Reading Ireland's colonial and postcolonial toponymic landscapes

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Abstract: One of the most basic, yet powerful and symbolic acts of geographical appropriation is the naming of places. With a focus on the island of Ireland, this chapter proffers a reading of Ireland's rich and diverse toponymic landscapes as integral components of the cultural landscape capable of providing unique insights into the social, political and cultural attitudes and perceptions of those who have both named and renamed places through time. In illustrating the themes of the politics of naming, appropriation, conflict and identity in both historical and contemporary urban and rural settings, a range of examples, from both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, and a case study from Dublin have been deployed. An overview of the various bodies involved in managing and promoting Ireland's place names today and the legislative framework within which it operates is also given.

Keywords: place names, street names, identity, cultural landscapes, legislative framework, bilingualism, Ireland, Irish language

Objectives: By the end of this chapter readers should be able to:

- Identify the colonial imprint on place names in Ireland between 1600–1900
- Recognise the agency and impact of the Ordnance Survey on Ireland's place name history in the 19th century
- Account for the significance of renaming as part of decolonisation and commemorative processes in Ireland during the 20th century
- Identify trends in naming of streets and urban developments since the 1960s through the use of a detailed case study
- Detail the legislative framework of place names in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland

1 Introduction

Place names as central components of cultural landscapes are reflections of the varied social, political and cultural attitudes, aspirations and identities that have sought to appropriate, control, 'civilise' and 'make' places through time (Alderman, 2008). In colonial and post-colonial contexts, as experienced in Ireland, the conflicting naming and renaming of places points to the centrality of place names as expressions of hegemony over space and ideologies (Nash, 1999; Berg & Kearns, 2009). Taking a broadly chronological approach, this chapter initially considers the significance of naming and renaming places and streets as a key component in the colonist's cultural arsenal, with particular emphasis on the period circa 1600 to circa 1920. The use of English as the state language resulted in the gradual decline of the Irish language over the centuries. The naming and renaming of places and streets that occurred during the 1920s, a symbolic part of the ritual of revolution as the country gained independence, is explored briefly; it illustrates the value placed on symbolically erasing the colonial imprint and inscribing the toponymic landscape with a new nationalist identity. Naming was an important tool in exercising hegemony, and during the 1930s up to the 1960s, the pervasive influence of the Roman Catholic Church, in conjunction with the state, found particular expression in the naming of new local authority urban residential developments as detailed. The naming of new residential estates and the associated roads in suburbs since the 1970s and to the present day is explored for one discrete case study area in Dublin, illustrating how naming was and is employed in creating and augmenting 'a sense of place' and 'image' of a particular area or development. The chapter concludes by setting out the legislative framework for establishing, translating and using place names across Ireland today and how these names are managed and recorded as integral parts of our cultural heritage.

2 Place names in Ireland: an overview

The legacy of past generations naming of places has resulted in Ireland being 'described as one of the most densely named countries in Europe' (Mac Giolla Easpaig, 2008, 164). Names have been ascribed to the various administrative divisions of the country both civic - province (of which there are 4), county (32), barony (345), district electoral division (3,474), townland (61,122) – and ecclesiastical, parish and diocese. In addition, physical features (e.g. mountains, rivers), human-made features (e.g. churches, castles) and centres of population (towns, villages) all the way down to individual fields have also been uniquely identified through this naming process. At an urban level, some 45,000 street names have also been identified.

Most Irish place names have been influenced by either dominant features of the local physical landscape, water bodies such as rivers, lakes, inlets and coastlines or settlement features such as castles or churches, with over 90% identified as being of Celtic origin meaning that they were in use by the 7th century (Mac Giolla Easpaig, 2009, 82). As the Irish writer Manchán Magan has noted place names 'offer tantalising hints and encoded reflections of our culture, psyche and past practices,' providing 'glimpses into the historical, geographical and anecdotal qualities of our past' and 'our ancestors' lives, their knowledge of environments and their folk beliefs' (2020, 139). Such names were not merely indicators or markers in differentiating one place from another, but rather as the historical geographer Patrick Duffy has noted, 'Naming places is a primary act of geographical

appropriation, a demonstration of control over nature, the landscape and everything in it' (2007, 63). It is to this aspect of naming as a hegemonic tool that our focus now turns.

3 The colonial toponymic imprint

As a country located in Western Europe, Ireland, unlike many other European countries which acted as colonising or imperial powers, had the distinction of being colonised (Smyth, 2006, 9–14). By the 16th century ownership, England's colonial policy for Ireland hinged on dismantling the existing indigenous land structures and the transfer of ownership of land with all of the attendant social, economic and political advantages it bestowed to a new landowning elite loyal to the English government and Crown. This process gained momentum in Ireland during the 16th and 17th centuries as a sustained series of colonial schemes of land confiscation and plantation were initiated to bring the entire country under English control, a position achieved by the later 17th century. The planning and implementation of these projects was underpinned by extensive surveys and mapping of the existing landscape, settlement features, land ownership boundaries and place names.

The recording and mapping of toponyms as Vuolteenaho & Berg have observed was 'an ancillary form of knowledge-production in the service of a wider scientific-geopolitical project of knowing the world as accurately as possible as part of the process of controlling its spaces' (2016, 4). The large-scale mapping of the confiscated lands of Ulster in the early 17th century exemplifies the significance colonisers placed on recording place names, as an integral part of their desire to control space. In providing legal basis to this subjugating colonial enterprise, government officials and administrators based in London employed maps and surveys in delimiting boundaries and extent of the landed estates. The names of the small land divisions, now referred to as townlands in Ireland, were listed in composing the legal title for these land grants (Margey, 2009).

Maps and recording of place names remained important throughout the 17th century. In suppressing the 1641 Gaelic rebellion, the English administration confiscated 11 million acres of land transferring ownership to those 'loyal' to the English Crown. Once again the legal basis of this rested on the mapping and recording of names, with the resulting Book of Survey and Distribution and the monumental Down Survey maps,[1] illustrating again how 'Maps were used to legitimise the reality of conquest and empire' (Harley, 1988, 282).

One of the crudest tactics employed by colonial powers in the subjugation of a people was through the naming and/or renaming of places. In Ireland, while many of the original names were retained by the colonisers, others were erased, resulting in the loss of indigenous names alongside the imposition of names in the coloniser's language reflecting their ideologies and values. This process of renaming was part of a suite of acts – including construction of urban settlements and dismantling or repurposing of previously important or symbolic sites – that sought to simultaneously disorientate, inspire awe and cultivate loyalty amongst the colonised. One early example of the power of this naming process was the formation and naming in 1556 of King's County and Queen's County, from the core of the Gaelic lordships of O'Connor of Offaly and O'Moore of Laois as a precursor to plantation with English settlers. In a further act of homage to the English monarch Mary I of England

[1] To view the Down Survey maps see http://downsurvey.tcd.ie/ [last accessed 11.2.22].

and her husband Philip, the primary urban settlements in each of the new counties were named *Philipstown* and *Maryborough*.

As the historical geographer William J. Smyth has remarked, these towns in the colonial context were 'frontier outposts created to dominate and reorganise hitherto hostile territories' (2006, 427), and as important 'civilising' centres they were 'the central instruments of imperial expansion and control' (2006, 219). The names selected for some of these new towns were integral to promoting and sustaining the ideological values that underpinned the broader colonial projects and in the achievement of hegemony, as 'part of the broader process of colonial, cultural and political subordination' (Nash, 1999, 461). The naming of a new urban settlement established as part of the Ulster plantation on a greenfield site in south county Cavan as *Virginia* was undoubtedly influenced by the earlier use of the same name by the British for one of their newly established colonies in North America. Evidence that such names rankled the Gaelic people emerges from depositions gathered from the colonial settlers in the aftermath of the 1641 Rising when the remaining Gaelic families attempted to forcibly upend the colonial project in Ireland. In these depositions the English settlers recounted their experiences and losses as a result of the rebellion. The deposition of a settler based at Virginia, County Cavan detailed how the local Gaelic family, the O'Reillys, had said that they would enact laws preventing the use of English and 'that all the names given to Lands or places should be abolished, and the ancient names restored'. In specific reference to Virginia, one of the insurgents, the Earl of Fingal, '…asked the deponent [the settler] what was the ancient name of Virginia: He answered Aghanure (as he remembreth): The Earle then said that must be the name againe'.[2] The desire amongst the Gaelic population to revert from *Virginia* to the original name *Achadh an Iúir* – the field of the yew tree – signals the levels of unease felt at, and resistance offered to, the imposition of colonial toponyms.[3]

Further insight into the importance placed on imposing place names in English as part of the colonial project 'to secure the political authority and to preserve the cultural identity of the New English settlers against the cultural and material threat of the "native Irish"' (Nash, 1999, 461) is exemplified in a statute passed by King Charles II in 1665.

> His Majestie taking notice of the barbarous and uncouth names, by which most of the towns and places in this kingdom of Ireland are called, which hath occasioned much damage to diverse of his good subjects, and are very troublesome in the use thereof, and much retards the reformation of that kingdom, for remedy thereof is pleased that it be enacted, and be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, that the lord lieutenant and council shall and may advise of, settle, and direct in the passing of all letters patents in that kingdom for the future, how new and proper names more suitable to the English tongue may be inserted with an alias for all towns, lands and places in that kingdom, that shall be granted by letters patents; which new names shall thenceforth be onely names to be used, any law, statute, custom, or usage to the contrary notwithstanding. (Quoted in Nash, 1999, 461).

This attempt to initiate a reformation in naming does not appear to have materialized to any great extent, but the desire to 'civilize' Ireland's toponymic landscape did find expression in Crown grants

[2] See https://1641.tcd.ie/index.php/deposition/?depID=833227r167 [last accessed 5.2.22].
[3] See https://www.logainm.ie/en/4307?s=Virginia [last accessed 5.2.22].

of land to families during the 1660s. In County Wicklow for example, Robert Kennedy of Balligarny was granted lands on the basis that 'The manor shall be called Mount Kennedy'.[4] The usage of the family surname as a component of a new place name became popular amongst the landowning elite, under whose aegis most of the naming and renaming of places in Ireland during the 18th and 19th centuries occurred. Such naming processes reflect the sentiments of Psalm 49, verse 11 that 'Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names'. These names were usually associated with the large country houses and ornate demesne landscapes constructed by landowning families during the period. Historian Roy Foster observed that 'the Ascendancy desire to build and to plan… may indicate an obsession with putting their mark on a landscape only recently won and insecurely held' (1988, 192) and he concludes that they 'built in order to convince themselves not only that they had arrived but that they would remain' (1988, 194). A cursory examination through the first pages of *Burke's Landed Gentry of Ireland* – which details the familial lineages of landowning families and records their 'seats' – illustrates the variety of ways in which the naming process worked.

> Ancketill of Ancketill's Grove, Emyvale, Co. Monaghan
> Archdale of Castle Archdale, Irvinestown, Co. Fermanagh
> Heaton-Armstrong of Mount Heaton, Co. Tipperary
> Beresford-Ash of Ashbrook, Co. Derry
> Bagot of Bagotstown Castle and Bagotstown House, Co. Limerick
> Barron of Carrick Barron and Barron Court, Co. Waterford
> Blakeney of Castle Gallagh (Castle Blakeney), Co. Galway and Mount Blakeney, Co. Limerick
> Bowen of Bowen's Court, Co. Cork
> Burton of Burton Hall, Co. Carlow

Other landowners in a romantic vein sought to honour their wives, by naming their lands and home after them. In 1623, the Montgomery lands at Comber in County Down were renamed *Mount Alexander* in honour of the owner's new wife Lady Jean Alexander.[5] In County Fermanagh, Sir John Cole named his new country mansion (constructed in 1719) *Florencecourt* after his wife Florence Wrey, displacing the earlier Irish name for the area – *Mullach na Seangán* – translated as the hilltop of ants'.[6]

For other landowners, inspiration in renaming their places came from 'idealised' and 'exotic' names (Flanagan & Flanagan, 1994, 84). The lands of Droim Caiside – translated as the ridge of Caiside (a family name) – in County Cavan which were granted to the Scottish Sanderson family in the mid-17th century, had by the early 19th century been renamed *Clover Hill* (See Figure 1). The origins for this name remains unknown, but the view across some clover clad hills in the drumlin landscape may have provided the inspiration.[7] A number of 'exotic' French and Italian names inspired by the Grand Tours of the 18th century were also introduced onto the Irish landscape with Belvedere, County Westmeath and Marino, Dublin as representative examples.

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[4] See https://www.logainm.ie/en/55643?s=mount+kennedy+demesne [last accessed 5.2.22].
[5] See http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=11969 [last accessed 5.2.22].
[6] See http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=13047 [last accessed 5.2.22].
[7] See https://www.logainm.ie/en/1393740 [last accessed 5.2.22].

Figure 1: Place name signage for Droim Caiside, Cloverhill, County Cavan. Source: Jonathan Cherry

Family names were also employed in naming urban settlements and the use of either, *Newtown-* followed by the family name, or the suffix *-town* preceded by it indicates the influential role played by individual families who arrived as part of colonial projects in Ireland in establishing and developing towns and villages from the 17th century onwards. By 1682, the settlement at Mostrim, County Longford had been renamed *Edgeworth Town* after the Edgeworth family.[8] Newtown, County Fermanagh was renamed *Newtownbutler* in 1715,[9] while in County Longford *Newtown Forbes* replaced the Irish place name for the village (An Lios Breac) in 1750[10] and by the early 19th century, Bunclody, County Wexford had been renamed *Newtownbarry*. Each of these examples illustrative how local landowning elites used place names to elevate and accentuate their dominant positions locally, further inscribing their presence and agency in maintaining hegemony.

4 Colonial urban naming

The naming and renaming of streets and bridges in urban areas, in conjunction with the construction of a suite of other features such as statues, monuments and a range of civic and ecclesiastical structures were strategic components of the colonial arsenal deployed in exercising hegemony in Ireland. As dominant forces in the governance of Dublin during the 18th century, the colonial

[8] See https://www.logainm.ie/en/1412094 [last accessed 5.2.22].
[9] See http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=13712 [last accessed 5.2.22].
[10] See https://www.logainm.ie/en/1166313?s=newtownforbes [last accessed 5.2.22].

landowning elite commemorated themselves: individual lord lieutenants (the most important representative of the English administration in Ireland), notable military figures and English monarchs, gave their names to streets and bridges throughout the city (Whelan, 2003, 95). Such processes reflect how street names 'are embedded into the structures of power and authority' and how 'political regimes and elites utilize history to legitimate and consolidate their dominance and reinforce their authority' (Azaryahu, 1997, 480). During the 18th century the leading landowning families in Dublin, used their family names in naming the streets, squares and lanes in the fashionable residential quarters they developed. In the south of the city, developments by the Fitzwilliam family of Merrion resulted in *Fitzwilliam Square*, *Fitzwilliam Street*, *Fitzwilliam Lane*, *Merrion Square* and *Merrion Street*. On the north side of the city the Gardiner family were the dominant developers and in addition to naming several streets after family names and titles, a new street that they developed in the mid-18th century was named *Cavendish Street* after William Cavendish, lord lieutenant of Ireland between 1737-1745. Such a move proved loyalty to the English administration in Ireland. While such processes found their greatest expression in Dublin they filtered down to smaller urban settlements across the country. At Maynooth in county Kildare, the proprietors of the town, the dukes of Leinster, lent their family name to the main thoroughfare, Leinster Street, while the Farnham family in Cavan named the new street that they laid down there in the early 19th century *Farnham Street*.

The usage of general and specific names relating to the royal family in naming the numerous quays along, and bridges across the River Liffey which bisects Dublin resulted in the naming of Queen's Bridge in 1776 after Queen Charlotte wife of George III, King's Bridge, named after the visit of George IV in 1821 and later Victoria and Albert Bridge commemorating its use by the royal couple during a visit in 1861. Several quays also displayed royal connections including George (George I) and Victoria (1871), while the commemoration of the naval figure the Duke of Wellington, victor at the battle of Waterloo (1815), resulted in the naming of both a bridge in 1816 and a quay in 1817 in his honour (Whelan, 2003, 96–99). Later in the 1840s two new residential streets in south Dublin were named *Wellington Road* and *Waterloo Road*.

Commemorations of significant events also provided naming opportunities. Aughrim Street in Dublin, was named in 1792 as a centennial commemoration of the Battle of Aughrim, county Galway (1691), which proved decisive in King William III securing Ireland under English control (McCready, 1892, 4). Such naming practices were thus hugely significant, 'in particular, when used for commemorative purposes… [to] inscribe an official version of history onto the cityscape and introduce this version of history into myriad networks of social communication that involve ordinary urban experiences that seem to be separated from the realm of political ideology.' (Azaryahu, 2009, 54). A new row of houses constructed in Clones, county Monaghan at the end of the 19th century was named *Jubilee Terrace* to celebrate Queen Victoria's sixtieth year as monarch, complementing the town's existing Whitehall Street, bringing a 'heart of the Empire' feeling to this small Irish county town.

Despite the dominance of the colonial imprint in Dublin's nomenclature, opportunities for naming and renaming streets emerged in the last decades of the 19th century as the local urban authority, known as Dublin Corporation came to be dominated by nationalist councillors. The significance of using naming as an act of resistance in supporting the growing nationalist political agenda and identity as an alternative to the colonial regime is reflected in the numerous proposals received,

some of which were acted upon. The renaming of Carlisle Bridge to *O'Connell Bridge* (after Daniel O'Connell, the 'Liberator' of Irish Catholics) in 1880 was symbolic of the shifting balance of local power in Dublin (Whelan, 2003, 101).

Not all renaming in Dublin city was politically motivated. The renaming of Lower Temple Street to *Hill Street* in 1885 was an attempt to retrieve the street's reputation 'owing to the fact that certain houses … have been for some time past occupied by immoral characters' (Quoted in Whelan, 2003, 104). At the same time 'members of the respectable working classes' residing in Upper Mecklenburgh Street petitioned for the renaming of their street as 'many of the houses in Lower Mecklenburgh Street are used for improper purposes, and inhabited by persons of the worse character' (Quoted in Whelan, 2003, 104). The campaign proved successful, with the renaming as *Tyrone Street*.

5 Standardising and mapping place names: the role of the Ordnance Survey

The most dramatic and widespread colonial impact on the place names of Ireland occurred - 1820s-1830s as the entire country was surveyed and mapped under the agency of the Ordnance Survey (Mac Giolla Easpaig 2008, 166–68). The resulting archive – alongside the voluminous body of surveys and reports generated during the 19th century – was, 'an important strategic resource in increasing official knowledge and control over landscape and society in Ireland… part of a colonial project to regulate and re-order a society and economy perceived as inherently backward and impoverished' (Duffy 2011, 562). While the Ordnance Survey brought standardisation to place names in the English language it is important to acknowledge that the process of anglicisation of place names was well established by the early decades of the 19th century, and generally the use of such place names in English when established went unchallenged (Ó Muraíle 2014).

Transliteration	Bántír (Co. Cork) > Banteer
	Bearna (Co. Galway) > Barna
	Na hUamhanna (Co. Cork) > Ovens
	Muiceanach idir Dhá Sháile (Co. Galway) > Muckanaghederdauhaulia
	Tamhlacht > Tallaght (Co. Dublin), Tamlaght (Counties Antrim, Fermanagh, Tyrone), Tawlaght (Co. Kerry), Tamlat (Co. Monaghan)
	Clais an Ghainimh > Clashaganny (Co. Roscommon), Clashaganniv/Clashnaganiff/Clashganniv/Classes (Co. Cork)
Translation	Cluain Eocrach (Co. Roscommon) > Keyfield
	Cuan na gCaorach (Co. Donegal) > Sheephaven
	Clais an Ghainimh > Sandholes (Co. Tyrone), Sandpit (Co. Louth), Sandville (Co. Cork)
Transliteration	Ceann an Dúna (Co. Kerry) > Doon Point

and translation	

Table 1: Examples of transliteration and translation in place names. Note the variety of approaches to some names. Source: Compiled by authors.

As John Andrews has detailed, existing Irish-language place names were subjected to processes of substitution, translation, transcription from Irish-language documents, dictation and restoration, in arriving at standardised names in English (Andrews, 1992). The majority of place names were arrived at through dictation, 'in which a non-Irish speaker recorded in English orthography a place name spoken by an Irish-speaker and turned to English words that partially matched the sound of the Irish name-elements, but obviously not the meaning' (Nash, 1999, 465). Other 'standardised' names were arrived at through substituting unrelated English words for approximate Irish sounds for example, drum for *droim* (a ridge), knock for *cnoc* (a hill), kill for *cill* (a church) and more for *mór* (great or big), resulting in *Cill Mhór* emerging as *Kilmore* in English, and *Na hUamhanna* ('the caves') becoming *Ovens*. This distortion and anglicisation coincided with a mass shift in language from Irish to English in the nineteenth century, accelerating the loss of historic, cultural and geographic knowledge inherent in place names (Doyle, 2015, 129) (See Table 1).

6 Erasing the colonial imprint: post-colonial place naming

By the 1920s, part of Ireland known as the Irish Free State – had gained independence and a new native government was established in Dublin. As others have noted the, 'renaming of streets figures prominently in periods of regime change and revolutionary transformations' (Azaryahu, 2009, p.59). The centrality of this process as part of the ritual of revolution reflects the significance and power of street names in building and augmenting new narratives and identities. As Azaryahu has observed, 'street names conflate history and geography and merge the past they commemorate into ordinary settings of human life' (1997, 481).

While the process found its greatest expression in the new capital, Dublin, similar nomenclature cleansings were recorded in many towns and villages as both the new state and local authorities sought to erase and replace colonial narratives with nationalist ones. The renaming process varied depending on each local urban authority. In some instances, ratepayers, residents and business owners were asked to vote on the change and if a certain proportion were in favour the renaming could proceed. In other circumstances, unilateral decisions regarding renaming were taken by individual local urban authorities.

In Dublin, the principal streets and thoroughfares renamed after independence included Great Brunswick Street to *Pearse Street* in 1922; Queen's Square to *Pearse Square*; Great Clarence Street to *Macken Street*; Sackville Street to *O'Connell Street*; Wentworth Place to *Hogan Place*; Denzille Street to *Fenian Street* all in 1924; Rutland Square to *Parnell Square*; Gloucester Street Upper to *Cathal Brugha Street* and Gloucester Street Lower to *Sean MacDermott Street* in 1933 and Stafford Street to *Wolfe Tone Street* in 1943 (Whelan, 2003, 224). The authorities in selecting names found inspiration in commemorating high profile individuals. Those who had died in the quest for independence included Theobald Wolfe Tone in 1798; Pádraig Pearse, Peadar Macken and Seán McDermott during the 1916 Rising and Cathal Brugha who had died in the early days of the Civil War in 1922. Others

had local connections to a particular street, such as John Hogan, a prolific sculptor, who was commemorated through the renaming of Wentworth Place where he had once resided, to *Hogan Place*.

While the renaming of Sackville Street to *O'Connell Street* was hugely significant as it was the most prestigious thoroughfare in the capital, what is most striking is the small number of streets renamed and the protracted nature of the process. Ireland's experience of purging colonial street names was not as radical or dramatic as might be expected (particularly compared to countries that transitioned from Communist to post-Communist governance (Azaryahu, 2009, 59)) and as a result, the origins of many of the contemporary street names in Dublin may be traced to the 18th-19th centuries, reflecting the difficulties of erasing the deeply embedded impacts of colonialism. A cursory examination of a contemporary map of Dublin's streets will show Nelson Street, Victoria Street, Waterloo Road and Wellington Road, while Erne Street and Terrace and Creighton Street, in Dublin's south inner city, commemorate the former owners of this part of the city, the Creighton family, the earls of Erne.

The changing of a street name was a relatively cheap process in terms of replacing existing name plates and signage, but gathering sufficient support from those who resided on or operated businesses from these streets proved harder to garner. Some residents may have found that the suggested new name did not reflect their own personal politics, while others may have harboured concerns over the appropriateness of the name to the image of the area, wondering perhaps if it would be 'a good fit' or detract from the area. Many businesses did not want to endure the expense of changing an address on their headed notepaper, invoices and receipts, shop signs and branded goods, while anxious to avoid the hassle and impact of delayed deliveries or disorientated customers. Some of these concerns were voiced during the early 1940s by residents and ratepayers as an unsuccessful attempt to rename Talbot Street to *Seán Treacy Street* was made.[11] As a result of such challenges in Dublin, it was the existing bridge network spanning the river Liffey that facilitated the greatest expression and fervour in nationalist renaming in the immediate aftermath of Independence. In 1922, amongst others, Queen's Bridge (constructed in 1764) was renamed Queen Maeve Bridge; Sarah Bridge (1791) renamed Islandbridge; Richmond Bridge (1813) renamed O Donovan Rossa Bridge; Wellington Bridge (1816) renamed Liffey Bridge and Victoria & Albert Bridge (1858) renamed Rory O'Moore Bridge (Whelan, 2003, 225).

Besides erasing and replacement of street names, attempts to provide Irish forms for existing English street names had been ongoing from the early 20th century. In Dublin, Nassau Street, named in 1749 by Lord Molesworth in marking the birth of his son Richard Nassau, was originally part of St Patrick's Well Lane. In 1905, it was suggested that the street's name in Irish was *Sráid Thobar Phádraig*. In 1921 a motion that Nassau Street be renamed *Tubber Patrick Street* was rejected by Dublin Corporation and today the street name in Irish remains as Sráid Nassau.[12] Contemporary street signs for Beresford Street in Dublin, named in the late 18th century, show both the contemporary Irish translation *Sráid Beresford*, which keeps the proper name, and an earlier *Sráid Dúinsméara* which means, roughly 'Berry Fort Street'.[13]

[11] See https://comeheretome.com/2012/04/11/ailtiri-na-haiseirghe-sean-treacy-and-talbot-street/ [last accessed 15.11.21].
[12] See https://www.logainm.ie/ga/1383555) [last accessed 18.11.21].
[13] See https://tinyurl.com/3pcyxcwm for a Google Street view of Beresford Street name signs.

Away from Dublin, the renaming of towns and administrative areas post-Independence reflects this broader theme of erasing place names and replacing them with names that could be employed in augmenting the nascent state's nationalist independence narrative. The renaming of Queenstown, county Cork, named in honour of the visit of Queen Victoria in 1849 to *Cóbh* in 1921 and the designation of Queen's County as county *Laois* and King's County as county *Offaly* are amongst some of the best known examples where references to monarchy was removed. In County Wexford, a vote by the rate payers of the town of Newtownbarry resulted in the name reverting to *Bunclody* in 1950.[14]

Renaming as part of the 50th anniversary commemoration of the Easter Rising in 1966 reflects the longevity of attempts in cleansing Ireland's toponymic landscape. In 1966, a number of train stations across Ireland were selected to be renamed in commemoration of the main leaders who had led the rising. In Dublin Kingsbridge Station was renamed *Heuston Station* and Amiens Street Station became *Connolly Station*. The main train station in Cork originally named Glanmire Road Station was renamed *Kent Station*, Sligo Station was renamed *Mac Diarmada Station* and Galway station renamed *Ceannt Station*. During 1966, Jubilee Road in Clones, county Monaghan named in 1897 to mark the 60th anniversary of the coronation of Victoria, was renamed *'98 Avenue* in marking the 1798 Rebellion, while the town's Erne Square was renamed *Fitzpatrick Square* in memory of Matt Fitzpatrick, the officer commanding of the 5th Northern Division of the IRA who had been killed in 1922.[15]

While opportunities to change existing names in Dublin proved quite challenging, reconstruction of existing parts of the inner city and construction of new developments in the suburbs from the 1930s onwards, aimed at addressing the city's housing crisis (Brady, 2014), provided a clear canvas where the new power brokers in the form of the state and Church could inscribe their identity, status and hegemony (Whelan, 2003, 214). The road names in the vicinity of Kimmage in south Dublin, 1930s-1960s were inspired by names associated with some of Ireland's most famous historic monastic settlements including Bangor, Cashel, Clogher, Clonmacnoise, Downpatrick, Ferns, Kildare, Kells, Leighlin and Saul. Saints' names were frequently employed in naming local authority housing schemes such as St Teresa's Gardens and St Laurence's Mansions in Dublin (Brady, 2016, 170). Most Irish country towns had at least one development, normally local authority housing, that was named after one of the two most popular saints in Ireland, Brigid or Patrick. The designation of 1954 as a Marian Year – a year for particular devotion to Mary, the mother of Jesus – by the Roman Catholic Church resulted in some streets and housing developments completed during that year including the name *Marian*. Such a phenomenon speaks to the level of influence enjoyed by the church in Ireland at this time. Besides socio-religious and political factors, Brady has examined how other motivations in seeking name changes centred on how the naming of new developments 'might impact adversely on … property values' (2016, 172), a theme that emerges in the next section of this chapter.

7 Naming in Modern Ireland

[14] See http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1950/si/281/made/en/print [last accessed 11.2.22].
[15] See https://www.rte.ie/archives/2017/0425/870227-what-should-happen-to-queen-victoria-statue/ [last accessed 16.2.22].

With a view to capturing a snapshot of naming practices in Modern Ireland (*c*.1960–2020), we carried out a case study on the modern and contemporary north-east suburbs of Dublin where we looked at residential suburban hodonyms (i.e. road names). The case study area equates approximately to the postcode districts of Dublin 5, Dublin 13 and Dublin 17, but also includes part of County Dublin. More specifically, it equates to the historic civil parishes of Artaine|Ard Aidhin, Balgriffin|Baile Ghrífín, Baldoyle|Baile Dúill, Coolock|An Chúlóg, Howth|Binn Éadair, Kilbarrack|Cill Bharróg, Killester|Cill Easra, Portmarnock|Port Mearnóg, Raheny|Ráth Eanaigh. Our analysis revolves around the historic townlands contained within these civil parishes. We chose this area as it comprises suburban developments built from the 1960s right up to today, including areas currently under development.

Situating our case study within the historic civil parishes was somewhat contrived, but it was convenient since defining the boundaries of the contemporary neighbourhoods (=areas) of Dublin is difficult. Muiris de Buitléir made the most definitive attempt at this so far in his mapping of what he termed Dublin's *City Districts* in *A Portrait of Dublin in Maps* (de Buitléir, 2013, 128–129). These are the toponyms Dubliners use to describe what *area* or *part* of Dublin they are from when asked, or perhaps what they put down on the optional second line of their postal address. District boundaries can be fluid and there are many examples of road name changes designed to reassign a road from one district to another, usually for social reasons. For example, *Brookwood Rise* in Artaine, formerly the south west end of *Harmonstown Road*, was renamed (Brady, 2014, 174) to distinguish the privately owned houses on that end of the road from the social housing further up the road, effectively relocating that part of the road from Harmonstown into Artaine. De Buitléir's districts which overlap with our case study area (excluding large parkland and industrial zones) are *Beaumont, Donnycarney, Killester, Artane (sic), Harmonstown, Raheny, Kilbarrack, Kilmore, Coolock, Darndale, Clare Hall, Donaghmede, Baldoyle, Sutton, Howth*. Portmarnock was outside the scope of his map.

Since de Builtéir's map was published, however, new districts have emerged within the area in question, namely, *Belmayne* and *Clongriffin*. Using the historic civil parishes allowed us to have a well-defined boundary that captured all of the residential developments in north-east Dublin since 1960 right up to today, including these new ones. In addition, the civil parishes subdivide neatly into townlands. With the green belt rapidly narrowing between the city limits at Baldoyle (Dublin 13) and the first north-east satellite suburb of Portmarnock (County Dublin), we have included Portmarnock to cover this area of development as well as to capture the use of townland names in residential road names outside the city limits.

Focusing on groups of residential roads within townlands allowed us to look at how much naming practices in modern and contemporary road developments relate to local history. Historic townland names, about one third of which in County Dublin are of Irish-language origin (de hÓir, 1972–73), are not generally recognised in urban and suburban Dublin City, but they are widely used in County Dublin, outside the city limits. Within the city and suburbs, however, townland names are sometimes incorporated into the naming of modern roads and housing developments, e.g. *Brookville Park* (Artane, Dublin 5). The case study area contains 62 townlands.

The method for our case study was as follows. Firstly, we compared the residential road names within each civil parish with the historic townland names therein. Secondly, we categorised the

names occurring within the research area. Thirdly and finally, we described the place name elements we saw occurring in the dataset. The toponymic data was retrieved from OpenStreetMap (OSM) via the Overpass API on a townland by townland basis, using OSM's own townland boundary data. The analysis and categorisation of road names in this case study was not based on extensive local knowledge or contact with housing developers, but rather on the surface forms of the road names supplemented by some local knowledge.

Obtaining a list of all residential ways (i.e. roads) in OSM in each townland allowed us to compare the townland name with the roads contained within the townland boundary in each case. This is important because we wish to show whether or not developers, public or private, are looking to the historic names for inspiration when naming roads in new residential developments. As highlighted by the Placenames Commission in their 1992 booklet entitled *Streetnames: Guidelines*, Government and local councils have in the recent past encouraged this, but it is not mandatory. Nonetheless, you would expect many new roads to be named after the places they traverse. What we see in the data we looked at (i.e. *c.*1k roads) is that only 5.64% of roads (61/1,081) had names that were based in whole or in part on the name of a townland they traverse. Examples of these names include *Grange Abbey Crescent* (Grange), *Newtown Court* (Newtown), *Tonlegee Road* (Tonlegee) and *Burrow Court* (Burrow). It is likely, however, that some of these are coincidental with the village or parish name, e.g. *Killester Park* (Killester North < Killester) and *Raheny Wood* (Raheny North < Raheny). Roads named after neighbouring townlands were not included, but nonetheless, the practice of naming new residential roads using historic townland names appears to be quite rare.

The second part of our analysis required us to broadly categorise the road names that occur within the case study area. We established the categories by reading through an alphabetic list of all the road names grouped by parish and townland, looking out for (recurring) themes. We assumed that some names would follow common types (e.g. famous people, landmarks, destinations), but we were on the lookout for other themes as well. What emerged were the following overlapping categories: Irish language (i.e. names in Irish only albeit with acute accents removed, e.g. *Dal Riada*, and names with Irish-language-based elements, e.g. *Carrick-*), flora and fauna (i.e. trees, animals, flowers, shrubs), built environment (e.g. buildings, parks, enclosures), physical landscape (e.g. fields, rivers, rocks, bays), eponymic places (e.g. Irish baronies, towns, townlands, lakes, foreign places, destinations), historic (i.e. townland and some other historic names), people (e.g. Irish politicians, Irish saints, biblical figures), ecclesiastical (e.g. church buildings, church lands) and colonial (e.g. English place name elements such as *wood*, *dale* and *brook*). Once we had established our categories, we assigned every road to one or more categories. Overlap happened most often between the *Irish-language*, *historic* and *ecclesiastical* categories, but also between other categories, e.g. *built environment* and *colonial*. Results are shown in Table 2 with examples. An interesting theme, which was not captured by the broad categorisation, is present in the townlands of Artaine (Domville) and Bonnybrook where a group of seven roads built in 1969 are named after the moon landing of that year (e.g. Aldrin Walk).

	Category	**Examples**
23%	Irish-language	**Adare Park**, **Clanmahon Road**, Coolrua Drive, **Donaghmede Road**, Dromawling Road, **Edenmore Park**, **Kilbarrack Road**, **Mask Green**,

		Moyclare Avenue, **Tonlegee Road**
17%	flora and fauna	Ashgrove, Buttercup Drive, Foxfield Crescent, **Thornville Avenue**, Verbena Park
15%	built environment	Castle Court, **Martello Court**, **Millbrook Drive**, Watermill Avenue
15%	physical landscape	Beaumont Grove, **Edenmore Park**, Seacliff Drive, Wheatfield Road
14%	eponymic places	**Adare Park**, **Clanmahon Road**, **Mask Green**, **Moyclare Avenue**
13%	historic	**Donaghmede Road**, **Edenmore Park**, **Grange Abbey Crescent**, **Harmonstown Road**, **Kilbarrack Road**, **Martello Court**, **Tonlegee Road**
11%	people	Ardilaun, Collins Park, Grace O'Malley Drive, **Harmonstown Road**, McAuley Park
10%	ecclesiastical	**Donaghmede Road**, **Grange Abbey Crescent**, **Kilbarrack Road**, Temple View Close, Churchwell Mews
10%	colonial	Newbury Wood, **Millbrook Drive**, **Thornville Avenue**

Table 2: Case study road name categories showing prevalence. Overlapping examples are shown in bold. Source: Compiled by authors.

The third and final part of our analysis involved extracting a frequency list of toponymic elements in the dataset (*c.*1k residential roads). This allowed us to further analyse the factors influencing the naming of residential roads in modern Dublin. The 12 most common disambiguation elements found in the dataset were *Road* (172), *Avenue* (145), *Park* (120), *Drive* (96), *Court* (64), *Grove* (63), *Crescent* (44), *Close* (37), *Green* (24), *Walk* (24), *Lawn* (24) and *Lane* (21). The 12 most frequent place name elements (including compound elements) found were *saint* (150), -*wood* (82), -*field* (61), -*more* (45), *grange*- (42), *ard*- (40), -*side* (33), *brook*- (30), *castle*- (30), -*ton* (30), -*hill* (27) and *kil(l)*- (27). Irish-language native elements emerged prominently, e.g. -*more* (45), *ard*- (40), *kil(l)*- (27), *clon*- (25), *ros*- (22), *carrick*- (16), *carrig*- (12), *clan*- (10), *bal*- (9) and *moy*- (9). The physical environment was prevalent within the native elements. English-language colonial elements emerged slightly more prominently than the Irish-language elements, e.g. -*wood* (82), *brook*- (30), *castle*- (30), -*ton* (30), -*hill* (27), -*mont* (16), *mill*- (15), -*mount* (15), -*town* (13) and -*ville* (11). The built environment was prevalent within the colonial elements.

The results of the case study show us clearly that the colonial names that characterise Dublin City (McCready, 1892) are not prevalent in the modern and contemporary suburbs of Dublin. Interestingly, names commemorating independence from Britain are not prevalent either. What we see instead is an overall tendency towards more neutral naming involving things like flora and fauna, the built environment and the physical landscape, coupled with homogenisation through the frequent use of common descriptive disambiguators (e.g. Crescent). Nonetheless, colonial name elements (e.g. *Wood*) are still quite common and outnumber Irish-language-based elements (e.g. -*more*), perhaps because the colonial-sounding elements are used by some developers in an attempt to assign prestige to new roads.

While it would have been interesting to accurately capture the naming tendencies over time from 1960 to 2020, it was outside the scope of this case study to assign a year to each residential road, and this data was not readily available. However, we posit that while the preference that existed for Irish-language names prior to the modern era may have waned in the subsequent decades, the use of Irish-language names and name elements persists to this day. In addition, through the use of elements derived from local townland and settlement names, as well as the names of baronies, parishes, towns, townlands, lakes and other places outside of Dublin, while obviously contrived in certain cases, Irish history and Irish language retain prominence in the names being chosen.

8 Protecting, recording and promoting place names as integral parts of cultural landscape and heritage

[Casestudy Box]

[Title:]Legal framework for naming in the Republic of Ireland

Under the Irish Constitution, the Irish language is the first official language, and the English language is recognised as a second official language. Place names in both languages are equally valid, except for Gaeltacht, or Irish-speaking, areas, where only the Irish version can be used on road signs.

There is no central authority for the creation of new English-language place names, administrative or otherwise, in Ireland. Local authorities are responsible under the Local Government Act, 1946, for keeping a record of new names in their area.

An Brainse Logainmneacha/The Placenames Branch, situated in the Government department with responsibility for the Irish language, undertakes research into the place names of Ireland to provide authoritative Irish language versions of place names for official and public use. The Irish language versions of administrative and certain non-administrative names determined by the Placenames Branch are given legal status by means of a place names order made by the Minister of State for Gaeltacht Affairs. The primary responsibility of the Placenames Committee is to advise the Minister in relation to the place names of Ireland as defined in section 31 of the Official Languages Act, 2003: '"placename" includes the name of any province, county, city, town, village, barony, parish or townland, or of any territorial feature (whether natural or artificial), district, region or place, as shown in the maps of Ordnance Survey Ireland'. Once an order has been made in respect of a Gaeltacht place name, the English version of the place name ceases to have any legal effect.

[End of Casestudy Box]

The Placenames Branch has, since its establishment in 1956, worked to determine the original Irish-language form of anglicised administrative place names, and to suggest suitable Irish-language forms for the minority which are not of Irish origin (Mac Giolla Easpaig, 2008). The Placenames Committee (formerly the Placenames Commission) meets regularly to consider the Branch's recommendations. The work of the Placenames Branch on Irish-language place names is available to the public through the *Logainm* ('place name') database, developed by Fiontar & Scoil na Gaeilge in

Dublin City University since 2007 with funding from the Government department with responsibility for the Irish language. The database contains English and/or Irish equivalents for over 120,000 places.

In addition to this basic information, all the digital records of the Placenames Branch, and most of their paper records, have been incorporated in the Logainm database so that much of the research trail of the Branch is available. A full bibliography and database of some 7,000 sources is also shared. The research trail stretches back to the Surveys and maps mentioned above as well as written records and audio recordings of fieldwork. This open approach has, ironically, led to an increase in correspondence to the Placenames Branch, often owing to a misinterpretation of the raw research, with local residents sometimes questioning or challenging decisions about both Irish and English place names. Naming can be controversial, and occasionally members of the local community can object to official naming policies, most notably in the case of Dingle, County Kerry. This Gaeltacht town and tourist hub was officially designated *An Daingean* in 2004, reflecting the long-established local Irish version of the name. As the Official Languages Act 2003 specified that this Irish version would have been the only name used on maps and official signage from then on (see information box above), residents of the town, fearing loss of tourist revenue, campaigned for a plebiscite on the name. On foot of the results, in 2011 the Minister of the Environment and Local Government changed the name of the town to *Dingle* in English and altered the official Irish version to *Daingean Uí Chúis*.

In recent years, Logainm editors have worked to link Logainm place entity identifiers to Ordnance Survey Ireland records, and this has led to corrections in both datasets of incorrectly located or spelled place names. Logainm data is openly available and Irish-language names are supplied to An Post GeoDirectory, and fed through to the Eircode (post code) system and to Google Maps. OpenStreetMap, Apple Maps and GeoNames have all ingested Logainm Irish-language toponymic data. Open online availability of correct Irish-language forms has, anecdotally, led to a reduction in misspelled or mistranslated forms in signage and in public usage. Although the Placenames Branch is not the official source for the provision of Irish language forms of street names (this responsibility is delegated to the relevant local authorities), the Logainm database holds *c*.38,000 street names, derived from Ordnance Survey Ireland records and research carried out by the Placenames Branch in conjunction with local councils, and gaps in Irish-language provision (where no extant Irish-language name can be found) are gradually being filled.

The other major category of place names in Ireland is non-administrative minor place names, such as physical features and human-made features. Field names are an example of minor place names; they have no official status or administrative function, but they can be extremely important as local sources of information regarding settlement patterns, agriculture and industry, amongst other things. Knowledge of field names is not as widespread as it once was due to demographic and occupational shifts. Minor place names are a popular topic with local historical and research groups, and field-name recording projects have been successfully undertaken in several counties, often with funding from city and county councils. Meitheal Logainm.ie, a tool for recording and preserving minor names, was established in 2015 to help such projects and ensure long-term preservation of the information collected. An example of this is the Kilkenny Field Names Recording Project, which was funded by the Heritage Council and resulted in the collection of over 11,000 field names, a book

(*Meitheal na bPáirceanna: The Kilkenny Fieldnames Recording Project*, 2016), and a short film. Minor names are generally more recent than administrative names and are more likely to be of English origin in non-Gaeltacht areas. In County Kilkenny, where Irish has not been spoken for several generations, 14% of all field names were of Irish origin or in Irish, and this percentage was higher in areas where Irish had been spoken somewhat more recently (Counihan, 2016, 29). The majority of field names collected were utilitarian and related to ownership, to location, to size and to topography or shape (Counihan, 2016, 12–17). The vast number of minor place names in Ireland is reflected in the *c*.300,000 references collected by the Cork and Kerry Place Names Survey since 1976.

[Casestudy Box]

[Title:]Legal framework for naming in Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland addresses are stored in the Pointer address database, maintained by Land & Property Services (LPS) with help from local councils and Royal Mail. The authority for naming is the local councils, and names can also, rarely, be designated by Letters Patent: this happened in 2021 when Hillsborough was renamed Royal Hillsborough on foot of an application by the local city council.

English is the official language in Northern Ireland and Irish has no official status. Local councils may however choose to pursue a bilingual approach. The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 bestows the power on councils to erect street name signs in a language other than English but the name must always be present in the official English form also.

[End of Casestudy Box]

Unlike the Republic of Ireland, there is no statutory imperative in Northern Ireland to use Irish-language forms of place names, although that may change in the near future with the enactment of a Languages Act. In the meantime, the Northern Ireland Place-Name Project works to elucidate the origin and meaning of the names of Northern Ireland, irrespective of their linguistic origin. The Project provides Irish-language forms to those local councils that choose to take a bilingual approach to signage and publications. While signage is politically contentious owing to the politicised nature of the Irish language in a Northern Ireland context,[16] place names research projects can be a way of creating a shared, non-sectarian pride of place, and the Northern Ireland Place-Name Project regards names as a 'manifestation of shared languages and shared space' (Ó Mainnín, 59). 'There can be fierce attachment to a name such as Drumnahuncheon (a name of Irish-language origin, Droim na hUinseann 'ridge of the ash-tree'), and pride on the part of the person who received it from their forebears... At the same time, there was resistance from the same person to the thought of the name appearing in its original Irish form in bilingual signage in the locality.' (Ó Mainnín, 76)

[16] See, for example, 'Irish language sign damage a "hate crime" police say', *The Irish News* 29 October 2021: https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2021/10/29/news/irish-language-sign-damage-a-hate-crime-police-say-2492719/

The introduction of the postcode and street name address system by Royal Mail in Northern Ireland in the 1970s meant that townland names were no longer always used in addresses, leading to concern that they would be forgotten.[17] Street names are generally much newer, and townland names are more likely to be of Irish-language origin. An address such as

Lambeg
Lisburn
County Antrim

changed to

Ballyskeagh Rd
Lisburn
BT27 5TE

Although similar concerns were voiced prior to the introduction of the Eircode postcode system in the Republic of Ireland in 2015, it is too early to measure any effect on knowledge and use of townland names.

9 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to offer a reading of Ireland's toponymic landscape over the past four hundred years in charting how the agency of the state and influential groups and individuals, from the colonial to postcolonial era periods through to the present day have sought to name and rename places and record these names in either strengthening or challenging dominant ideologies and values. In looking at more recent influences on naming in the period 1960 to the present day, the case study of parts of north Dublin is hugely insightful in illustrating the breadth and range of influences that have a bearing on the choice of street name. The impact and significance of such inscribing, erasing and recording on the cultural landscape is a useful indicator of broader changing socio-economic and political structures that has to date, in the Irish context, not received the attention it merits. In concluding the chapter, consideration is given to how the rich toponymic heritage of both administrative and non-administrative minor place names in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland are protected, recorded and promoted, but also contested for a variety of reasons.

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Questions

[17] See, for example, a debate in the Northern Ireland Assembly on 1 October 2001: https://www.theyworkforyou.com/ni/?id=2001-10-01.9.0

1. With a particular focus on Ireland, detail the varying motivations in naming and renaming streets?
2. Use the www.logainm.ie website to identify five places in Ireland whose Irish name and English name are not direct translations of each other and discuss.
3. For an administrative region / urban settlement that you are familiar with, consider how the place names reflect those who have influenced and controlled it over time.
4. How are place names recorded and protected in a country that you are familiar with?

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