Muir [1860], 1890: vii).

- 21 In 1893, the German Orientalist Gustav Oppert went one step further than Muir when he declared that *Bhāratavarṣa* was the only relevant *national designation* for India:

I prefer as India's name the designation Bharatavarsa, or land of the Bharatas. [...] Such a name will bridge over the great social chasms, which divide at present the Hindus, and perhaps bring together in union the two great antagonistic sections of the original inhabitants, which since the earliest times of antiquity have lived estranged from each other [*i.e.* what he calls further 'Aryanised and non-Aryan Indian clans']. [...] by accepting such a time-honoured and honourable name as their national designation, a great step towards national unity would be taken in India (Oppert 1893: 621-23).

- 22 *Bhārata* was now fully prepared to embark on a career on the political stage, as politics had become 'the unavoidable terrain on which Indians would have to learn to act.'<sup>29</sup> In *The Soul of India* published in 1911, Bipin Chandra Pal (1858-1932) proclaimed it to be the only real indigenous name for India. The Bengali nationalist and social reformer, well-known for the part he had taken in the organization of the *swadeshi* movement after the Partition of Bengal, wrote (2010 [1911]: 65):

We never called her either India or Hindoostan. We knew her of old by quite a different name (p. 57). [...] The fact of the matter really is, that as long as you look upon our country as 'India or the Land of the Indus'—you will get no closer and truer view than the foreign officials and students have been able to do (p. 62). [...] Our own name was, and is still today, among the Aryan population of the country, Bharatvarsha.

- 23 In this language of 'you' and 'we', whereas 'you' refers to a young foreigner desirous to understand India with whom Bipin Chandra Pal is supposedly corresponding (*The Soul of India* is in the form of four letters), 'we', which includes the author himself, is associated with 'Ārya'. At a time when the definition of one's nation was woven into the self-definition of Indian, *Ārya* appears to have been the best 'non-foreign' word at Bipin Chandra Pal's disposal. The ethnonym was popular both with the representatives of the orthodox Hindu set-up—against whom Bipin Chandra Pal stood squarely, and with the *Āryasamāja*, the religious organization that claimed India as the natural homeland of the *Āryas*—whose views he did not espouse either. Like many Hindu reformists of his days, he combined nationalism with religious symbolism taken from Hinduism with outright rejection of basic aspects of that tradition.

## ***Bhārata? Hindustān? Hindusthāna?***

- 24 Supported from all sides as it was, then, not only had the old name *Bhārata* not fallen into oblivion, but it had been invested with a new meaning and was ready to serve the emerging country. But Hindustan remained a worthy candidate for the same cause, as, among other reasons, it could claim a political career that was associated with the Moghul Empire and therefore predated the colonial period.<sup>30</sup> It is noteworthy that although Bipin Chandra Pal stigmatized Hindustan as 'foreign', he was keen to draw the attention of his young correspondent to the contribution of the Moghuls to the development of an Indian national consciousness. For unlike Puranic *Bhārata*, Hindustan had been associated with political sovereignty and administrative centralization, two dimensions, he stressed, that were 'foreign to the genius of the Aryan people of India' (Pal 2010 [1911]: 67):

The unity of India was [...] neither racial nor religious, nor political nor administrative. It was a peculiar type of unity, which may be best described as cultural (p. 69) [...] at a very early period of our history we had fully realized a very deep, though complex, kind of organic unity at the back of all the apparent diversities and multiplicities of our land and people. (p. 87) [...] The Moslem rulers of India came into these invaluable inheritances of the Hindus. (p. 89) [...] To the old community of socio-religious life and ideals the Mahomedans now added new elements of administrative and political unity. (p. 90) [...] all irrespective of castes or community, became equally subject to certain laws and obligations, known only to Islam. (p. 90) [...] Thus we had, under the Moguls [sic], a new and more united, a more organic, though not yet fully organized, national life and consciousness than we had before. The British came to this India; and not to an unorganized, unconscious, and undeveloped chaos, having simply a geographical entity. And in view of this, it is unpardonable ignorance to say that [...] the Indians have always been and still are a chaotic congregation of many peoples, an incoherent and heterogenous collection of tribes and races, families and castes, but not in any sense a nation.’ (p. 93)

- 25 It was during Moghul rule rather than during British rule, at a time when India was called Hindustan, that political unity had been achieved and added to the already existing cultural unity of *Bhārata*, allowing Indians to develop a complete sense of belonging together, irrespective of their religions.
- 26 In 1904 when he penned his famous patriotic poem in Urdu *Hamārā deśa*, ‘Our country’, Mohammad Iqbal (1877-1938) also associated Hindustan with Indians at large and with a composite religious culture:

*Sare jahām se acchā Hindustām hamārā*  
*Ham bulbulēm haiṃ us kī, yī gulistām hamārā [...]*  
*Mazhab nahīṃ sikhātā āpas meṃ bair rakhnā*  
*Hindī haiṃ ham, vatan hai Hindūstān hamārā*  
 The best in the whole world is our Hindustan  
 We are his robin, he is our rose-garden [...]  
 Religion does not teach mutual hatred  
 We are Hindī, Hindustān is our native country<sup>31</sup>

- 27 The sense of belonging to a country (*vaṭan*) here overrides other loyalties. It is with this nationalist understanding of Hindustan that Iqbal’s song, which became immediately popular in anti-British rallies, was solemnly chanted on 15 August 1947, the day of the proclamation of India’s independence, along with *Jana Gana Mana*, composed by Rabindranath Tagore.<sup>32</sup> Iqbal’s song is still widely sung in India today.
- 28 The attempt by Savarkar to hinduize the name Hindustan was another crucial moment in the naming of the budding nation.<sup>33</sup> Whereas Iqbal called the inhabitants of *Hindustān* by the old appellation *Hindī*, which signifies ‘Indian’ in the ethno-geographical sense,<sup>34</sup> Savarkar called them Hindus, and reserved the term only for those Indians who considered Bharat both as their Holy land (*puṇyabhūmi*) and as their fatherland (*patṛbhūmi*), by which he meant the Hindus, Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs but not the Muslims and Christians.<sup>35</sup> It is not, therefore, that Savarkar did not think of *Bhārata* as a suited designation for the country of his dreams. But he found the name *Sindhusthāna* (or *Hindusthāna*, given the phonetic evolution) more ‘authentic’, and he also preferred it to *Āryāvarta*, a notion that he found too ‘parochial and narrow-minded’.<sup>36</sup> It was more authentic, he argued, because Hindusthan was not, as was commonly held, a foreign term, but a purely Sanskrit term, just like Hindu and Sindhu.<sup>37</sup> Hindu was the name by which the Hindus had always referred to themselves, Sindhu the name they had given to the

Indus River and Hindusthan, the name they had given to their nation. Thus Savarkar constructed the genealogy of Hindus, demonstrating the autochthony of the three terms with due etymological and phonetic explanations.<sup>38</sup> In his conception, the key element was Sindhu: the Indus River was made 'the vital spinal cord that connects the remotest past to the remotest future'.<sup>39</sup> To territorialize Hindu identity, Savarkar needed to associate the territory with the word Sindhu even when he called that territory Bharat. Under his pen Bharat becomes the land delimited by the Indus River (*sindhu*) and by the sea (also *sindhu* in Sanskrit), an unheard of definition in Brahmanical literature.

- 29 With Hindusthan, Savarkar produced an exclusive Hindu vision of India. This vision that stressed religious differences was to remain influential in the Hindu nationalist milieu and beyond. It also left its mark on those Sikhs who from the 1940s onwards had begun visualizing the Panjab as their natural homeland and who were heard demanding in the early 1950s: 'the Hindus got Hindustan, the Muslims got Pakistan, what did the Sikhs get?'

40

## The Constitutional debates on the naming of the nation

- 30 On 14 August 1947 at midnight, India became independent. Two weeks later, on 29 August 1947, the Constituent Assembly, that had been meeting since December 1946, set up a Drafting Committee under the Chairmanship of B.R. Ambedkar. From February 1948 to November 1949, the members of the Constituent Assembly examined the draft, moving and discussing in the process almost 2,500 amendments.<sup>41</sup> On 26 November 1949, they finally adopted the Constitution of India and signed it on 24 January 1950. On 26 January 1950, the Constitution of India officially came into force, and the Constituent Assembly became the Provisional Parliament of India until the first general elections of 1952.
- 31 As we know, the Constitution was drafted under the extremely difficult circumstances of the immediate post-partition period, just two years after horrendous chaos and bloodshed. It was a time, then, when the unity and stability of the new born country were in doubt. Was it because it was linked to its identity or for another reason that the question of its naming is found to have come relatively late in the long process of the adoption of the Constitution? Whatever the case, the section 'Name and territory of the Union' was examined only on 17 September 1949. The very touchy nature of its first article was immediately perceptible. It read: 'India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States'. A division arose among the delegates between those who, like B.R. Ambedkar, wanted it to be adopted within the half an hour that was left for the meeting of the day and those who wished that it be discussed at length the next day. At the risk of taxing the patience of the main author of the Draft Constitution, there followed the next day a thorough examination of the implications of the first article. It bore on two points: 1) the relationship between the two words 'India' and 'Bharat', 2) the political and administrative implications of the terms 'Union' and 'States'. The second point was by far the most hotly debated one (not only during that particular session but throughout the long Constitutional proceedings). Here I will deal only with the arguments exchanged about the first point. As we can expect, they illustrated contrasting visions of the budding nation.<sup>42</sup>

32 The main speakers (recorded) were Seth Govind Das ('C.P. [Central Province]' & Berar: General) and Kamalapati Tripathi, two Congress leaders, Shri Ram Sahai ('representing Madhya Bharat'), Hargovind Pant ('United Provinces'), and Hari Vishnu Kamath, a leader of the All India Forward Block, a party then situated to the left of the Congress Party. Introducing the first amendment, P.V. Kamath proposed that the sentence 'India, that is Bharat shall be a Union of States' be replaced by 'Bharat, or, in the English language, India, shall, be and such'.<sup>43</sup> He explained that he had been inspired by the Constitution of 'the Irish Free State' (1937), Article 4 of which read: 'The name of the State is Eire, or, in the English language, Ireland.' A while later, Seth Govind Das proposed: 'Bharat known as India also in foreign countries...'. He was followed by Kamalapati Tripathi who wanted 'Bharat, that is India' (instead of 'India, that is Bharat'), and by Hargovind Pant according to whom the people 'of the Northern part of India' that he represented 'wanted Bharatvarsha and nothing else'.<sup>44</sup> None of these proposals were accepted by the Assembly. The above named delegates nonetheless made their point, which was to dwell at length on their 'satisfaction' that the word Bharat had been at all retained by the drafters. As Ram Sahai observed: it had 'been felt that this name may lead to some difficulties' and it was therefore 'a matter for pleasure that we are going to accept the name Bharat *without any opposition* [emphasis added by the speaker]'.

33 The 'opposition', it is safe to guess, would have been to a vision of the new India that could not be shared by most delegates of the Constitutional Assembly because it clashed with their understanding of what the emerging secular state ought to be. Kamalapati Tripathi's declaration of 'satisfaction' left little doubt that Bharata could indeed be associated with a conception of the nation that was potentially divisive:

When a country is in bondage, it loses its soul. During its slavery for one thousand years, our country too lost its everything. We lost our culture, we lost our history, we lost our prestige, we lost our humanity, we lost our self-respect, we lost our soul and indeed we lost our form and name. Today after remaining in bondage for a thousand years, this free country will regain its name and we do hope that after regaining its lost name it will regain its inner consciousness and external form and will begin to act under the inspiration of its soul which had been so far in a sort of sleep. It will indeed regain its prestige in the world.

34 This one-sided history, containing a distinctly anti-Muslim tone, came from an important North Indian leader of the Indian National Congress: a reminder of the fact that this party was not of one mind regarding India's past and future.<sup>45</sup> K. Tripathi's vision of the new India did demonstrate the presence of near-communalist concerns. Such an understanding of Bharat was likely to be seen as undermining national unity. What seems to have been at work with the other delegates equally keen on the name Bharat was the Hindu rhetoric of the more traditionalist sort. See, for example, the statement of Seth Govind Das, a Congress fellow of Kamalapati Tripathi. The name Bharat, he said, was 'befitting our history and our culture', because it was found in the old Hindu literature, whereas the 'word India does not occur in our ancient books', adding, to stress his point: 'We fought the battle of freedom under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi by raising the slogan of 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai'.' A statement like that could be said to be parochial perhaps, but was it necessarily divisive or potentially detrimental to the interests of non-Hindus? In any case, it was not completely without political acumen:

We should indeed give such a name to our country as may be befitting our history and our culture. It is a matter of great pleasure that we are today naming our country as Bharat. I said many a time before too that if we do not arrive at correct

decisions in regard to these matters the people of this country will not understand the significance of self-government.

35 A point of view shared by Hargovind Pant:

So far as the word 'India' is concerned, the Members seem to have, and really I fail to understand why, some attachment for it. We must know that this name was given to our country by foreigners who having heard of the riches of this land were tempted towards it and had robbed us of our freedom in order to acquire the wealth of our country. If we, even then, cling to the word 'India', it would only show that we are not ashamed of having this insulting word which has been imposed on us by alien rulers. Really, I do not understand why we are accepting this word [...].

36 Pritam Singh has recently argued that 'the symbolic significance of 'Bharat' in the opening article [of the Constitution] was meant to suggest a sense of Hindu ownership of the new India—the India which was perceived to have achieved self-rule after many centuries of foreign rule. The name Bharat signified the birth of a new India, with whose government and state the Hindus felt a sense of identification.'<sup>46</sup> The basic question at stake here is how to separate religion from culture when one speaks from within one's own tradition, as had been the case for most Hindus during the national struggle. It had been the case even for Gandhi, as his use of the expression *Bhārata māṭā kī jaya* testified.<sup>47</sup> Smith raised this very question when he wrote that:

Nationalism inevitably drew part of its inspiration from India's ancient cultural traditions, and these were mainly Hindu. India was the only home of the Hindus, and whatever patriotic demands were made in the name of the majority would naturally appear to be expressions of Indian nationalism. (Smith 1963: 455)

37 This was never more obvious than at the time of choosing the name of the nation despite the fact (but also thanks to the fact) that the delegates whose words I have quoted functioned within the secular framework of politics.

38 At this point, the reader who has not forgotten that Iqbal's *Sare jahāṃ se acchā Hindustāṃ hamarā* was sung on 15 August 1947 may well wonder about the whereabouts of the name 'Hindustan!' 'Hindustan' received different treatments during the Constituent Assembly. Let us start by quoting the observation that Mohammad Tahir ('Bihar, Muslim') made on 24 November 1949, two days before the final adoption of the Constitution:

I would like to submit that it is a matter of shame that our Constitution could not fix a name for our country. This is a proof of the intelligence of Dr. Ambedkar that he suggested a hotch-potch sort of name and got it accepted. Well, if somebody would have asked Doctor Saheb about his home land, he could have replied with pride that he belonged to Bharat or India or Hindustan. But now the Honourable Dr. will have to reply in these words: 'I belong to India that is Bharat'. Now, Sir, it is for you to see what a beautiful reply it is.

39 Here was a subtle way of saying that three names had been at the start of the race, but at the end two had been placed on equal footing and one dropped. And the absentee was staring them in the face. But the very next day, 'Hindustan' reappeared. At that point of time, however, the discussion did not bear on the name of the whole country but on the demand made by certain Provinces (such as Orissa) to change their own particular names.

40 The name Hindustan popped up again when from there the discussion shifted to the naming of the United Provinces. At some point, R. K. Sidhva ('C.P. [Central Province] & Berar, General') recalled that there had been a serious objection when 'the U.P. [United Provinces] Government and U.P. Assembly decided that the name should be changed into Aryavarta.' But now, since Aryavarta had not been accepted, he feared that they might take the name Hindustan, as he recalled that in 1938: 'when the Indian National Congress

held its session in Cawnpore in the All-India Congress Committee my friends from U.P. brought a resolution that the name of the U.P. Congress Committee should be changed into Hindustan Congress Committee.' So the prudent R. K. Sidhva had another suggestion:

Why not U.P. be called Samyukt Pradesh? If that is not acceptable there are other very fine names like Avadh, Ayodhya, Ganga, etc. Why should they usurp the name of the whole of India and tell us they are the people who are the only custodians of India? I strongly resent their monopolising the name of India.

41 Mohan Lal Gautam ('United Provinces, General') equally strongly objected to this:

I assure you that U.P. has a gift and it is perhaps the only province in the country which can claim that it has no provincialism. [...] This function of Brahmins—of giving names ought to have some background. You say why not give it the name of Avadh. Avadh is one of the very important parts of U.P. but it is only a part. Avadh has a tradition of Nawabs and feudal lords which we do not want. [...]. The solution is that the Provinces must be consulted and it must be acceptable to all-India authority and the all-India authority is the President and the President means the President and the Cabinet.

42 But for Shri R.K. Sidhva, this solution was no guarantee:

The purpose of consulting the legislature also will not be served because the majority of the Members there would say, 'Have it Aryavarta or Hindustan'. Supposing they change it to Hindustan, what will be the remedy if the Provincial Legislature also says that U.P. will be known as Hindustan? India in future will be called Bharat but that does not mean that we discard the name Hindustan. Therefore you must tell me Sir how to safeguard the interests of the country in seeing that this word Hindustan is not adopted by the U.P. as they did make a venture in the past unofficially to introduce it in the Congress Committee but in which they failed?

43 Pandit Balkrishna Sharma ('United Provinces, General') had the last word when he said: 'If it will satisfy my honourable friend, I may say I hate the word 'Hindustan'.

44 What was the gist of this exchange about the proper naming of U.P.? Was it that Hindustan is 'the name of India'? This was known already. No, what was said here with force was that it is not because the Constituent Assembly had decided to name India 'Bharat' that Indians were going to discard the name Hindustan.

45 Now anyone who reads carefully the proceedings of the Constitutional debates will come to the conclusion that 'India' and in second position 'Hindustan' were the two names that came most naturally to the delegates when speaking about their country as long as they were not debating the issue of its name.<sup>48</sup> These two names kept reappearing throughout the debates for the simple reason that the country whose Constitution was being written had to be constantly referred to in one way or another. But when it came to the naming question, Bharat was the first name to appear. Bharatvarsh, Aryavarta and Hind were but marginally mentioned. Hindustan was never considered in this context.

46 On 24 January 1950, the Constituent Assembly held its last meeting. The delegates rose to sing solemnly *Jana Gana Mana*, Tagore's hymn to Bharat. Then instead of singing Iqbal's *Sāre jahāṃ se acchā Hindustāṃ hamarā*, as they had done two-and-a-half years earlier, they chanted *Vande Mātaram*, 'Mother I bow to thee' written by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1882) in honour of the Mother land identified with the Goddess. On that same day, Tagore's composition was chosen as new India's 'national anthem' and Bankim's song was given an 'equal status' because it had 'played a historic part in the struggle for Indian freedom'.<sup>49</sup> Meanwhile Iqbal had been (posthumously) declared the national poet of Pakistan.

## Naming the nation: a complex and sensitive issue to this day

47 The processes of construction and reconstruction of the meanings of the nation's names have been uninterrupted since the adoption of the first article of the Constitution. The task of describing them is enormous in scope and would require consulting an immense variety of sources. In this final section I merely look at some of the prevailing demands and statements at the time of writing this article. I do so on the basis of information found on internet (blogs, personal pages and also printed materials appearing on the net such as newspapers, all in English).

48 A first type of demand one comes across is to altogether do away with 'India' in the Constitution. As one would expect, the most likely place where this occurs is the Hindu nationalist milieu. A case in point is the article published in July 2005 by V. Sundaram, a retired member of the IAS and a freelance journalist known for his Hindutva leanings. According to V. Sundaram, it is because 'Bharat' was thought to be too Hindu by the drafters of the Constitution that they introduced 'India' as a guarantee to the minorities that they would not be Hinduized. But, he argued, this was a misconception: the word Bharat carries no communalist overtones and therefore it should be the sole official name of the country. However, this Hindutva sympathiser also wants to keep 'India', for which he has in mind a usage presently given to 'South Asia':

[...] it will not be historically or culturally or geographically correct to call our country by the general name India. Pakistan is also India, Bangladesh is also India, our country India is also India—all these three Indias together can legitimately be called India in the larger geographical sense. [...] It is quite possible that in the future countries like Pakistan, Ceylon, Bangladesh, India and Burma may get together and form themselves into an Indian Federation. We can possibly think of the name India as being appropriate for such a Federation if and ever it becomes relevant in the future.<sup>50</sup>

49 According to Hindu nationalists there is a basic philosophical difference between India and Bharat. This point was never made so clear as in December 2012, when commenting on the appalling gang rape that had just occurred in Delhi Mohan Bhagwat, the RSS chief, said: 'Such crimes hardly take place in Bharat, but they frequently occur in India'.<sup>51</sup>

50 But Hindu nationalists are not alone in thinking that Bharat is the only legitimate name for the Republic of India. There is at least one Congress MP (Goa) who entertains the idea, if one is to judge by the Bill Shantaram Naik introduced on 9 August 2012 in the upper house of parliament (Rajya Sabha) to amend the first article. He proposed three main changes: 1) that in the Preamble to the Constitution the word 'Bharat' be substituted for the word 'India'; 2) that for the phrase 'India, that is Bharat' the single word 'Bharat' be substituted; 3) that wherever the word 'India', occurs in the Constitution, the word 'Bharat' be substituted. Stating his reasons, the Member of Parliament declared:

'India' denotes a territorial concept, whereas 'Bharat' signifies much more than the mere territories of India. When we praise our country we say, 'Bharat Mata ki Jai' and not 'India ki Jai'. There are various grounds for changing the name of the country into simply 'Bharat'. The name also generates the sense of patriotism and electrifies the people of this country. In this regard it is relevant [to recall] a popular song: 'Jahan dal dal par sone ki chidiyan karatin hai basera wo Bharat Desh

hai mera' ['where marvellous birds sit on every branch, this is Bharat my country'].

52

- 51 Finally, the argument that 'India' should be replaced by 'Bharat' is not encountered only within the political frame of 'communalist versus secular'. It also finds its way in a context of anti-English or rather anti-Western crusades. For example in April 2004, the Samajwadi Party proposed to adopt the sole name 'Bharat' in the Constitution 'as a step to protect the identity of the country', to 'ban the import of luxury goods' and 'to take other suitable economic and political measures to end the cultural degeneration being encouraged by the Western consumerist lifestyle.'<sup>53</sup> In October 2012, the Chief Minister of Karnataka, B. S. Yeddyurappa, proposed to amend the Constitution to rename India as 'Bharat', and announced that 'programs will be launched to promote Kannada as a classical language, at a cost of Rs 50 crore.'<sup>54</sup> Here the ethical dimension of the argument comes with a chauvinistic stance, the implication being that the domestic product is morally superior to anything that is imported.
- 52 Equally relevant to this section of our enquiry are arguments in favour of or against the use of the name Hindustan. Some reject 'Hindustan' as being too offensive to 'minorities' (read non-Hindus). 'Bharat', they argue, is to be preferred to 'Hindustan' because it is less divisive. Here 'Hindustan', even with the Persian suffix, is understood with Savarkar's meaning of 'land of the Hindus'—with Hindu receiving a religious signification. In contrast, 'Bharat' is associated with the capacity to generate and tolerate internal differences. Words do have a life of their own! Some argue that 'Hindustan' should be avoided by Indians because it is being used in Pakistan to refer to India. Some tribals from Gujarat have declared preferring 'Bharat' to 'Hindustan' because they are not Hindus.<sup>55</sup> On the opposite side, there are those who argue that 'Hindustan' should be used precisely to stress the Hindu character of India. Thus in February 2003 the VHP demanded that India be renamed as Hindustan in order to restore 'the honor of the Hindu rashtra (nation)'.<sup>56</sup> And in July 2011, Dr. Subramanian Swamy, the president of the Janata Party who was then teaching economics at Harvard, made the same demand. He also recommended that a civil code be implemented, the learning of Sanskrit and singing *Vande Mātaram* be made mandatory, and non-Hindus be allowed to vote only if they acknowledged Hindu ancestry.<sup>57</sup> These demands reflect the legacy of Savarkar, even though they overlook that he spoke of *Hindusthan*.

## Conclusion

- 53 The politics of naming is part of the social production of the nation. Its processes are shaped by broad socio-political conditions and can be studied from several angles. In this paper I have adopted a cultural history perspective. My purpose has been to look at some of the inherited discourses on '*Bhārata*' both prior to and at the time of its official equation with 'India' in the Constitution of 1950. To begin with I attempted to characterize the memory that was taken in by those who in the 19<sup>th</sup> century used the name *Bhārata* to refer to the geographical, political and administrative entity that the colonial power called 'India'. The evidence presented shows that it was the Puranic memory of a naturally bounded (sea, mountains) and specifically socially organized territory where human beings could fulfill the specific sets of socioreligious duties required to maintain their cultural identity. That *Bhārata*—a cultural space whose unity was to be found in the social order of *dharma*—was a pre-national construction and not a

national project. Then I argued that at the time of independence, India and *Bhārata* were equally worthy candidates to baptize the newly-born nation, along with 'Hindustan'. But the opening article of the Constitution discarded Hindustan and registered the nation under a dual and bilingual identity: 'India, that is Bharat'. One name was to be used as the equivalent or the translation of the other as exemplified on the cover of the national passport, where the English 'Republic of India' corresponds to the Hindi '*Bhārata gaṇarājya*', or, perhaps even more telling, on India postage stamps, where the two words *Bhārata* and India are collocated. Pursuing the history of the reception of the Constitutional equation of Bharat and India in all its social and political complexities was beyond the scope of my enquiry. I have merely pointed to two contemporary phenomena: the name Hindustan has continued to be widely used in spite of, or may be thanks to, its plurality of meanings and the implication of the equivalence of Bharat with India has remained a subject of debate. It is likely that all these names will continue to be interpreted to fit new circumstances, to give new meanings to India's national identity, an ongoing, open-ended process.

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## NOTES

1. This paper is an extended version of a communication delivered on 13 November 2012 in the workshop on 'The Idea of South Asia' organized by the Centre d'Etudes de l'Inde et de l'Asie du Sud, Paris. I am grateful to four anonymous SAMAJ reviewers for their close reading of the manuscript and to Aminah Mohammad-Arif and Blandine Ripert for their editorial assistance. Their suggestions were very helpful. Responsibility for the content of my article is entirely my own.

2. 'Often, as I wandered from meeting to meeting, I spoke to my audiences of this India of ours, of Hindustan and of Bharata, the old Sanskrit name derived from the mythical founders of the race. [...] I spoke of this great country for whose freedom we were struggling, of how each part differed from the other and yet was India, of common problems of the peasants from north to south and

east to west, of the Swaraj that could only be for all and every part and not for some. I told them of my journeying from the Khyber Pass in the far north-west to Kanya Kumari or Cape Comorin in the distant south, and how everywhere the peasants put me identical questions, for their troubles were the same—poverty, debt, vested interests, landlords, moneylenders, heavy rents and taxes, police harassment, and all these wrapped up in the structure that the foreign government had imposed upon us—and relief must also come for all' (Nehru 1946: 38-39).

3. The expression is a hybrid, it associates a Sanskrit word (*jaya-hail*) with an Arabic word (*Hind-India*). It was coined by Chempakaraman Pillai (1891-1934), a revolutionary from Kerala who went abroad during the First World War to organize an armed resistance against the British; it was later used by Subhas Chandra Bose as the battle cry of his Azad Hind Fauj (literally 'Army of Independent India'—rendered as 'Indian National Army').

4. <sup>4</sup> The name given by Yule and Burnell (1996) to their dictionary of Anglo-Indian terms. See also the entries for 'Deccan' and 'Hindustan'.

5. The Persian *Hindustān*, the Greek *Indikê*, the latin *India*, and the Arabic *Al-Hind* are all derived from the old-Persian *hindu* (found in an inscription in Persepolis which mentions the 20<sup>th</sup> province—satrapy—of Darius' empire, the country of the Lower-Indus). *Hindu* is the Persian for *Sindhu*, the name for the Indus River in ancient Sanskrit literature. The Persian *Hindustān* got introduced in India and became very commonly used in the Moghul period. Notwithstanding their diverse linguistic forms, all these terms share the same etymology and connect an inhabited land with the Indus River.

6. See Barrow 2011: 41. I am grateful to Aminah Mohammad-Arif for this reference.

7. See Barrow 2011: 47. In 1894 Strachey (1894: 2), then member of the council of the Secretary of state for India, observed: 'The name Hindustan is never applied in India, as we apply it, to the whole of Indian subcontinent; it signifies the country north of the Narbada River, and especially the northern portion of the basins of the Ganges and Jumna.'

8. Savarkar wrote *Hindutva* (in English) during his imprisonment in Andaman and Nicobar Islands between 1911 and 1921, but it was only published in 1923. On the semantic history of the word 'Hindu', see Lorenzen (1999); Sharma (2002). On the import of the slogan 'Hindi, Hindu, Hindustan!' raised to mobilize the Hindus of Northern India at the end of the nineteenth century, see Dalmia (1997: 27 sq.).

9. The First article reads: '(1) India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States. (2) The States and the territories thereof shall be the States and their territories for the time being specified in Parts I, II and III of the First Schedule.' For the text of the Constitution of India, see <http://india.gov.in/my-government/constitution-india>.

10. The Hindi translation reads: '*bhārata arthāt indiyā, rājyom kā saṅgha hogā.*' See <http://bharat.gov.in/govt/documents/hindi/part1.pdf>, retrieved 27 September 2012.

11. Reports of the Constituent Assembly Debates (Proceedings) (9 December 1946 to 24 January 1950) published online on <http://parliamentofindia.nic.in/ls/debates/debates.htm>.

12. Manu 2.21-24: 'The land between the Himalaya and Vindhya ranges to the east of Vinashana and west of Prayāga, is known the 'Middle Region'. The land between the same mountain ranges extending from the eastern to the western sea is what the wise call Āryāvarta—the region of the Āryas' (translated from the Sanskrit by Olivelle 2004).

13. Taken together the seven islands constitute the world. They are separated from each other by oceans of different composition (saltwater, syrup, wine, ghee, milk and fresh water), a configuration that suggests that they are mutually inaccessible and reinforces their insularity. Each island is divided in *varṣa*—a word meaning 'rain', hence it is usually understood as a climatic zone. *Jambudvīpa* (which of the seven islands is the only one inhabited by human beings) is divided in 9 *varṣa*, and *Bhārata* lies on its most southern section. See Rocher 1986: 130-131; see also Rocher 1988: 3-10 and Pollock 2006: 193ff.

14. ‘The country that lies north of the ocean, and south of the snowy mountains, is called Bharata, for there dwell the descendants of Bharata. It is nine thousand leagues in extent, and is the land of works, in consequence of which men go to heaven, or obtain emancipation.’ (*Viṣṇupurāṇa*, 2, 3, 1-2, translated from the Sanskrit by Wilson 1840).
15. See Ali 1966: 109.
16. See Renou & Filliozat, 1947-1949: 547.
17. ‘In the Bharatavarsha it is that the succession of four Yugas, or ages, the Krita, the Treta, the Dvapara, the Kali, takes place; that pious ascetics engage in rigorous penances; that devout men offer sacrifices; and that gifts are distributed; all for the sake of another world. [...] Bharata therefore is the best of the divisions of Jambudwipa because it is the land of works: the others are places of enjoyment alone.’ (*Viṣṇupurāṇa* III, 2, 19-20, 22, translated from the Sanskrit by Wilson 1840). See also Kane (1974: 17), Kane (1973: 137).
18. See Bhardwaj (1973: 7).
19. In a way, contemporary orthodox Brahmins still mentally reside in *Bhārata*, as their ancestors did: at the beginning of their daily rituals when they express their intention (*saṃkalpa*) and identify themselves, they not only give their name, caste, lineage, etc., the period of the year, the date, but also their location in space, and this they do by using the word *Bhāratavarṣa*; see, for example, Miśra (2000:19). See also Pollock (2006: 190).
20. In the *Matsyapurāṇa* 114, 9-10, see Kane (1973: 67).
21. Quoted by Kane (1974: 16).
22. See Halbfass (1988: 178).
23. See for example Pollock (2006: 572).
24. Killingley (1997:126) compares *Bhārata* to *dār al-islām*, the territory where according to Islamic juridical theory Islamic law is protected.
25. Edney (1997) explores the relationship between cartographic knowledge and power, showing how map making accompanied empire building and was fundamental to the creation of British India.
26. See Embree (1977: 256, 259); Cohn (1996: introduction); Khilnani (2003: 21).
27. See Goswami 2003.
28. See Muir [1858] 1890: Chapter 6. He also equates *Bhāratavarsha* with Hindustan, Muir ([1861] 1890:148).
29. See Khilnani 2003: 17.
30. ‘Some pre-requisites of nationhood had [...] been achieved by the time that the British conquests began: in 1757, the year of Plassey, India was not only a geographical expression, it was also seen as a cultural entity and a political unit. It is, however, important to realise that, notable as these advances were in the long process of the formation of India, these did not yet make India a nation’ (Habib 1997: 8). Curiously, Hindustan is outside the enquiry of Goswami (2004: 1). Her quotation of Nehru’s text even omits the word: ‘Often, as I wandered from meeting to meeting, I spoke to my audiences of this India of ours, of Bharata, the old Sanskrit name derived from the mythical founders of the race.’ Compare with note 2 above.
31. On the history of the song and on how it was rewritten by Iqbal, see Pritchett (<http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00urdu/taranahs/juxtaposition.html>); on the evolution of the political vision of the poet, see Matringe (2011).
32. *Jana-gaṇa-mana adhināyaka jaya he/Bhārata bhāgya vidhātā*: Thou art the ruler of the minds of all people/ Dispenser of *Bhārata*'s destiny. See <http://parliamentofindia.nic.in/ls/debates/debates.htm> on 14 August 1947.
33. On Savarkar, see note 8. Savarkar wrote *Hindutva* in English but he gave the *Devanāgarī* spelling of words he deemed important in footnotes. Those words have been rendered with diacritical marks in what follows.

34. In the *Samkṣipta hindī śabdasaṅgṛaha* ('Abbreviated Dictionary of Hindi'), *hindī* as an adjective is defined as '*hindustān kā* [of Hindustan], *bhāratīya*', as a masculine substantive as '*hind kā rahanevāla* [inhabitant of Hind], *bhāratavāsī* [dwelling in Bharat]'; in the feminine the substantive means the language: '*hindustān ki bhāṣā*' [language of Hindustan].

35. *āsindhu sindhu-paryantā yasya bhārata-bhūmikā/ pitṛbhūḥ puṇyabhūṣcaiva sa vai hindur iti smṛtaḥ*: 'He is known as a Hindu he whose Fatherland as well as Holy land is the land of *Bhārata* that goes from the Indus (*sindhu*) to the Ocean (*sindhu*)' (Savarkar 1969: 116). Let it be kept in mind that for Savarkar (1969: 80) a Hindu is not to be identified by religion alone. Hindu does not mean a believer of Hinduism, it is a national and cultural designation. Jains, Buddhists and Sikhs too are Hindus. However, not all Indians are Hindu because Hindus 'are united not only by the bonds of the love they bear to a common 'fatherland' but also by the bonds of a common blood. They are not only a Nation (*rāṣṭra*) but also a race (*jāti*)' (Savarkar 1969: 84). Hindus are also bound by their culture (*saṃskṛti*) (Savarkar 1969: 92, 100-101, 115-116).

36. '[...] we have left the thread of our enquiry at the point where the growing concept of an Indian nation was found to be better expressed by the word Sindhusthan than by any other existing words. It was precisely to refute any parochial and narrow-minded significance which might, as in the case of Aryavarta be attached to this word that the definition of the word Sindhusthan was rid of any association with a particular institution or party-coloured suggestion.' (Savarkar 1969: 38-39). Here the accusation of narrow-mindedness is clearly aimed at the Āryasamāja, whose founder, Dayananda Saraswati (1824-1883), had chosen *Āryāvarta* as the only possible name for the nation in his *Satyārthaprakāśa* (1875), see Prasad (1908: 250, 291, 545).

37. '[...] the epithets Hindu and Hindusthan had been the proud and patriotic designations signifying our land and our nation long before the Mohammedans or Mohammedanized Persians were heard of [...]' (Savarkar 1969: 73).

38. The 'h' is dropped by most authors, academics or otherwise, who quote Savarkar, though he himself took great pains to justify the spelling Hindusthan rather than Hindustan.

39. (Savarkar 1923: 31). 'Sindhu in Sanskrit does not only mean the Indus but also the Sea which girdles the Southern peninsula—so that this one word Sindhu points out almost all frontiers of the land at a single stroke [...] the epithet Sindhusthan calls up the image of the whole Motherland: the land that lies between Sindhu and Sindhu—from the Indus to the Seas' (Savarkar 1923: 32).

40. See Oberoi (1987: 38).

41. The Draft Constitution was being finalized when Gandhi was assassinated (31 January 1948). Its first reading was held from 21 February 1948 to 26 Oct. 1948, the second between 15 November 1948 to 17 October 1949 and the third between November 14 1949 and November 26 1949.

42. The following quotations unless otherwise mentioned are from the reports of the debates mentioned in note 11.

43. He had in fact also proposed 'Hind' along with 'Bharat' but withdrew it when it was pointed to him that he had to choose one name only.

44. 'I represent the people of the Northern part of India where sacred places like Shri Badrinath, Shri Kedarnath, Shri Bageshwar and Manasarovar are situated. [...] I may be permitted to state, Sir, that the people of this area want that the name of our country should be 'Bharat Varsha' and nothing else.'

45. On the presence of 'Hindu traditionalists' (whom he distinguishes from 'Hindu nationalists') in the Congress at the time of independence, see Jaffrelot (1996: 81-84); on the inner diversity or lack of coherence of the Congress, see Khilnani (2003: 26, 28, 33-34).

46. See Singh (2005: 911-912). As the debates on the name were going on, an unnamed female renouncer undertook to fast till her death unless India be renamed Bharat and Hindi adopted as a national language. Upon Nehru visiting her, she broke her fast on 12 August claiming that Nehru and other Congress leaders had assured her that Hindi would be adopted. See Austin (2004: 293).

47. Nehru was not adverse to using it either: 'Sometimes as I reached a gathering, a great roar of welcome would greet me Bharat Mata ki Jai [sic]—Victory to Mother India! I would ask them unexpectedly what they meant by that cry, who was this Bharat Mata, Mother India, whose victory they wanted? [...] And so question and answer went on, till they would ask me impatiently to tell them about it. I would endeavour to do so and explain that India was all this that they had thought, but it was much more. The mountains and the rivers of India, and the forest and the broad fields, which gave us food, were all dear to us, but what counted ultimately were the people of India, people like them and me, who were spread out all over this vast land. Bharat Mata, Mother India, was essentially these millions of people, and victory to her meant victory to these people. You are parts of Bharat Mata, I told them, you are in a manner yourself Bharat Mata, and as this idea slowly soaked into their brains, their eyes would light up as if they had made a great discovery' (Nehru 1946: 39).

48. I have found this 'search engine' a very useful tool to look into the India Constitutional debates: <http://viveks.info/search-engine-for-constituent-assembly-debates-in-india/>. It should perhaps be observed here that outside Article One, 'India' is the only name for the country found in the Indian Constitution.

49. This proposition came from Rajendra Prasad, the President of the Constituent Assembly, see <http://parliamentofindia.nic.in/ls/debates/debates.htm> on 24 January 1950.

50. 'India that is Bharath [sic]' by V. Sundaram, IAS (July 14 2005), see [http://www.ivarta.com/columns/OL\\_050714.htm](http://www.ivarta.com/columns/OL_050714.htm), retrieved in September 2012.

51. <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/bharat-versus-hindustan/1065278/>

52. See <http://164.100.24.219/BillsTexts/RBillTexts/asintroduced/cons-peamble-E.pdf>. The allusion is to a popular patriotic song written by Rajinder Krishan and sang by Rafi in the film *Sikandar e Azam*, 1965.

53. See <http://www.hindu.com/2004/04/10/stories/2004041006051100.htm>, retrieved October 2012.

54. <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/101476/banner-300x250.swf>, retrieved October 2012.

55. 'We are all moolnivasis (original inhabitants) of this land and that is why we are called Adivasis. Indian civilisation is the oldest in the world but ours is older still. We belong to Bharat, not Hindustan. We should call ourselves moolnivasis, Adivasis [First inhabitants], Bharatvasis [Inhabitants of Bharat]. [...] We are fragmented today by the different religious sects that seek our membership. We have our own religion. We are fragmented by different political parties. We need to become one. Religion is a private matter. We need to come together as Adivasis and not as Hindu or Christian, or Muslim tribals.' See Lobo (2002).

56. See <http://www.rediff.com/news/2003/feb/22vhp.htm>, retrieved October 2012.

57. 'How to Wipe Out Islamic Terrorism', Daily News and Analysis, <http://jahnabibarooah.wordpress.com/>. As a consequence he was expelled from Harvard Summer School, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/harveysilverglate/2012/01/17/censorship-at-harvard-comes-as-no-surprise/>, retrieved October 2012. On Subramanian Swamy, see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subramanian\\_Swamy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subramanian_Swamy)).

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## ABSTRACTS

The politics of naming is shaped by broad socio-political conditions and can be studied from several angles. Adopting a cultural history perspective, this paper considers some of the inherited discourses on 'Bhārata' both prior to and at the time of its official equation with 'India' in the Constitution (1950). It focusses on three successive definitional moments: the Puranic definition of Bhārata; the shift to its colonial definition, when the old toponym became the 'indigenous' name for a budding nation exposed to the imported political and geographical conceptions of (British) India; and, lastly, the choice of the Constitutional assembly to register the nation under a dual and bilingual identity: 'India, that is Bharat'. The paper concludes with a sample of contemporary reactions that show that this double-name formula remains a baffling subject for Indian citizens.

## INDEX

**Keywords:** cultural history, politics of naming, Indian Constitution, India, Bharat, Bharata, Hindustan, Hindusthan

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