

# Street-Naming Cultures in Africa and Israel

Power Strategies and Place-Making  
Practices

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## Chapter 2

**Names in the city: street signage  
in urban Africa and Israel**

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## 2 Names in the city

### Street signage in urban Africa and Israel

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#### **Introductory note**

This chapter presents the photographs and accompanying texts of an exhibition that we set up in 2018. The exhibition was first held at the library of the Holon Institute of Technology (HIT) in the spring and then moved to the Architect's House gallery in Jaffa for the summer. It featured about a hundred pictures of street signage from Africa and Israel, covering large and small cities, city centres and suburbs, street signs as such and alternative signage, formal names or the lack thereof and a wide range of linguistic landscapes.

By bringing together a visual collection of so diverse toponymic inscriptions, the exhibition strived to broaden the geographic, thematic and methodological horizons of current street name studies. The aim was threefold. Firstly, to document what is too often overlooked. This implied ignoring the self-inflicted limits of Europe- or America-centred research traditions in their over-reliance on official signage, maps and gazetteers. Formal names, the exhibition showed, are neither the only ones to be considered nor always the most relevant for a political analysis. Secondly, the exhibition invited its visitors to read toponymic landscapes as being shaped and reshaped by a wide range of players and social forces. As an initial act of colonial intervention in the space of the colonised, the hanging up of street signs superimposed on other local uses, conceptually and visually, other ways of naming and marking space and place. Different toponymic systems continue to exist. The exhibition shed light on their tensions and interactions in terms of identity/alterity interplay, forms of distancing and otherness and memories and counter-memories in a variety of scales, languages and contexts. Thirdly, but not least, we have endeavoured to bring the sensory fabric of urban ambiances into the analysis. This involves examining street signs, not as if they have the same significance wherever they are planted but in their relation to both the surrounding physical environment and the practices of

ordinary people. As many of the following photos illustrate, the lived city and the experiences of city dwellers largely determine street-name reception.

We issued a call for photographs a year before the exhibition, mentioning the aforementioned goals and asking contributors to send one or more images with a brief explanation. The call was distributed via academic listservs (H-Net, Calenda) and platforms dedicated to photographers in Africa (afriqueinvisu.org, Maison Africaine de la Photographie). At the time, we were planning a selection of around 40 large format images. The response was more massive than expected. In a few months, we received nearly 500 photos. We selected a fifth of these – being the maximum we could hang (in smaller sizes than originally planned) in the library space of HIT. Two-thirds of the photos received were from African cities, one-third from Israel. We have kept this proportion in the selection. There was the same proportion with regard to contributors' occupations, which we also retained. That is, about two-thirds of the proposals were submitted by academics in the social and human sciences – remarkably, with no specific discipline predominating. The submitters were geographers, linguists, anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists and historians, each approaching street signage from a different angle. The other third was no less diverse and stimulating. It comprised professional and amateur photographers, architects, social and political activists, as well as just residents or passers-by – each with their concerns and own ways of capturing the toponymic landscapes. To retain this diversity, we sought a balance between the proper qualities of each contribution and the complex tapestry they weave together. The exhibition owed its richness to the combination of many diverse perspectives (and talents).

The most challenging part of the curation process was to classify the selected pictures. Binary oppositions – e.g. formal vs. informal toponymy or official vs. alternative signage – were irrelevant. The opening image, for example [Figure 2.1], showing the hand-painted inscription of a formal street name on a corrugated iron fence, could not be reduced to one discrete category. This image and almost all the others are informative in many ways, making the options for grouping them virtually endless. Rather than mutually exclusive categories, we opted for a breakdown in thematic panels. Each panel opens with a short analytical text that sets out its general theme, binds the panel's photos together under that umbrella topic and occasionally outlines inter-African or African-Israeli comparisons.

The first panel, serving as a visual and conceptual introduction to the exhibition, immediately took shape. There was a sort of intuitive obviousness in using it to intertwine street signage in Brazzaville, Congo, and in Holon, Israel – with an emphasis on Holon's Brazzaville Street, which, as recalled in the preface, was the birthplace of this book. It took more time to design the other panels and arrange them in a progressive sequence. The question was to bring out prominent aspects of street signage in African



Figure 2.1 Félix Éboué Street, Brazzaville, Congo.

Source: Photo by Jean-Euloge Samba.

and Israeli cities, while gradually building, from panel to panel, an in-depth understanding of it in both regions (and possibly beyond). After trying countless combinations, we decided on the following panel themes, in this order: the ideological uses of street signage in colonial history and now, signage languages and the construction of public space, the policies and politics of street numbering, street signage and the making of place, neo-liberal reforms and the commodification of signage, signage decay and weathering, address-less settlements and how their residents cope with it.

There remained one difficulty. Since these analytical categories are not mutually exclusive, most images could have fit in more than one panel. To finalise the sequencing of the photos, we gave ourselves a rule: two cross-cutting themes were to run in each panel and through the exhibition as a whole – the materiality of signage and its reception in specific contexts. By complementing the panels' themes and analyses, these common threads have helped an approach to street signage that is lively and rigorous, generic and site-specific, theoretical and empirically nuanced. Short bios of the participants, 35 in all, from 4 continents, are attached at the end of the chapter. All captions were written or rewritten by us unless otherwise stated.

### **Panel I Brazzaville/Holon: visual and conceptual connections**

The existence of a Brazzaville Street in Holon, a suburban town bordering Tel Aviv, as well as a reference to a few sample street names in Brazzaville, the capital of the Republic of Congo, serve as a trigger for the entanglement

between these two cities. This entanglement has political-ideological facets while at the same time displays the mundane side of everyday life (for more see Chapter 3).

The histories and present-day policies with regard to both localities' toponyms were intertwined in this panel in a discursive way. The interconnection between the two different geographies, historical and socio-political contexts as related to 'Brazzaville', enables an innovative glimpse of place-naming processes. Connecting Israel and the Congo in a flexible way, and their attached nationalisms, revolutions, international relations and the everyday dimension, constitutes a debut reflecting the ambiance of this exhibition and its creation of original and novel interpretations concerning nomenclatures beyond Europe. Rather than concentrating on a single site-related toponymic process in an essentialist way, we have touched these two sites in an interactive manner, intertwining between their different colonial and postcolonial heritages. This entanglement reflects not only urban practices, experiences and memories in situ but also it rather promotes a more inclusive and transnational interpretation of place naming.

In Brazzaville, the toponyms connect between formal and informal traditions of urban planning, urban practices and imageries. They also embed colonial and postcolonial realities, moving between socio-political conformity and multisided indocility. In Holon, Brazzaville Street and the nearby, what was previously Tamatave Street, are exceptional in their relative political light-mindedness in the Israeli urban namescape, generally characterised as a hot and ideological climate. Inaugurated in times of tightened relations between Israel and Africa, the plaque of Brazzaville Street bore a geographical mistake for more than 50 years without anyone apparently noticing, while Tamatave Street was recently hastily replaced with another (ideological) name by Holon's municipality. And here, Holon's public housing projects and an area whose inhabitants have refused 'slum clearance' since 1948 in the vicinity of both streets – bring us to the broader picture of global South cities and cityscapes, referring back to Brazzaville.

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Welcome to Baongo, one of the oldest and poorest boroughs of Brazzaville, immediately bordering the ex-European Plateau. French authorities, following colonial logic, created the area in 1909, out of three small villages, to keep the colonised Africans away from the city centre. The street is named after Félix Éboué, who established Baongo as an Indigenous Council in 1943 while serving as the governor general of French Equatorial Africa (AEF) [Figure 2.1]. Éboué, born in French Guyana and a Free French leader, was the first black person to be appointed to such a high post in the French colonies and to have his remains placed at the Pantheon in Paris after his death in 1944. This highly symbolic figure, also commemorated in several toponyms in Paris, is in counterpoint to the hand-painted address on

corrugated iron – material that has conquered many cityscapes in Africa and beyond.

The Avenue des Trois Francs is a 1.5 kilometre artery that crosses the popular borough of Bacongo and ends at Avenue de Brazza on the edge of the ex-European Plateau quarter [Figure 2.2]. Its name commemorates an anti-colonial strike against the three francs tax that was imposed on the indigenous population at times of World War Two (WWII). The strike, which was harshly suppressed, is considered a landmark in early Congolese nationalism. While the street, originally named Guynemer in the colonial period, was renamed a few years after independence, it is still known by both names in popular usage.

The Three Martyrs Avenue near Brazzaville’s airport [Figure 2.3] is named after those who were killed during the ‘Three Glorious Days’, 13–15 August 1963, leading to the resignation of the French-backed president, the city’s mayor and National Assembly member Abbé Fulbert Youlou (in office from independence 15 August 1960 to 15 August 1963). Abbé Youlou, a laicised priest with a mystical aura in the eyes of his supporters, sparked widespread protest due to his decision to impose a single-party system and imprison union leaders.

Could it be that the Congo and its capital Brazzaville, actually located on the western side of Africa, were relocated eastwards, at a considerable distance? The short Hebrew explanation just underneath the toponym ‘Brazzaville Street’ stated that the city was “the capital of Congo in *East Africa*”. The geographical dissonance presented on this sign remained uncorrected for decades on this short street close to the northern entrance to Holon, a suburban town that borders Tel Aviv [Figure 2.4].



Figure 2.2 Avenue des Trois Francs, Brazzaville, Congo.

Source: Photo by Jean-Euloge Samba.



*Figure 2.3* Three Martyrs Avenue, Brazzaville, Congo.

Source: Photo by Jean-Euloge Samba.



*Figure 2.4* Brazzaville Street, Holon, Israel.

Source: Photo by Liora Bigon, 2014; the visit of the vice-president of Congo-Brazzaville in Holon in 1962. In public domain, Holon History Museum and Archive.

The street name was set in the heydays of Israel-Africa relations in the early 1960s when a series of developmentalist endeavours and expertise were exported to the continent. Unlike the business-minded approach that characterises Israel-Africa relations at present, by the early 1960s, such relations were guided by a passionate solidarity on the part of Israel, which gained its

independence not much before most of the African countries. Holon was, therefore, visited by the vice-president of Congo-Brazzaville in 1962 (see the photo taken in the front yard of the private home of Holon's mayor, Pinhas Ayalon, Figure 2.4). However, following the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, diplomatic relations between Israel and the African countries that aligned themselves with the Arab Bloc were frozen, with the government of Congo-Brazzaville among the first to do so already in 1972. While the residents of Brazzaville Street demanded to change their street's name, Ayalon was reluctant, explaining that one needs to discern between the hostility of the Congolese government and the supposed friendship between each country's peoples. During this dispute, well documented in the city's archives, no one seemed to notice the geographical disorientation inscribed in the explanation right under the toponym. A naive mistake on the part of a state that did not exist during the European 'scramble' for Africa?

Following our remark to the Holon Municipality in 2014 through the local newspaper, the sign was corrected together with a renovation of the signage in the whole vicinity and now reads: "Brazzaville, the capital of the Republic of Congo" [Figure 2.5]. A change in the style of this sign is also salient, implying a 'classic turn' to the British Mandate period (indeed, a British guard post called the 'pillbox' is situated just opposite Brazzaville Street). That is, it changed to white letters on a blue background, *à la* Mandatory regulations regarding street plaques all over the British Empire.

Aligned in parallel to Brazzaville Street is Tamatave Street in Holon, which was also named during the golden age of Israel-Africa relations. Holon established a twinning agreement with the port city of Tamatave



Figure 2.5 Brazzaville Street, Holon, Israel.

Source: Photo by Michel Ben Arrous, 2018.



(Toamasina) in Madagascar in the early '60s, when shared overseas ceremonies took place. Holon's then-mayor Pinhas Ayalon visited Tamatave and hosted in return a delegation from there in his city – in whose presence the toponym was inaugurated [Figure 2.6].

Tamatave Street was renamed by the municipality of Holon in 2005, which ignored the contemporary state of Israel-Madagascar relations (Madagascar had cut ties with Israel in 1973 and restored them in 1994) and without consulting the city council. Its toponym has been changed into Rechavam Ze'evi Street, commemorating a right-wing politician who sought to suppress the



*Figure 2.6* The mayors of Holon and Tamatave at the inauguration ceremony of Tamatave Street, 1962.

Source: In public domain, Holon History Museum and Archive.

Palestinian population. The renaming event took place on the Memorial Day for Yitzhak Rabin, a left-wing prime minister who, while promoting the peace process with the Palestinians, was assassinated by a right-wing terrorist in the winter of 1995 (Ze'evi was assassinated in 2001 by Palestinian terrorists). This move resulted in a protest on the part of Shmuel Bartenstein, a left-wing member of the city council – holding a sign, under the street plaque, saying, “No to Transfer Street” – in vain [Figure 2.7].

The next four images [Figures 2.8–2.11] from/regarding Brazzaville highlight one of the subjects that runs through the exhibition. That is, the day-to-day, often almost trivial context of the signage and its appearance in relatively underprivileged, sometimes semi-formal, areas of the city – with the actual appearance of the ‘real city’ that tends to undermine the wished-for image of the city. The two images of Brazzaville Street in Holon, a short



Figure 2.7 Holon, Israel, “No for the Transfer Street”, 2005.

Source: Photo by Ora Lev-Ron and Shmuel Bartenstein.



*Figure 2.8* Brazzaville Street and its vicinity, Holon, Israel.

Source: Photo by Liora Bigon.



*Figure 2.9* A handmade signage for official street, Brazzaville, Congo.

Source: Photo by Rodric Steeve Mpassy.

and easy to miss street, exemplify this: one plaque [Figure 2.8] confronts a few tens of informal structures whose occupiers, since 1948, refuse rehousing programmes; and the other plaque [Figure 2.10] is hung on the walls of one of the public housing blocks that this street comprises, currently inhabited by relatively disempowered Jews of Middle Eastern origin, newcomers of Russian origin and a growing community of ultra-Orthodox Sephardi Jews. The pair of images from Brazzaville [Figures 2.9 and 2.11] show official but still handmade signage against the background of a streetscape



Figure 2.10 A plaque of Brazzaville Street, Holon, Israel.

Source: Photo by Liora Bigon.



Figure 2.11 Official but handmade street sign in a dilapidated state, Brazzaville, Congo.

Source: Photo by Lebon Chansard Ziavoula.

made partly of temporary building materials and signage in a dilapidated state. This also implies on Holon photos.

### **Panel II (Post-)colonial ideologies and signage: a top-down view**

Discursive relations between place naming policies and colonial, postcolonial and post-independence state ideologies in Africa and Israel are exemplified

in this panel through short insights on Francophone, Anglophone and Lusophone Africa and on British Palestine and independent Israel. Considering colonial, settler-colonial and mandate territories, from Casablanca to Cape Town via Maputo and Tel Aviv, the focus here is on the variety of top-down naming policies and their value orientation, in conformity with the political logic and systems of government of each territory in question. This category of place naming expresses the prominence of political regimes, nationalisms and ideologies in the shaping and dissemination of ‘textual streetscapes’ against the background of historical events and processes.

In Africa, designed mainly for the benefit of the expatriate population, the more prestigious Europeanised quarters and their related spatial terminology reflected the mentality and ambiance of the politically dominant culture. These quarters had introduced – in a variety of global colonial contexts – a sense of uncanny order into what had been perceived as an amorphous, if not wild, landscape. Moreover, in many cases, the actual toponymic inscriptions in these quarters testify to the ruling philosophy of the respective colonial regime, such as (French) assimilation, (British) indirect rule or apartheid. In many cases as well, the postcolonial period created toponymic hybrids of names coexisting literally one near the other, in a thought-provoking mix. In Israel, like in other countries where several national communities speaking different languages coexist, language and signage issues are loaded with ideological and political implications. It is especially in bilingual and multilingual societies that a problem exists concerning official signage policies – both intercity governmental and urban municipal. From the British Mandate times to the post-independence period, the process of administrating signage policies in Israel is a vehicle for understanding ethno-linguistic and socio-political conflicts.

Our visual examples constitute just a glimpse. Possibilities for current place-naming conversations with a strong affinity for the colonial period are myriad on the intra- and extraterritorial levels. These toponymic legacies not only point to the multiplicity of colonial regimes that were involved in the creation of urban spaces; they equally reflect on the continuity of the colonial past into the postcolonial present and on the conflictual relations between history and the ceaseless formation and reconstruction of collective memories and counter-memories.

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The strategic position of Dakar, the westernmost tip of Africa, was acknowledged by the French following the Crimean War and in the age of modern imperialism. Its first streets were named together with the drawing up of the first city plan in 1862, intended for the French colonialist community. The designation of Dakar as the capital of the *Afrique Occidentale Française* (AOF) Federation in 1902 culminated with the consolidation of the French centralist doctrine of ‘assimilation’. The latter aimed at turning the colonies and their populations into an integral part of the metropolitan country.

Consequently, ‘Rue Pasteur’ (after the microbiologist who discovered the vaccination against some tropical diseases, critical to the white presence overseas) [Figure 2.12] and ‘Rue Galliéni’ (after the then renowned military commander and administrator) [Figure 2.13] in Dakar and ‘Rue de France’ [Figure 2.14] in Saint-Louis, exemplify these assimilationist views.

At the same time as imposing metropolitan cultural and political values, the French colonialist doctrine of ‘assimilation’ strove for the nullification



*Figure 2.12* Rue Pasteur, Dakar, Senegal.

Source: Photo by Liora Bigon.



*Figure 2.13* Rue Galliéni, Dakar, Senegal.

Source: Photo by Liora Bigon.



*Figure 2.14* Rue de France, Saint-Louis, Senegal.

Source: Photo by Liora Bigon.

of indigenous urban cultures. In Dakar, what this meant was French efforts to transfer the local Lebou population to the margins of the city, while erasing their toponymy from the city centre. ‘Rue de Thann’ constitutes in this regard a rare and outstanding testimony for the persistence of pre-colonial indigenous toponymy in Dakar’s city centre – maybe because here were located the headquarters of the Lebou chief (*sérigne*) at the time of the French military occupation of the area [Figure 2.15].

The annexation of Lagos to the British Crown in 1861 was the first step in making Nigeria into one of the most populous and wealthiest of African



Figure 2.15 Rue de Thann, Dakar, Senegal.

Source: Photo by Thomas Hart.

territories. Lagos, its capital, enjoyed construction and improvement of wharfs, being the terminus station of hundreds of miles of railroad to the hinterland and the only first-class township in British Nigeria. According to the typically British colonial doctrine of ‘indirect rule’, the economic exploitation of Africa was expected to occur with the least interference in indigenous customs (hence ‘indirect’), through decentralised politics and policies. This *laissez-faire* atmosphere was also reflected in colonial place-naming practices, which, unlike those of the French, were generally open to accept local nomenclatures. The old Ajele Street near the Marina exemplifies this, inter alia, with *ajele* meaning ‘consul’ in Yoruba, as that was where the British consul resided [Figure 2.16].

Early Tel Aviv is an exemplary case of local society, which, under the British Mandate, was strong enough in terms of identity and (Zionist) ideology to fix its toponymy for itself, without significant intervention from the colonial regime. In 1918, Meir Dizengoff, who was to become the first mayor, announced the upcoming visit of Field Marshal Allenby and proposed to call the then unpaved main road after him, as Allenby was perceived by the Jewish society as the emancipator of the land from the Ottoman regime [Figure 2.17]. Tel Aviv was the first Jewish settlement to name streets, and most names were commemorative. The naming process before its new legislative status as a ‘township’ in 1921 was quite rudimentary – names were chosen democratically in meetings of all the residents, to be ratified later by the town council.





*Figure 2.16* Ajele Street, Lagos, Nigeria.

Source: Photo by Liora Bigon.



*Figure 2.17* Allenby Street, Tel Aviv, Israel.

Source: Photo by Yoram Bar-Gal.

In 1924, the British regime interfered in the naming process of Tel Aviv streets, asking its signage to be written in Hebrew, Arabic and English. Meir Dizengoff, the mayor, agreed, employing ceramic plaques as in contemporary Jerusalem to be made for Tel Aviv's 22 main streets by the Bezalel School of Arts and Crafts in Jerusalem. After completing 11 ceramic plaques, among them for Nachlat Benyamin Street, the British administrator insisted that

the plaques must be made of iron, with white letters on blue background “as in Cairo and Alexandria”. As a result of this colonial policy of standardising street signs across the British Empire, new plaques were later installed. But, interestingly enough, the Arabic transcription was omitted by the hegemonic group – a practice of enforced Hebraisation that has been recently contested in the High Court by Arab activists and is now being changed by the municipality [Figure 2.18].

‘Rue Bringau’ honoured the personal photographer of Sultan al-Hafiz, a French engineer who was killed during the Fez riots of April 1912. The riots began as a mutiny of Moroccan infantrymen under French command in response to the sultan’s agreement to make Morocco a French Protectorate. Rioters soon turned their anger against the *mellah* (the Jewish quarter), murdering dozens of its residents and leaving 12,000 homeless. The Fez riots or *Tritl* (literally the ‘sack’, as they came to be remembered) were a bleak moment in the history of Moroccan Jews and a factor in their mass emigration after the restoration of Moroccan independence. More than 50 years after the repeal of the Protectorate (in 1956), the colonial signpost is still in place, coexisting with a new one that honours an anti-colonial figure. The street was renamed after Patrice Lumumba (here misspelled), the first democratically elected prime minister of what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC, ex-Belgian Congo). An outspoken African nationalist and Pan-Africanist, Lumumba was assassinated in January 1961 on the orders of Belgian officials aided and abetted by the CIA. The misspelling of his name results from a phonetic rendering by the person who transcribed it



Figure 2.18 Nachlat Benyamin Street, Tel Aviv, Israel.

Source: Photo by Michel Ben Arrous.

into French from the Arabic [Figure 2.19]. The switch from ‘Rue Bringau’ – notice the assimilationist French language only – to bilingual ‘Rue Patrice Lemomba’ reflects both the will to assert the primacy of Moroccan Arabic and the persistence of the French language in Moroccan cityscapes. Strikingly enough, Berber is absent, despite the policy that in 2011 promoted it to the status of second official language, after Arabic.

Jean-Baptiste Colbert, the powerful minister of finances of King Louis XIV in seventeenth-century France, is generally remembered as an exemplary statesman, fully dedicated to building the prosperity of his country. On a less glorious level, he initiated the redaction of the *Code noir* (1685) – the infamous official document that defined the conditions of slavery in the French empire, ordered all Jews out of France’s colonies and prohibited any religious practice other than Roman Catholicism. With broad powers over the commercial economy, agriculture, industry and the navy, Colbert enabled France to accumulate gold and silver through trade with its overseas possessions. Many streets were named after him throughout the French colonial empire. Following the end of French rule in Morocco, Casablanca’s ‘Rue Colbert’ was renamed after the region of Chaouia or ‘Land of Chaouis’, a Berber word meaning ‘sheep herders’ [Figure 2.20]. Historically, the Chaouia region, comprising Casablanca, had in 1907 mounted the first strong rebellion against colonial penetration in Morocco – leading, in retaliation, to the French bombing of the city and its near-complete destruction. Against this background, the trouble-free coexistence of the Chaouia and Colbert signposts stands in contrast with the situation in France herself, where anti-racist associations are asking



Figure 2.19 Rue Bringau/Rue Patrice Lemomba, Fez, Morocco.

Source: Photo by Samira Hassa.



Figure 2.20 Rue Colbert/Rue Chaouia, Casablanca, Morocco.

Source: Photo by Samira Hassa.

(so far in vain) that the many schools and high schools named after Colbert be renamed and that his statue in front of the National Assembly be taken down. To our knowledge, no civic association in Morocco ever petitioned to have the Colbert street sign removed. In common usage, many

Casawis (residents of Casablanca) actually continue to refer to Chaouia Street as ‘Rue Colbert’.

This series of four images shows the physical process of replacing a street name in Sommerschield, one of the most prestigious areas of the Mozambican capital. First [Figure 2.21], the name on the initial marble plate is covered with black ink, rendering it illegible. Then [Figure 2.22], the marble plate with the blackened plate is removed. The last two photos show a new marble plate bearing the new name, before [Figure 2.23] and after [Figure 2.24] the official unveiling. What, under Portuguese colonisation, was an avenue named after the Portuguese general Teixeira Botelho, has now become a street bearing the name of Samuel Dabula Nkumbula – an ardent promoter of African languages and cultures who deeply impacted



*Figures 2.21* Rua Samuel Dabula Nkumbula, Maputo, Mozambique.

Source: Photos by César Cumbe.



*Figures 2.22* Rua Samuel Dabula Nkumbula, Maputo, Mozambique.

Source: Photos by César Cumbe.



Figures 2.23 Rua Samuel Dabula Nkumbula, Maputo, Mozambique.

Source: Photos by César Cumbe.



Figures 2.24 Rua Samuel Dabula Nkumbula, Maputo, Mozambique.

Source: Photos by César Cumbe.

the cultural dimensions of Mozambique's struggle for independence. Photos were taken in February, May, July and September 2007, respectively.

Israeli street names create clusters of concepts around common themes. So these two Jerusalem streets meet in an area named after various heroes of the Zionist paramilitary movements that operated in Mandate Palestine between 1931 and 1948 – Etzel and Lehi. These movements were considered terrorists by the British, and even by many among the Jewish inhabitants. In their own eyes and to mainstream Israelis today, they were freedom

fighters. They believed that they were revolutionising the Jewish response to oppression: no longer passive resistance but proud military activism. David Raziel Street commemorates Etzel's founder and first commander. When WWII broke out, he stopped his anti-British activities, joined the British army and was killed on a mission in Iraq.

The Jews of Mashhad are a community from northern Iran, who were forced to convert to Islam in 1839 – hence the qualifier *Anuse* (converted by force). For over a hundred years they kept their Jewish identity and religion through intermarriage, being extremely proud of their community – a self-proclaimed ‘nobility’ even during their worst times. Their ties with British merchants and intelligence officers were a lifeline to another world. After WWII many of them left Iran and resettled in Israel. Some stayed behind until the Khomeini revolution in 1979 cut short their economic success and they had to flee for their lives, but are now flourishing in Great Neck, New York. And so the underground community upheld its identity, helping and being helped by British officers under daily life-threatening danger, meets at a street corner in the Jerusalem of their dreams with the underground-movement commander who was fighting for political independence against the British in Israel-to-be, yet fell in British service. Clearly, putting these street signs side by side by the Israeli authorities was meant to contrast the pre-state diaspora lives of fear with post-independence pride [Figure 2.25]. Yet, from the viewpoint of the Mashhadis, this conjunction means different heroism under different colonialisms and different ironies meeting at one street corner.



*Figure 2.25* The corner of David Raziel Street and Anuse Mesh'ed Street, Jerusalem, Israel.

Source: Photo by Hilda Nissimi.

Notice that because of the special status of Jerusalem, as also in Israel's main urban centres, Arabic, spoken by a fifth of Israeli citizens, is included on the white, free-standing plaques.

Following the 1948 War, the urban space in the south of Israel was conquered and became Hebraised, together with the application of infrastructural and other urban amenities. The Arab town Majdal was surrounded, and its remaining 1,500 residents, represented in the temporary council of the city of Ashkelon, were incorporated into the city. The excitement of the conquest led the Jewish leaders to name the city's streets with heroic names that symbolised the struggle for independence. Along the years, these names began to converse with the changing socio-economic and psychological character of the city in somewhat an ironic way. For instance, names such as 'Ha-Gdud ha-Ivri' – that is, the 'Jewish Legion' (1917–1921), referring to the battalions of Jewish volunteers in the British Army who fought against the Ottoman Empire during World War One (WWI) – now faces a motorcycle business (this Legion's soldiers were renowned for riding on the back of mules) [Figure 2.26], or the 'Aliya Street' – i.e. the immigration of Jews from the Diaspora to the Land of Israel – confronts a private business named 'Golda' (after Golda Meir, the first minister of labour in Israel), facing an old Arab house at the right of the image [Figure 2.27].

Notice that in Israel's second-tier cities (such as Ashkelon or Holon), Arabic transcription is not always added to street signs.

Apart from empirical data concerning discriminatory policies by the Jerusalem Municipality and limited budget allocations for the city's Arab districts, the signage, on the symbolic level, achieves the same atmosphere.



*Figure 2.26* Jewish Legion Street, Ashkelon, Israel.

Source: Photo by Avi Sasson and Gad Sobol.





Figure 2.27 The Aliya Street, Ashkelon, Israel.

Source: Photo by Avi Sasson and Gad Sobol.

For instance, the road signs that indicate certain Jewish neighbourhoods ignore the Palestinian ones that are located on the same road and direction. Another example is Paratroopers Road, which is situated in one of Jerusalem's most sensitive areas, a road that until 1967 served as the border between the two parts of the city [Figure 2.28]. The municipality's toponym for this road bears a military connotation, reminding the Arab residents who is in power. The order of the languages on the sign and the size of the script also point to an implicit hierarchy.

In Cape Town's city centre, here at the corner of Buitengracht and Wale Streets, between formal storefronts and the discreet stall of a flower vendor, signage of heritage and orientation unfolds vertically. Not showing a street name but appropriating the codes of urban signage, the brown sign indicates the direction to the Mandela Rhodes Place (which is not a 'place' in the sense of a public open space but the name of a suites hotel) and the adjacent Mandela Rhodes Foundation [Figure 2.29]. The juxtaposition of two opposed figures, Rhodes the mining magnate and expansionist empire-builder (Zambia and Zimbabwe, formerly North and Southern Rhodesia, were once named after him; Rhodes also served as prime minister of the Cape Colony in the 1890s), and Mandela, the anti-apartheid hero and reconciliation champion, seems ideologically in line with the branding of South Africa as an 'already-reconciled' Rainbow Nation. Elsewhere in the urban agglomeration, however, references to Rhodes are highly controversial. In 2015, the #RhodesMustFall campaign had his statue removed from the campus of the University of Cape Town, while, on the other hand, Nelson



Figure 2.28 Paratroopers Road, Jerusalem, Israel.

Source: Photo by Meir Margalit.



Figure 2.29 Mandela Rhodes Place, Cape Town, South Africa.

Source: Photo by Frédéric Giraut.

Mandela's figure is widely celebrated throughout the post-apartheid public space.

### **Panel III Reshaping the public space: bottom-up responses**

Top-down, ideologically driven policies of street naming and signage generate, almost by definition, bottom-up reactions and responses. Examples in this panel encompass graffiti, alternative signage, self-initiated signage and creative reuse of signage codes. They convey different attitudes to official signposting, ranging from protest and engagement to mockery and ironic distance. Each, in its own way, challenges the hegemonic claim of a dominant culture.

Street signs are not posted in social or cultural vacuums. In multiethnic and multilingual contexts, like Israel and most African countries, signage policies are all the more prone to being contested since, manipulatively applied, they exclude whole groups of people from the production of public space. The latter is here to be understood both in the simple sense of 'non-private space' (the portion of city space, including streets and places, that is physically open to passers-by) and in that of a 'space for debate' (a metaphorical place for civic expression in the conduct of public affairs). Not only street names contribute to demarcate borders within and between ethno-linguistic groups but also the languages used. The visibility and salience of languages in the public space – that is, the linguistic landscape – involve many influential factors likely to stir various forms of discontent. Such factors include the presence or absence of particular languages, the order of those displayed, the connection between language preference and the demographic weight of their speakers, considerations of consumption under the global economy of tourism – and, of course, the meanings assigned to all the above or their perception by the groups involved.

Photos from Israel in this panel, mostly from mixed Jewish-Arab cities, contribute to an understanding of linguistic landscapes as being both arenas and mirrors of the ideological, political and cultural conflicts that, in this country, shape the identity of space. The issue of street signposting is in Israel embedded within a passionate nationalistic ideology and socio-political contexts, with limited consideration given to disempowered sectors or cultural minorities. We shall literally reread here the dominant governmental narrative in a challenging way – through the symbolic resistance of multifarious social forces and their counter-strategies for reshaping the public space.

The photos from African cities are of a quieter tone, possibly due to lower ideological investment in signage since the end of colonial rule or because self-initiated signage has in many areas become a mundane substitute for missing or derelict official street signs. They point to a dispassionate attitude towards colonially inherited signage and its (ex-colonial) languages – making

the most practical use of local languages, while still using the colonial ones on occasion.

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‘The Way of Language’ is a graffiti dictionary of Arabic and Hebrew words in the public sphere. Figures 2.30 and 2.31 show the Arabic word *shar’a*, meaning ‘street’, followed by its phonetic transcription and translation (*rehov*) in Hebrew. Same for the word *amn* on Figure 2.32, meaning ‘security’ (in Hebrew, *bitahon*). An initiative of the Parrhesia group of social-activist artists, this bilingual dictionary came in response to the process of erasing the Arabic language from civil life in Israel, and its negative implications. Making Arabic spatially present challenges conceptions that see this language and culture as a threat, by offering an alternative through listening and learning. ‘The Way of Language’ was presented in Jaffa harbour, in Jerusalem, and in streets of Tel Aviv during the ‘summer protest’ of 2011 – an unprecedented series in Israeli history of mass rallies against the soaring cost of living and the widening gap between rich and poor. Israeli and Palestinian artists also exhibited the project in the Essl Museum and the Augarten quarter in Vienna, with German translations and phonetics added.

Multilingual signage makes a prime target for extremist groups, using spray paint or stickers to selectively erase, strikethrough or overwrite the language/s of the Other. On both sides of Jerusalem, vandalised street signs here and there have become features of the linguistic landscape. The obliteration of Arab lettering in the western parts of the city [Figure 2.33] or



Figures 2.30 Streets in Jaffa, Israel.

Source: Photos by Parrhesia.



*Figures 2.31* Streets in Jaffa, Israel.

Source: Photos by Parrhesia.



*Figures 2.32* Streets in Jaffa, Israel.

Source: Photos by Parrhesia.

of Hebrew and English in its eastern parts [Figure 2.34] gives visibility to those who protest official multilingualism. This form of bottom-up protest transposes spatial conflicts to the symbolic level and contributes, when vandalised signs are left untouched, to micro-processes of territorialisation.

The Israeli Black Panthers (as distinguishable from the African American Black Panthers), were a protest movement seeking social justice for



Figures 2.33 Street signage in Jerusalem, Israel.

Source: Photos by Meir Margalit.



Figures 2.34 Street signage in Jerusalem, Israel.

Source: Photos by Meir Margalit.

Sephardi and Mizrachi Jews – that is, Jews who immigrated to Israel from North Africa and the Middle East and were generally less privileged than Ashkenazi European Jews. Established in the early 1970s in the Musrara neighbourhood of Jerusalem, they protested, sometimes violently, against poverty and the ethnic tensions within Jewish Israeli society. As a result, government discussions and a public committee brought about a significant budgetary increase in programmes dealing with the socio-economic gaps. Black Panthers Way [Figure 2.35] and “They’re Not Nice” Alley [Figure 2.36] – are toponyms initiated in Musrara in 2011 by a group of artist-activists to mark 40 years since the beginning of the protests. While the second toponym is based on a quote of Golda Meir following her uneasy meeting with the movement leaders in 1971, and these alleys were previously



Figure 2.35 Black Panthers Way, Jerusalem, Israel.

Source: Photo by Zeev Barkan.



Figure 2.36 "They're Not Nice" Alley, Jerusalem, Israel.

Source: Photo by Hedva Sanderovitz.

unnamed, the new names are yet to be officially recognised and do not normally appear on maps of Jerusalem.

In 2001, UNESCO listed the Old City of Acre (Akko, *Akkā*, Saint-Jean d'Acre), as a World Heritage site. As a result, street names in the Old City are generally perceived by the state and city authorities as a means of symbolic consumption, assisting the financial accumulation of tourist capital. The sign 'The Turkish Bazar' constitutes part of a series of orientation plaques intended mainly for visitors from Christian or Jewish backgrounds

in the historic part of the city. These signs highlight Hellenistic and Roman Antiquity, the Crusaders period and the Ottoman era – bypassing the predominantly Arab-Muslim population and their history.

The local residents of the Old City – who, since 1948, are an ethnic and religious minority in the municipal council, responded with anger to this new symbolic space and the erasure of their collective past. One of their ways of protest has been to insert and further stress the Arabic language in the public space. Figure 2.37 shows an alternative plaque affixed by the extremist Islamic Movement, making creative use of signage visual codes. Many such green plaques, containing verses from various Muslim scriptures, were put up in the quarter. This one says, “I cherish my religion and my Islam”. The municipality did not remove these counter-hegemonic signs.

Not street signage, but the next three photos from the University of Haifa (UH) are emblematic of the tensions surrounding the shaping and reshaping of Israeli signscapes:

The university’s logo at its main entrance hall [Figure 2.38]: the proportion of Arab students in Haifa is the largest of all Israeli universities (about 40%), making issues of representation particularly important in the branding of the institution and the visual images chosen to reflect it. Over the years, the university has changed the language mix that appears in its logo: Hebrew only, Hebrew and English and a logo with three languages. On its 40th anniversary in 2012, the administration distributed a new logo entitled ‘Shared Israeliness’ but in Hebrew and English only. Following the protest by lecturers, UH’s president apologised and allowed an Arabic script as well. This ambivalence towards representation and the visibility of Arabic



Figure 2.37 An alley in Akko, Israel.

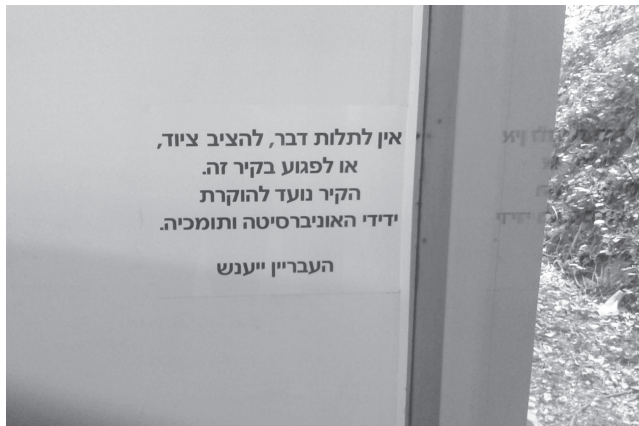
Source: Photo by Michel Ben Arrous.





*Figures 2.38* Linguistic landscape, UH, Israel.

Source: Photos by Yael Maayan.



*Figures 2.39* Linguistic landscape, UH, Israel.

Source: Photos by Yael Maayan.

appears in the current logo, with the Israeli flag waving in the wind and a language hierarchy, from top to bottom: Hebrew, English, Arabic.

“Do not hang” [Figure 2.39]: signs prohibiting the hanging of ads throughout the university are found in most academic institutions in Israel. They state that posters, ads and other items can only be hung on the walls of these large, public spaces with administrative permission. Students,

therefore, have a very limited influence on the visual space of their campuses, where tens of thousands of young people in the country pass through. “It is an intact space, no scratch, no dirt”, says the photographer, “it does not have graffiti fingerprints, it does not encompass memories of leaflet battles. Just a silence that reminds me of a shopping mall or fear”.

Sisters’ prayer place [Figure 2.40]: at the entrance to the prayer room that was allocated (after a long struggle) to Muslims on campus, UH authorities set up a sign stating that the room serves both male and female Muslim students. Since the two sexes do not pray together, these students have decided that the room would serve women only. The improvised sign in handwriting thus says, “A sisters’ prayer place”, accompanied by related images. This small arrangement testifies to a community that has to organise the resources allocated by the institution in a way that preserves its way of life and to communicate through the use of (forbidden) informal signs.

Figure 2.41 illustrates the translingual experiences of people in Ibadan, one of the major cities in south-western Nigeria. English, the dominant colonial language, remains the sole official language of the country. However, beyond the overriding primacy of English in the public space, the complexity and heterogeneity inherent in Ibadan’s linguistic landscape are on display through parallel linguistic practices in the same location. The sign names and describes a specific domain, a mosque: “Temidire Gbigba Adura Masjid. Agbowo, U.I. Junction, Ibadan”. Three languages are creatively deployed here: *Temidire Gbigba* (Yoruba), *Adu[r]a* (Arabic-adapted-to-Yoruba pronunciation), *Masjid* (Arabic, written in English transliteration), *U.I. Junction* (English). The whole text describes Temidire Masjid as a place where prayers are granted by God, located at the University of Ibadan (U.I.) Junction in the Agbowo district [Figure 2.41].



Figures 2.40 Linguistic landscape, UH, Israel.

Source: Photos by Yael Maayan.



*Figure 2.41* A mosque in Ibadan, Nigeria.

Source: Photo by Kazeem Kèhìndé Sanuth.



*Figure 2.42* Kabongo Avenue, Lubumbashi, DRC.

Source: Photo by Donatien Dibwe dia Mwembu.

*Mayi iko* – literally water is here (i.e. water for sale, in plastic sachets) [Figure 2.42]. The inscription is in Kiswahili, a language widely spoken in Lubumbashi, the mining capital and second-largest city in the DRC. A major lingua franca throughout East and Central Africa, Kiswahili was favoured by mining companies in and around Lubumbashi, during and after Belgian colonisation, as a vehicular language for use with and between migrant workers from neighbouring regions and countries. The address of the water business is number 3 Kabongo Avenue, Kabongo, being the name



*Figure 2.43* Unofficial street plate, Mapelane, Mozambique.

Source: Photo by César Cumbe.

of a former Luba chief. The Luba people, indigenous to the region since at least the fifth century, have over time evolved many variations of the Luba language. Interestingly, the handwritten address skips the French generic term ‘avenue’ (which would feature on an official street sign, French being the official language of the DRC). The image illustrates a postcolonial situation where a vehicular language (Kiswahili) rather than the official language (French) becomes the vernacular for a language-rich region. This water business is just one of the many mundane, small-scale and bottom-up language choices that, in the end, have made Kiswahili so evident in Lubumbashi’s streetscape and public space.

This dirt track in Mapelane, some 50 kilometres north of the capital Maputo, is officially a street but had no formal street sign. Residents have hung an unofficial plate of metal on a tree, mentioning both the street name and the administrative code number of the area (B3) [Figure 2.43]. Their response to a situation of signage deficiency is a reminder that informality does not necessarily seek to protest, replace or compete with the official naming and street-posting policies. It, nevertheless, constitutes a self-empowering initiative, one that gives the residents a hold on their daily environment, corrects a form of marginalisation and makes the correction visible.

#### **Panel IV The politics of street numbering**

Street names, including commemorative names, constitute part of a cultural landscape and a memorial arena – and thereby an arena at the same time

for oblivion and denial. If they represent a cultural ‘symbolic capital’ (à la Pierre Bourdieu), so their antithesis, street numbers could be regarded as an anonymously neutralised representation of ‘economic capital’. That is, by the rationalisation and quantification of the geographic spaces of everyday life, street numbers are part of calculative techniques, monitoring and surveillance efforts since the emergence of the modern state and city governance.

While numbering street systems are an accepted norm in North American urbanism, such systems are limited and rare in Europe because of both the longer history of urbanism there and the strength of nationalistic tendencies. Apart from North America, the favouring of street numbering is assigned to unified and centralised regimes, such as the ex-Soviet Bloc, and to some European colonial situations beyond Europe. In the (former) colonial world, the (erstwhile) white residential areas – and today the quarters of the socio-political elites – obtained as a rule possessive, commemorative street naming systems, supporting the then Eurocentric and today’s postcolonial narratives. At the same time, quarters that were designated for indigenous or underprivileged populations have been numbered (Douala, Dakar, Maputo, ‘informal’ districts in Tel Aviv and some streets in Jaffa). Beyond these areas, the ever-expanding extra-legal city margins have not been normally regarded as part of the city at all. Being associated with a variety of ‘greys’ between cultural recognition and marginalisation/eviction, these margins are neither named nor numbered.

The dual toponymic system of colonial times, with Europeans living in named streets and numbered streets being reserved for the colonised, not only reflected a geography of privilege and prejudice but also created it. Its continuation in the postcolonial era similarly acknowledges, and at the same time perpetuates, the spatialisation of renewed patterns of inequality. As class lines, rather than skin colour, turned into the main driver of socio-spatial differentiation and segmentation of postcolonial cities, intra-city boundaries have and continue to shift. Still, the principle of dual toponymy has survived the (colonial) conditions that gave birth to it. Gentrified areas are the most likely, nowadays, to receive street names, while suburban housing schemes typically have their streets numbered.

Street numbering, including for new streets, has indeed remained the preferred policy in many African countries for one basic reason: names often stir controversy, numbers never do. As examples from Maputo’s outskirts and Dakar’s Parcelles show, the residents of numbered streets and areas have other cultural resources to make some sense out of their numeric identification – both humorous and artistic.

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A noted centre of the trans-Saharan trade and a flourishing city for centuries, Gao, once the capital of the Songhay empire, did without street names for most of its long history. Its quarters had names, and mosques or other

landmarks were used for orientation. This changed somewhat in colonial times. Colonial authorities named a handful of streets, and they numbered the others. Then postcolonial authorities renamed the few streets that had been named in the colonial period and left the others numbered. To complicate things, the identification numbers of the streets do not always proceed in numerical order. Way-finding patterns, however, have not changed much. First, get to the right quarter – their names are inscribed at the top of the street signs (here: Djidara). Then use local or micro-local landmarks (here: a sewing shop by the name of Lafia). And if lost, passers-by or local residents are still ready to help [Figure 2.44].

Samora Machel and the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO, *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique*) fought a ten-year guerrilla war, 1964–1974, to achieve independence from Portugal. From a broad nationalist movement, FRELIMO established itself as a Marxist-Leninist party dedicated to the building of socialism, with its president as president of the Republic. Machel, the president of both, emphasised in his independence speech that Mozambique was to be “a state of people’s democracy, in which, under the leadership of the worker-peasant alliance, all patriotic strata commit themselves to the destruction of the sequels of colonialism, and to annihilate the system of exploitation of man by man”. Machel did not live long enough to see this goal fulfilled or actually dropped. He died in office in 1986 when his presidential aircraft, possibly decoyed off course by false signals, crashed at the Mozambican-South African border, just inside South Africa [Figure 2.46]. Revolution or not, commemorative street names are mainly located downtown, in the City of Cement or City of Tall Buildings,



Figure 2.44 Rue 152, Djidara, Gao, Mali.

Source: Photo by Abdoulaye Ibrahim Touré.



*Figure 2.45* Rua 4.821, Bairro de Mahotas, Maputo, Mozambique.

Source: Photo by César Cumbe.



*Figure 2.46* Avenue Samora Machel, Maputo, Mozambique.

Source: Photo by César Cumbe.

while the streets of the surrounding ‘poverty belt’ mostly bear numbers. A few streets of Bairro de Mahotas [Figure 2.45] were given names, but none of the city centre is numbered. And as the photos show, besides names and numbers, the materials used for street plaques also reflect the dualistic spatial structure of Maputo – a marble plaque here, there one of iron.

The formal signage “Rua 3648 Polana Caniço ‘A’” [Figure 2.48] marks and reproduces a border between what colloquially since colonial times has been called the City of Cement and the City of Reed in Mozambique’s capital, Maputo. The City of Reed (in Portuguese: *Polana Caniço*) was the neighbourhood of the so-called indigenous people in the colonial city Lourenço Marques, now Maputo. Reed represented a common building material at the time, and in some areas, still is. The City of Reed is a so-called poor area associated with high population density, poverty and the absence of



Figure 2.47 A streetscape, City of Cement, Maputo, Mozambique.  
Source: Photo by Torun Reite.



Figure 2.48 Rua 3648 Polana Caniço 'A', Maputo, Mozambique.  
Source: Photo by Torun Reite.

property rights, predominantly informal economic activities, appalling sanitary conditions and gentrification.

At the other end of the spectrum, there is an inner city, or so-called rich area, where inhabitants have access to property rights, electricity services, water and sanitation and participate as agents in a formalised economy.



Since colonial times, this inner city has been referred to as the City of Cement. Figure 2.47 displays the City of Cement – some hundred metres away from Rua 3648 Polana Caniço ‘A’. Figure 2.49 displays the City of Reed some hundred metres in the opposite direction down Avenue Vladimir Lenin. Equidistant from the border between the richer and poor areas, the two pictures portray distinct settings, which reflect Maputo’s enduring spatial divisions and continued spatial segregation that are grounded in social and economic inequalities inherited from colonialism. The formalisation of the City of Reed can be seen as a reproduction of segregated spaces and a re-enactment of orders of differentiated access to urban space and to political, social and economic rights.

The former *dibiterie* (traditional restaurant) Kër Penda (Penda’s House), in the Médina quarter of Dakar, was for many years a local landmark more helpful for orientation than the actual street address. Interestingly, the street address – Rue 11 x Avenue Blaise Diagne – shows both numbered and commemorative toponymic systems [Figure 2.50]. As the French hastily created the Médina quarter for Africans following a bubonic plague epidemic that hit the Europeanised city centre in 1914, most of the Médina’s streets were numbered, not named. The numbering policy excluded only two main arteries, which were named after indigenous personalities who cooperated with the French in various ways; one of them was Blaise Diagne.

Numbered streets are not just for historically underprivileged districts. This ‘Rue MZ-172’ (looking rather like an aircraft registration identifier) is located in Mermoz, one of the most sought-after neighbourhoods in Dakar [Figure 2.51]. Built after independence, the quarter quickly became a preferred area for expatriates, particularly due to its prestigious *Lycée français*



Figure 2.49 A streetscape, City of Reed, Maputo, Mozambique.

Source: Photo by Torun Reite.



Figure 2.50 Rue 11 x Avenue Blaise Diagne, Dakar, Senegal.  
 Source: Photo by Allen and the late Mary Nooter Roberts, 1994.



Figure 2.51 Rue MZ-172, Dakar, Senegal.  
 Source: Photo by Abderrahmane Ngaidé.

(also named Mermoz), military bases and proximity to the ex-airport (now closed following the opening, at the end of 2017, of a new international airport some 50 kilometres away). The name of the quarter commemorates Jean Mermoz (1901–1936), the aviator who performed the first transatlantic mail flight – Saint-Louis, Senegal, to Natal, Brazil. Mermoz and fellow pilot Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, author of the timeless *The Little Prince*, were the most famed pilots of the legendary *Aéropostale*, a pioneering company specialising in airborne postal services. Mermoz and his seaplane, the *Croix-du-Sud* (‘Southern Cross’) disappeared at sea off the coast of Senegal and were never found. To retain some slim hope and reject silence, Saint-Ex devoted several texts to his friend before finally pronouncing, months after the disappearance, his eulogy. It is to honour the memory of Mermoz that Air France pilots, as a sign of mourning, have long wore black ties.

While numbered streets rarely carry meaning for their residents, a Senegalese advertising company took advantage of their intersections. Throughout Dakar, for instance, the advertising poster for a ginger candy as shown in Figure 2.52 was posted prominently at street intersections in a visual play with the actresses. Maritchou (right) and Eva (left) are co-wives in a weekly TV broadcast that castigates polygamy by exposing in theatrical form its inherent intrigues. The two characters are at a ‘marital crossroads’ since they learnt that their common husband has had an affair with still another woman. Maritchou wants to leave, and Eva tries to bring her back home.

Being widely posted at intersections, the adverts acted as playful orientation clues for many Dakarians: “When you get to the crossroads, go with Eva” or “follow Maritchou”, instead of mentioning left/right directions or street names [Figure 2.52]. The series sparked protests from an ultra-conservative organisation, which complained of some supposedly risqué scenes. Against this background, the adverts took on special meanings at certain street corners, such as the one photographed in the image with Eva leaning in the direction of the neighbourhood mosque and Maritchou pointing in the direction of nearby nightclubs. Notice that the main road, also one of the two streets, is both named and numbered. It bore the name of the poet and storyteller Birago Diop well before being adorned with a totally unpoetic ‘PE-27’.

The *Parcelles Assainies* (‘sanitised plots’) form a recent district of Dakar, created in the 1970s at the initiative of the World Bank. It was meant to unclog the city centre and offer rural migrants plots with water and electricity, on which they would build their own homes. The programme was a spectacular success and is now one of the boroughs of the city, with some 300,000 inhabitants living in 20 units (numbered 7 to 26). On this roundabout, an artist represented the division of the neighbourhood into units [Figure 2.53]. Someone has attached to the metal sculpture a bottle



Figure 2.52 PE-27 x PE-28, Dakar, Senegal.

Source: Photo by Abderrahmane Ngaidé.



Figure 2.53 A roundabout, Parcelles Assainies, Dakar, Senegal.

Source: Photo by Xavier Ricou.

containing a product with mystical virtues, and we can see that he or she has poured its contents on this modern sacrificial altar. Later, a singer came to promote her latest record at the base of the monument.

In the words of the photographer,

A house in Jaffa on a numbered street. The numbering of streets does not derive from a perception of relation to a place, such as the one that gives the street a name – names carry an historical and cultural weight, and thereby raise tension and polemics about them. Rather, the numbering is derived from a mathematical understanding and from a spatial perception of geometric infinite space. Everything, as an object, can be virtually quantified, detached.

The Municipality of Tel Aviv-Jaffa is the first one in Israel to proactively name its streets, though there are streets that are nameless and numbered, such as 3895 Street (Jaffa streets were numbered by the British Mandate and partially by the Tel-Aviv-Jaffa municipality immediately after 1948) [Figures 2.54 and 2.55]. From the outset, each street has a number in the local authority's records, and if it has yet to be named, its number is used. The municipality said this was a temporary phenomenon until the street would be named, but this situation has continued for many years. This situation is sometimes connected with informal or disputed 'grey' areas, where, since 1948, their residents' (Jewish or Arabs) title-to-land has yet to be settled.

The junction of 'Rua 5.765' (Street 5.765) with 'Rua 5.750' in KaMavota, a suburban district of Maputo, Mozambique's capital [Figure 2.56]. These streets are also informally called 'Rua dos Apaixonados Cont'/'Hélio



*Figures 2.54* 3895 Street, Jaffa, Israel.

Source: Photos by Edna Langenthal.

Eles' (Streets Lovers Contact/They Hippolytus – the latter name being humouristically associated with the Greek tragedy about sexual desire and Aphrodite). Just underneath the fixed official street numbering system, there for economic-efficiency considerations but meaningless to the space users, temporary mobile signposts were placed by these users to make some sense. Very common, these spontaneous names allow city residents to express themselves by the social act of adding alternative toponyms to the numbering system, acting as a gateway for capturing the actual life of the residents.

### **Panel V Signs and the sense of place**

Each of us experiences a sense of attachment to certain places, not to every place. Or repulsion for some places, not for all. Some places speak to us: they seduce or scare, appease or annoy – and others leave us indifferent. The capacity that some places have to foster a sense of authentic attachment (among other equally meaningful emotions) has received many names: *genius loci*, 'spirit' of the place or sense of place – all of them being elusive notions.



Figures 2.55 3895 Street, Jaffa, Israel.

Source: Photos by Edna Langenthal.



Figure 2.56 A junction in KaMavota, Maputo outskirts, Mozambique.

Source: Photo by César Cumbe.

The world of emotions that does or does not develop between people and their relationship to a place is undoubtedly a social and cultural phenomenon, grounded in education, values and the complex web of individual and collective identities and experience. Viewed this way, the sense of place is a feeling held by people rather than a characteristic of places themselves. Yet it takes shape from site-related traits or distinctive features, which make each place unique. Is signage, then, one of these traits? To what extent, or in what ways, does it contribute to the identity of places? To their *perceived* or *emotive* identity – i.e. that which is deeply felt and meaningful?

Examples in this panel suggest that signs sometimes play a significant part in binding a community to a place. Not just street names matter in this regard. This is so because words are not merely ‘planted’ in quarters where lives take place. From Galilee to the Sahel through the southern tip of Africa, our photos highlight many other facets of signage that, in always specific contexts, both feed and reflect the sense of place. The formal or self-initiated display of quarters’ names is a significant one in African cities, where attachment to one’s neighbourhood is particularly strong. The visual aspect of the street signs, the languages used, their materials or colours also play a role in our Israeli examples. What most surely binds the photos of this panel together, however, is the historical depth and ongoing dynamics of identity-making to which signage here testifies.

Beyond the desired or fancied identities (of place, of people) that naming commissions tend to prescribe ‘from above’, place-making is a highly interactive process that involves individuals, their social worlds and physical arenas. A sense of place does not always emerge and cannot only be pre-planned in advance by any agency. When that does happen, it is the outcome of both deliberate and non-deliberate practices, interweaving experiential, emotional and perceptual realms.

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Gao, now an impoverished city in restive northern Mali, is one of the oldest human settlements in the area known as the Niger Bend – that is, the great curve formed by the Niger River at the edge of the Sahara Desert. Like most cities in the well-watered floodplain, Gao is a city of canals. According to oral tradition, the first ones were built at the initiative of Faran Maka Bôté, the leader of a community of fishermen in the fourth century. The canals were used to bring the boats closer to the fishers’ compounds during river floods; they allowed the development of irrigated crops, and, it is said, they sheltered the spirits of the waters.

Most of Gao’s canals are nowadays covered. They were transformed into (numbered) streets but their memory is still very much part of neighbourhood identities. The names of Gao’s quarters being displayed on signs contribute to keeping this memory alive.

Figure 2.57 shows a street that few residents call by its number. They know it rather by the name of the canal underneath: Tilafonso – a Songhay name meaning ‘the canal dug by Faran Bôté’. The quarter’s name on



Figure 2.57 A street in Farandjireye quarter, Gao, Mali.

Source: Photo by Abdoulaye Ibrahim Touré.



Figure 2.58 A street in Gadeye quarter, Gao, Mali.

Source: Photo by Abdoulaye Ibrahim Touré.

the street sign is Farandjireye, meaning ‘the times of Faran’. The street in Figure 2.58 is also better known by the name of the canal underneath – Gouroum – than by its number. As shown on signage, it is located in the Gadeye quarter, sometimes spelt Agaday or Gadi Gaay, a name that commemorates another ancestral folk figure and Songhay culture hero. In the



heydays of Gao, the Gouroum canal brought water to the palace of the Askias – the dynasty that in the sixteenth century ruled over the powerful Songhay empire. Figure 2.59 shows the sorry state of Aljana Bandia, literally ‘the pond of paradise’. Stories abound of sick people having recovered health after a bath in its healing waters. Its banks are now a dumping ground. With bitter humour, some residents have come to call it the ‘pond of hell’ – in reference to the broader context of conflict and insecurity. Gao and the surrounding region are the cradle of several Tuareg uprisings and a sanctuary for Islamist insurgents.

‘Maḥmūd Darwīsh’ is the name of a tiny private alley leading to the residential compound housing Nimr Naṣṣār’s extended family in the Arab village of Ṭur‘ān in the Galilee, Israel [Figure 2.60]. Naming this alley after the renowned Palestinian poet was Naṣṣār’s personal initiative following the poet’s demise. The resident also placed a commemorative stone plaque with the poet’s name, the dates of his birth and death and four lines of a poem:

*You planted hope  
And came down above the winds of the Kasîdah [a genre of ancient  
Arabic poetry]  
And rode on the obstinate death-horse  
You will never leave [us].*

According to Naṣṣār, since the installation of the monument, this corner has become a gathering place for the village youth in the evenings. The choice of writing the name on a commemorative plaque rather than on a



Figure 2.59 Aljana Bandia’s streetscape, Gao, Mali.

Source: Photo by Abdoulaye Ibrahim Touré.



Figure 2.60 Maḥmūd Darwīsh Alley, Tūr'ān village, Israel.

Source: Photo by Amer Dahamshe.

street sign emphasises its being homage to the national poet. When the street naming process began in the village, the regional council (then chaired by a Jewish person) avoided posting a sign in this alley and ignored the plaque. Naṣṣār protested to its secretary: “Is Maḥmūd Darwīsh’s name disrespectful to Tūr'ān? . . . I have named the street after him for commemoration and for making the Arabic language present in the space”. The council finally agreed and placed a sign with Darwīsh’s name: its Hebrew transliteration on top and the Arabic below.

Linguistic landscape in the Old City of Akko (*Akkā*, Saint-Jean d’Acre) is marked by a strong sense of local attachment among its Arab residents [Figures 2.61 and 2.62]. This is represented here by site-related images (the sea-oriented culture of fishery and commerce), by regional affinity images (the Dome of the Rock, with the words of the Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwīsh underneath stating, “On this land, there is what is worth living”) [Figure 2.62] and by signs that highlight a wider Arab-Muslim identity (the Holy Kaaba, with an Islamic Movement quasi-street plaque underneath stating, “The one who repents from sin is like one who did not sin”) [Figure 2.61]. These visual and inscribed manifestations from below constitute an important declaration of spatial identity against the background of continuous dissension between the residents and the municipality – the latter invests in tourism-oriented physical infrastructure rather than in social services and economic development programmes for the local population.

This ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) Jewish city, one of the lowest-income and most densely populated in Israel, is located close to Tel Aviv and currently governed by Haredi parties. Aside from the street signs, which, particularly



Figures 2.61 Linguistic and visual landscapes, Akko, Israel.

Source: Photos by Michel Ben Arrous.

on the primary roads, are called after Jewish religious leaders, the linguistic vernacular landscape in Bnei Brak has a special role in designing, preserving and reinforcing the culture of an introverted society amidst a secular, modern and threatening world. Figure 2.63 encapsulates some of the ordinary landscape, collective identity and pride, by representing a street sign that commemorates a second-century rabbi, Yehuda haNasi (Yehuda ‘the Prince’, compiler of the earliest written redaction of the Jewish oral traditions); to its left, a delimiting sign for strangers, asking them not to enter the city (a public space) on sabbaths and holidays; an advertisement (on the electric pole to the right) by the Lubavitcher Hasidic group saying “Long live the King Messiah” with an image of ‘the Rebbe’ M.M. Schneerson (1902–1994) whom some believe was the Messiah; and two charity boxes.

Only a few kilometres from Bnei Brak (previous picture), the contrast is striking. The street art and graffiti in the heart of Tel Aviv show no particular deference to the illustrious Rambam (acronym for Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon, commonly known as Maimonides, 1135–1204) [Figure 2.64]. Rambam was both a Torah scholar, possibly the most influential of all times, author inter alia of an authoritative codification of Jewish law and ethics and a philosopher and physician. He is considered an intellectual giant in both the Jewish and Islamic worlds, and almost all major movements in modern Judaism lay claim to his legacy.

The two street plaques contribute to render a worldly atmosphere. The older one, now turned into a suitcase in the hand of a Captain America-like



Figures 2.62 Linguistic and visual landscapes, Akko, Israel.

Source: Photos by Michel Ben Arrous.

character, is part of a series that was produced in the mid-1920s by the Bezalel arts school in Jerusalem. It shows the street's name in Hebrew, Arabic and English, with no need for further explanation as to who was Rambam. The second plaque on the photo, above the pink flying figure, 'omits' the Arabic transcription in favour of displaying three lines of a short bio. Notice that, in this short bio fixed in the very secular atmosphere of the city centre, the word 'philosopher' comes before the word 'rabbinic adjudicator' (*posek* in Jewish law). Beyond the various materials, colours, styles and wording of both plaques, what we have here is an animated linguistic landscape that has shaped the identity of this part of Tel Aviv – a vivid area in the process of gentrification, full of commercial activity, art shops, restaurants and cafes.



*Figure 2.63* A street in Bnei Brak, Israel.

Source: Photo by Liora Bigon.



*Figure 2.64* Rambam Street, Tel Aviv, Israel.

Source: Photo by Michel Ben Arrous.

The city of Saint-Louis, a World Heritage site, is the former capital of Senegal. It is located in the extreme north of the country on a sandy island in the mouth of the Senegal River and connected to the mainland by the famous Faidherbe Bridge. The island is very narrow and extends over 2 kilometre in length. The former Governance Square, which was next to the old fort



Figure 2.65 A house façade, Saint-Louis, Senegal.

Source: Photo by Xavier Ricou.

founded by the Frenchman Louis Caullier in 1659, is placed in the centre of the island and marks the division between the northern quarter, named ‘Loodo’, and the southern quarter, called ‘Kértian’ (or Keurthian). The latter is a Wolof deformation of the French word *chrétien* (‘Christian’), by reference to the cathedral located in it [Figure 2.65]. In Senegal, the notion of belonging to a neighbourhood is extremely strong. Thus, football tournaments between neighbourhoods are receiving much more attention than the national championship, and supporters do not hesitate to support their team by expressing their sense of belonging to their neighbourhood on the walls.

These two toponymic inscriptions in the city of Thiès exemplify the diffusion of spatial elements from the French metropolitan culture into a former colonial terrain. They also accentuate, and gently mock, the pervasive reference to France in the discourse of local politicians. Thiès has in recent years undergone extensive public lighting and road works, with the declared aim, endlessly repeated on radio, of making it the “City of Light of Senegal”, “as beautiful as Paris”, with its own *grands boulevards* and “kind of Champs-Élysées”. A series of major urban works was scheduled but had to stop due to embezzlement of public funds that led to the then prime minister and mayor of Thiès being jailed for a while.

The photos depict two views of a ceremonial boulevard, officially called ‘rue de la Mairie’. Figure 2.66 shows the ‘Pétanque Square’, as the median strip of the boulevard was (unofficially) renamed by a local pétanque club, with its specially prepared plots for the most French of all sports.



Figure 2.66 Pétanque Square, Thiès, Senegal.

Source: Photo by Michel Ben Arrous.

Figure 2.67 shows the entrance to a compound on which the unofficial (but popular and more vibrant) name of the boulevard has been humouristically inscribed – that is, ‘Champs-Élysées Thiès’. Both inscriptions remind the local politicians of their unfulfilled promises. At the same time, they undoubtedly express a strong neighbourhood identity and a gentle lifestyle.

The street plaques of District Six, once a cosmopolitan neighbourhood in the heart of Cape Town, hang over a big map of the district with handwritten notes of former inhabitants, indicating where their homes were located. The map and the street signs are part of the permanent exhibition of the District Six Museum, serving as a memorial to the forced removal of 60,000 residents of different skin colours in accordance with the Group Areas Act – which enforced the separation of ‘racial groups’ into distinct areas of the urban locale [Figure 2.68]. The cradle of Cape Town jazz music and home to myriad writers, painters and anti-apartheid activists, District Six was a vibrant community made up of workers, artisans, merchants and immigrants of many diverse origins. It was almost entirely destroyed in the 1970s; its houses were flattened by bulldozers, and even its name was removed from maps (the municipality renamed the quarter *Zonnebloem*, sunflower in Afrikaans). Yet people’s experiences and their memories of having lived in those streets are still alive. A (slow and chaotic) process of land restitution currently provides several opportunities for redeveloping the area as a heritage site. It is in this context that the museum stresses the intangible practices which contributed towards building the fabric of the community. They are as important as the little that remains of the built-up environment.



Figure 2.67 An entrance to compound, Rue de la Mairie, Thiès, Senegal.

Source: Photo by Michel Ben Arrous.

Compared with the municipality's 'cultural regeneration' plans for this part of town, which promote cultural heritage tourism but sideline the (former) residents and their (living) memories and actually foster gentrification, the museum advocates for the rights of the former District Sixers, not only to restitution but also, to be considered in more respectful and dignified ways. Both the map on the floor and the hanging plaques are reminders that a 'sense of place' sometimes survives bulldozers.

### Panel VI Signage in neo-liberal times

Defined as a policy model that transfers modes of economic control from the public sector to the private sector, the term 'neo-liberalism' has been used in a wide variety of contexts. In many African cities today, neo-liberalism is less a self-aware philosophy of 'arts of government' or a class-based project and more an outcome of a *laissez-faire* and pragmatic attitude on the part of the fragile modern state. As a result, the power of states over the economy and the provision of infrastructure and services has been curbed by deregulation, free trade and privatisation – which led many commentators to call





Figure 2.68 District Six Museum, Cape Town, South Africa.

Source: Photo by Frédéric Giraut.

for a deployment of a more appropriate balance between private entrepreneurship and governmental responsibilities, policies and strategic orientations. However, regarding street signage, the leakage of neo-liberal elements into this urban practice in contemporary Africa creates some contradictory overlaps, clearly visible in this panel with photos from Cameroon, the two Congos, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa.

The core of the contradiction lies in the fact that street naming and signage usually represent the political elite's hegemonic version of memory introduced into the everyday landscape. Yet when financed by private or semi-private companies that laudably market themselves on the signs, as shown in the first photos of this panel, the toponymic landscape becomes identified more with 'economic capital' at the expense of its traditional 'symbolic capital'. In fact, due to its pragmatism, such commodification contributes to the neutralising of the 'hot' ideological and political dimension that is sometimes associated with toponyms. The aspiration to neutralise signage (and through it the social and political conflicts that supposedly hurt business) is nowhere more apparent than in private estates when land developers themselves take charge of street naming. As implied here by a representative South African example, they then generally choose the most consensual names, even if contextually meaningless.

Such trends point to the fantasy of a depoliticised urban governance, one that would run a city like a business: no politics, no ideologies, just plain efficiency. Itself highly ideological, the rejection on principle of all (other) ideologies, subjectivities and conflicts inherent in social life, quite logically promotes specific forms of street signposting. New layers of numeric spatial identification have thus been introduced in some African cities over the last three decades. Aimed at economic betterment through a presumably neutral (numeric) renewal of signage, the material result of the new numbers proved, at best, doubtful. Photos in this panel highlight that they indeed added more confusion to the one that already existed, if only because they proved void of any meaning for the city dwellers.

\*

Traditionally the prerogative of public authorities, street signage in many African cities has become open to sponsorship by the private sector. Three examples are presented here, by increasing size of the mention of the sponsor. Just underneath the Bangui Street sign in Brazzaville, a plaque of reasonably modest size states that this street sign is a gift of the CTA (Congolaise des Travaux et Aménagements), a construction and civil engineering company [Figure 2.69]. In Dakar, the CSE (another building firm), has its name inscribed directly on the street sign of ‘Boulevard de la République’. This boulevard, named ‘République’ in colonial times, exemplified the centralist assimilationist thought of the French regime. While such representation of republican values in the colonial context is somewhat ironic, another irony is of now having the ‘République’ sponsored by a private business



Figure 2.69 Rue Bangui, Brazzaville, Congo.

Source: Photo by Jean-Euloge Samba.

[Figure 2.70]. Finally, in Lubumbashi, the street sign that was created and paid for by the Commercial Bank of Congo (Banque Commerciale du Congo, BCDC) is completely dwarfed by the advertising panel of its sponsor. The sign of ‘Avenue Mgr Jean-Félix de Hemptine’ (named after the city’s first archbishop) is about ten times smaller than the bank’s advertising structure [Figure 2.71].

Aside from its French colonial street names and some later post-independence symbolic renaming, Douala, like many of sub-Saharan Africa’s primary cities, underwent a naming operation by the Urban Development



*Figure 2.70* Boulevard de la République, Dakar, Senegal.

Source: Photo by Liora Bigon.



*Figure 2.71* Avenue Mgr Jean-Félix de Hemptine, Lubumbashi, DRC.

Source: Photo by Donatien Dibwe dia Mwembu.

Program of the World Bank. The naming operation took place during the 1990s, addressing the severe continental economic crisis of the previous decade. A network of numbered streets according to their geographical position has been imposed on many capitals and other important cities (e.g. Conakry, Yaoundé, Dakar) in order to facilitate trade and billing by street codification, identification and signposting. Yet the numbered system later proved to have been a rather impractical bureaucratic procedure, clearly impossible for absorption and use by the urban residents. It was typically imposed top-down, totally ignoring the street users, in very limited urban areas (normally upper income and central business districts) – creating new problems of its own [Figure 2.72].

These two signs together, a street plaque that meets new bureaucratic standards and a front sign for an association of traditional healers, illustrate a serious shortcoming of the already-mentioned naming operation initiated by the World Bank: its lack of adoption, hence of use, by the city dwellers. The blue plaque mentions a street name that has no meaning to anybody (AAB-42), and it imposes a new and equally meaningless name to this quarter of Dakar (Amitié zones A et B), a residential area that Dakarois only know as Amitié 2. With superb indifference to the new rules, the healers' sign displays its own address lines [Figure 2.73]. The 'real' name of the quarter is given first (Amitié 2). It is immediately followed, in brackets, by the name of the nearest neighbourhood (Rue 10), meaning that they are located in a portion of Amitié 2 that is not far from Rue 10. Interestingly, the house number (Villa no. 4065) is also followed by nearby orientation clues: they are located "in front of the district's town hall" and not far from



Figure 2.72 Boulevard de la République/1.409 Street, Douala, Cameroon.

Source: Photo by Salifou Ndam.

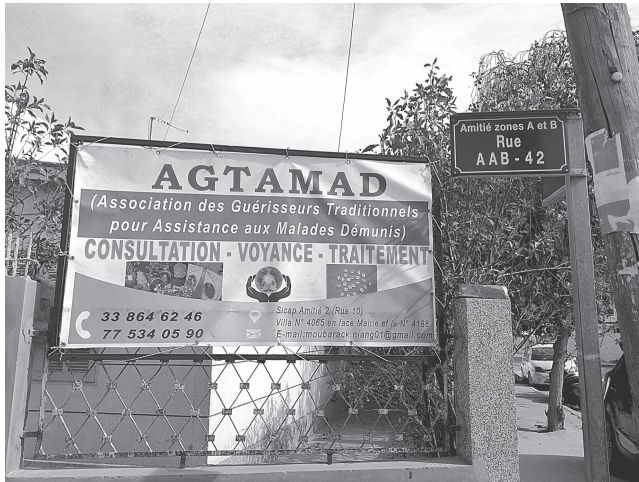


Figure 2.73 Rue AAB-42, Dakar, Senegal.

Source: Photo by Michel Ben Arrous.

a villa numbered 4188. These address lines actually reflect the most widespread form of spatial identification in this part of town, including for shops and businesses: businesses are first and foremost identified by their proximity to other businesses, not by numbers.

In many African cities, several formal, semi-formal and informal naming systems coexist. Running through cities simultaneously with the naming systems, different numbering systems are also used by urban services, generally for billing purposes. The first example, Figure 2.74, is of the signage system of Mutengene, as inscribed in white chalk by authorities of the ex-Société Nationale de l'Electricité du Cameroun, the former national electricity corporation (now privatised and renamed ENEO). The second example, Figure 2.75, is of a geographic information system being implemented in Dakar to foster the development of e-commerce, numbering each of the premises throughout the city – so far with many errors (for instance, test versions of the system locate the shop on the photo at the port of Dakar kilometres away from its actual Médina location).

Directional signs to private businesses are blossoming throughout Africa. In cities where people move according to landmarks rather than street names or numbers, the directions to potential landmarks and possible waypoints are of prime importance. Generally quite restrictive until the 1990s, the municipal regulations regarding outdoor advertisement have eased, allowing many sorts of business premises (bank branches, sales outlets, private colleges, etc.) to 'compete' for an informal landmark status, both among



*Figure 2.74* Electricity cabinet, Mutengene, Cameroon.

Source: Photo by Liora Bigon.



*Figure 2.75* A shop in Dakar, Senegal.

Source: Photo by Michel Ben Arrous.

themselves and with the classic landmarks that hitherto prevailed (government buildings, mosques or churches, marketplaces and others). Figure 2.76 from Zaria in northern Nigeria captures a busy roundabout featuring a collection of directional boards – to the city’s main market, to a private Islamic library and to a private college affiliated with Ahmadu Bello University (together with a sign celebrating the governor of Kaduna State). Here, directional signage performs more than simply an orientation function: it also provides a textual and visual medium for displaying political and Islamic elements of the dominant culture. Figure 2.77 from Dakar shows a higher



*Figure 2.76* A roundabout, Zaria, Nigeria.

Source: Photo by Elisha Renne.



*Figure 2.77* Boards of advertisement, Dakar, Senegal.

Source: Photo by Michel Ben Arrous.



*Figure 2.78* Harmony Street, Fountainhead estate, Cape Town, South Africa.

Source: Photo by Frédéric Giraut.

level of competition for visibility, with all boards advertising purely private businesses, all pointing in the same direction and all competing to gain attention towards a possible route or landmark in this part of town. Such signs reflect not an ideological narrative of nation or heritage but a local version of the general, and no less ideological, deregulation of streetscape inscriptions in postcolonial cities.

The Khayelitsha township (meaning ‘our new home’ in the Xhosa language) was established in the last years of the apartheid regime, at the cost of large-scale forced removals involving high levels of state-sponsored violence. At its northern edge, new housing estates are being built by private land developers. These are gated communities designed to meet the aspirations of homeownership of the emerging middle class. They are presented as quiet places where life is good, far from any reference to the area’s painful history. Thus, in this estate called Fountainhead, the developer chose sanitised street names, all of which refer to ‘positive’ values: Harmony, Solidarity, Integrity, Quietude, Fortitude and the like [Figure 2.78].

### **Panel VII Fading and perishable street signs**

The dual structure of colonial cities and the forms of signage that went with it in Africa were passed on to the postcolonial authorities. Political,



economic, and planning practices have varied greatly in the postcolonial period, depending on national priorities and local contexts, but as a rule, they failed to redress socio-spatial duality and growing inequalities. For all that, substantial changes continue to occur in the urban distribution of affluence and deprivation.

The formerly privileged quarters of colonial times have generally accommodated the postcolonial, political and economic elites, but some of them have decayed significantly. New upmarket districts were created, often at a considerable distance from city centres, attracting both the wealthy few and, in their immediate periphery, new self-produced neighbourhoods lacking basic services. The districts built at independence for the middle class were the worst hit by the severe economic crisis of the 1980s and 1990s, with a sharp decline in living and housing conditions. Relatively closer to city centres, some of the colonially designed ‘native quarters’ have experienced processes of gentrification (with their former residents being pushed aside to remote suburban locations), while others have the highest densities of people living close to or below the poverty line.

These dynamics have contributed to blurring the erstwhile neat distinctions, both between neighbourhood clusters and modes of toponymic inscription in various parts of the urban agglomerations (named or numbered streets, or neither). They have had different impacts on signage, from creating actual and potential confusion to enthusiastic resilience. For instance, many urban loci are known by several names (formal and informal). Many streets are nameless. In some cases, two or more streets within the same vicinity may go by the same name. Some streets possess names that are not signposted, signposted but in obscured locales or marked by hand by the local residents over perishable materials.

This panel shows photos of street signs that tend to fade due to apparently ‘natural’ reasons – such as wear, aging, weather conditions or even vegetation growth – and could hardly be read. Yet ‘nature’ comes only second to neglect and/or indifference on the part of both the space users and the municipal authorities. In this regard, fading signs invite questioning of the very significance and relevance to everyday life, in rapidly changing cities, of colonially designed and postcolonially recycled street-naming and street-posting systems. The panel shows more intriguing situations, such as a street plaque being painted over following a building renovation. And others that are physically hidden behind street market stalls – or, rather, pragmatically subjected to other usages, such as serving as a hook.

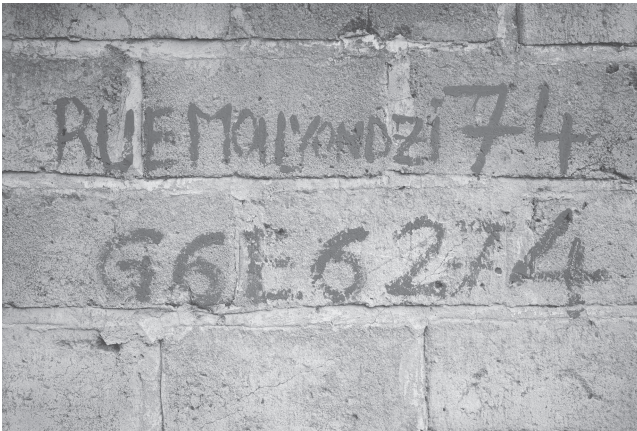
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Two handwritten addresses from Brazzaville: one in charcoal on a peeling plaster [Figure 2.79], the other in red paint on concrete bricks [Figure 2.80]. Neither one is meant to stay very long. The second inscription also displays a land registry number, possibly for a sale or a seizure of property. Rain will erase them both.



Figures 2.79 Handwritten addresses, Brazzaville, Congo.

Source: Photos by Lebon Chansard Ziavoula.



Figures 2.80 Handwritten addresses, Brazzaville, Congo.

Source: Photos by Lebon Chansard Ziavoula.

The next image shows a ‘fading’ sign maybe, but due to the opposite of decay. That is, a vibrant burst of renovation of national heritage buildings on Gorée Island. One has to make an effort reading this sign beyond the screen of paint – in the memory of an early Catholic missionary following the French repossession of the island (from the British) in 1817 [Figure 2.81].

The paint is chipped and there are traces of glue on the plaque of Rue Marché Bourreau, named after the Bourreau market in Makélékélé, a popular borough adjacent to Bacongo [Figure 2.82]. It is incidentally not a *rue*



*Figure 2.81* Rue Saint Joseph, Gorée, Senegal.

Source: Photo by Liora Bigon.



*Figure 2.82* Rue Marché Bourreau, Brazzaville, Congo.

Source: Photo by Rodric Steeve Mpassy.

(street) but an avenue. Few people care. After all, one does not go to a street or an avenue but to the market itself. The dilapidation of the market, its sanitary conditions, and especially the tax policies of the municipality, which generate tensions with traders and drive up food prices, are concerns that are far more important. The condition of a street sign comes far behind – unnoticed.

Street markets are very much part of urban African landscapes. Here in Douala, Cameroon’s largest and busiest city, the street vendors have occupied the sidewalks, a portion of the roadway and they have used every available space to display their goods. As a result, no sign is any longer visible from the street [Figure 2.83]. It is only by passing behind market stalls that street signs can be found again, diverted however from their primary function. The street sign of Dobelle Street, for instance, serves to hang a bag [Figure 2.84]. This is a current reality, which the municipal police tries in vain to repress. Many street vendors in Douala have limited education and are illiterate. It does not matter to them that this or other signs are not visible from the street when, in popular usage, the place is better known as *Trois morts* (‘Three dead’), *Grand Bar* (‘Big bar’), *J’ai raté ma vie* (‘I have wasted my life’), *Rue de la joie* (‘Street of joy’) or *Trois voleurs* (‘Three thieves’). Even municipal police and authorities, in their dealings with the vendors, often use the informal names.

Some posts bear names that have become unreadable over time. This is the case here, at the corner of Lubilashi (a watercourse) and Sandoa (a political-administrative unit in Lualaba Province) Avenues in Lubumbashi



Figure 2.83 A street scene, Douala, Cameroon.

Source: Photo by Salifou Ndam.



Figure 2.84 Rue Dobelle, Douala, Cameroon.

Source: Photo by Salifou Ndam.

[Figure 2.85]. The neglected signage contrasts with the immaculate condition of expensive and well-maintained cars that are parked at this junction.

The signpost was erected before the growth of the tree. Slightly slanting, it stands at the corner of Kapenda Avenue, commemorating Moïse Kapenda Tshombé (the late president of the short-lived state of Katanga, 1960–1963) and a causeway named after Laurent-Désiré Kabila (former president, 1997–2001, of the DR of Congo) [Figure 2.86]. Lubumbashi was still called by its Belgian name, Elizabethville, when it served as the capital of breakaway Katanga – whose secession from the newly independent Congo enjoyed full Belgian support. It is in this city that Patrice Lumumba, the Congolese prime minister who opposed secession, was handed over to Katangese militaries and at least one Belgian official to be assassinated in the nearby countryside. Tshombé’s involvement in the assassination is undisputed, though the exact circumstances remain unclear. On the opposite side of the political spectrum, L-D Kabila was at that time a deputy-commander of *Jeunesse Balubakat*, the Lumumbist youth movement. Tshombé died in exile in 1969. L-D Kabila was assassinated by a bodyguard in 2001 and was succeeded by his son. The signpost shows two directions but only that of Kapenda Avenue remains clearly visible. The people underneath do not



Figure 2.85 Lubilashi x Sandoya Avenues, Lubumbashi, DRC.

Source: Photo by Donatien Dibwe dia Mwembu.



Figure 2.86 Kapenda Avenue x Laurent-Désiré Kabila Street, Lubumbashi, DRC.

Source: Photo by Donatien Dibwe dia Mwembu.

seem to worry much. Who cares if, someday, the growing tree blows down one name or both?

At first glance, this sign [Figure 2.87] seems to recall many other streets of African cities, where signposts are hung in obscure positions, such as trees, electricity poles and boundary walls. Yet this street signpost in Dixième – one of the privileged quarters of the railway town of Thiès close to the ex-European *escale* – is hung on a great baobab tree but of considerations that



Figure 2.87 A street sign in Dixième, Thiès, Senegal.

Source: Photo by Liora Bigon.

are all but obscured: large trees are venerated in western Sudan as cultural objects that accumulate a multiplicity of meanings and are unlikely to be removed or hurt.

### Panel VIII What's your address? Living with no street signs

This last panel deals with the situation of people living, working and coping with the absence of formal addresses. On city maps, quarters with no addressing systems are generally coloured grey or green, the colours of empty spaces. These are not necessarily slums, *bidonvilles* or squatter settlements, though they share key characteristics with these, including insecure tenure and lack of access to basic public services, such as drinking water, sanitation and waste collection. Having no address raises huge obstacles in ordinary life, be it to apply for a job, get the children enrolled in school, obtain an ID card, arrange for an ambulance or simply claim one's right to have rights.

Yet municipal authorities in Africa have rarely prioritised the need to generate comprehensive (and comprehensible) addressing systems for their cities. Street addressing initiatives in the last decades were prudently geared toward improving the effectiveness and efficiency of urban management in the *ville officielle*, without venturing into extra-legal settlements (though their inhabitants in some cases make up more than half of the *ville réelle*). The fear was that street addressing might be a pretext for regularisation. This would then create an obligation to extend to these quarters the

infrastructures and urban services that the municipalities already have so much trouble providing in all regular neighbourhoods.

The overt tendency of municipal authorities to disregard address-less settlements is Africa-wide but not specific to Africa, as our Tel Aviv photos exemplify. Here as well, invisibility makes poverty, social exclusion and discrimination self-perpetuating. There can be instances, as in Gao, where the lack of addresses serves to safeguard a lifestyle and to distance a person, if not from fellow urban dwellers, at least from national or local governments. As a rule, however, people use creative and original ways to be accessed in terms of spatial marking and marketing.

\*

Gao and Timbuktu, the main cities of the upper Niger Bend, are home to both sedentary and nomad or semi-nomad populations. The latter group includes herders and traders who stay in town for several months, sometimes years. Tuareg or Fulani camps like this one in Gao [Figure 2.88] are erected in open areas that have neither streets nor formal addressing. Their inhabitants, who routinely travel long distances in the Sahara Desert or the plains of the Sahel, have multiple ways of orienting themselves and their



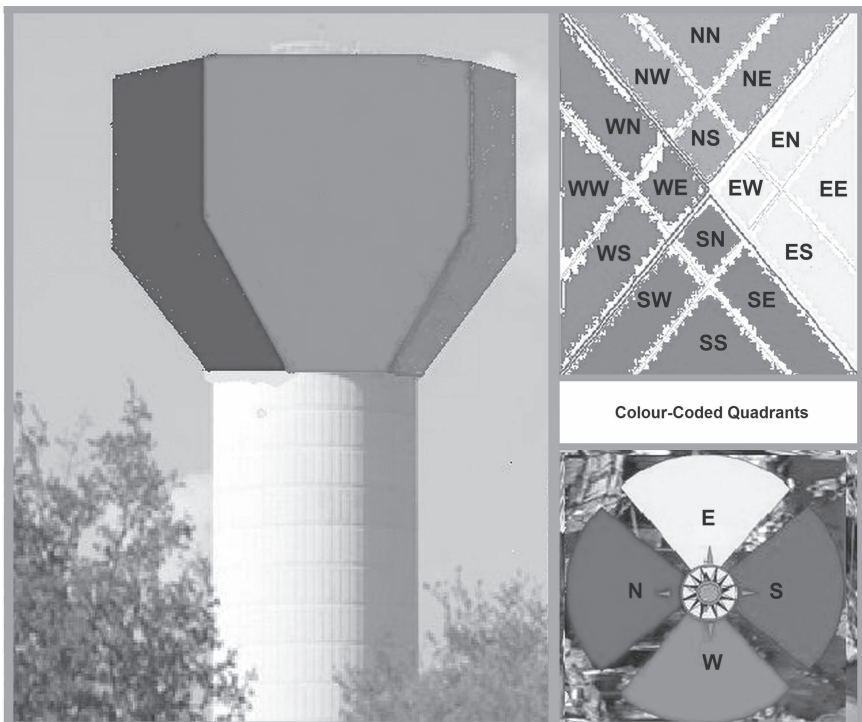
*Figure 2.88* A streetscape in Gao, Mali.

Source: Photo by Abdoulaye Ibrahim Touré.



visitors. The Fulani and Tamasheq (Tuareg) languages are extremely rich in verbs of motion, expressing with many nuances all sorts of movement, direction and location. The lack of formal addresses traditionally allowed the inhabitants of such camps to limit contact with local authorities and escape the administrative hassle. In humanitarian emergencies, such as the ongoing crisis in northern Mali, humanitarian operators rely on ad hoc addressing systems to reach the people with no formal addresses.

In the contributor's view, colour-coded landmarks could be used as a strategy to circumvent the problem of ambiguous physical addresses characteristic of (some) sub-Saharan Africa's urban centres [Figure 2.89]. Tall concrete or metal water tanks or cellular phone towers may serve as tools of navigation by colour-coding them. Divided into four equal facets, with each face painted with a different bright colour to be visible to a naked eye from afar, such physical objects would be made to agree with the corresponding zone within the surrounding neighbourhood or quarter. Each landmark



*Figure 2.89* A pragmatic proposal for facilitating geospatial navigation and adapting modern ICTs in Africa, where precise and unambiguous physical addresses are a rarity.

Source: Image by Ambe J. Njoh.

should then be assigned a precise physical address based on its polar coordinates and bearings.

Since the settlement of Jewish refugees from Tel Aviv/Jaffa's frontiers, whose homes found themselves in battle zones in the 1948 War of Independence, the status of Givat Amal, in the area of an abandoned Bedouin village, has been always in dispute. The residents of this northern Tel Aviv neighbourhood won a series of legal battles against the municipality, which has sought to evacuate them since the 1950s. While most of the area has changed ownership and moved into the hands of a number of real estate developers in the private market (see Chapter 5), this neighbourhood has never been connected to roads and urban infrastructure, and no names ever been given to its streets (but it does have a municipal division into zones A, B, C and D). In recent years, high-rise buildings were erected in Givat Amal in a neo-liberal spirit, and families were evacuated with great physical force and through the imposition of compensation arrangements. The images show the protest of the residents, now third generation, who have not yet been evicted [Figure 2.90], together with the assembly of mailboxes of the entire neighbourhood, which had been still in use in 2014 under the provision of precise residential addresses [Figure 2.91]. A picture that was taken in 2017 shows that the mailboxes are now worthless, as, according to



Figure 2.90 Signage of protest, Givat Amal, Tel Aviv, Israel.

Source: Photo by Liora Bigon.



*Figure 2.91* Mailboxes in 2014, Givat Amal, Tel Aviv, Israel.

Source: Photo by Liora Bigon.

the residents, the municipality stopped the distribution of mail in order to encourage the evacuation of the remaining families [Figure 2.92].

Figure 2.93 shows an informative plaque (re)produced by the Provincial Government of Luanda, among many other plaques of equal purpose, in accordance with the national housing policy of the Angolan government and its ‘One Million Houses’ programme (from 2009 and ongoing). It reads, “It is forbidden to occupy land in this area. Those who do not comply will be severely punished, in accordance with article 188 of the Penal Code”. Such plaques are frequently located in the expansive margins of the Angolan capital. They reflect the administration’s punitive approach regarding self-built housing on land earmarked for official (and political) housing schemes. Yet there are people already living in these areas whose dwellings do not qualify for formal addressing. The baobab picture, Figure 2.94, is a reminder that, even where there’s no address, economic life goes on. The photo was shot in southern Luanda, near the gated communities that were built for high-income social groups after the 1990s, in line with the country’s pro-market economic reforms. The wheelbarrow suggests the existence of informal self-building activities for, and by, low-income communities – as it is commonplace in the surroundings of market-driven housing estates. The signs on



*Figure 2.92* Mailboxes in 2017, Givat Amal, Tel Aviv, Israel.  
Source: Photo by Michel Ben Arrous.



*Figure 2.93* A road plaque, Luanda, Angola.  
Source: Photo by Sílvia Leiria Viegas.



*Figure 2.94* A baobab of advertisements, Luanda, Angola.

Source: Photo by Sílvia Leiria Viegas.

the baobab imply the absence of formal addresses as they only announce telephone numbers of the ‘informal’ construction workers and/or suppliers:

Sign 1: “There’s a mason, plumber, electrician, construction, tiller, plasterer, painter. False ceiling applications. Installs electricity and pump. Contacts: 923647325/933781255”.

Sign 2: “There’s a plumber. Contact: 922867317”. Sign 3: “Football table for sale: 939393538”.

Address-less houses and plots of land can still be sold. Here is an informal and illegal announcement for houses and land for sale in Polana Caniço ‘A’, a self-produced neighbourhood of Maputo [Figure 2.95]. The land in Mozambique constitutionally belongs to the state and therefore cannot be sold, mortgaged or alienated. In practice, however, there exists an intense real estate and land market, especially since the beginning of the new millennium, with the consolidation of the neo-liberal model generating or intensifying processes of gentrification and peripheralisation. As a matter of



Figure 2.95 A sign in Polana Caniço ‘A’, Maputo, Mozambique.

Source: Photo by Sílvia Manuela Branco Jorge.



Figures 2.96 A mobile hairdresser sign, Brazzaville, Congo.

Source: Photos by Baudouin Mouanda.

prudence, the sign specifies neither the address of the vendor nor that of the properties for sale.

No address. No phone number. Two hairstyles and hairdressing tools painted on plywood: an itinerant hairdresser sign [Figures 2.96 and 2.97]. And a power generator for the clipper. Cléo travels around the city every



*Figures 2.97* A mobile hairdresser sign, Brazzaville, Congo.

Source: Photos by Baudouin Mouanda.

day to find clients. The streets of popular districts, the river shores, are his hair salon. Address-less but not lacking solid foundations: creative resourcefulness and heart.

### **Exhibition participants**

**YORAM BAR-GAL** is Emeritus Professor of Geography at the University of Haifa. Specialising in cultural geography, his research deals mainly with the connections between ideology, landscape design and spatial representations. Bar-Gal has published several critical books and article series in the area of Zionist agenda and propaganda, including their accompanying spatial representations – such as maps, toponyms and schoolbooks.

**ZEEV BARKAN** was born in 1948 and is a resident of Jerusalem. A graduate of the Department of Hebrew Literature and General Philosophy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, he is a researcher of culture, a poet and an artistic photographer. Barkan has mainly researched the Star of David and has published several books on this subject, including initiating several art exhibitions in which hundreds of artists participated. He has also studied the influence of the Bible on daily life in Israel, including initiating several art exhibitions on this subject as well.

**SHMUEL BARTENSTEIN**, an engineer in a high-tech company, and **ORA LEV-RON**, a poet and a film and literature critic, are an Israeli social-activist couple.

**MICHEL BEN ARROUS** and **LIORA BIGON** are the initiators and curators of the exhibition.

CÉSAR CUMBE (PhD in Linguistics, Université Paris Descartes, Paris 5) is Professor and Researcher at the Faculty of Language, Communication and Arts of Universidade Pedagógica, Maputo, Mozambique. He is associated with the research team on written anthropology (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales-Paris) and a Coordinator of Anthropological Studies at the Centre for Mozambican Studies and Ethnoscience (Maputo). His additional interests include linguistic and urban practices and different forms of popular expression, particularly informal inscriptions and popular art.

AMER DAHAMSHE (PhD in Hebrew Literature, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem) is Research Fellow at the Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His research interests and publications focus on the examination of the connections between place and identity in the Arab-Palestinian culture, including place name studies (toponymy), local vernacular legends, literature and the presentation of the Hebrew and Arabic languages in the landscape of streets and roadways.

DONATIEN DIBWE DIA MWEMBU is full Professor of History at the University of Lubumbashi, DR Congo. He holds a PhD from the University of Laval, Québec (Canada). He specialises in the social history of the mining city of Lubumbashi and has authored several books on the topic – e.g. *Les identités urbaines en Afrique: Le cas de Lubumbashi* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005), *Bana Shaba abandonnés par leur père: Structures de l'autorité et histoire sociale de la famille ouvrière au Katanga 1910–1997* (L'Harmattan, 2001), and, in collaboration with Rosario Giordano and Bogumil Jewsiewicki, *Lubumbashi 1910–2010: Mémoire d'une ville industrielle* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2010). For several years, he presided over the scientific committee of the “Mémoires de Lubumbashi” research group at the University of Lubumbashi.

FRÉDÉRIC GIRAUT is Professor of Political Geography and Territorial Development at the University of Geneva. He works on territorial restructuring issues, mainly on the African continent and especially in South Africa, where he has been a visiting scholar. In the field of political toponymy, he mainly studies the production of new names, in other words the neotonymy for which he has an academic blog: <http://neotopo.hypotheses.org/>. With Myriam Houssay-Holzschuch, he proposed a global theoretical framework for interpreting toponymies: Giraut and Houssay-Holzschuch, “The *dispositif* of place naming: Toward a theoretical framework”, *Geopolitics* 21, 1 (2016), 1–21.

THOMAS HART, a retired American diplomat, has pursued a second career in heritage preservation, working as executive director of the Historic Fredericksburg (Virginia) Foundation and on conservation of the historic rooms of the Old Executive Office Building next to the White House. He has published several articles on heritage conservation topics in the United States, Kenya, Suriname and Senegal. Hart was educated at the universities of Princeton, Columbia and Oxford and has an MA in historic preservation from Goucher College. He currently lives in Paris.



SAMIRA HASSA is Associate Professor of Languages at Manhattan College in the city of New York, United States. She holds a PhD in French linguistics from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a maîtrise and a diplôme d'études approfondies (doctoral preparatory degree) from the University of Montpellier, France. In her multilingual, multicultural family in Morocco, her grandfather referred to places by their French names, while her parents used Moroccan names. This piqued her interest in the connections between language, space and history.

HOLON HISTORY MUSEUM AND ARCHIVE presents the history of the city of Holon (Israel), its neighbourhoods and its residents. It archives and preserves documents, images and objects and organises educational activities about the city's heritage for local schoolchildren and other visitors in order to strengthen a sense of place, identity and culture. Among the highlighted topics are the establishment of the first quarters on the sandy dunes, the 1948 War of Independence, immigration absorption, industry and the Samaritan community.

SILVIA JORGE concluded her PhD in urbanism in 2017 (Faculty of Architecture, University of Lisbon – FA/UL) with a thesis on the pericentral self-produced neighbourhoods of Maputo, Mozambique. She is now a researcher of the Urban Socio-Territorial and Local Intervention Study Group, University of Lisbon (GESTUAL/FA/UL).

EDNA LANGENTHAL is Senior Lecturer at the University of Ariel, School of Architecture, Israel, where she teaches the fifth year, final project. She is the founder and chief editor of *Architext*, the journal of the School of Architecture at Ariel University, a peer-reviewed bilingual (Hebrew/English) journal. Edna received her BArch from the Technion, Haifa, and she holds a MA and a PhD in philosophy from Tel Aviv University. Her research and teaching incorporate philosophical and ethical questions, emphasising the link between the fields of architecture and phenomenology. Edna is also a practicing architect as an associate at Langenthal-Balasiano Architects, mainly specialising in public buildings.

Yael MAAYAN is a political and social activist, currently a PhD student in sociology at the University of Haifa, Israel. She works on the topic of Arabs in Israeli academia and the climate of Israeli academic institutions towards Arab students. Yael won the State of Israel President's Residence Prize for Outstanding Doctoral Research Proposal, in addition to the Dean's Award and Master's Degree Award from the University of Haifa. Her publications include *Present yet Absent – Arabic and Arab Culture on Israeli Campuses: An Updated Look* (together with Thaer Abu-Ras), a report published by the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) Sikkuy and Dirasat with the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, 2014, and *Living Together in a Diverse Campus – Research Report* (together with Rassem Khamaisi and Raymaa Da'as), published by the Jewish-Arab Center at the University of Haifa, 2016.

MEIR MARGALIT lectures at the Center for Advancement of Peace Initiatives of Ono Academic College, Israel, and specialises in urban policy and

multiculturalism. He has just concluded being Chair of a research group within the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem on the topic of planning and building in East Jerusalem as one of the most actual and burning issues regarding Palestinians' hardships to build there legally. Dr. Margalit has published four books on this topic and is also an editorial board member of the *Palestine-Israel Journal* and the Spanish journal *SinPermiso*.

BAUDOIN MOUANDE is a Congolese photographer, a member of the "Collectif Génération Elili" group of photographers and "Africa in Visu". Starting by documenting Brazzaville life and the wars in Congo for local newspapers, he benefited, in 2007, from professional training in Paris at the Centre for Training and Development in Journalism. Mouanda presented his work at the Dapper Museum, Paris, and at the African Photography Encounters in Bamako, Mali. The winner of several prizes, he also recently spent three months in Libreville, Gabon, where he developed his work "Hip-Hop and Society" and followed the presidential elections. Aside from regularly publishing in several regional magazines, Mouanda's work is part of several collections in France and beyond.

RODRIC STEEVE MPASSY is a self-taught photographer, born in 1990 in Brazzaville. He spent his childhood and adolescence in Pointe-Noire, the second-largest city in Congo-Brazzaville; he has lived and worked in Brazzaville since 2010, where he also pursued his university studies. In his work, Mpassy manipulates casual images of everyday life by mixing them with historical and mythological references. In spite of great difficulties experienced during his debut, Mpassy has always been devoted to the medium of creative arts and has felt a desire for artistic liberation through photography. This desire led him to join the "Collectif Génération Elili" group of photographers in Brazzaville. Thanks to professional workshops, exchange of knowledge, interactions and debates that are being organised by this group, Mpassy further explores the world of photography and its rich diversity.

SALIFOU NDAM is a doctoral student in urban sociology at Le Centre de Recherche et de Formation Doctorale en Sciences Humaines, Sociales et Éducatives de l'Université de Yaoundé at the University of Yaoundé 1, Cameroon, and a researcher at the National Education Center. He wrote an MA thesis on the topic of mobility and urban violence in Cameroon: analysis of forms of sociability in the streets of Yaoundé and Douala.

ABDERRAHMANE NGAIDÉ teaches history at the Université Cheikh Anta Diop of Dakar, Senegal. He has published several books, including *Suintements de couleurs sous fichues banderoles: Essai sur l'art de l'in-vu* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2015). On the eve of the opening of a photo exhibition (*L'Art de l'in-vu*) at the Goethe Institute in Dakar, Ngaidé organised a private viewing on the occasion of the release of his essay which explains the meaning, the content and the purpose of this art that expresses itself through photography.

HILDA NISSIMI is Chair of the General History Department at Bar-Ilan University. Dr. Nissimi has published widely on the identity, formation

and memory practices of the Mashhadi Jewish community in Iran. She has also published work about the history, tradition and memory practices of the Jewish underground movements during British Mandate Palestine and about the Mau-Mau underground movement in Kenya during the British colonial period.

AMBE J. NJOH is Professor of Environmental Science and Policy at the University of South Florida (USF), where he has been since 1994. He was Pioneer Director of the Urban & Regional Planning Program at USF from 2009 to 2014. He has written 12 books and more than 100 peer-reviewed articles, book chapters and technical reports. He is an authority on urban public service delivery in Africa and has served as a consultant to the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements on this and related matters. He is currently exploring the relationship between electric energy supply/consumption and development in Africa and developing a model for assessing the sustainability of renewable energy technologies in developing regions.

“PARRHESIA” was a group of social-activist artists in Israel operating between 2005 and 2012. The group was preoccupied with the development of a language of civil communication, a dialogue through mutual respect and humanism. It strove to increase the visibility of social change organisations through visual creativity workshops and the publication of books, leaflets, advertisements, presentations and internet sites. Its members also produced artworks treating controversial issues aimed at provoking public discourse and bringing social change.

TORUN REITE is currently a PhD research scholar at the Department of Romance Studies and Classics at Stockholm University. She holds an MA in Portuguese language from the University of Oslo (2013) and a master of economics and business administration from the Norwegian School of Economics (1989). In the last 25 years, she has held independent and governmental positions in the field of international development. These have included the completion of evaluation reports and the implementation of public-sector reforms in over 20 developing countries, particularly in emerging economies and so-called quasi-fragile or fragile state contexts.

ELISHA RENNE is Professor Emerita in the Departments of Anthropology and Afro-American and African Studies at the University of Michigan. Renne’s dissertation research (1987–1988) focused on gender relations in south-western Nigeria. She subsequently taught at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, and continues to conduct research in Zaria on gender, textiles and health.

XAVIER RICOU is an architect who lives in Dakar, Senegal. He is involved in the preservation of the built heritage in Senegal and passionate about the iconography of colonial Senegal. Xavier pursued historical and genealogical research on the métis families in Senegal and administrates the “Senegalmétis” Facebook page. He is the author of *Trésors de l’iconographie du Sénégal colonial* (Riveneuve éditions, 2006); and *La Maison Senghor* (Riveneuve éditions, 2015).

ALLEN F. ROBERTS and the late MARY “POLLY” NOOTER ROBERTS, Professors of World Arts and Cultures at the University of California, Los Angeles. Trained in sociocultural anthropology and art history, respectively, they conducted research, curated exhibitions and published their work. Their exhibition, “A Saint in the City: Sufi Arts of Urban Senegal”, was funded by the US National Endowment for the Humanities and travelled to six US museums (2003–2008); the accompanying book received the Herskovits Prize and the Arnold Rubin Award for US publications in African Studies.

JEAN-EULOGE SAMBA is a photographer who began his career almost by chance in 1984 as an assistant in the photography studio of his older brother while going to school in Pointe-Noire, the second-largest city in the Republic of the Congo. This experience initiated him into the field, leading him during his studies to shoot pictures in the city’s quarters and at wedding ceremonies. His first attendance in a training workshop in 1997 at the French Cultural Center (now French Institute of Congo), was interrupted by the outbreak of civil war in the country. In 2003, a new professional avenue opened up for him, supported by the European Union in Brazzaville in a professional training course in the visual arts. With the creation of the “Collectif Génération Elili” – a group of professional photographers from Brazzaville in which he took part – Samba shares with his colleagues knowledge, research and reflections. This is through the organisation of workshops, training seminars and meetings in the Congo and beyond.

HEDVA SANDEROVITZ is an international consultant for business processes and information technology. Her career includes marketing and managerial roles for IBM, managing a high-tech incubator for start-up companies and founding an innovative e-commerce company. Hedva lives in Israel. She is an amateur photographer, passionate about technology and loves to travel and discover new places in the world. She has an MBA from Boston University.

KAZEEM KĒHINDÉ SANUTH is a PhD candidate in second-language acquisition at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His dissertation examines language ideologies and linguistic practices that surround a study abroad programme in south-west Nigeria. It investigates how American learners of Yoruba experience the multilingual contexts in which Yoruba is spoken, the various affordances that the contexts present to learners and how these resources shape their language-use opportunities.

AVI SASSON is Senior Lecturer at the Department of Land of Israel Studies in Ashkelon College, Israel, and a member of Yavne kibbutz. As a historical geographer who examines spatio-cultural phenomena, he focuses mainly on the southern littoral and the city of Ashkelon in terms of water history, holy sites and heritage – including counselling for the municipality.

GAD SOBOL was born in Haifa in 1939 and has a bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering from the Technion and an MA in history of the Jewish people from the Ben Gurion University of the Negev. Nowadays, he

investigates the history of the city of Ashkelon and its heritage sites and assists in municipal educational enterprises in this regard.

ABDOULAYE IBRAHIM TOURÉ was born in 1975 in Gao, Mali. He has been a TV/Video director since 2002, when he successfully passed a video production course at the University of the Nation in Lomé, Togo. During his training at Mali's national television (ORTM) in Bamako, Touré started a magazine entitled *Disrupted Families (Familles disloquées)*. He was also the editor of the ORTM's programme *La Bonne Nouvelle* on behalf of the Christian Association of Communication in Mali from 2006 to 2012. In 2014, following the reconquest of Mali's northern cities by the government from rebel groups, Touré decided to return and settle in Gao, initially as an independent reporter. In 2016, following the first Turban Festival, he established the "Turban Communication SARL" – a registered agency specialising in audiovisual production and training and events communication support.

THE TURBAN FESTIVAL is a cultural activity that draws its essence from the strip of cloth which some men in northern Mali use to cover their heads. For these men in the Sahara region the turban represents a most prestigious accoutrement, symbolising honour, wisdom, responsibility, dignity and knowledge of Islam. In order to expose the younger generations to this part of their ancestral tradition and social codes, this events platform has been created through photo exhibitions, video projections, turban parades and symposiums of relevant stories on this fabric – unifying the diverse peoples of the Sahara.

SÍLVIA LEIRIA VIEGAS (Portugal) concluded a PhD in architecture in 2015 (Faculdade de Arquitetura da Universidade de Lisboa) with a thesis about Luanda (Angola) and is now a FCT scholarship holder (SFRH/BPD/118022/2016), a postdoctoral researcher with the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra (CES-UC) and a member of the study group GESTUAL of the Faculty of Architecture, University of Lisbon (FA-UL).

LEBON CHANSARD ZIAVOULA, aka Zed, is a graduate in documentary communication from the Marien Ngouabi University of Congo-Brazzaville. He developed a photographic instinct from a young age and is passionate about artistic and journalistic photography. A member of the "Collectif Génération Elili" group of photographers since 2010, Zed has participated in several photography exhibitions at national and international levels and in many professional workshops in Congo-Brazzaville and around the world. After a training seminar on creativity and design in Shenzhen, China, he was selected to be one of the young ambassadors of the European Union-Africa partnership. Zed collaborates with magazines and newspapers nationally and internationally and was honourably mentioned by the jury of the 8th Jeux de la Francophonie, Abidjan 2017.