

Toponymy and the Spatial Politics of Power on the Urban  
Landscape of Nairobi, Kenya

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## ABSTRACT

Names of places, otherwise known as toponyms, have in the past been viewed as passive signifiers on the urban space. However, in the last two decades, scholarly attention has focused on reading toponyms within the broader socio-political context — a concept referred to as critical toponymy. Critical toponymy refutes the notion that place names are simple, predictable and naturally occurring features which give descriptions of locations of places.

In Nairobi, no critical research has been done to find out the motivations behind place naming and the implications of certain naming patterns, especially in showing the linkage between the power struggles and the toponymic inscriptions on the urban landscape. The main objective of this study is to investigate the meaning and processes behind the inscription of place names and their role in the spatial politics of power on the urban landscape of Nairobi, Kenya. To analyse toponymy and the spatial politics that influenced the city over time, Nairobi's toponymic history was analysed chronologically based on three political epochs: the colonial period 1899–1963; the post-independence period 1964–1990; and the contemporary period 1990–2017. The third period was further sub-divided into two phases, with its latter phase starting in 2008, the year when the debate surrounding privatisation of naming rights began. These three periods were then analysed based on the actors and socio-political processes involved in shaping Nairobi's toponymic inscriptions; and the extent to which these politics of power, memory, and identity were manifested on the landscape through toponymy. Four toponymic themes emerged and formed the base for the analytical chapters of this thesis, which are: toponymy in British colonial Nairobi, street toponymic (re)inscriptions in post-independence Nairobi, toponymy in Nairobi's informal settlements, and toponymic commodification in Nairobi.

Various methods were applied for research whereby, extensive archival research was done in Kenya and Britain (because Kenya was a British colony) and information was gathered from newspaper reports. Furthermore, interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted among residents of informal settlements. Finally, field surveys were also carried out to see the nature and manifestation of toponymy on the urban landscape of Nairobi.

This thesis concludes by synthesising the main findings and contributions, and formulation of three main toponymic inferences based on the three periods: colonial, post-independence and contemporary. 1) The colonial period was characterised by the conquest of a new land by the British colonial government. The British used toponymy as a tool to impose their political and

cultural ideology. 2) In the post-independence period, the mass erasure of British colonial names was a powerful symbolic resistance against a former oppressive regime and a toponymic re-appropriation by the new political regime to propagate an optimistic agenda of nationalism and pan-Africanism. 3) The contemporary period is one of toponymic innovation. First, the people in the informal settlements formulate names that delineate villages according to ethnic communities. Further, they embrace names of other places in the world that have undergone war and violence thereby identifying with them. This informal toponymy is powerfully innovative and communicates about their struggles as a marginalised urban community. Second, toponymic commodification is an innovative strategy for global companies to market themselves using public spaces and on the other hand, it provides a source of funds for those facilities to be improved so that they can serve the urban communities better. These three toponymic inferences of imposition, re-appropriation, and innovation, show how toponymy in Nairobi has evolved over the years and how it has been instrumental in shaping the symbolic urban landscape of Nairobi.

**Keywords:** Critical toponymy, colonialism, post-independence, globalisation, informal settlements, toponymic commodification

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBD	Central Business District
CCN	City Council of Nairobi
DN	Daily Nation
EAS	East African Standard
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IEBC	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KAR	King's African Rifles
KHR	Kenya Hansard Records
KLFA	Kenya Land and Freedom Army (Mau Mau)
KNA	Kenya National Archives
Ksh.	Kenya Shillings
MGS	Metropolitan Growth Strategy
MISC-K	Moi International Sports Center - Kasarani
MLK	Martin Luther King
MP	Member of Parliament
Nacosti	National Commission of Science, Technology and Innovation
NCC	Nairobi City County
NNS	Nyayo National Stadium
NCE	Nubian Council of Elders
P.C	Parliamentary Committee
PPP	Public Private Partnerships
SOAS (UCL)	School of Oriental and African Studies (University College London)
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SSMB	Sports Stadia Management Board

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

“What’s in a name?” This is an age-old question regarding the value of a name. The frequently quoted line “A rose by any other name would smell as sweet” from Shakespeare’s play *Romeo and Juliet*, tends to suggest that a name does not have much effect on the value of an object. However, this research shows that names can influence the value attached to an object and in the context of this research, to a place. Taking the case of Nairobi, this study exemplifies how different place names (also referred to as toponyms) have been inscribed and (re)inscribed and how valuable they have been in shaping the urban landscape.

Kenya as a country has not always been known by that name. In 1896, Kenya became a British protectorate and was after that referred to as the East African Protectorate. This name was changed to Kenya in 1920 as seen in this excerpt from a letter written by Colchester.

We know that it was in 1920, by “Order in Council” that the name Kenya replaced that of East African Protectorate....it is fairly obvious why the change was made, and the choice would fall naturally on the name of the country’s dominant geographical feature. The new name also happened to be euphonious and easily pronounced (Colchester 1976).

The ‘dominant geographical feature’ mentioned is Mt. Kenya and its naming can be traced back to the missionary Johann Krapf, who heard the name from the Kamba ethnic group who lived on the Eastern side of the mountain and who called the mountain Kiinya. The Kikuyu who also live(d) in the Mt. Kenya region called it Kirinyaga (meaning the mountain with ostriches). It is thought that the meaning of the name in the Kamba and Kikuyu language is the same. The mountain was likened to having ostriches by the indigenous tribes because it was snow-capped, just like ostriches have mainly black feathers and a few white feathers on their backs. Krapf is considered to have been a good linguist, and so his understanding of the name and its pronunciation may have been close to how the natives meant it and the name was eventually adopted by the British government to refer to the Kenya Colony as stated in the excerpt above.

The name of Nairobi City can be traced back to the Maasai ethnic group, who referred to the area as “Enkare Nyirobi” meaning “a place of cool waters.” The area occupied by Nairobi is traversed by three rivers (Ngong, Mathare, and Nairobi). The presence of the three rivers explains why the Maasai, who are livestock keepers named Nairobi in this way. In a map dated 1900, one of the oldest maps of Nairobi, the then railway town it is referred to as Nyrobi,

perhaps a mispronunciation of the original Nyirobi. As seen in this account, place names (toponyms) are complex entities which are representations of social, political, economic and even environmental conditions. Klaas Willems alludes to this by stating that, “proper names are complex signs with specific linguistic, pragmatic, logical, philosophical, semiotic, historical, psychological, social and juridical properties”(Willems 2000, p. 86). In this study, place names in Nairobi have been categorised chronologically and thematically based on three political periods, i.e., colonial, post-independence and contemporary.

In the first theme, the findings show that toponymy during the colonial period was an imposition of British political ideology as well as the replication of a British spatial idyll on the urban landscape of Nairobi. The population was mainly composed of three races: the British, Asians (mainly Indians) and Africans. Although the Africans formed the bulk of the population, they were the least represented socially and politically and this, in turn, was reflected in the toponymy. Streets, buildings and other spaces such as parks were predominantly named after the British monarchy, colonial administrators, settler farmers, and businessmen as well as prominent Asian personalities. In this way, the names were a direct reflection of the political and ideological dominance of some racial groups over others. Hence, the racial politics were tightly linked to the symbolic (including toponymic) construction of the city at the time.

In the second theme, the attainment of independence in 1963 witnessed the erasure of most of the colonial place names and marked a major shift in toponymic inscriptions in Nairobi. Names were now inscribed and (re)inscribed to promote ideologies of nationalism and pan-Africanism. In the post-independence period, names, therefore, acted as symbols of justice restitution, arenas of reputational politics, spatial scales of memory, and representations of ethnic representation and exclusion in the urban space. In this study, the post-independence period refers to the first 26 years after Kenya gained independence because, during this time, the urban symbolic change was most felt and especially that of street name changes in Nairobi. There were many contestations between the post-independence government and the public regarding street name changes during that time. Furthermore, documentation from the city council of Nairobi shows that most of the street name changes in Nairobi were carried out between the years 1973–1974, a decade after independence. However, other minor street name changes are recorded to have occurred up until the late 1980’s.

This study also examines toponymy in what has been referred to as the contemporary period. This contemporary period has been divided into two phases. The first phase focuses on

toponymy in informal settlements while the second phase focuses on the privatisation of naming rights of public spaces in a bid to get funds to revitalise these spaces.

The first phase of the contemporary period elaborates the third theme of this study which is toponymy in informal settlements. The premise is that the proliferation of slum settlements in Nairobi arose after the former restriction against native Africans having a permanent residence in Nairobi was removed, leading to a high influx of population into the city and the existing formal native housing facilities built by the colonial government. The few illegal villages that had developed during the colonial period began to absorb more of the Africans who came to settle in the city. The independent government faced difficulty in providing more housing. Hence, starting 1964, the housing shortages in Nairobi increased, and the informal settlements (also referred herein as slums) grew exponentially. The government resorted to demolitions and evictions between the years 1960–1970 to eradicate the slums which were considered as disruptive to the growth of a modernizing African city. In 1990, another major political shift occurred in the country, where the one-party government system was replaced by multipartyism. Land is a very important commodity in Kenya and in the wake of multipartyism, it was used as a tool for political manipulation, rewarding its allies and depriving its opponents, accentuating urban land conflict in Nairobi and especially in the informal settlements which housed many people and were termed as ‘vote banks.’ Since the informal settlements are considered illegal, it was during this time that demolitions, evictions and arson attacks were intensified in the slum areas especially on those thought to be sympathetic to the political opposition. Hence, 1991 presented an important political epoch, one that also influenced the toponymy in informal settlements which started to reflect the socio-economic challenges, land injustices as well as an identification with global struggles. That is why in the context of this study and more specifically looking at the toponymy in informal settlements, the first phase of the contemporary period has been considered as being from 1991–2007. The toponymic dynamics of informal settlements have been exemplified using the cases of Kibera, Mathare and Mukuru informal settlements. Through these three case study areas, this research established that the toponymy in the informal settlements reflected the social and political struggles that the residents faced. The study went further to compile records of newspaper articles that verified the actual struggles that were symbolised by the names. A total of 278 newspaper articles ranging from March 1961 to February 2016 reported cases of evictions and violence in informal settlements in Nairobi including in Kibera, Mathare, and Mukuru, further



concretizing the claim of this study that names reflected the social and political struggles of residents in the informal settlements.

Finally, the fourth theme of this study is elaborated in the second phase of the contemporary period where there has been increased Public Private Partnerships (PPP's) between the government and corporate firms pertaining place branding and the sale of naming rights. In this study, this period ranges from 2008–2017. Corporate branding and the sale of naming rights started with a deal to rename Nyayo National Stadium to Coca-Cola Stadium in 2008. The deal failed because the government and the company could not agree on the renaming conditions. Since then corporate branding for Moi International Sports Center-Kasarani (MISC-K) and Kenyatta International Conference Center (KICC) have also been done. The challenge this trend brings is the contest between heritage and exchange value of the names of the said spaces. Some people contend that the heritage value of these toponyms is priceless, while others think that they are only valuable in as far as they can be beneficial in providing funding for revitalisation and maintenance of these spaces.

The study area, Nairobi, is Kenya's capital city and is also referred to as Nairobi County, one of the 47 counties in Kenya. With the division of Kenya into 47 counties following the passing of the new constitution in 2010, Nairobi is the smallest county geographically though with the highest population density and serving as a leading political and economic hub of the country.

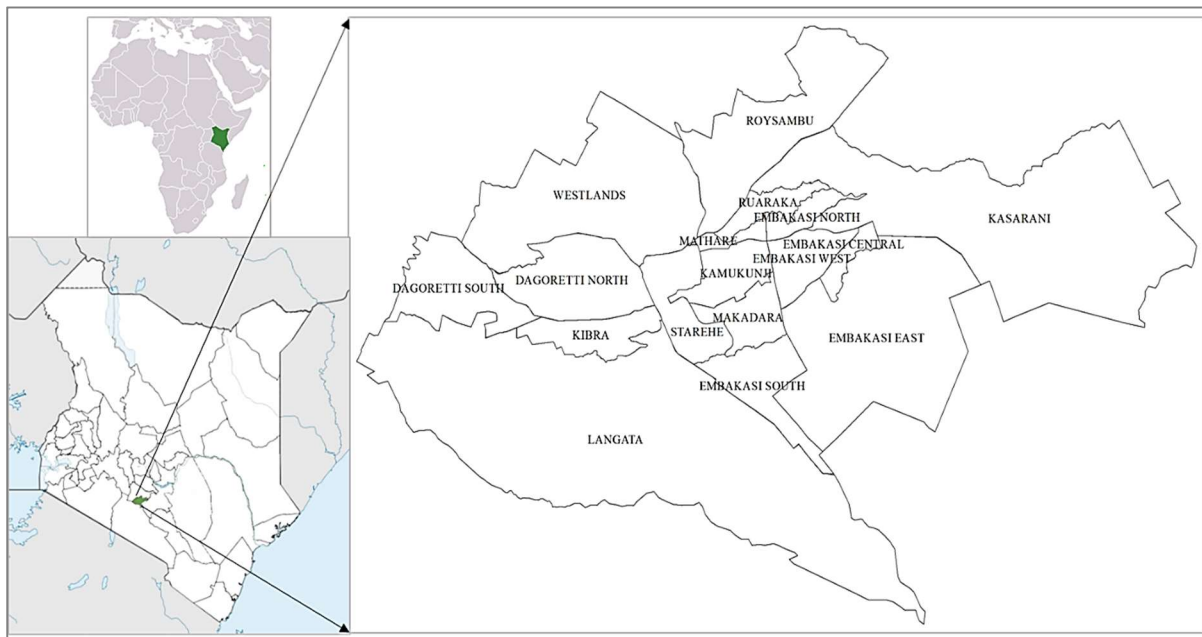


Figure 1. Map showing the 47 counties in Kenya and the 17 constituencies within Nairobi  
Source: Ilri.org

The county is divided into 17 constituencies: Langata, Kibra, Dagoretti South and North, Embakasi North, South, Central, East and West, Starehe, Makadara, Kamukunji, Mathare, Ruaraka, Westlands, Roysambu and Kasarani (figure 1). According to the 2009 Census, 3,138,295 people in the administrative area of Nairobi, known then as Nairobi Province (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2009). Currently, the population of Nairobi is estimated to be 5 million people.

## **1.2 Problem statement**

For the most of the twentieth century, place naming was antiquarian and encyclopaedic. One scholar argued that the “toponym collector draws up lists of place names and garners details regarding the origin and meaning of each” (Wright 1929, p. 140). Within geographical studies, place name research has long held the position of a marginalised discipline. It has commonly been referred to as an old and discredited scholarship (Goodchild 2004). Zelinsky, a place name study enthusiast also lamented that even after many years “the study of names leaves everything to be desired” (2002, p. 243).

However, despite the field of toponymy being neglected or mainly focusing on antiquarian empiricism for the most of the century, in the mid-1990’s, there was an increased interest in studying place names based on the social and political processes underlying their inscription on the landscape. This ‘critical turn’ in place-name studies forms the theoretical basis of this research. Critical toponymy refutes the notion that place names are simply predictable and naturally occurring features which give descriptions of locations of places (Vuolteenaho and Berg 2009). The theory is informed by a post-structural tradition in cultural geography, and it recognises that names are discursive power agents which play performative roles in the ongoing production of place (Wideman 2015). Critical toponymy has in the past focused on discourses regarding naming and commemoration, nationalism and state-building in the wake of political regime changes, social justice and symbolic resistance and the role of toponymy in the production of calculable spaces. Moreover, an emerging discussion among critical toponymists is that toponyms can also be implements of branding and commodification especially with the influence of globalisation where global corporations are taking interest and investing in local establishments in exchange for naming rights (Light and Young 2014; Medway and Warnaby 2014).

In the context of Nairobi, barely any critical toponymic research has been done to find out the motivations behind naming and the implications of certain naming patterns in the city of

Nairobi and especially in showing the linkage between the power struggles and the toponymic inscriptions on the urban landscape. An attempt was made by Owuor and Mbatia when they looked at the post-independence development of Nairobi city (Owuor and Mbatia 2008). They summarily discussed how names of streets and neighbourhoods changed from the colonial period to signify nationalism in the post-independence period.

Nevanlinna's book *Interpreting Nairobi: the cultural study of built forms* is a seminal work on the study of the cultural landscape of Nairobi. However, her primary focus was the built form, with few mention of names and their importance on the urban landscape. This study, thus, aims to fill the gap left by existing toponymic studies in Nairobi, which have been done shallowly by other scholars of geography and urban cultural studies. Consequently, the following research aims, questions, and objectives have been formulated.

### **1.3 Research objective and questions**

The main objective is to investigate the meaning and processes behind the inscription of place names in Nairobi, and their role in the spatial politics of power, on the urban landscape. This thesis attempts to elaborate and enrich the existing theory of critical toponymy using Nairobi as a case study. To achieve this objective, we seek to answer four fundamental questions and which also form the basis for the objectives of this study:

- 1) How did toponymy emerge as a symbol of cultural and political dominance on the urban landscape in colonial Nairobi?
- 2) What was the role of toponymy in decolonising and Africanising the urban space in post-independence Nairobi?
- 3) How is toponymy manifested in contemporary Nairobi and especially in the informal settlement areas?
- 4) How is toponymic commodification, through place branding and sale of naming rights occurring in Nairobi?

These four research questions form the basis for the four main analytical chapters of this thesis as shown in the thesis structure below.

#### **1.4 Importance of this study**

This study is useful because it draws more attention to how names are useful to the symbolic interpretation of urban spaces. It has been divided into three chronological periods: these are British colonial, post-independence, and contemporary Nairobi.

In the colonial period, the exercise of power over space was by the British authorities. The practice of spatial segregation by the British was evidenced by the land use and ownership patterns, coupled by the distribution of population by race over space, and the material manifestation of colonial hegemony through architecture and monuments. These elements have been studied extensively by other historians, geographers, and urban planners. However, this study focuses on how toponymy served to consolidate this British ideology together with the other material symbols in the city at the time. Street names, names of building and parks were named after the pioneers of the city, British royalty, the administrative and political class.

In post-independence Nairobi, this study brings to the fore the highly contested, uneven and non-monolithic nature of Africanizing and nationalizing the urban landscape after independence. It shows that the socio-political processes behind place naming are important and should be given more attention especially in analysing place naming in post independent cities.

In contemporary Nairobi, this study has sought to show how names within informal settlements are effective in communicating the social, political and economic challenges of the people living in those settlements. The study gives a unique narrative of the complexities of land injustices, political incitements, and infighting among and within communities living in the informal settlements. It also has provided a unique way of understanding the history behind informal settlements in Nairobi as well as the impact of globalisation on the urban landscape of Nairobi.

Further, in the contemporary period, the current trend of toponymic commodification was analysed with relation to place branding, outdoor advertising and the sale of naming rights of public spaces in Nairobi including sports stadia, public buildings, and even street signage. This trend shows the impact of the economic dimensions of naming urban places and how these are linked to the wider social and political contexts of urban change especially in the heritage or civic versus economic or exchange value of names.

## **1.5 Thesis structure**

This thesis starts with an introduction (chapter 1) which gives a background to the study, the research problem, aims, and objectives, as well as the research contribution. In chapter 2, review of the relevant literature is done and an analytical framework is derived from the existing theories. In chapter 3, the data collection and analysis methods applied in this study are discussed in detail. The four chapters that follow (4,5,6, and 7) are the analytical chapters each looking at different ways in which toponymy is manifested in Nairobi from a critical toponymic perspective. These four chapters have been compiled in a way that can allow them to be independent peer-reviewed publications. Two of the chapters, i.e., 5 and 6 have already been published in peer-reviewed journals. The thesis ends with a discussion and conclusion (chapter 8) which synthesises the findings from the four chapters and explains how the aims and objectives of the research have been achieved, as well as giving the empirical, methodological and theoretical contributions and finally suggesting further areas of research.

## CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Introduction

The study of place names can easily be placed in different fields of study including linguistics, anthropology, and geography among others. However, based on the review of literature done, the theoretical basis of this study which is critical toponymy can be best placed under the bigger post-structural theory of cultural geography.

Cultural geography primarily focuses on the study of immaterial symbols on the urban landscape using socio-theoretical approaches (Norton 2000). Norton further notes that cultural geography is “concerned with making sense of people and the spaces they occupy, an aim that is achieved through analyses and understandings of cultural processes, cultural landscapes, and cultural identities” (p. 3). Although critical toponymy is not necessarily identified as a branch of cultural geography, in the context of this study, I have found these two approaches to be inextricably linked, especially in view of the historical development of cultural geography and its shift from the Sauerian approach to the new cultural geography as discussed further in this section.

The study of place names has also undergone some changes over time especially in geographical studies, most notable being its move from the taxonomical and encyclopedic analysis of names to a more critical approach referred to as critical toponymic theory. This is the more specific theoretical approach that has been utilised in this research and is the basis of the methodological strategy that has been applied in the analytical chapters.

The review of relevant literature will, therefore, be focused on these two theoretical approaches of cultural geography and critical toponymy and how they have developed over time. In addition, other theoretical approaches that have influenced this study include colonialism and colonial urbanism, postcolonialism, urban informality as well as globalisation. It is expected that the outcomes of this study will contribute by enriching and elaborating on these theoretical perspectives using the case study of Nairobi. This review of the existing theories is what is used to inform the analytical framework of this study, which forms the basis for the analysis and structural organisation of this study.

## **2.2 Theoretical framework**

### **2.2.1. Cultural geography**

Cultural geography first emerged with Carl Sauer, probably the most influential cultural geographer of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His method also termed as the ‘Sauerian Approach’ focused on the relationships and interactions between diverse human societies and their natural environment (Price and Lewis 1993). Sauer’s ideas were considered influential in the move from environmental determinism and regional geography — the two preferred approaches in the 1920’s, toward more cultural and historical studies of human-environment relations. It is on this basis that he outlined what constitutes a cultural landscape in his seminal article published in 1925, titled: ‘The morphology of landscape’(Sauer 1925). These were: factor (culture), time, medium (natural landscape) and forms (population, housing, production, communication) etc. He is quoted as saying: “It then becomes the task of geography to grasp the content, individuality, and relation of areas, in which man comes in for his due attention as part of the area” (Sauer 1927, p. 186). Hence for Sauer, the aim of cultural geography was to “explain the facts of the culture area, by whatever causes have contributed thereto” (Sauer 1931, p. 623).

However, in the 1980’s the Sauerian approach was challenged based on its over-reliance on empirical methods, focusing mainly on material culture and being limited in theory (Laragh 2007). A new scholarly attention advanced the thoughts on landscape studies that had been revived in the 1970’s. It was during this time that emphasis started to be placed on social-theoretical approaches and this gave birth to a new school of thought now known as the ‘new cultural geography’.

The ‘new’ cultural geographers of the 1980’s and 1990’s examined culture in contemporary and urban societies and focused primarily on investigating non-material culture in relation to identity, ideology, power, meaning, and values. Two household names in the ‘new’ cultural geography movement are Cosgrove and Jackson. In a co-authored paper in 1987, they stated that the new directions in cultural geography saw the landscape as a sophisticated construction of culture with a way of composing, organizing and assigning meanings to an external world (Cosgrove and Jackson 1987).

Cultural geographers have analysed place names or toponymy based both on the Sauerian approach and the new cultural geography approach. The Sauerian approach focuses on the ability of a group to impress its identity on a landscape especially if the group is the first settler in that specific place. On the other hand, the analysis based on the new cultural geography

approach tends to focus on analysing names based on unequal power relations and related identities. Both analyses have a concern with cultural identity and with place names acting as symbols on the urban landscape. A point of convergence for the two theories is that naming has a cultural power over the landscape and this is appropriated by social actors and groups who control the message these names communicate (Alderman and Inwood 2013). Petzet reinforces this position on the power of naming over placemaking by stating that “naming can be a way of organizing and giving meaning to place, and thus staking a claim and imposing ways of conceptualizing and navigating it” (Petzet 2005, p. 158). These arguments form the basis for the emergence of critical toponymy as a theoretical approach to place name studies.

### **2.2.2 Toponymy and the socio-semiotics of urban space**

This study suggests that toponyms are very important to the city landscape in terms of evoking a certain image and creating a sense of awareness and legibility of one’s surroundings. According to Lynch, imageability is that quality in an object that makes it vividly identifiable by a given observer. He also defines city legibility as, how its parts can be recognised and organised into a coherent whole (Lynch 1960). How people view (imageability) and read (legibility) their city is highly influenced by the names therein. Names of spaces within a city affect the overall image of the city, and it’s no wonder that their (re)inscriptions tend to be highly contentious, and hence the need for critical toponymic analysis. However, Lynch’s work has been called into question by scholars of urban semiotics who have considered his work highly limited to perceptual cognition and not having been keen on meanings and ideology. Urban socio-semiotics, which is defined as the study of signs and symbols related to ideology and power in urban environments, focuses on the ‘codes of meaning’ interacting with a space. Gottdiener astutely points out that in the study of the city image, there is a need to investigate the “struggles for control of space and the manner by which certain ideological representations succeed while alternatives fail.” He goes on to claim that “the surface calm of the city image belies its constitution as the condensation between various organised group expressions.” (Gottdiener 1986, p. 216). Symbolic memorials cannot be fully elaborated using cognitive mechanisms of remembering and forgetting, hence the need to study them as products of a “socio-spatially mediated political process” (Dwyer and Alderman 2008, p. 167). This study leans towards this school of thought, which emphasizes that within the city, urban objects at the level of denotation have their own conceptualised functions, but beyond this, they have another role which is symbolic (Gottdiener and Lagopoulos 1986). Umberto Eco alludes to this in his seminal work titled: *Function and sign: semiotics of architecture*. He posits that architectural



codes have denotative and connotative meanings. A denotation of primary functions, and on the other hand, a connotation of ideologies (Eco 1997). It is on this basis of the city image being belied with 'struggles for the control of space' that the theoretical scholarship of critical toponymy is applied in this study.

### **2.2.3 Critical toponymy**

Toponymy is defined as a scholarship that focuses on systematically studying the history and origin of place names (Monmonier 2006). Traditionally, toponymy was focused mainly on the collection and description of place names, not paying attention to theoretically guided interpretations of the meanings and processes behind those names (Alderman 2003). Following Eco's model of denotative and connotative architectural codes, toponyms are also said to contain a twofold system of signification. On one level, which is immediate, each toponym signifies a geographical place and on the other, which is less immediate, it signifies a certain ideology which gives the place its proper legitimacy (Azaryahu and Golan 2001).

The 1990's saw a re-definition of place name studies, as scholars took up a more critical approach, as opposed to the prevalent encyclopedic, taxonomic and antiquarian study of names. They focused more on the ideological connotations of names and more specifically, reading toponyms within the wider socio-political context (Anderson and Gale 1992). This new approach also highlighted the importance of looking at the processes that led to the specific names being selected to fit into their specific contexts and to explore the social struggles that underlie the place naming process (Rose-Redwood and Alderman 2011). An observation that astutely supports critical toponymy was made by Withers (2000, p. 533):

Attention to the name alone, either on the ground or on an historical map, runs the risk of concerning itself with ends and not with means; of ignoring, or, at best, underplaying the social processes intrinsic to the authoritative act of naming.

In their work on landscapes of memory and socially just futures, Alderman and Inwood noted that while memory is seemingly about the past, it is shaped to serve ideological interests in the present and to perpetuate certain cultural beliefs into the future (Alderman and Inwood 2013). These two and other scholars of critical toponymy have focused on creating a theoretical background for the cultural politics of place naming. It points to how people seek to control and contest the naming process as they engage in wider economic, social, and political struggles

(Berg 1996, Yeoh 1996, Azaryahu 2011). Critical toponymy seeks to show that place naming is an outstanding political practice of power over space (Pinchevski and Torgovnik 2002).

In this thesis, various case studies in Nairobi have been discussed based on critical toponymy. First, is the commemorative and ideological function that British names served in colonial Nairobi. Commemorative names play a key role in remembrance of key individuals or historical events to create collective memories. Hence names become agents of constructing and institutionalizing a hegemonic narrative of history (Light and Young 2014b). Second, in the post-independence context, the colonial hegemony was replaced with one of political elitism, patriotism, and nationalism. Azaryahu (2011, p. 29) has referred to this as “toponymic cleansing”. Similar studies have been done in post-apartheid South Africa (Swart 2008, Ndletyana 2012, Duminy 2014) and post-socialist Soviet Union (Light and Young 2014, Light 2004). Third, is a toponymic subject which has been given little, if any attention in mainstream critical toponymic studies, and that is toponymy in informal settlements (slums). In the case of Nairobi, the slum toponyms acted as symbols of resistance to the hardships and injustices that instigated against the settlements’ residents, mainly ethnic clashes, evictions and demolitions. These challenges have led to the residents identifying with other conflict-torn areas in the world, and have imported this toponymy. This opens a novel area of investigation and especially the role played by toponymy in cities affected by informality and globalisation. Finally, the rapidly developing literature on the sale of naming rights and place branding has also found its way into critical toponymic studies. Rose-Redwood says that this trend of commercialising public place naming systems will probably “reshape the toponymic landscape of the next century” (2011, p. 34). This phenomenon is currently taking place in Nairobi with major public spaces such as stadiums and other public buildings selling their naming rights to big corporations as a way of raising funds for the management of the facilities.

#### **2.2.4 Colonialism and colonial urbanism**

The Oxford English Dictionary (OED), states that the word colonialism comes from the Roman term ‘colonia’ which meant ‘farm’ or ‘settlement.’ The dictionary further describes a colony as being a community which, although it has settled in a new locality, is still connected to their parent state.

Loomba notes that the definition remarkably avoids mentioning anyone else in the ‘country’ other than the colonisers. The ‘new locality’ mentioned in the definition, may not have been new per se and the ‘forming of a community’ may have been repressive and unfair to the native

communities resulting in complex and traumatic relationships (Loomba 2015). This oversimplified definition tried to avoid the idea that colonialism was a meeting between different peoples and cultures and it involved the conquest and domination of one community by another. King states that the city was used as a cultural artifact for colonisation (King 1990) and hence the natives were seen as part of the artifact to be colonised alongside their habitation. The physical imprints of colonialism on cities were evident in the form of trading centers, urban centers, schools and hospitals, churches and prisons, military garrisons as well as mining barracks (Demissie 2007). These places and spaces were also given new names, giving rise to a colonial toponymy as the new colonial administrators nostalgically aimed to recreate their own countries in the new land.

Systems of nomenclature indicate different categories and sub-categories; social, political, and cultural — through which the colonial urban space was conceived and created. The organisation of the city testifies more to the colonial rather than the culture of the indigenous or colonised cultures, with residential segregation being one of the most obvious examples of separatist structures that formed the basis for colonial urbanism (King 2004). Scholarship in colonial urbanism has sometimes focused on how colonial authorities supplanted toponyms to their ‘new frontiers’ with names from their own sociocultural lexicon (Basset 1994). As noted by Yeoh, in her analysis of street names in colonial Singapore, names denoted a sense of nostalgia from the settler’s original homes in England and reflected the imagery of colonial hopes in their new-found homes. Toponyms, therefore, reflected the cultural prejudice of colonial settlers, replacing (if there was an existing) pre-colonial toponymy, or inscribing the landscape afresh to affirm their hegemony (Yeoh 1992).

The structures built strongly adhered to European architectural and construction standards. The building materials like glass, cement, aluminium originated from Europe and there was a reluctance to apply local building materials and techniques. Municipal codes of segregating land use in the city, as applied in Europe were enacted. Ordinances such as the Town and Country Planning Act were also used. Planning tools, and in particular the master plan were used to regulate and control the growth and development of towns (Njoh 2009). Bigon and Njoh state that, British colonial urbanism was characterised by racial spatial segregation under the pretext of public health. The resultant spatial structure which was replicated throughout Anglophone colonial Africa was further solidified by planning law (Bigon and Njoh 2015). Planning law resulted in the ‘township’ which meant an area outside of the native administration and jurisdiction, resulted in ‘Town Planning Ordinances’ for most countries under British

colonial administration.<sup>1</sup> Toponymy in British colonial settings reflects the overall planning and urbanism techniques applied by the British with an aim to segregate, control and dominate.

### **2.2.5 Postcolonialism**

Postcolonialism is a heterogeneous and diffuse term that has become quite difficult to define in recent years. It tends to have limits of temporality, geography, and history recognizing the continuity of history as well as the change. In this thesis, I look at ‘post-colonial’ more like a period right after independence rather than an ideological concept. However, it is imperative to understand the theories put forward regarding postcolonialism and how these can be applied to this study.

Postcolonialism can be defined as all aspects of a culture affected by the imperial process from the moment colonisation began to the present day. Four aspects of culture that are said to be heavily influenced are hegemony, language and text, place and displacement and theory development (Hall and Tucker 2004). Language especially, and its relationship to power is receiving more attention in current postcolonial scholarship. Geographers are increasingly noticing that “the right to speak and be heard, the right to name and have that name stick — is empowerment” (Tuan 1991, p. 685). Thus, names are among the sharpest tools that have been used to construct postcolonial identities, making “a postcolonial city an important site where claims of identity, different from a colonial past, are expressed and indexed and in some cases, keenly contested” (Yeoh 2001). In addition to names, this is also done by through architecture and monuments, all of which form sites of contests for social and political positions (King 2016).

In postcolonial cities, on the one hand, the material representations and state politics as used in the colonial period are still present. Odhiambo alludes to this by stating that “the colonial and post-colonial regimes in Kenya have sought to control the direction and content of politics using state power as the instrument of control” (Odhiambo 1995, p. 178). On the other hand, if there is change, the continuity and necessity of it is asserted (Mcleod 2010). Indeed, the argument that independence in most African countries just made way for African political elitism would be one way of justifying Mcleod’s claim that the material representations remained the same and just changed ownership.

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<sup>1</sup> In Kenya, the planning law for townships was referred to as the Town Planning Ordinance (Chapter 85 of the Laws of Kenya).

However, change is still felt as those representations are sometimes changed in form, or eliminated, thus asserting the change of political order. In Kenya, some of the material representations that have persisted to date include the colonial architecture — which has largely remained the same but ownership was changed from the colonialists to the African political and business elite. However, material representations such as monuments and immaterial representations such as toponyms changed drastically after independence. This meant that they had more impact in the changing colonial landscape of Nairobi.

With the consideration of Yeoh's and King's definition of a postcolonial city, a justification of the post-colonial period considered in this thesis is accrued. It is within approximately the first 25 years of independence in the period 1964–1990, that the contests for identity change within Nairobi were felt. Therefore, in the context of this study, this historical sub-period of post-colonial Nairobi, is the one used to show the effects of toponymic changes (specifically, street toponymy) on the urban identity of the city.

### **2.2.6 Urban informality and spatial marginalisation**

According to the UN-Habitat, a slum or informal settlement is characterised by Inadequate access to safe water, poor sanitation and other infrastructure, has poor structural quality of housing, is overcrowded and residents do not have security of land tenure (Mitullah 2003). Informal settlements (squatter settlements or slums) have also been defined as dense settlements comprising communities housed in self-constructed shelters, sometimes under conditions of poor access to utilities and informal land tenure. From their early origins, these settlements are beset with derogatory associations, such as crime, squalor, and apathy.

McFarlane and Waibel claim that informal settlements fester where governments tend to turn a blind eye to them, i.e., the lack of enforcement of regulations (McFarlane and Waibel 2012). Informality is not just about the housing, but also the housing process in terms of land occupation, the layout of sites, construction methods and materials of the structures and infrastructure provision (Roy and Alsayyad 2008). Informal settlements in cities of the Global South are the most visible sign of physical segregation between the haves and the have-nots. They also tend to lack legitimacy because of, among other reasons: 1) they are not found in city cadastral maps, 2) they occupy way-leaves set aside for future developments by the government or environmentally fragile areas, and 3) they tend to develop organically, sometimes starting as squatter settlements (Roy 2009).

Roy further conceptualises informality into two distinct ideas based on two books written at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century—one showing informality as a crisis and the other as heroism (Roy 2005). The crisis concept was brought forward by Peter Hall and Ulrich Pfeiffer in their book *Urban Future 21: A Global Agenda for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cities*. In this book they talk about the urban poor as having “built their own city without any reference whatsoever to the whole bureaucratic apparatus of planning and control in the formal city next door” (Hall and Pfeiffer 2000, p. 15). On the other hand, Hernando De Soto in his book *The Mystery of Capital* stated that the “informal economy is the people’s spontaneous and creative response to the state’s poor capacity to satisfy the needs of the impoverished masses” (Soto 2000, p. 14). These two concepts of crisis and heroism are in many ways reflected in our study of toponymy in informal settlements. Some slum toponyms reflect an oppressed people who are in a crisis because they are not recognised by their government, while the other talks of a people who have risen above their circumstances and are trying to make a life for themselves where the government failed in its responsibility towards them. The slum toponymy of Nairobi reflects mainly the second aspect which shows that the slum residents are finding ways of making a living and surviving despite being marginalised by the city authorities in terms of land tenure, infrastructural provision, and social justice.

Spatial marginalisation is well understood within the framework of geographic landscapes and social exclusion. Scholars in cultural geography have explored a way in which social theories can be applied to understand the socio-spatial processes of exclusion (Trudeau et al. 2011). Taking the two approaches to cultural geography — the Sauerian approach and the ‘new’ cultural geography approach, Mitchell seeks to balance them on the point of political economy of place scholarship. Places are the products of the ongoing struggle between different social groups to control how a place appears, how it is represented, who owns it and who has legitimate access to it. Sibley, on the other hand, comes up with the idea of space purification, which he defines as a process of social control through which a dominant social group socially constructs boundaries that contribute to the marginalisation of minority groups considered to be outside the mainstream society. For him, exclusion plays a part in the reproduction of social identity (Sibley 1995).

Based on the two approaches to spatial marginalisation, it is not only shown to occur socially and politically but also geographically, with the minority groups occupying the marginal areas because of these actual or implied boundaries. In this study, it emerged that the spatial localities

of minority groups and the social, political and environmental conditions therein have influenced the names of the villages that make up the informal settlements.

### **2.2.7 Globalisation**

Globalisation is defined as the rapidly developing and ever densening network of interconnections and interdependencies that characterise modern life (Tomilson 1999). It can also be defined as the increase in worldwide social relations which link different people in their localities, such that local happenings are shaped by events occurring in different parts of the world (Steger 2013). Steger determines that there are four dimensions of globalisation: economic, political, cultural and ecological. The economic refers in part to the flows of capital mediated by digital technology across the globe; the political focus on the impact of inter-governmental organisations and prospects of regional and global governance; the cultural looks at the exploding network of cultural interconnections in symbolic construction, and articulation of meanings; and the ecological focus on issues of climate change and transboundary pollution that have been brought about by global negotiations and interconnectedness.

Scholarly attention has also been given to spatialities of globalisation. In this concept, globalisation is analysed in relation to the spatiality of contemporary social organisation and meanings of space and place with increased global forces of connectivity (Aminy 2002). The connection between space and globalisation is portrayed when global issues and trends are reflected in local geographies, creating heterotopic spaces which are multilayered because of their connections with other places. To understand the complexity of the urban experience in Africa, the ongoing processes of urbanisation have to be connected with globalisation trends at any given point (Myers and Murray 2006).

In the urban space, globalisation can result into two things: on the one hand, the reconfiguration and disappearance of localities and on the other hand the emergence of place-specific localities which derive their power from alignments with global networks (Read 2005). There is an increasing superimposition and interpenetration of global political-economic forces with local-regional responses (Brenner 1998). Therefore, it has become imperative to understand how particular communities define what is local, and how the fate of the local is linked with that of the global. The linkage between the local and the global, produces dire political repercussions that affect not only the construction of geographic scale through the politics of naming, but also ‘the global politics of human rights, liberty, and democratic self-determination’ (Adebanwi 2012, p. 642).

In Nairobi, there is a considerable number of slums which bear the names of other places in Africa and around the world. In this study, we discuss globalised toponymy as it occurs in the informal settlements of Nairobi and how the communities in these settlements are linking their local situations with global happenings. The slum phenomenon in Nairobi has been explained using the concepts of: ‘toponymic importation’ of names from other places in the world, as well as ‘toponymic exchanges’ between Kenya and other African countries, as well as within Kenya and Nairobi.

Globalisation has also shown its effects in the realm of space branding and the privatisation of naming rights in Nairobi. Names of global corporates such as Samsung have now made their way on to the urban landscape of the city. There was also an attempt to rename one of the stadiums in Nairobi from Nyayo National Stadium to Coca-Cola, another global corporate. This trend shows how names are now acting as symbols of globalised urban landscapes.

## **2.3 Analytical framework**

### **2.3.1 Interpretive map for critical toponymy**

The fundamental conceptualisation basis for this study is the theory of critical toponymy, which looks at names as being products of the social and political processes occurring in a certain place. In a bid to elaborate the various concepts within critical toponymy (Giraut et al. 2016), came up with an interpretive framework for toponymy (Figure 2). It was formulated with the intention of interpreting toponymy as it occurs in various contexts. They classified the naming process according to three facets namely, geo-political contexts, actors and technologies. The geo-political contexts include: conquest, revolution, emergence and commodification. The actors are state power, private sector and civil society. The technologies they identified are: cleansing, founding, restoring and promoting. This framework served as a basis to justify the chronological periods: colonial, post-independence and contemporary period. These periods corresponded to geo-political contexts of conquest during colonisation, revolution in the post-independence period and emergence and commodification in the contemporary period. The technologies that applied in the Nairobi context are founding (colonisation), cleansing (nationalisation), and promoting (globalisation). All the three actors identified applied in the following ways: the state power in the colonial period was the British colonial government, in the post-independence period was the Kenyan government. The civil society and private sector was mainly involved in the contemporary period. The civil society in the informal settlements and private sector in the commodification of public space names.



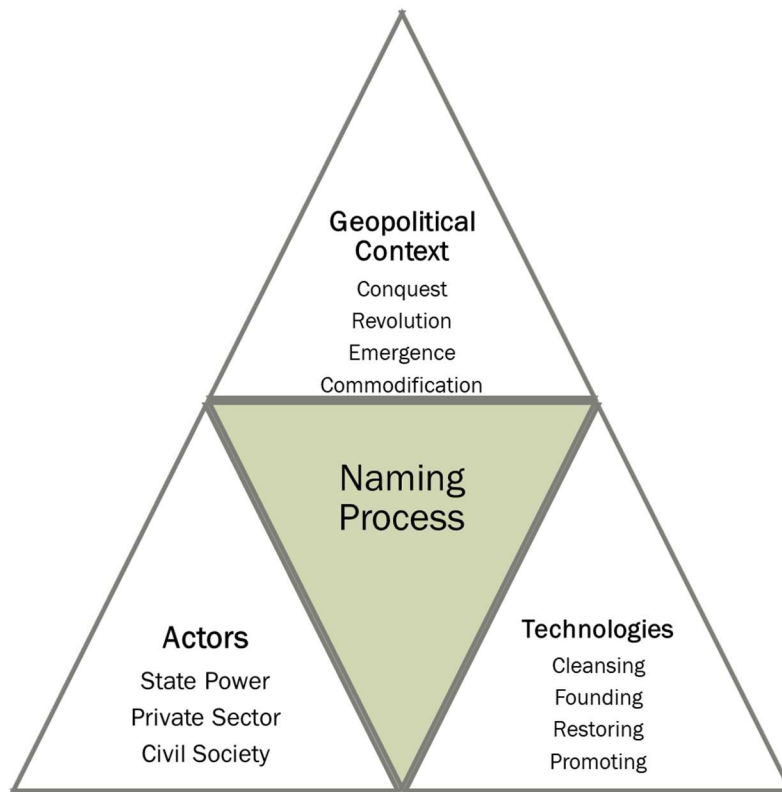


Figure 2. Interpretive map for toponymy in various geopolitical contexts

Source: Giraut and Houssay-Holzschuch 2016

### 2.3.2 Chronological framework

The toponymic concept for Nairobi has further been developed chronologically based on the different political regimes and their respective naming agencies involved mainly the government (of a certain period), people and the private sector (global and local). Three main periods identified for this study were: (1) colonial period 1899–1963, and the post-independence period 1964–1990 and the contemporary period 1991–2017, which includes a sub-period from 2008–2017 that focuses on the emerging trend of the sale of naming rights of public spaces. Chronological periods such as these have been applied before by other scholars of toponymy such as Liora Bigon in her study of Dakar, Senegal (Bigon 2008a) and Brendah Yeoh in Singapore (Yeoh 1992) both of whom have looked at toponymy in colonial contexts. Ndletyana has looked at toponymic changes in post-colonial and post-apartheid times (Ndletyana 2012). The contemporary period as applied in this study has been used to analyse toponymy in informal settlements as well as the toponymic commodification of public space names.

In the three periods, different toponymic elements are considered. In the colonial period, the town experienced rapid growth after the introduction of British colonial planning and architecture. Njoh states that an important feature of colonial towns was that they constituted the familiar colonial agenda of ‘modernising’ the backward Africans and Africa. Structures, building code, legislation and master plans were all used to develop African cities on a European model. The colonial period is used as a time to situate toponymy among the rest of urban landscape symbols within Nairobi. Urbanisation in the inland part of Kenya begun when colonisation was introduced and the building of the railway commenced. Therefore, it is imperative to consider toponymy in Nairobi through understanding the historical context of urbanisation in the country. Unlike the coastal part of Kenya whose urbanisation dates before the British colonisation period in Kenya, urbanisation in the inland part of Kenya follows the trail of British exploits starting majorly with the railway construction.

The initial inscription of toponyms on the urban landscape of Nairobi was British and served the purpose of imposing a British ideology on the urban landscape of Nairobi. Names in British colonial Nairobi are analysed based on pioneers — whereby the colonialists who saw themselves as the pioneers of the city and named it after themselves. It is also seen in the lenses of a royalist tradition whereby the colonial authorities sought to honour the British Monarchy by inscribing their names on the urban landscape of Nairobi. In addition, names of other emergent personalities such as British settlers and Indian businessmen made it to the urban landscape of Nairobi. The political, social and economic ideologies of the time also shaped the toponymic landscape of the city.

The immediate post-independence period is referring to the first 26 years after Kenya gained independence, i.e., 1964–1990, during which time the after-effect of colonialism was highly felt and the attempts to detach from it were more vigorous. This formed the basis for the fifth chapter of this research where a major re-writing of the street toponymy of Nairobi was carried out. It is here that toponymy is seen to play a big role in transforming the image of Nairobi from a colonial to a nationalist city. The African political elite now replaced British monarchs, administrators, and settlers from the city’s street toponymic landscape. The renaming of places was an indication of a power shift in the city. Using the case of street name changes, this research shows the extensive power contests that were involved in re-inscribing the urban landscape of Nairobi.

The contemporary period (1991–2017) was characterised by an increase in the population of Nairobi, exacerbating the housing and economic disparity problem in Nairobi, leading to a proliferation of slums and informal settlements. At first, the government sought to give the city a good image by providing housing for all residents. However, the supply could not meet the demand and on many occasions, the government tried to wipe out the slums through evictions, arson attacks, and demolitions, to no avail. Later in 1992, a major political change happened in the country, when it moved from being a one-party to a multi-party state. Multipartyism is said to have accentuated the existing problem of inadequate housing and land injustices (Otiso 2002). The political opposition was pushing for a federalist state that could see the country divided along ethnic blocs. However, the ruling party was against this, but this did not stop the ingrained ethnic divisions in the country and cosmopolitan Nairobi. The communities living in informal settlements suffered due to the conflict between the government and the opposition. This is because the informal settlements created large ‘vote banks’ for either side. Any opposition to the government would lead to retaliation through demolitions and evictions. The opposition would then use this opportunity to rally the residents against the government in demanding for their rights with the politicians offering to help the residents acquire land. All this with the primary motive of gaining political mileage. In this section, a case study analysis of the three main informal settlements in Nairobi is done. The toponymy within informal settlements reveals a history of inequality and injustices from land tenure insecurity to constant demolitions and evictions. Globalisation coupled with politics of ethnicity and socio-economic inequalities has become a major influence on the toponymy of informal settlements in Nairobi. Ethnopolitics within the informal settlements is a major cause for divisions and that is why there are large concentrations of communities within certain villages. These ethnic groupings are sometimes reflected in the village toponymy.

Further, in the contemporary period, the economic value of names has also influenced the naming of public spaces through place branding and the sale of naming rights of public spaces to private corporations through Public Private Partnerships (PPP). This phenomenon has emerged within the last decade with the first attempt at the sale of naming rights occurring in 2008. This new trend represents the struggle between maintaining the civic or heritage value of public space names versus exploiting them for economic gain.

The summary of major political changes and the years they occurred are shown in figure 3.

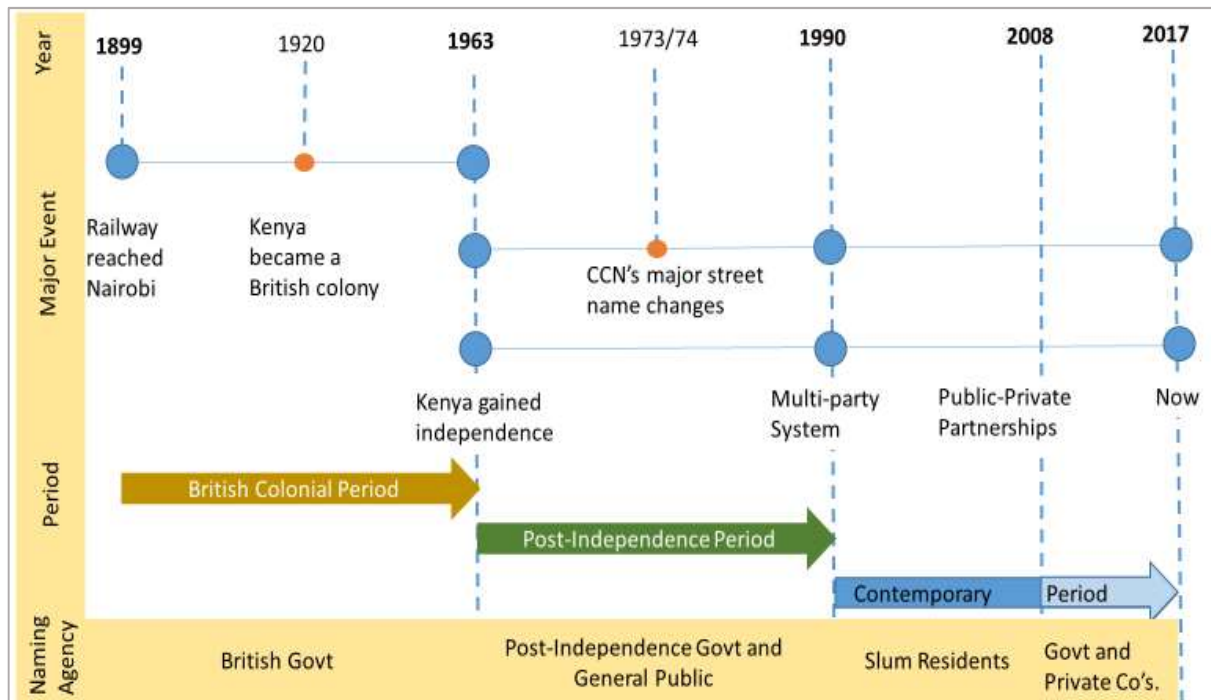


Figure 3. Chronological concept and interpretive framework of toponymic inscriptions on Nairobi's urban landscape

Source: Author's construct

### 2.3.3 Interpretive framework for toponymy in Nairobi

As shown in the chronological framework the major factors that have influenced toponymy over the years are interlinked in some way or other, but they are not mutually exclusive. However, some of the emerging conceptual issues are dominant in some periods more than in others. In the colonial period, the British focused on conquering the new land. They did this through spatial segregation by race and imposition of a colonial ideology. In the post-independence period, nationalism with the aim of cleansing the British names (that represented oppression) was the focus, resulting in a toponymy of revolution and re-appropriation. In the contemporary period, the proliferation of informal urban settlements, and the economic forces of globalisation have influenced emerging toponymic trends that are innovative and promotional (both ideologically and economically) in nature. Hence the three periods chosen for this study, fit well into the interpretive framework formulated by Giraut et al. as shown in figure 4. In the context of Nairobi, geopolitical contexts have been termed simply as political context and the geopolitical context which had been referred to as emergence is making reference to globalisation since it reflected an identification with universal human experiences of injustice and oppression through informal settlement's names. Emergence is also reflected

by the acceptance of global corporation’s investments through place branding for promotional activities. Finally, what Giraut and company simply referred to as renaming has in the context of this study been elaborated and referred to as erasures, (re)inscriptions and superscriptions. Erasures refer to those names which were previously inscribed and used actively, being deleted from the landscape. (Re)inscriptions refers to new names being put in the place of previous names or completely new names being inscribed where there were no names previously. Superscription has been used in the context of this study to refer to names which are inscribed on top of other names leading to a landscape of alternative toponyms and identities. This occurred mainly in the contemporary period in the informal settlements whereby villages could have two or more names, e.g., a village in Mathare called Kosovo which is an expression of the negative impact of demolitions and evictions and the alternative name of the same village is New Millenium which was to signify hope and positivity. The latter is a superscription of Kosovo which is the original name of the village. Superscription is also seen in the context of place branding whereby a facility such as KICC has the brand name Samsung. The building is often referred to as Samsung building because the brand name is a superscription which is more visible and hence easy to identify with the building. Hence, unofficially, the building has two names — KICC and Samsung building.

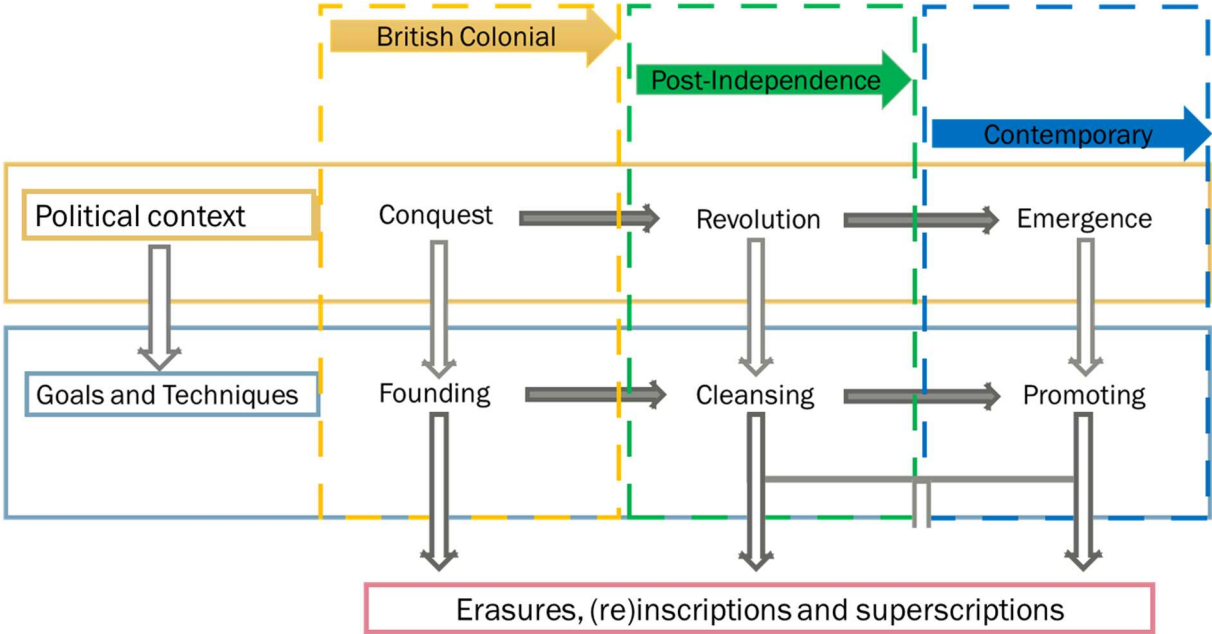


Figure 4. A framework for interpreting toponymy in the context of Nairobi  
 Source: Adapted from (Giraut et al. 2012).

#### **2.3.4 Analytical framework (synthesis)**

An analytical framework (figure 5) for this study was created by combining the interpretive framework developed by Giraut et al. and the chronological concept developed for this study. The two provide a comprehensive basis for the understanding of the toponymic landscape of Nairobi. Giraut et al. suggested that in the toponymic landscape, the techniques applied are those of founding, cleansing and promoting in the contexts of conquest, revolution, and emergence.

In the context of this study, these techniques were applicable as well. Before the arrival of the railway into Nairobi, the area was mainly occupied by the agrarian (Kikuyu) and pastoral (Maasai) communities. The area was known as Enkare Nyirobi a Maasai phrase meaning a place of cool waters. The name Nairobi was derived from this phrase. Other indigenous names in Nairobi such as Pumwani, Pangani, and Kileleshwa were retained, while at the same time new British colonial names for streets and neighbourhoods were introduced. Numerical as well as British street names such as Princess Elizabeth Way, Victoria Street, Whitehouse Road, Delamere Avenue among others. Neighbourhoods such as Thompson Estate, Donholm Estate also came up. These new names appearing on the landscape at the beginning of British colonial Nairobi was evidence of the active (re)inscriptions (meaning new inscriptions and re-inscriptions) of toponyms in that period with the view of founding a new colonial territory whose values were supposed to resonate with those of the British culture and ideals. As stated earlier, there was also evidence erasing or overwriting the indigenous landscape but not to a large extent as some of the names were retained while others such as Nairobi, were modified to suit the needs of the colonisers. In the post-independence period, there was a mass erasure of the British toponymy that had been inscribed since 1899 with the intention of cleansing the memories of an oppressive regime. This was in equal measure replaced with a new toponymy reflecting freedom, nationalism, and pan-Africanism which was spearheaded by the new African government and the citizens alike to give the urban landscape a local identity. In addition, streets which had no names before were now given African names, and housing areas developed in the post-independence period were also given names celebrating ideas of unity, freedom, and development. Such names include Umoja, Uhuru, Madaraka and Jamhuri Estates which mean unity, freedom, independence, and republic respectively. Hence, in the post-independence period, erasures and (re)inscriptions occurred in almost equal measure to bring about a landscape ‘cleansed’ of bad memories of oppression and discrimination.

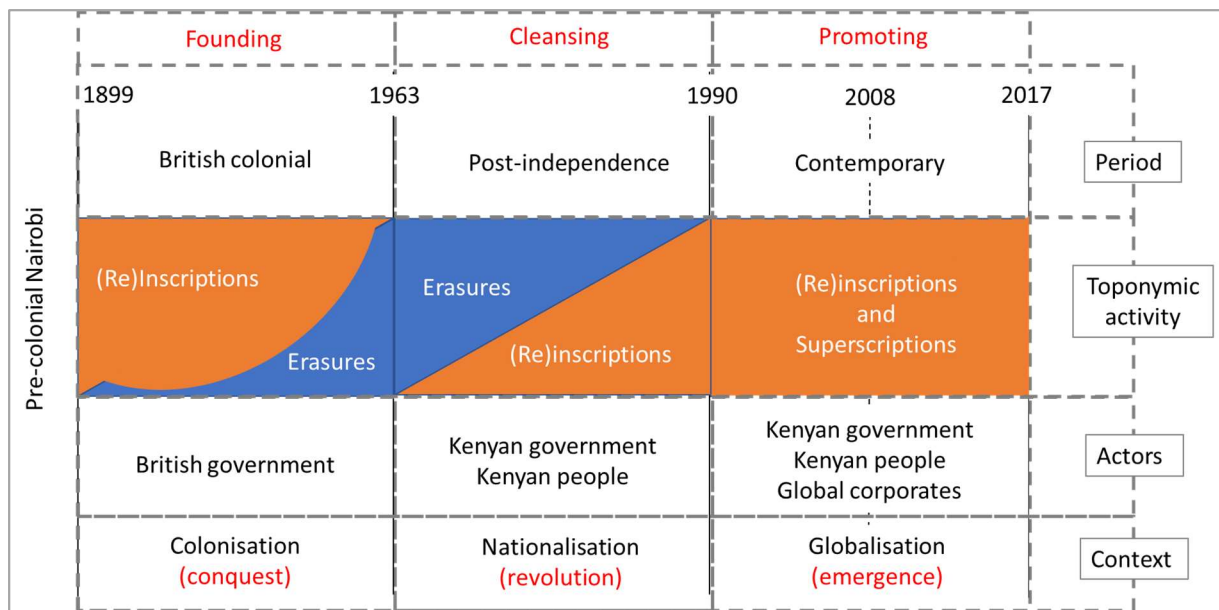


Figure 5. A framework for analyzing toponymy in the context of Nairobi  
 Source: Author's construct

Finally, in the contemporary period, toponymy was highly influenced by external forces of globalisation. The toponymy in informal settlements in Nairobi was mainly inscribed by the people (slum residents), based on their living conditions, whereby, the globalised names such as Kosovo, Vietnam, Bosnia, Nigeria, Jamaica among others, relate to contemporary urban challenges facing the people in the informal settlements. Within the last decade, i.e., 2008 to 2017, the government and the private sector, through PPPs (Public Private Partnerships) have started playing an important role in the toponymy of public spaces. This has mainly been through the sale of naming rights to big local and global corporations, in what is referred to as toponymic commodification. Names such as Samsung and Britam have been branded on major public facilities, and this is evidence of the effect of globalisation on the urban landscape. Hence, the exposure of the injustices in the informal settlements by the adoption of names from other countries and consequently, the advertisement of global products through place branding showcases the promotional role that is played by toponyms.

## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS

### 3.1 Overview

The methods for this research were divided into four main parts: 1) archival research, 2) narratives, i.e., key informant interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) 3) newspaper records and 4) field observation survey. The main data collection periods were August–September 2015, February 2016 and May 2016. The whole period between 2014–2017 was used for online archival research as well as data synthesis and analysis (figure 6). I obtained permission from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (Nacosti) to carry out my research. The commission issued me with a research permit (see appendix 7). Due to the historical nature of this research, most of the data collection was archival. This was followed by interviews and focus group discussions mainly carried out with residents of the informal settlements. These narratives formed an important part of this work in getting the opinions of people and their recollection of past histories. Field observation surveys were carried out at the same time with archival research and the interviews.

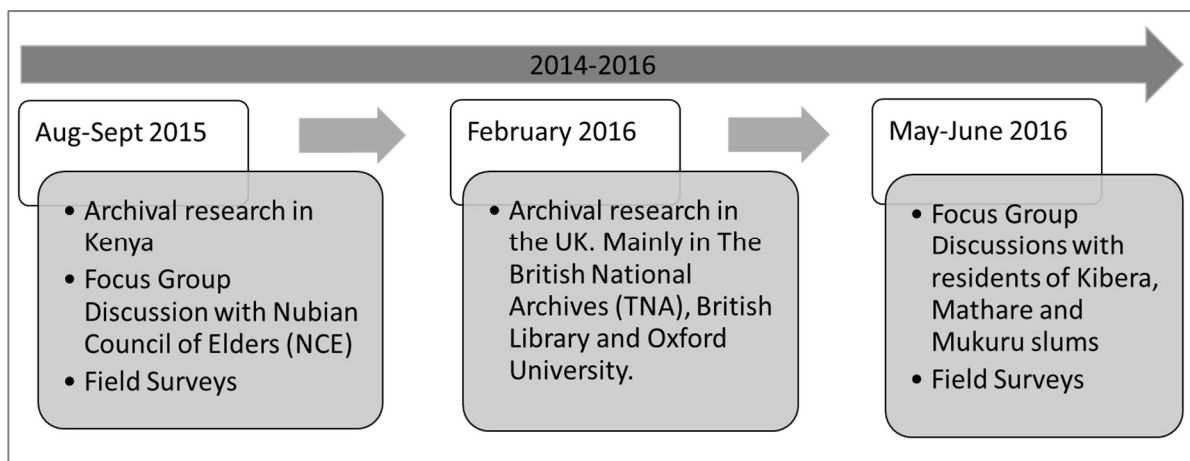


Figure 6. Data collection schedule

Source: Author's construct

### 3.2 Archival research

Archival data was sourced from the Kenya National Archives (KNA), the Macmillan Library, the Museums of Kenya Library, the Railway Museum all located in Nairobi. At the KNA, which is the national repository of historical information in Kenya, letter correspondences within the City Council of Nairobi (CCN), and between the CCN and the public, private developers, and public agencies were obtained. These archival sources shed light on the negotiations that



occurred during the naming processes. The Macmillan Library had a record of minutes of meetings held by the CCN’s naming sub-committee especially in the period 1970–1980.

The National Museums Library provided a good selection of books on the history of Nairobi. Photographs and plans that showed how Nairobi developed as a railway town were found at the Nairobi Railway Museum. Archival information was quite limited in Nairobi; hence it was supplemented by a further data collection in the UK because Kenya was colonised by the British and hence, there are many records about colonial Nairobi which can be found there. In the UK, library access permission was obtained (see appendix 7) and archival research was carried out in: The National Archives (TNA) in Richmond, Oxford University (Weston Library) in Oxford, the British Library, the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in Central London and Reading University Library. At TNA, some information like that found in the KNA was obtained, but the records were much easier to access. Old maps of colonial Nairobi dated (1901, 1904 and 1925), photographs of the growing city and colonial files regarding administration of the city were obtained. Oxford’s Weston Library proved to be a rich resource for monographs containing the recollections of former British settlers. It also contained books and colonial files which were invaluable to this research. The British Library and SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies) also provided more historical references to this research. Tiwari’s doctoral thesis which was completed in 1964, titled ‘Nairobi: A Study in Urban Geography’ was obtained from Reading University. More of these books, monographs, and maps which I accessed are compiled in table 1.

Table 1. Archival resources obtained from libraries in the UK

<b>Library</b>	<b>Period (days)</b>	<b>Resources obtained</b>
British Library	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kenya historical biographies</li> <li>• Standard newspapers (1909–1910)</li> <li>• Nairobi cadastral map of 1948</li> <li>• Nairobi Today: The paradox of a fragmented city edited by Hélène Charton-Bigot, Deyssi Rodriguez-Torres</li> </ul>
Oxford University Library	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Kenya Pioneers by Errol Trzebinsky</li> <li>• Oriental Nairobi by R.O Preston</li> <li>• Nairobi: A jubilee history by James Smart</li> <li>• Norfolk: The hotel that built a nation by Stephen Mills</li> <li>• British East Africa- Kenya Colony. Wanted – A Policy! by Sir George Buchanan.</li> <li>• John Ainsworth-Pioneer Kenya Administrator by F.H Goldsmith</li> </ul>

British National Archives	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Photographs of colonial Nairobi</li> <li>• Early plans of Nairobi (1901 and 1925)</li> <li>• Proposed measures to develop the Kibera area in Kenya</li> </ul>
Reading University	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Histories of the hanged: British dirty wars in Kenya and the end of an empire by David Anderson</li> <li>• Nairobi: A study in Urban Geography by Tiwari R.C</li> <li>• Cadastral Map of Nairobi: 1960</li> </ul>
SOAS (UCL)	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decolonisation and Independence in Kenya, 1940–1993. Edited by B.A Ogot and W.R Ochieng.</li> </ul>

Source: Author's construct

### 3.3 Newspaper records

Newspaper records were useful in the whole of this research but most especially in the post-independence period when many streets were renamed, and in the contemporary period for reports and articles of slum evictions and the sale of naming rights of public spaces.

In the case of street toponymic changes in post-independence Nairobi, newspaper articles from the two leading newspapers DN and EAS were analysed. From the EAS, the articles that addressed street naming and renaming were 44 in total. 34 were news articles, 8 were letters to the editor, and 2 were opinion articles. They ranged between the years 1952–1999 (47 years). The DN articles were 37 in total with 20 news articles, 15 letters to the editor and 2 opinion articles. They ranged between the years 1964–2015 (51 years). Worth noting is that for the EAS, 40 articles reached up to the year 1987, and similarly for the DN 33 of the articles were up to the year 1988. This formed part of the justification for considering street toponymic changes mainly for the period up to the year 1990.

In the colonial period, reports were of streets being named by the colonial government. However, not much was reported during this period and the only operating newspaper at the time was the EAS. In the post-independence period, there was an increase in the reported news on street naming and renaming. The public also participated more in the process by airing their views through the letters to the editor section. Both the DN and the EAS reported more on the subject during the post-independence period. In the EAS, there were 39 newspaper reports on street name changes in the period 1964–1990 as compared to 3 in the period 1899–1963 and 2 reports after 1991. In the DN, there were 31 newspaper reports on street name changes between 1964–1990, as compared to a meagre 2 after 1991 as shown in table 2. The extensive street renaming exercises as reported in the newspaper reports and as shown in the CCN minutes

show that street toponymic changes played a big role in Africanising and nationalising the urban landscape of Nairobi in the period after independence.

Table 2. Newspaper articles tracking street name changes in Nairobi

<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Chronological period</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Nature</b>	<b>No. of Articles</b>
East African Standard (EAS)	1899-1963	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Colonial Street naming</li> <li>•Anticipated renaming after independence</li> </ul>	News articles	2
			Opinion articles	1
	1964-1990	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Renaming by City Council of Nairobi</li> <li>•Public proposal for renaming</li> <li>•Parliamentary proceedings</li> </ul>	News Articles	<b>27</b>
			Opinion Articles	<b>1</b>
1991-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Memory of renaming exercise</li> </ul>	Letters to the Editor	<b>11</b>	
Daily Nation (DN)	1964-1990	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Renaming by City Council of Nairobi</li> <li>•Public proposal for renaming</li> <li>•Parliamentary proceedings</li> </ul>	News articles	<b>20</b>
			Letters to the Editor	<b>11</b>
	1991-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Memory of renaming exercise</li> </ul>	News articles	2

Source: EAS (1952–2016) and DN (1964–2016)

In the case of land disputes in informal settlements, newspaper articles in the EAS and DN also contained a lot of helpful information. The articles addressed evictions, demolitions and other land disputes in the three settlements taken as case studies. In total 278 newspaper articles with dates ranging from March 1961 to February 2016 reported cases of evictions and violence in informal settlements in Nairobi. Although many articles did not specify exactly where the skirmishes and evictions were occurring, there were specific reports given for Kibera, Mathare, and Mukuru. In the case of Kibera, the reports of these events were recorded in 17 articles between 1979 and 1988. In Mathare Valley, there were 24 articles reporting injustices against

slum dwellers, some of them under the guise of improving the city by clearing of slums. The reports about Mathare ranged between 1969 and 2015, with the majority appearing in the 1970's and 80's. In Mukuru settlements, reports of evictions in the EAS ranged between 1982 and 2016. 1982 was the estimated time for when the settlement began, so the evictions are as old as the settlement. Most of the evictions occurred between 1986 and 1996. The evictions in Mukuru are newer than those in Kibera and Mathare. The recency of the evictions in Mukuru compared to the other two settlements could also explain why the village toponymy of Mukuru was more influenced by globalisation and hence had more foreign names. Table 3 below shows how newspaper articles on historical slum evictions recorded in the Daily Nation, The East African Standard, and the Kenya Times newspapers were compiled, summarised and categorised before being analysed and quoted in this research. Further reference can be made from appendix 6.

Table 3. A compilation of newspaper articles on eviction related issues in informal settlements

No	Date	Title	Synopsis/Content	Settlement	Writer	Newspaper
140	18 May 1987	Villagers, youth in slum clean-up	Mariguini residents and Kanu youth wingers joined hands to collect heaps of garbage after Govt extended its eviction notice.	Mariguini	Kenya News Agency	Daily Nation
141	18 June 1987	Facelift for shanty town	Roads, electricity and Nyayo wards planned for slum following a recent visit by President Moi at Korogocho	Korogocho	Richard Kerror	Kenya Times
142	21 July 1987	Carton cities' have a future - US firm	The cardboard carton, playhouse for children and makeshift shelter for many of the world's poor, may have a future as cheap form of temporary housing.	All	Michael Conlon	The standard
143	18 February 1988	Police demolish 300 houses	50 APs and city askaris raided and demolished 300 houses leaving hundreds homeless in Mukuru. This came barely a week after Sinai had also been raided.	Mukuru	Nation Correspondent	Daily Nation
144	19 February 1988	Many left homeless as clean-up starts	Nairobi City Commission askaris demolished shanty town, Sinai, located along Lunga Lunga Rd. Askaris warned residents they will be served notice of order the following week.	Mukuru	Standard Reporter	The standard
145	02 May 1988	2,000 families face eviction	Nairobi PC confirmed there will be a rail eviction notice meant to leave about 2000 families homeless in Kibera.	Kibera	Standard Reporter	The standard
146	07 May 1988	Shanties crowd rail line space	Laini Saba dwellers defied quit notice by Railways administration and management and continued to build more shanties within a 100 metres reserve land for Kenya Railway Corporation. The shanties were for renting.	Kibera	Nation Reporter	Daily Nation
147	14 May 1988	City bulldozer flattens shanty	City Commission askaris and National Youth Service combined to demolish slum houses in Mathare 4-A to give way for the expansion of a primary school.	Mathare 4-A	Standard Reporter	The standard
148	18 May 1988	Laini Saba structures demolished	AP demolished 30 illegal structures including kiosks and residential houses along railway line.	Kibera	Standard Reporter	The standard
149	23 May 1988	Askaris pull down 30 houses	About 200 left homeless after administration officials pulled down 30 shanty houses in Maili Saba slum village in Dandora. Residents alleged the ploy involved area chief and assistants as no notice was given to them.	Maili Saba	Warambo Owino	Kenya Times
150	23 May 1988	Houses destroyed	Those whose houses were within 100 metres prohibited zone of the rail line were left salvaging iron sheets from the rubble at Gatuikira village.	Kibera	-	Daily Nation

Source: Nation Media Group and The East African Standard Library, Nairobi, Kenya

In addition, newspaper articles on the sale of naming rights were also compiled from the DN newspaper. About 15 articles from 2008 to 2012 that reported on the contestations surrounding the sale of naming rights were analysed and excerpted to show how the phenomenon is taking place in Nairobi. A key informant, Charles Nyende who is a sports journalist with the DN

newspaper was also interviewed regarding the dynamics of selling naming rights of sports stadia in Nairobi.

### **3.4 Narratives: interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs)**

The other main source of data was individual interviews and focus group discussions (FGD) which were held mainly with the residents of the informal settlements. A focus group is a certain number of people selected as a sample of a certain population to discuss a given topic (Thomas et al. 1995). The purpose of the narrated data was to obtain qualitative descriptive information which was later used to deduce how the residents of the settlements recollect past events and how they perceive the places in which they live in reference to those events and vice versa. The interviews and FGDs provided a rich source of information about social issues, ethnicity and politics within the informal settlements and how these have influenced the toponymy.

#### **3.4.1 Criteria for participants**

The criteria for choosing participants was partly based on the following: the participants have something to contribute to the topic, have close to similar social characteristics, and are comfortable to talk about the topic, talk to the interviewer and to each other within the group (Richardson and Rabiee 2001). In this exercise, residents of informal settlements who had been born there or had lived there for about 10 years, were selected. Some of the participants chosen were involved in community activities and so were well versed in issues related to the settlements. For example, in Kibera, the first FGD was carried out with the Nubian Council of Elders (NCE) who represented a unique group in Kibera, i.e., a minority community and one which claimed to have been the first to settle in Kibera. The second FGD included Kibera community members

In Mathare and Mukuru, the composition of members in the FGDs was wider, but still included community members who were known to be active in community activities by the community mobilisers who assisted me in organizing the data collection. One of the FGD meetings is shown in figure 7. The individual in-depth interviews were held with 3 members of a selected village in each settlement. In Kibera, members of Soweto Village were interviewed, in Mathare those of Kosovo Village and in Mukuru those of Vietnam Village. These villages were chosen primarily because of their toponymic uniqueness. All of them have foreign names which are associated with a certain struggle. The Soweto Uprising in South Africa (1976), the Kosovo War (1998–99) and the Vietnam War (1955–75) respectively. The qualitative data from the

FGD interviews formed an important component in chapter six on toponymy in informal settlements of Nairobi.



Figure 7. Focus group discussions with residents of informal settlements  
Source: Fieldwork Survey, June 2016

### **3.4.2 Period of conducting the individual interview and FGDs**

The FGDs and interviews were held within two periods: in September 2015 and May to June 2016. The FGDs were held with a selected number of villagers and community leaders. In Kibera, the first FGD was held with members of the NCE on September 7, 2015. The second FGD was held with community representatives from the 12 villages in Kibera on May 27, 2016. A similar FGD was held in Mukuru on May 24, and in Mathare on June 2, 2016. The individual interviews were held with three members of a select village within the informal settlements.

### **3.4.3 Analysis of narrative data**

The recordings were transcribed and the discourses derived for the analysis. The analysis of the data from the focus group discussions involved two qualitative methods for the narratives. The first is the analysis continuum by Krueger, which includes three basic steps of collection and compilation of the raw data, descriptive statements and interpretation (Krueger 1994). The second method applied was an enhanced framework analysis approach by Ritchie and Spencer who incorporated more steps. These are data collection, data familiarisation, development of thematic categorisations, indexing, charting and interpretation (Ritchie and Spencer 1994). FGDs formed a major component of this research, especially in the informal settlements. The enhanced framework analysis method (figure 8) provided a useful way of analysing the narrative data from the FGDs.

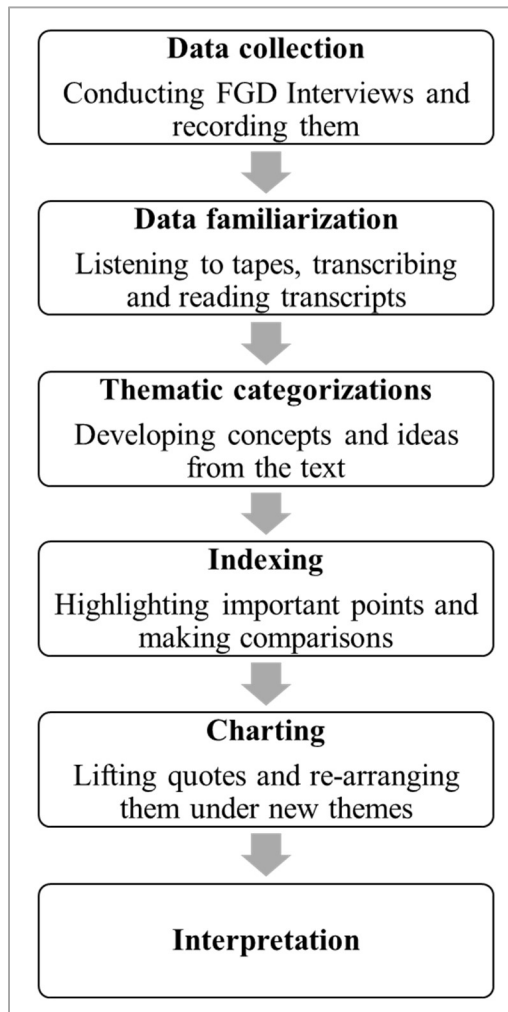


Figure 8. Framework analysis process for narrative data

Source: Richie and Spencer, 1994

The transcribed texts were imported into the Dedoose software. While the two software, Dedoose and MS Excel were used for the generation of output, the actual thematic categorisations, indexing and charting followed the steps given by Richie and Spencer as shown in earlier in figure 8. Coded themes were extracted from the content of the transcription as shown in figure 9 (also refer to appendix 4). Using the software, simple code statistics were derived on how often a certain theme emerged. Thereafter, these coded statistics were transferred to MS Excel where charts were generated.

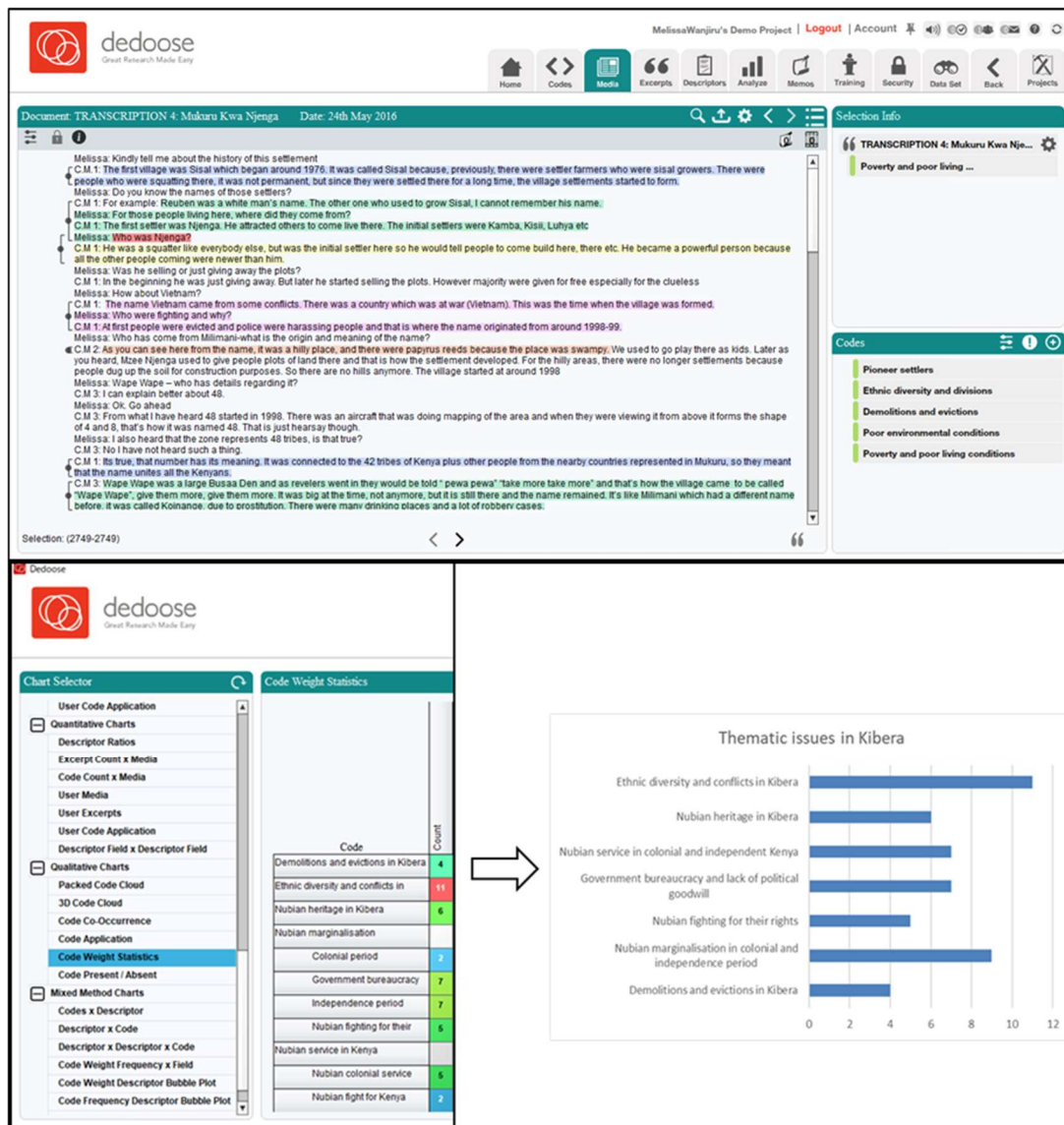


Figure 9. The indexing and charting stage involved grouping emerging themes

Source: Author's analysis charts

### 3.5 Field observation surveys

The field surveys formed an important but secondary source of information for this research. The field surveys were carried out concurrently with the other data collection activities of archival research and FGDs. In the UK, during street walks, it was observed that several streets bore similar names to those of colonial Nairobi. These included: Victoria Street, Elizabeth Street among others. The street names helped to show the relationship between the UK as it is and colonial Nairobi. Photographs of the conditions in the informal settlements were taken and field observation surveys done alongside the interviews and FGDs in the informal settlements.



Photographs of rebranded public spaces were also taken to show the changing face of the public spaces.

**3.6 Digital geographical information (DGI)**

Digital geographical information (DGI) in the context of this thesis simply refers to the spatial data that was obtained from online resources. The main sources were: mapKibera, the ongoing work on street renaming by UREPI (Urban and Regional Environmental Planners International Ltd),<sup>2</sup> ArcGIS online, The United States Geological Survey, OpenStreetMap, google earth and mapstack applications. Data sourced was mainly in the form of shapefiles, which were then later processed into maps and images for visual representations. This data was most useful for the toponymy of informal settlements with kiberamap.org providing the most information regarding the village toponymy.

**3.7 Synthesis of the different data sources**

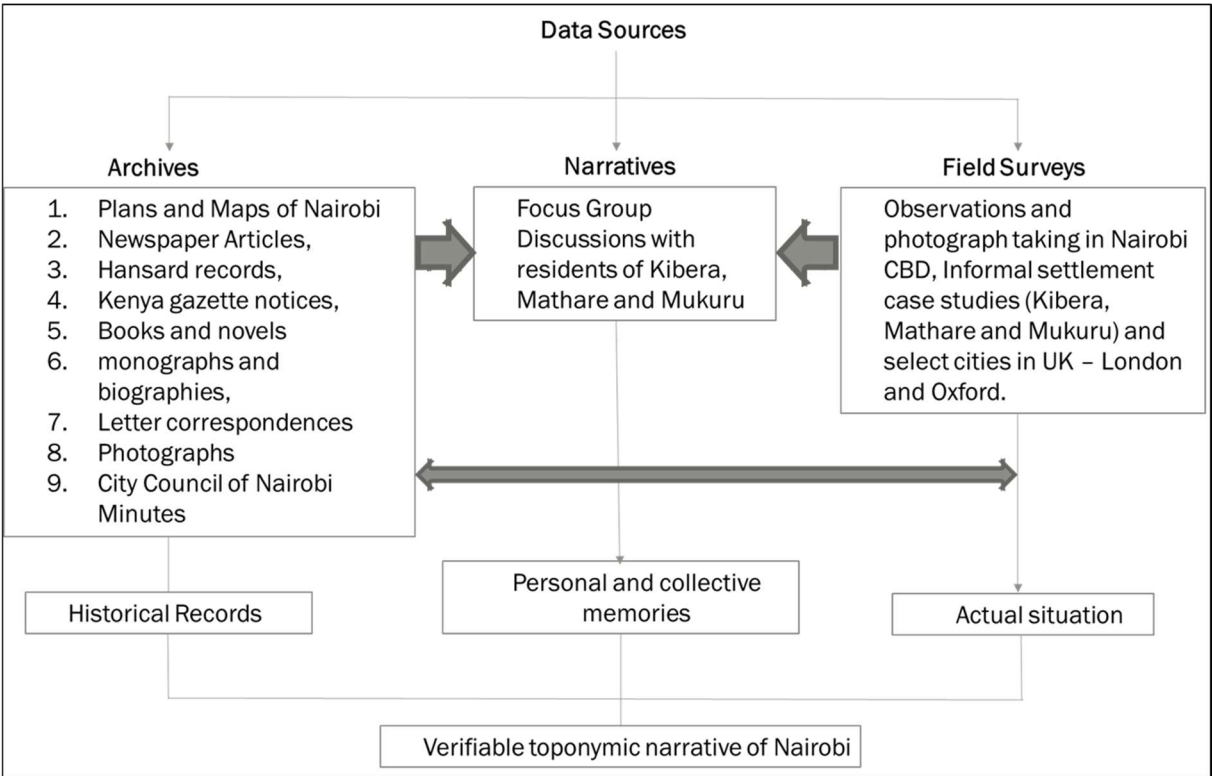


Figure 10. Relationship of the various sources of data utilised  
Source: Author’s construct

<sup>2</sup> UREPI is currently undertaking a consultancy project for the County Government of Nairobi to prepare a physical addressing system for the city.

Information derived from one source formed a basis for building a case for information sourced from the other sources as shown in figure 10. Archival resources such as development plans, maps, and photographs were important for this study and were used extensively. The information extracted was examined vis a vis information from other archival sources such as monographs, newspaper articles, and letter correspondences. The other two important sources were: narratives from FGDs and field survey information. These three sources created the basis for the theorisation of the toponymic trends and processes in Kenya. Afterwards, this was used for the creation of a verifiable toponymic narrative for the city of Nairobi within the period between 1899 to 2017.

### **3.8 Research limitations**

Several challenges were encountered in the course of this research and especially during the data collection stage. First, there was the inadequacy of archival information in Kenya. The Kenya National Archives and the Macmillan Library provided a lot of information but the record keeping is not very efficient. The City Council of Nairobi did not have any historical information on the city's development and administration over time since they claimed that most of their data was destroyed in a fire at the City Hall. Hence, there was a need to supplement the information by going to the UK. The records at the British National Archives, the British Library and Oxford University's Weston Collection were much easier to access.

Second, it was difficult to get adequately representative groups (in terms of gender and age) to participate in FGDs across the various locations. However, this was mainly experienced in Kibera informal settlement where the participants in the FGDs were all male because the community mobiliser who was assisting me could not get women volunteers. However, for this research on toponymy in the slums, the gender of participants was not a major factor to consider, but rather age. Most participants selected were middle-aged and over and had lived in the settlements for over ten years.

While obtaining newspaper records, it was difficult to obtain old newspaper articles from the EAS. The EAS, unlike the DN, did not have digitised newspaper records before the year 2000. All the articles before the year 2000 were stored in micro-film, and it was hard to retrieve information from them since they were not very clear. Hence, the process was tedious and time-consuming.

## **CHAPTER 4: TOPONYMY IN BRITISH COLONIAL NAIROBI: A SYMBOL OF CULTURAL AND POLITICAL DOMINANCE**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Spatial studies based on the history of Nairobi have shown that the city has developed as a colonial city. For instance: Edward Soja stated that the morphology of towns in Kenya, and not only Nairobi, reflected a lack of participation by Africans in the appropriation of the urban culture despite the fact that they formed the bulk of the urban population (Soja 1968). Kimani also attributed land structure and ownership in Nairobi to colonial policies which promoted the European and alienated the African (Kimani 1972). Robert Obudho observed that the urban development in Kenya could be largely attributed to the colonial period (Obudho 1979) while Anthony O' Connor identified the physical form of Nairobi as being European (O' Connor 1983).

Africans were only allowed residence in Nairobi based on their employment. There were 'Pass Laws' enacted in 1901 and a Vagrancy Ordinance enacted in 1922, which required members of the Indigenous African population to have a colonial government document permitting them to be in the town, and which they were required to produce to the police on demand (Njoh 2007). This document was called a Kipande by the natives, a name which has remained to date and is used to refer to the current national identity cards. Njoh further claims that these policies were designed to exclude Africans and other non-European people as part of a larger plan to ensure that urban privileges were reserved for Europeans. The case of naming in colonial Nairobi reflects what both Kimani and Soja saw as an alienation of the African while elevating the political position of the colonialists and imprinting their ideologies on the urban landscape.

Toponymy can be situated among other urban symbols as a reflection of the cultural, socio-political and the economic life of a community. However, apart from merely reflecting culture, place names on the urban landscape participate in making certain cultural, social and economic relations, and identities appear to be normal (Alderman 2008). Don Mitchell referred to the landscape as a form of ideology with one of its key functions being to control meaning and to channel it in particular directions (Mitchell 2000). Similarly, this is what happened in colonial Nairobi when the British colonial government set in place structures to inscribe their own cultural and ideological symbols on the landscape of Nairobi.

Toponyms, along with iconic architecture, monuments, statues, and ceremonial events and spaces, are a key means through which urban space is infused with political and ideological

values (Verdery 1999). Azaryahu alludes to this, by stating that names not only facilitate spatial orientation but “are loaded with additional symbolic value and represent a ‘theory of the world’ which is contingent on the ruling social and moral order” (Azaryahu 1992, p. 351).

In the colonial period, according to Bigon and Njoh (2015), place naming was a reflection of the racial hierarchical structure and spatial segregation created by the Europeans, leading to toponymic ambiguity in post-independence cities. Ndletyana, in his analysis of the South African toponymic struggle, states that colonial toponyms “reflected the cultural prejudice of colonial settlers...and affirmed their hegemonic status” (Ndletyana 2012, p. 91). The settlers saw themselves as emblem bearers whom the uncivilised and conquered natives were supposed to emulate. He states that naming itself was a political strategy which translated into cultural oppression. In French colonial Dakar, street toponymy also served to alienate the native population from the colonial urban sphere. The idea of the African was only encouraged if it supported the Eurocentric image through compliance or cooperation (Bigon 2008b). Ngugi Wa Thiong’o, in his book *Decolonizing the Mind*, points to the cultural alienation of the African by the colonial regimes.

The effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people’s belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves (Thiong’o 1986, p. 3).

This chapter aims to show how naming was one of the strategies employed by the colonial regimes in Africa to subdue their new territories.

## **4.2 History, planning and development in colonial Nairobi**

### **4.2.1 Historical overview**

The British claims on Kenya started with William Mackinnon’s Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC), which was granted a royal charter in 1888 to administer the area between the Indian Ocean and Uganda. This area was proclaimed to be the British East African Protectorate in 1890, and in 1895 the largely unsuccessful IBEAC, transferred its charter to the British Government (Coker 1996). In 1896, the construction of the Uganda Railway was commenced by the British Government and by May 1899 the railway reached Nairobi, where a temporary camp that was set up became the headquarters of British East Africa (BEA) (Smart 1959).

The development of the railway along the southern strip of the country led to the development of many towns, for example, Voi, Naivasha, and Nakuru which initially started as railway posts. The three major cities in the country, Nairobi (at the center), Mombasa (at the Coast) and Kisumu (at Lake Victoria) were all connected to the railway (figure 11). The negative consequence of this southern railway route was the neglect of the northern part of the country especially the north-eastern part. In the western part of the country occupied by Europeans, most of the development that took place there was agricultural, and the area was nicknamed ‘the white highlands.’

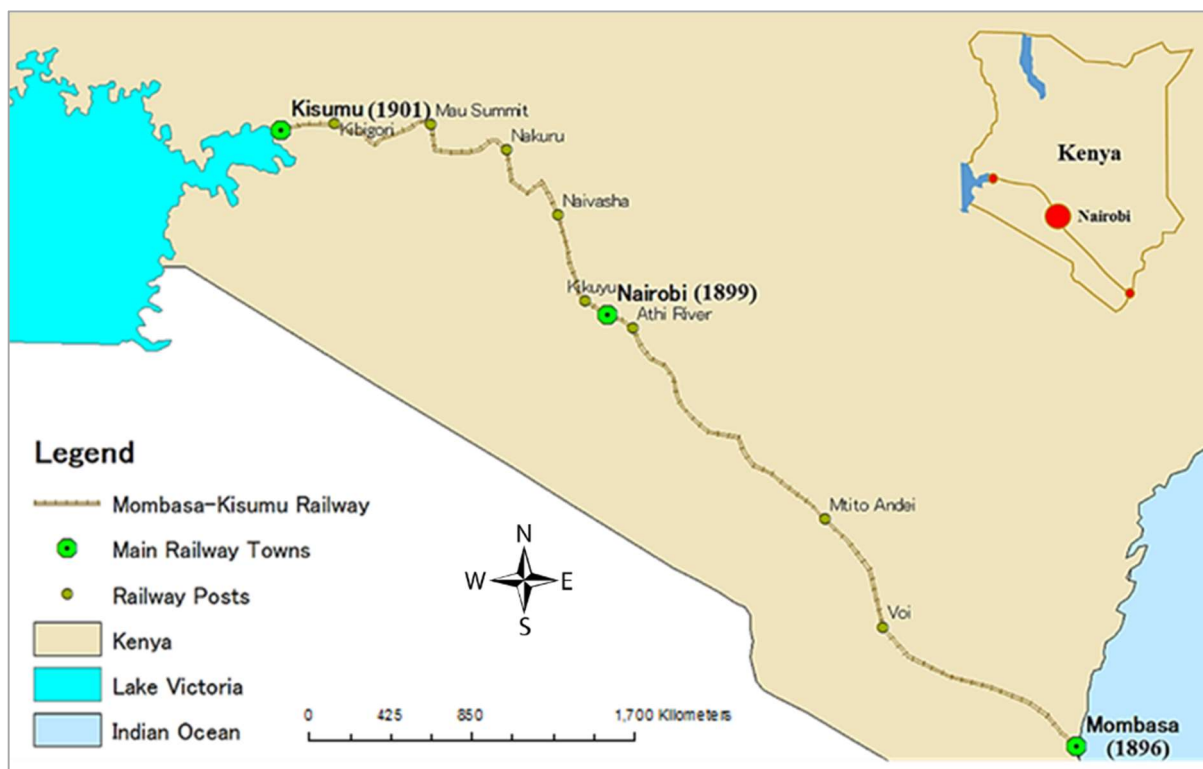


Figure 11. The main railway towns in Nairobi, Kenya  
Source: Adapted from Stanford Geog.

Apart from the coastal settlements, most of inland East Africa was largely unknown in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The slave trade, the search for River Nile and the competition for empires in Africa brought European powers together culminating in the signing of the Congo treaty in 1885 and later in 1886; a treaty was signed between Britain and Germany to define their ‘spheres of influence’ in East Africa (Lucas 1922). In 1889, the European powers met in Brussels and signed a treaty to abolish the slave trade and find ways to tame and exploit the interior of Africa. One way would be through the construction of a railway network to the interior. In the BEA the railway was built for the prime purpose of reaching what is now known as Uganda, where

the exact origin of River Nile on Lake Victoria is found. This purpose was articulated by Elizabeth Huxley in her book, *White Man's Country* as shown in this excerpt:

Whoever rules Uganda, rules the Nile, whoever controls the Nile, dominates Egypt, whoever dominates Egypt holds the Suez Canal, and whoever holds the Suez Canal has his hands upon the throat of India's trade (Huxley 1935, p. 48).

The choice for Nairobi as the Railway headquarters is highly contended, with at least two versions of why the specific site was picked (Tiwari 1964). One of the versions states that once the railway construction from Mombasa had progressed for quite a bit, it had been decided that the railway workshop and headquarters would be located at Kikuyu. However, one of the surveyors advised against that because of the terrain. Instead, he suggested 'Nyrobi' to be a better site for the construction. The other version suggests that, unlike Kikuyu which was inhabited by the Agikuyu tribe, Nairobi was selected because it was 'no man's land.' Setting up the railway headquarters at Kikuyu may have brought about conflict with the tribe. It was typical for sites which were considered as no man's land to be picked for railway construction.

Toponymically, the origin of the name Nairobi reflects the physical conditions of the site. The original name of Nairobi came from the Maasai phrase, 'Enkare Nyrobi' which means 'a place of cool waters.' The site where the city developed had and still has many rivers including 1) Nairobi River which is fed by Kirichwa Kubwa and Kirichwa Ndogo Rivers; 2) Mathare River 3) Gitathuru River; 4) Karura River and 4) In the South, having its source from Ngong forest is Ngong' River.

## **4.2.2 Colonial spatial planning and development**

### ***4.2.2.1 Uganda Railway Plan of Staff Quarters: 1899***

The railway reached the swampy site of Nairobi in May 1899. In an initial close-up plan of Nairobi which shows the street structure and staff quarters in the town, Nairobi is referred to as Nyrobi: *Uganda railway plan of staff quarters-Nyrobi*, dated 29 October 1899 (figure 12). This dating shows that this was the plan designed to direct the development of Nairobi and not one showing the development status. The date of the map could justify Boedecker's assertion that the establishment of Nairobi had been decided earlier in mid-1899, since the railhead reached Nairobi in May 1899 and the plan was ready in October of the same year.

Nairobi Town came into the limelight about the middle of 1899, when the late Sir. George Whitehouse K.C.B, the Chief Engineer Uganda Railway had definitively decided to establish

the headquarters and the main station of the railway on the flat and open stretch on the south side of the Swamp (Boedecker 1936, p. 2).

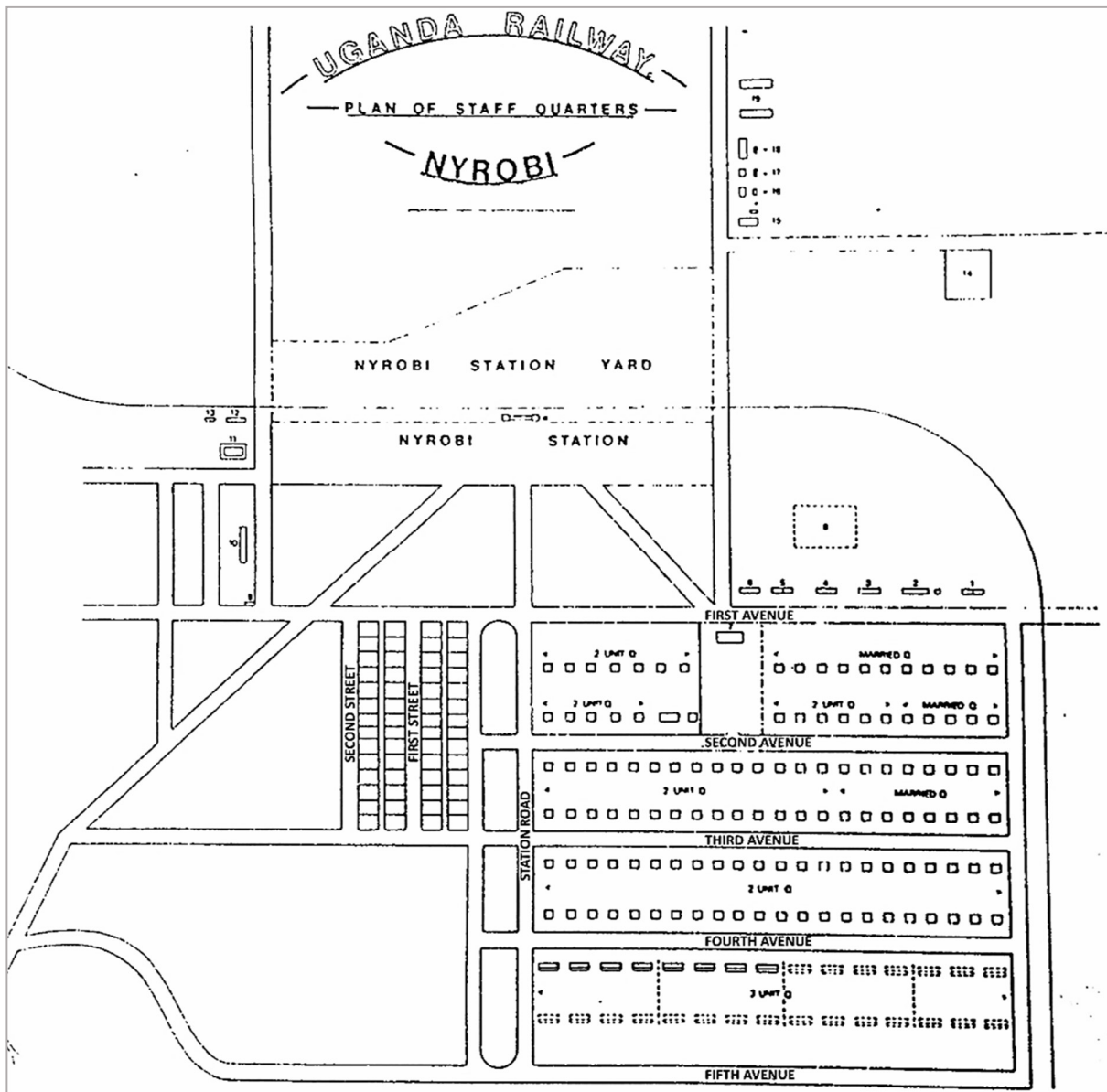


Figure 12. Uganda railway plan of staff quarters, Nyrobi (1899)

Source: Nairobi township plan No.56. Obtained from Railway Museum, Nairobi

In the 1899 plan, the name Nyrobi (derived from Enkare Nyrobi) appears thrice: Uganda railway plan of staff quarters-Nyrobi, Nyrobi station yard, and Nyrobi station, showing that the use of the word Nairobi was not a mistake. At the time, the indigenous name had not yet been wholly altered to Nairobi as it appears in subsequent city plans. The basic plan of the town shows street names such as First and Second Street, and First to Fifth Avenue. All the streets were named numerically except for Station Street which was to run from the railway station.

Later, on 16 April 1900, the Nairobi Municipal Regulations were published, and the township was defined as that area within a radius of 1.5-miles from the then office of the sub-commissioner making the first arbitrary Nairobi boundary.

#### ***4.2.2.2 Uganda railway general plan: 1901***

The Uganda railway general plan of 1901 indicated that the differentiated land uses within the town had started to take shape. Space occupation as organised by Uganda railways is characterised by subordinate's quarters being separate from the officer's quarters. A separation based on race can be observed because the European Bazaar was separate from the Indian Bazaar. The residential quarters for the Indian Railway workers, shown in the figure as Coolie Landhies were also separate from the other residential quarters.

The construction of the railway station and residential quarters for railways subordinates had been completed by 1900, and in 1901, the Nairobi railway map (figure 13) shows that the primary functions of the town at the time were related to the railway. These were: 1) the railway station yard 2) the railway's officer's quarters 3) the subordinate's quarters and 4) the coolie (Indian) Landhies or quarters. There was a definite separation of residential quarters based on the rank and service but also on race as is seen by the separation of the Coolie Landhies. Coolies were Indian Labourers who had been brought to help with the construction of the railway. The only named road in the plan is Station Road (5) again showing the centrality of the railway in the birth and initial development of Nairobi. Two bazaars are also indicated in the plan. The European Bazaar (6) is located next to the Railway subordinate's quarters, and the Indian Bazaar (7) is located to the North-East of the European Bazaar.

The protectorate offices (8) which are centrally located on the map, indicate the administrative function that the town had at the time. They had been moved from Machakos to Nairobi by Colonel John Ainsworth, but the railway authorities did not receive this move well, so there was a clear distance between the two offices (Tiwari 1964). The deliberate separation was done because the protectorate offices were likely to usurp the power of the railway authorities. The protectorate officers' quarters (9) to the west of the town, in a seemingly isolated location. As the map indicates, in the northern part of the city, there was a barrack yard for the British East African Rifles (BEA) officer's quarters (10).

As indicated earlier, the reasons for the selection of the site by the chief engineer of the railways, the terrain of the town was flat and swampy. The presence of Nairobi River (11) supports the notion. During the rains, many of the earth roads would be flooded, and the poor drainage was



causing a menace due to unsanitary conditions especially in the Indian Bazaars. Several plague outbreaks were reported during this time. The first plague was reported just weeks after the railhead reached the town: In the Indian Bazaar area. The second was reported in 1902, which resulted in 19 deaths out of the reported 63 cases of infections. Another plague broke out in 1904 that led to parts of the bazaar now mainly occupied by Indians and some Africans to be burnt down. The most severe plague happened in 1906 (Nevanlinna 1996). Sanitation hence emerged as another reason why the colonial administration separated the different races with the Indians being deemed as having the most unsanitary lifestyles.

Most of the buildings at the time were built using corrugated iron sheets, but the map shows a Brick Field, including a kiln and drying sheds (12). However, there are barely any remnants of brick buildings in Nairobi now. Just like most of the corrugated iron sheet buildings were destroyed and replaced with stone buildings.



Figure 13. Development status of Nairobi as at 1901. Dated 6 August 1901, and signed by the Chief Engineer of the Uganda Railways (see lower left side).

Source: The British National Archives. File No. TNA/FO925-7274.

#### 4.2.2.3 Development status of Nairobi: 1901

Following the 1901 plan, there was a more detailed map of Nairobi dated 1904 (figure 14). The plan shows the mainland uses as being divided between the railway functions, the administrative functions, and private land usage. A red dotted line delineated the land belonging to the railway as well as plots which were suggested sites of buildings. These proposed developments were residential quarters for European and Indian subordinates, Khalasis<sup>3</sup> Landhies<sup>4</sup>, offices for the court clerk as well as the medical storekeeper and clerk. The other primary function was the civic function. The center of the map shows the civic hospital, the public jail, police line as well as the protectorate offices.

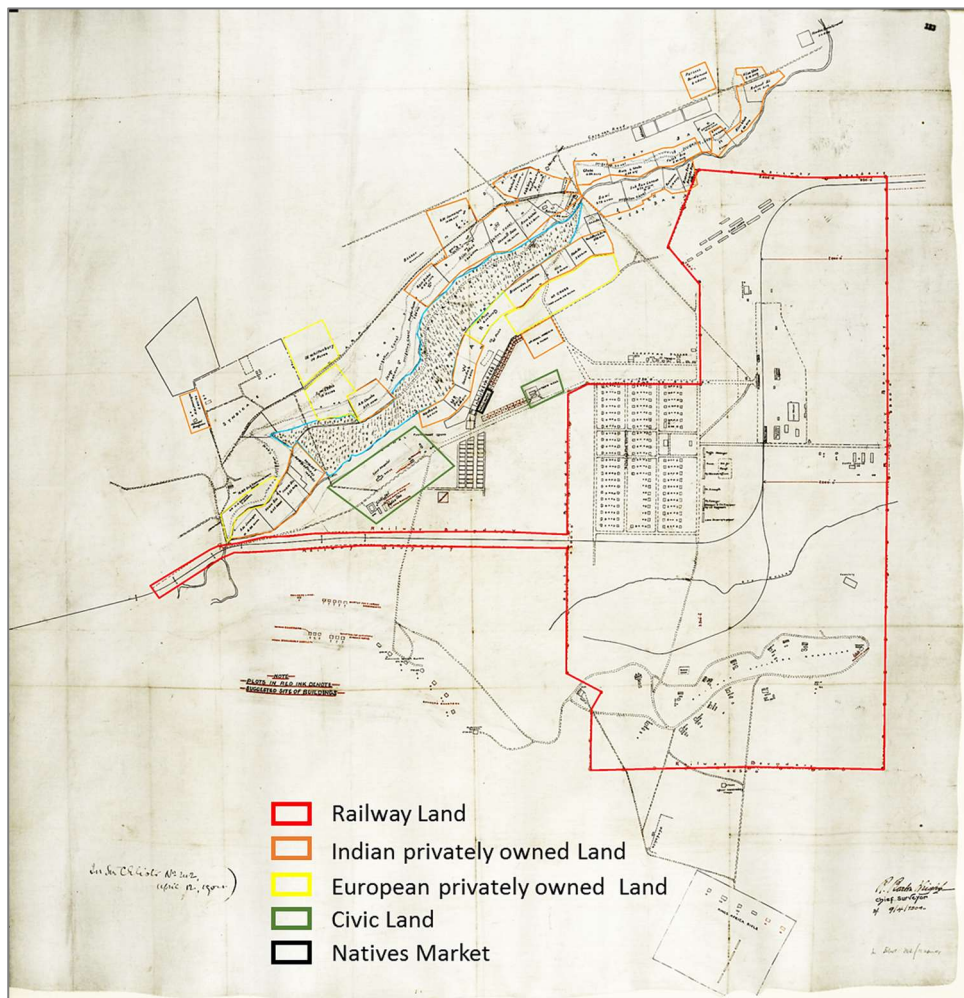


Figure 14. Development status of Nairobi as a railway town. Dated 9 April 1904 and signed (lower right side) by the Chief Surveyor of the Uganda Railways.

Source: The British National Archives. File No. TNA/ MRI/1027

<sup>3</sup> Khalasi is an Arabic word which means dockyard worker, sailor etc. In the Nairobi case, it could have referred to Arabs or Indians who were working for the Uganda Railway.

<sup>4</sup> Landhi is a town located in the Eastern part of Karachi in Pakistani. This name could have been used by the Indian Pakistani railway workers in reference to their home town.

The privately-owned land (by leasing from Sir Grogan and Shariff Jaffer who owned it) along the river banks seemed to have been dominated by the Indians. The area was named ‘Gertrude Swamp after Sir Grogan’s wife. The landowners and the size of their land were as shown in Table 4. Some owners had separate pieces of land, e.g., Alim Shah, Jevanjee and the Dass family.

Table 4. Land owned by Indians in Nairobi in the year 1904

Name	Size of land (Acres)	Name	Size of land (Acres)	Name	Size of land (Acres)
Alim Shah	2.13	Hira	3	Imani Din	6.0
Alim Shah	7.90	Bishen and Dwarka Dass	5.0	A.M Jevanjee	4
Alim Shah	4.85	Ram Sahal	5.27	A.M Jevanjee	10.58
Rahmat Ali	3.12	Shankar Dass	6.79	Dawi	5.72
M D’Souza	5	Ram Sahal	4.66	R.L Gheba	4.96
Faleh Din	5.41	Deogha Rarao	2.34	Abdul Hussain	5
Bishen and Dwarka Dass	2.55	Jangu	8.40	J.R.N	1.05
Rehmoon	2.16	R.B Chunha	5.74	Behranjee	1.92
Rao Ganash	4.70	Wadhawa	3.0	Bura	2.75
R.L Gheba	4.99	Mr. Baiju	2.66	Abdulla	2.5
Total land leased to Indians: 134.15 Acres. Including the two burial grounds (139.15 Acres)					

Source: Map of Nairobi railway town. 9 April 1904

In addition to the privately-owned land, there was land set aside for the Hindu burial ground (1 acre), the Parsee's burial ground (4-acres) and the Indian Bazaar (area not indicated). Some of the names were not very legible from the map. Therefore it is difficult to ascertain their accuracy. The Indians then owned about 140-acres of the estimated 4,480-acres which accounted for about 3% of the total area. The land owned by Europeans at the time is also indicated. There were far fewer owners than the Indians, but they owned larger plots of land. The European landowners as shown in figure 2–5 were: 1) Mr. Cross (18.04-acres), C.W Evans (10-acres), Dr. Whittenbury (10-acres) and Mr. A.S Cooper (7.16-acres). In total, the private ownership was 45.2-acres much less than the Indians. However, the Europeans controlled the railway as well as the civic functions of the town hence their influence was still the biggest. The absence of the African native is quite noticeable with only an indication of a native’s market in the

central part of the town. There is no evidence of private land ownership as in the case of the Europeans and Indians. The disproportionate allocation of land among the three major races also

In 1920, BEA became the Crown Colony of Kenya, with Nairobi as its capital (Tignor 1976). The role of the township grew, incorporating administrative and commercial purposes, and a pattern of racially distinct commercial and residential zones started to emerge. This was a result of the British colonial tendency to divide society into distinct groups for easier control. As the population increased, there was a need to extend the boundary of the city. Tiwari (in figure 15) explains how the city boundaries changed with land sometimes being excised or added to the town (Tiwari 1964). In 1926, the local government commission under Justice Feetham was constituted to investigate every aspect of the Nairobi Municipal Council. Thus, further boundary changes were recommended. A new boundary, drawn in 1928, absorbed more of the autonomous residential areas including Thompson Estate and Muthaiga Township which was in the North, despite the townships' considerable resistance on their part to remain autonomous. The boundary of Nairobi remained substantially the same, only minor additions and excisions taking place during those years (Wanjiru 2014).

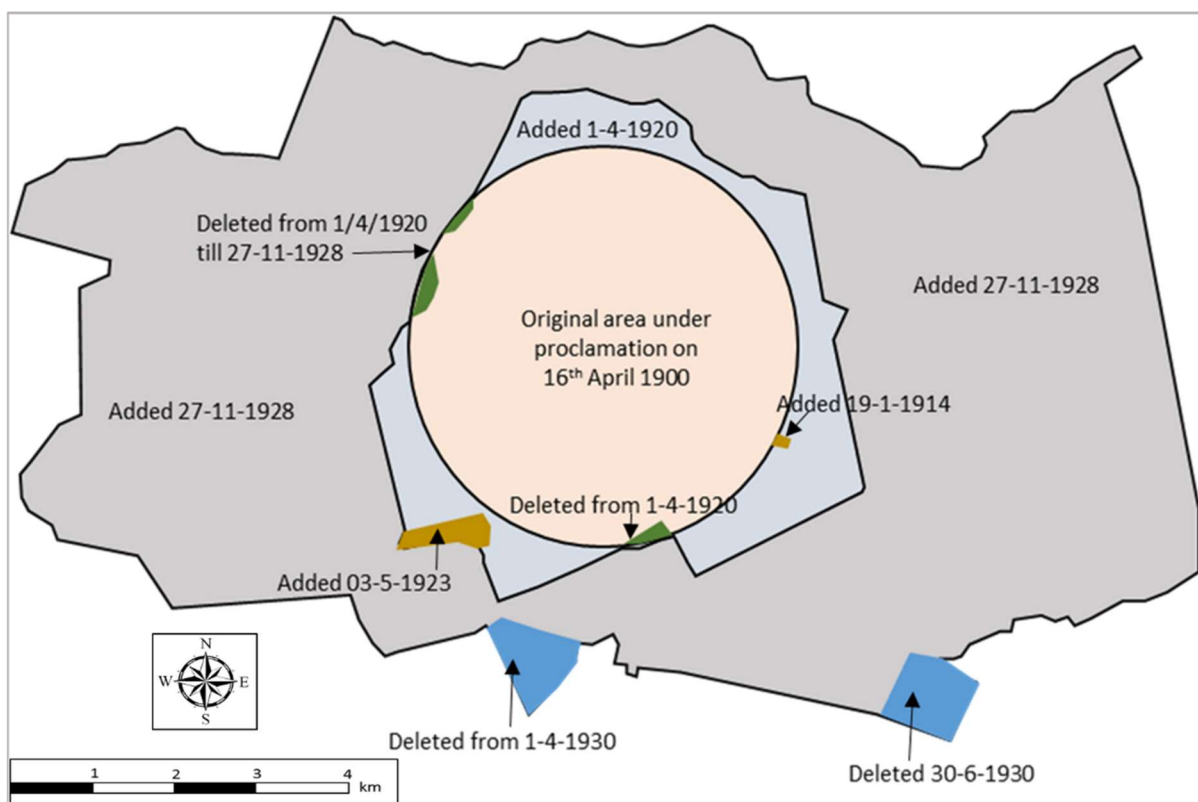


Figure 15. Map showing the growth of the municipal area  
Source: Adapted from Tiwari, 1964.

#### ***4.2.2.4 Explanatory Memorandum of the Nairobi Area: 1927***

In the 1920's, racial segregation was apparent in Nairobi's political, social and spatial organisation. There were discrepancies in the land prices where the Africans had to pay more for land. Norman Leys describes that in the European suburbs an acre went for £100, in the Asian quarters a twelfth of an acre cost £65 and in the African villages an acre cost £200–500 (Leys 1941). The Europeans had control not only on the economic but also on the socio-political and cultural level. This had largely been influenced by the '1927 Explanatory Memorandum of the Nairobi Area', whereby the Town Planning Authority determined some of the cultural boundaries of the town. In the colony, political rights, social and urban services were distributed on a racial basis. Emig and Ismael called this memorandum 'The Plan for a Settler Capital,' they emphasised the word settler because of the settler community who yielded much political power at the time (Emig and Ismail 1980).

#### ***4.2.2.5 Nairobi Master Plan for a Colonial Capital: 1948***

The 1948 master plan is one of the most significant colonial planning efforts whose legacy can still be felt in the current spatial organisation of Nairobi City (figure 16). The master plan was prepared by a team from South Africa; Professor L.W Thornton White (an architect and town planner), L.W. Silberman (a sociologist) and P.R Anderson (a town planning engineer). The plans stated objectives were: to provide areas adequate in size for residential, commerce and business, industry, public buildings, and recreation; to zone these areas to ensure their most efficient interrelationship; to organise traffic circulation on a rational basis, to design a system of interlinked spaces, and to increase civic consciousness. There have been varying views about the racial basis of the 1948 master plan, with most scholars alluding to the notion that it excluded the African even though he formed the bulk of the population at the time. Emig and Ismael who also assessed the 1948 master plan claimed that its political character was hidden behind the look of a technical document: "the basic common authoritarian outlook is preserved — albeit concealed behind the liberal façade of the plan" (Emig and Ismail 1980, p. 55). In the colonial period, what appeared as technical planning documents and policies had far-reaching impacts on the social and political makeup of the city.



Figure 16. Nairobi master plan for a colonial capital, 1948

Source: Adapted from (White et al. 1948 p. 100)

As seen in the master plan, the two shades of brown colour represent the two main residential areas for urban residents. The area in the northeast to the west was envisioned as ‘areas of economic, residential development.’ This part of Nairobi which was of higher altitude and had well-drained soils was mainly occupied by the Europeans (Morgan and Halliman 1967). The south and east were areas for ‘official housing zones’ or workers housing (White et al. 1948). They housed municipality, government, and railway workers. The areas of economic, residential development occupied a much larger area (twice as much as the official housing zones) since housing was to be developed at half the density. The so-called ‘economic, residential areas’ were built upon existing residential areas which were mainly occupied by the white population. The east and south parts, on the other hand, were very controlled areas. The initial developments in Pumwani and Kariakor were built to accommodate male workers only, without their wives or children because the African was considered a transitory resident of the city.

### 4.3 Racial dynamics in colonial Nairobi

#### 4.3.1 Population by race in colonial Nairobi

During the colonial period, the dominant ethnic groups in Nairobi were: European, Asian, and African. Although Africans were the most prevalent in terms of population, as explained earlier in the previous section on the growth and development of Nairobi, it is the Europeans who were most dominant, followed by Asians. The Europeans were mainly British Railway officers, and protectorate administrative officers and settler farmers. The Asians were Indian indentured labourers recruited by the British Government for the construction of the rail (Tiwari 1981). The Africans were mainly of Kikuyu and Maasai ethnic origins because they were the two main tribes who resided in this area before the arrival of the Railway and the development of the town. The Maasai, who are pastoralists, grazed and watered their herds here, while the Kikuyu were mainly carrying out farming activities in the nearby Kikuyu area, part of what is now Kiambu County — adjacent to Nairobi (Zwanenberg and King 1975). The population of Nairobi grew steadily with the Africans making most of the urban residents as shown the chart below (figure 17). However, even with the majority being Africans, their presence was barely felt on the urban landscape as the Europeans and Indians took positions of power in government and business.

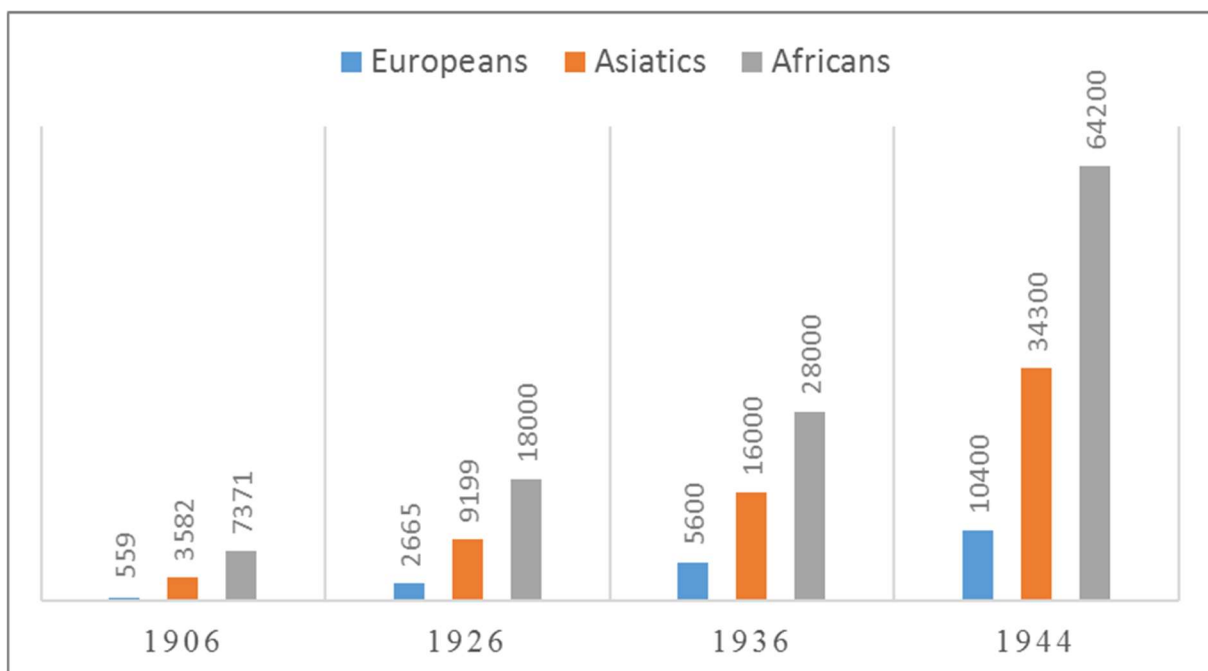


Figure 17. The ratio of population and its growth in colonial Nairobi.

Source: Nairobi Master Plan, 1948



### 4.3.2 Racial politics of power

Racial segregation inevitably led to racial discrimination. An observation made by the British Prime Minister who visited Kenya in 1907, sums up the political tension that was in the young town of Nairobi.

One would scarcely believe that a center so new should be able to develop so many divergent and conflicting interests. The white man versus the black and the Indian versus both the white and the black man. The official class against the unofficial, the coast versus the highlands, all these different points of view, naturally arising, honestly adopted, tenaciously held and not yet reconciled into any harmonious general conception, confront the visitor in perplexing disarray (Churchill 1909, p. 14).

Over time, the racial politics continued to cause rifts among the three major races. When Kenya became an official British colony in 1920, the British wielded more power, and the Indians started to press for more representation.

Regarding political representation, the discrepancy was quite conspicuous since, in 1920, 1924, 1928 and 1950, the composition of the Municipal Council of Nairobi had a majority Europeans. There were a few Asians (mainly Indian and Goans), but no Africans. The majority of members of the municipal council were Europeans (table 5).

Table 5. Political representation by race in Nairobi’s Municipal Council

Representatives	1920	1923	1928	1950
Europeans	12	5	9	22
Indians	4	4	5	10
Goan		1 (nominated)	1	
African				1
		1 (Government Official)	1 Senior Commissioner	
Total	16 (8 Europeans, 4 Indians, 0 Africans)	12 (8 Europeans, 4 Asians, 0 Africans)	17 (12 Europeans, 5 Asians, 0 Africans)	34 (22 Europeans, 10 Asians, 1 African)

Source: Feetham Commission Report (1928); Master Plan for a Colonial Capital (1958) and Smart. J (1950).

### 4.3.3 Racial dominance and city pioneers

#### 4.3.3.1 European pioneers

Pioneers as they are referred to in Errol Trzebinsky’s book, *The Kenya Pioneers*, were seen to be the Europeans and Asiatics who came to Nairobi and through the railway, colonial administration, and business enterprise led to the development of the city. The line of colonial

administrators started with the British East Africa Protectorate which lasted from 1891–1920. This later changed when Kenya officially became a British Crown Colony in 1920. This did not change the administrative position of the British. However, now what was under the BEA was directly under the British government. A quote in James Smart’s book *A Jubilee History of Nairobi* shows the sense in which the European pioneers were the ‘saviours’ of the uncivilised land.

Jackson, Lugard, Portal and the others who first passed through the Nairobi plain were steeped in the tradition of the old world but they believed that somewhere, in these territories a new race would quicken into life, tolerant, generous, retaining in its new culture that which was best in the old. Perhaps it may yet be. On the threshold of a new age, Nairobi has within its grasp the leadership of that new civilisation, worthy of those ‘who came at the beginning from the white queen to give the country peace.’ (Smart 1950)

Some of those who are regarded as esteemed pioneers were the initial commissioners, consuls, and governors of the British East African Protectorate (BEA) which later became the colony and protectorate of Kenya (table 6).

Table 6: Administrative leaders in British colonial Nairobi

<b>Commissioners and Consuls: British East Africa Protectorate (1891–1920)</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b>Name</b>
1891	L.W Mathews
1892	G.H Portal
1894–1900	A.H Hardinge
1900–1904	C.N Elliot
1905	Donald Stewart <sup>5</sup>
1905–1906	J.H Sadler
<b>Governors</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b>Name</b>
1906–1909	J.H Sadler
1909–1912	E.P Girourard
1912–1919	H.C Belfield
1919–1920	E. Northey

<sup>5</sup> Coger does not include Stewart in his list of commissioners. But he is mentioned by Errol Trzebinsky as having been a commissioner for barely one year in 1905 before he succumbed to Pneumonia.

<b>Governors of the colony and protectorate of Kenya (1920–1963)</b>	
<b>Years</b>	<b>Governor</b>
1920–22	E. Northey
1922–25	T. Coryndon
1925–31	E.W Grigg
1931–37	J.A Bryne
1937–40	H. Brooke Popham
1940–44	H.M Moore
1944–52	P.E Mitchell
1952–59	E. Baring
1959–63	P.M Renison
1963–64	M.J MacDonald

Source: Kenya: World Bibliographical Series, Coger, 1996

Pioneers in colonial Nairobi were administrators, settler farmers, and businessmen and well as railway personnel. For example, Colonel John Ainsworth was the chief native commissioner of Kenya between 1889 and 1920. He initially came to work with the Imperial British East Africa Company. He retired from his position in 1920. A road was later named after him. Sir. Percy Girourard was another pioneer who served as a governor of colonial Kenya from 1909 to 1912. Subsequently, a street was named in his honour. Sir Phillip Mitchell was the governor who served the Kenya colony at the time when anti-colonial resistance was rife. His term ended in 1952, the same year a state of emergency was declared in Kenya. A park (Mitchell Park along Ngong' Road was named in his honour during the colonial period, but it was later renamed to Jamhuri (meaning republic in the Swahili language) Park after independence. George Whitehouse was the first chief engineer of the Uganda Railways, and he was assisted by R.O Preston in overseeing laying of the railway line from Mombasa to Kisumu (refer to figure 11 for a map of the railway line). Both Whitehouse Road and Preston Road were located near the Nairobi Railway Station. It was first believed that Kisumu city, (formerly Port Florence) had been named after Preston's wife Florence Preston since it is her who put in the last nail when the rail line was completed. However, in actual sense, it had been named after Mrs. Florence Whitehouse, wife of the chief engineer and Preston's boss in Uganda Railways. The wives of both Railway officials shared a first name, and this led to a conflict in understanding the actual meaning of the towns name.

In addition to the government officials, there were reputable settlers who rose to prominence through farming and commercial businesses. The most prominent settler farmer was Lord H.C Delamere. He was also very influential in politics and hence, he was honoured through the naming of longest and widest thoroughfare in Nairobi CBD at the time after him — Delamere Avenue. His statue was also erected where Delamere Avenue intersected with Hardinge Street. Delamere’s statue was removed after Kenya gained independence, as were other colonial monuments. Grogan Road was located near Nairobi Swamp, near Nairobi River. E.S Grogan after whom it was named, was a prominent businessman in Nairobi. He also owned the swamp which he named Gertrude Swamp after his wife. Other influential personalities were the Mayors who served in the municipal and subsequently the City Council of Nairobi. The first Mayor was Henderson. Another Mayor, Woodley, still has an estate named after him.

**4.3.3.2 Asian pioneers**

Asians played a significant role in the growth of Nairobi. Preston, in his book *oriental Nairobi*, described the Asian community as having contributed significantly to serve the town and country of their adoption (Preston 1938). These included: businessmen, religious leaders, and politicians. A.M Jeevanjee, the most prominent Indian businessman during the colonial period. He owned many businesses including A.M Jeevanjee and Co. and was a co-owner of the first newspaper in Nairobi (*The African Standard*) before selling it in 1905 (figure 18). He also presented Nairobi with a park, named after himself, complete with a statue of Queen Victoria, and which was unveiled by the visiting Duke of Connaught.

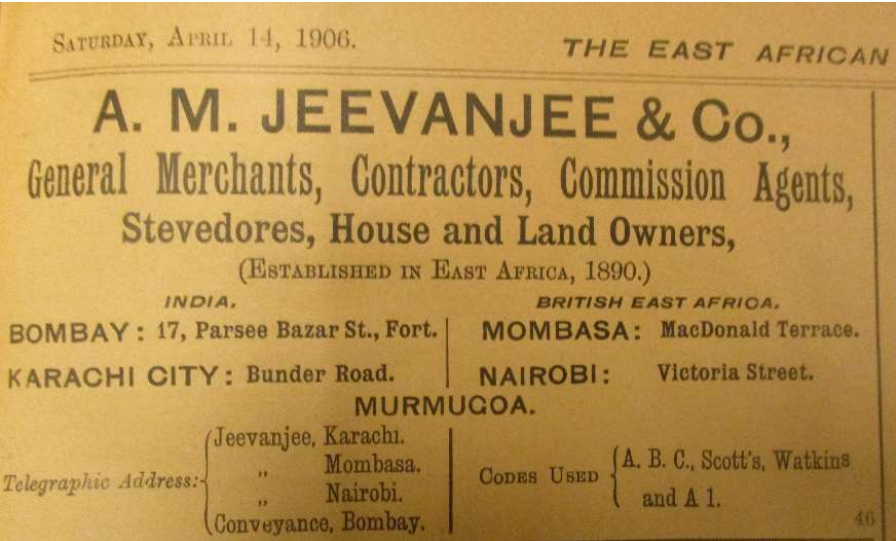


Figure 18. An advert about Jeevanjee’s company in the East African Standard. Source: British Library, The East African Standard. 14 April 1906.

Jevanjee died in 1936, and although he had lost most of his property, he was still highly honoured mainly by the Indian community. One of his eulogies recorded in the Kenya Daily Mail, a local newspaper, on 18 May 1936 stated: “Indians in East Africa have lost a great pioneer...for nearly two decades, his masterful personality dominated the Indian public life in almost all activities...” (Larsen 2007, p. 59).

Lala Shankardass and his sons were also pioneer business men and land owners in Nairobi (refer to table 4). Up to now, there is a remnant of their business acumen, since the building which houses Kenya Cinema in Nairobi CBD is still known as Shankar Dass Building. M.A Desai, on the other hand, was a pioneer politician who served as president of the East African Indian National Congress in 1922 and was at the forefront of fighting for the rights of Indians during the colonial time. In Ngara Parklands, there is a street (Desai Road), which was named in his honour. Another pioneer medical professional was Dr. R.A Ribeiro — a physician who arrived in Nairobi in February 1900. He tamed a Zebra, which he would use to make rounds around the city visiting those who were sick (Smart 1959). He had also set up his private clinic in the Indian Bazaar, but which was razed down after the Bubonic Plague. After the fire, he was compensated with 16-acres of land behind Victoria Street by the colonial government. He later sold some of the land to Julius Campos. Campos Ribeiro Avenue was named as such by combining both of their names (Trzebinsky 1985).

There was not much Indian representation in the Municipal Council of Nairobi in the years 1920-1928. The Feetham Commission recommendations report did not help the situation because they did not advocate for an increase in Indian representation. Thus, there were a lot of protests even from India regarding this matter through newspapers. This also led to a communique being sent from the Secretary of State in India to the Secretary of State to the Colonies regarding the issue of Indians in East Africa. What emerges is that the colonial government was using the native African trusteeship of the land as an excuse to deny the Indians access to it. However, the Africans did not benefit from the trusteeship of the land at the time. Hence the Europeans put themselves in a position of power by stifling the attempts for more representation by the Indians. Eventually, these complaints (some recorded in table 7) led to an increase in the Indian representation to about 10 in the Municipal Council of Nairobi by 1950 (Smart 1950).

Table 7. A record of complaints through newspapers by Indians regarding representation in the municipal council.

<b>Complaint</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>
It is unjust for the government of Kenya to oppress Indians by claiming to protect native Africans.	Tamil Nadu	2 September 1927
If representation of the Indians was reduced and that of whites increased, then Indians would become slaves in Kenya.	M. Dravidan	5 September 1927
Only a minority seats to be given to Indians, and a majority official and unofficial seats to Europeans.	E. Sattyagraha	5 September 1927
Protest against the Feetham commission by Indian members of NMC by not attending meetings.	T. Andhra Patrika	2 and 7 September 1927
The Feetham Committee removes even the small rights already secured by Indians.	T. Rajamundry	9 September 1927
The report makes it impossible for the majority Indians to get adequate representation.	K. Pratidinam	16 September 1927
The White Paper of July 1927 questioned the civic and political rights of Indians. The Feetham Committee recommendations are prejudicial to the rights of Indians.	M. Swaraiya	19 September 1927
Referred to it as a campaign launched to rob Indians of their rights through a conspiracy by the Colonial Government and Kenyan Europeans.	Indian National Herald (Bombay)	19 September 1927
British colonial government was using the disguise of native trusteeship to alienate the Indians.	Servant of India	22 September 1927
Speech by Sir Edward Grigg (Governor) showed that his objective was to increase the power of the whites and minimise rights of Indians and the natives of Kenya.	M. Andhra Patrika	23 September 1927

Source: Series of letters to newspapers by Indians in India about Indians in Kenya from The British National Archives (TNA).

#### **4.4 Toponymy in colonial Nairobi**

##### **4.4.1 Street toponymy**

Initially, the street toponymy of Nairobi was numerical as shown earlier in the Uganda Railway Plan for Staff Quarters. The first street began from the Railway Station around which the town was built. The plan shows the staff quarters area which was between First and Fifth Avenues

which ran east to west. Running parallel to this was the First and Second Street which ran north-south. The map of 1925 shows that the town had extended northwards up to Tenth Street. Some of the street names had changed from numerical to British names. These were mainly names of the first commissioners of British East Africa (figure 19). The street names included Hardinge, Sadler, Stewart, and Eliot, all of whom were commissioners between 1894 and 1909. Names representing members of the British monarchy including Victoria Street, and Duke Street.

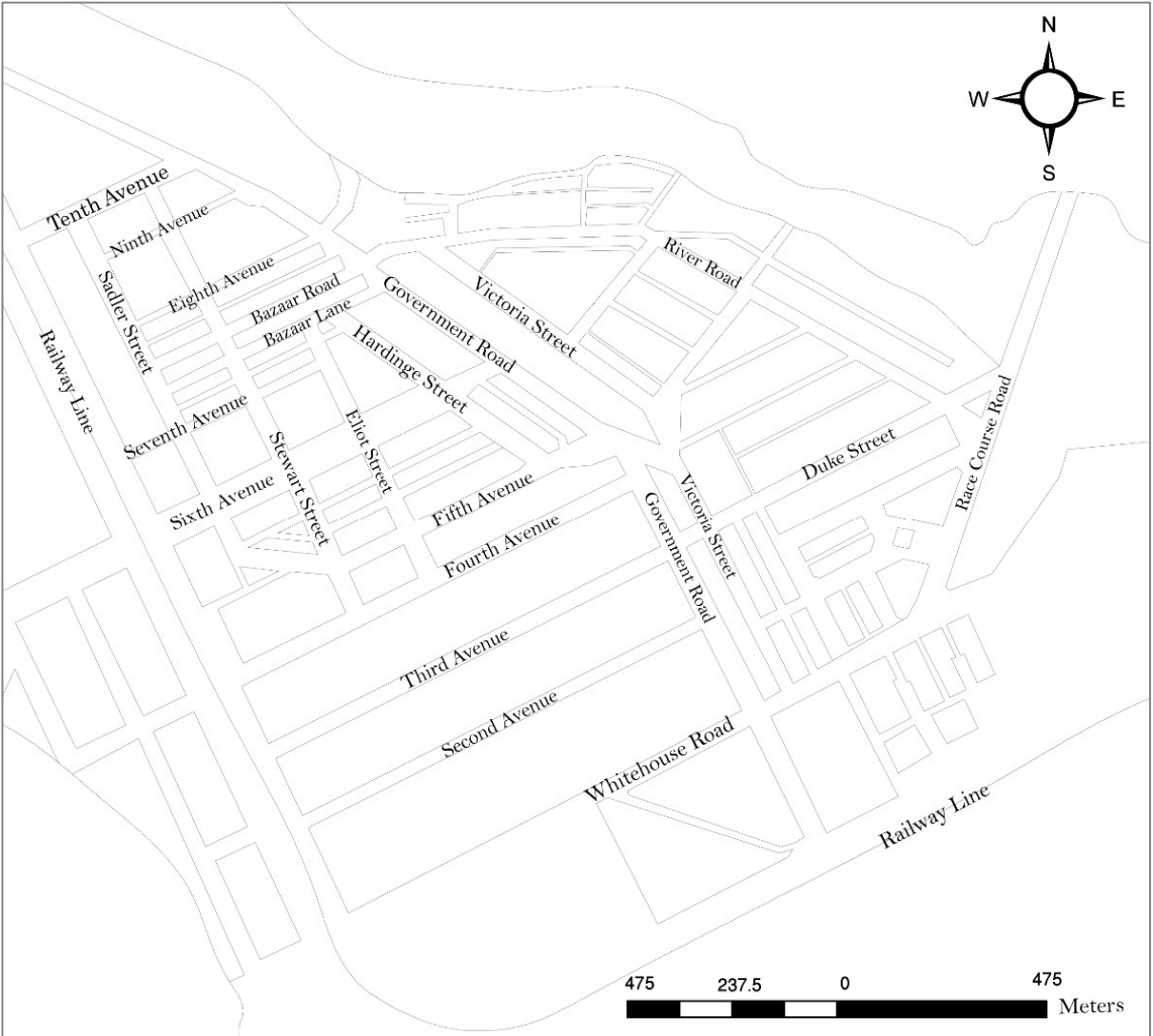


Figure 19. The street names of Nairobi as at 1925.  
Source: Topocadastral map of Nairobi, 1925. Survey of Kenya.





Buildings aside, it is the naming of streets which had an unmistakable colonial tag about them. The streets were mainly named after something in Britain or relevant to Europe. The royal family was especially celebrated in the street names. Owing goes by naming and this, the British relish (Amutabi 2012, p. 339).

Some of the streets named after royals in Nairobi were: Princess Elizabeth Way, Duke of Connaught Road, Duke Street, and Queensway.

As shown in the 1960 topocadastral map of Nairobi (figure 21), colonial street names dominated the urban landscape compared to the street names representing the other two main racial groups in Nairobi. The number of streets representing each category shows that streets with a British connotation constituted about half of all the streets in Nairobi. On the other hand, African and Indian streets constituted around 18% each while the neutral names which were categorised as indicative (referring to a certain physical feature located near the street), as well as numerical street names, constituted about 7% each of the total street names in Nairobi at the time. There was a concentration of colonial street names on the western part of the city, which corroborates with the design of the 1948 Nairobi Master Plan, which spatially allocated the west part to the Europeans.



Figure 21. Categories of street names in colonial Nairobi

Source: Topocadastral map of Nairobi, 1960. Survey of Kenya.

Indian street names were mostly in northeast of Nairobi CBD, while the African street names were arbitrarily located north and south as shown in figure 22.

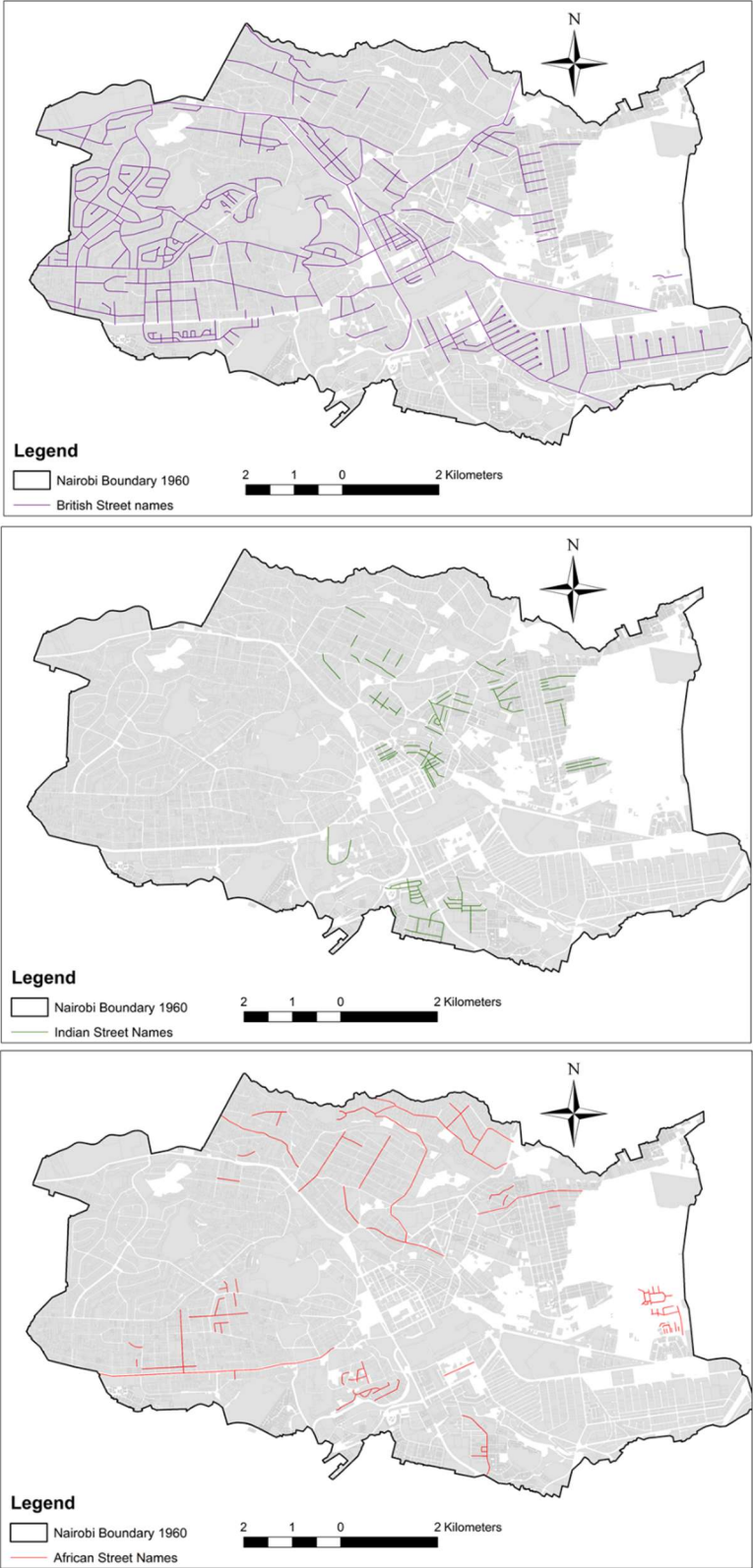


Figure 22. British, African and Indian street names in Nairobi as at 1960  
Source: Topocadastral map of 1960. Survey of Kenya.

#### 4.4.2 Toponymy of buildings and businesses in colonial Nairobi

This section examines the names of buildings and or businesses within buildings which have their names on the building facades. The names observed were mainly of British or Indian origin, indicating that the buildings were owned mainly by these two groups or else, the businesses housed therein were. From pictures obtained through archival research, it appeared that most businesses either had British or Indian names. This shows that these two groups controlled the economy of the city at the time. This persisted from the early 1900's to the 1950's, while Kenya was under colonisation. Names of privately owned enterprises and buildings are used to show the social and economic hierarchy among the main racial groups in Nairobi at the time.

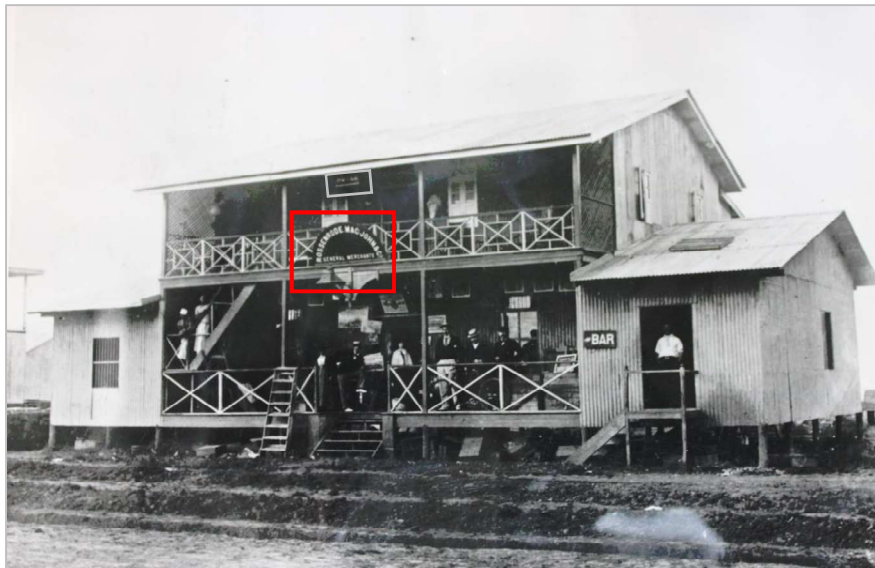


Figure 23. A hotel and bar in early Nairobi

Source: The British National Archives. File No. TNA/ ZZZ 38516H

The picture above (figure 23) shows a typical bar in early Nairobi. The hotel belonged to Tommy Wood and was located along Victoria Street. The hotel was referred to as Victoria Hotel because of the street along which it was located. On the top floor, though not very well legible is the name Hotel is indicated on the top floor, whereas the ground floor names, read: Rossenroad MacJohn and Co. General Merchants. The building itself was owned by A.M Jeevanjee. Within this single entity, the power relations at the time can be seen in the sense that the European and the Indian are seen to be partners in an economic endeavour, and simultaneously, the hotel bears the name of the street.

Another picture taken around 1913 shows a building named M.H Jaffer (an Indian name) on Bazaar Street. There are cows on the street an indication that there may have been Africans (Masa's) in the town as well. The architecture shows a mixture of Indian (Madhukas) as well as modern buildings. On the street, there can be seen a European on a bicycle, Africans standing on the sidewalk, indicating the cosmopolitan nature of the town from its beginnings (figure 24). The European on a bicycle as compared to other people (Africans and Indians) who can be seen on foot in the picture indicate that he (the European) was more privileged. Although Africans can be seen on the street, there are no signs e.g. buildings or names of buildings to show the permanence of the African in the city. This supports the claim that Africans were considered transitory members of the urban community. They would engage in business with the Indians or work for the Europeans but not have permanent residency in the city.



Figure 24. A general view of Government Road in 1913  
Source: British National Archives, File No. TNA/ZZZ 38521H

In some instances, the resilience of toponymy was exhibited through business names. Even though businesses expanded, and even changed location, the name remained the same. Such was the case of the National Bank of India which was started in the early 1900's, and whose location has been moved twice, it still maintains the same name upto now, indicating the presence of Indians in the city through the years.

#### **4.4.3 Toponymy and royal events in colonial Nairobi**

Visits to the Kenya colony by members of the British Royal Family were much-anticipated events. As reported in the East African Standard (EAS), the Duke of Connaught and his family, were the first royals to set foot on the shores of East Africa. To give him a proper welcome, streets were ‘thronged with enthusiastic crowds, and lined on either side by Maasai warriors who gave a most picturesque effect to the whole scene....’ (Larsen 2007, p. 52). The visit was also coupled with the unveiling ceremony of Queen Victoria’s Statue donated by and prominent Indian businessman A.M Jevanjee, at the gardens now known as Jevanjee Gardens.

The scene was well orchestrated and choreographed such that it portrayed a perfectly harmonious relationship with all the racial communities knowing their role and playing it well, as was implied in a despatch by Sir James Sadler reporting on the success of the event, where he stated that:

His Royal Highness was particularly impressed by the contented appearance of the natives, who throughout the tour welcomed His Royal Highness with unmistakable feelings of loyalty and pleasure (PSSC 1906, p. 307).

Later, a street was named Connaught Road in honour of the Duke of Connaught. The event described above was organised by the colonial government, honoured by a member of the royal family, the statue donated by a rich Indian businessman as a way of declaring his loyalty to the queen. But the African only had a decorative role, that of lining up the streets in his traditional regalia (Larsen 2007). This event underlines the relationship that existed between the British, Asian and local African population. On the surface, all the activities seem quite innocent, but they are loaded with representations of how the three main racial groups interacted.

The interlinkage between the royal power and political and economic power is exemplified in the unveiling of British monarch — Queen Victoria’s monument. The unveiling of Queen Victoria’s monument was done in Jevanjee Park (which was named after a prominent Indian businessman), and it was done by the Duke and Duchess of Connaught who were visiting the city at the time and who in turn had a street named after them, i.e., Connaught Street. The royal power met with the business power, and this led to three important names that indicated the power linkage. Hence toponyms act were important signifiers of the power linkages and dynamics in British colonial Nairobi.

## 4.5 Chapter discussion

This chapter gives a background of urban growth of Nairobi and how the construction of the railway from Mombasa to Uganda, was the impetus for the development of Nairobi. The town started as a railway depot, and after that, it played an administrative role as a provincial headquarter and eventually as the capital city of Kenya. The British colonial administration highly influenced the town's physical structure. In a bid to reward the city and country pioneers (as the British considered themselves), they branded the town with their symbols, among them, monuments and architectural style. But in addition to this was a significant symbol, one that is often considered as banal and mundane — toponymy, i.e., the names of places, buildings streets, and parks. Toponymy as an intangible symbol, so rightly fit among these other tangible features of the city and was used to reinforce the colonial hegemony.

Streets were named after colonial administrators, settler farmers and businessmen as well as prominent Asian personalities. The businesses and the buildings that housed them followed suit since most of them were owned by the British or Asians. Hence British Colonial Nairobi developed a pioneer's based toponymy inscribed by the self-proclaimed pioneers. There was a clear effort to honour the British Monarchy by inscribing their names on streets, parks and building monuments in their honour. Many streets as discussed in this chapter including Kingsway, Queensway, Princess Elizabeth Way, Duke Street were an indication of a royalist toponymy in British colonial Nairobi. As described by Amutabi: “At the junction of Queensway Road and Princess Elizabeth Way was the statue of King George, a symbolic meeting of the royal family in total domination of Nairobi” (Amutabi 2012). In alluding to this Myers (2003), states that colonial powers used urbanism and urban planning to shape the physical spaces of the city to bring consensus as well as domination. Hence, toponyms coupled with other urban symbols like monuments and their strategic locations served to promote the British colonial hegemony.

In conclusion, toponyms in colonial Nairobi were well situated among the other symbols and metaphors on the urban landscape and showed the political, ideological and cultural dominance of some racial communities over others, i.e., the British over the Indians and Africans. Names were also used to actively alienate the native Africans who despite being the majority in population, had little or no say in the city's affairs and in equal measure, there were barely any African names inscribed on the urban landscape of colonial Nairobi. Hence, the conclusion is that racial politics of dominance and pioneership influenced the symbolic construction of the city at the time.

## CHAPTER 5: STREET TOPONYMIC (RE)INSCRIPTIONS IN POST-INDEPENDENCE NAIROBI

### 5.1 Introduction

Kenya gained Independence from the British in 1963, and in 1964 Kenya officially became a republic, signifying one of the most important political changes in the history of the country. Henceforth, the native Africans now had the right to self-government and could define their own identity. Kenya had been under colonial rule for about 70 years from the late 1800's to 1963. It was then referred to as British East Africa as it was put under the Imperial British East Africa Company Limited in 1890 in a type of corporate colonialism which European countries employed at that time (Coger 1996). In 1920, Kenya had officially become a crown colony of the British government and remained so until 1963 (Smart 1959).

The period when Kenya was under the British government, political and economic control lay in the hands of the British Colonial Government. This control translated into the daily lives of the people living in the colony. As elaborated in chapter 4, there were mainly Europeans, Asians and Africans. Ironically, even though the Africans formed the majority in terms of population, they had the least representation in political affairs, barely owned land, and were considered a transient rather than a permanent group in the city.

In addition, in the previous chapter, this thesis explored at length the impact of colonisation on the urban toponymic landscape of Nairobi. Political semiotics of the time and how they translated into actual urban symbols being the main point of investigation and further to that, seeing how toponymy fit in among the other symbols such as monuments and architecture as well as the actual layout of the town which was indicative of spatial segregation based on space.

In this chapter, the post-independence period in the country's political history is analysed in a bid to show how toponymy reflected the transitioning from the British Colonial Regime to the African Independent Government. It is highly evident on the city's landscape that street names played an important role in the decolonisation and subsequent Africanisation of the city's urban landscape. The post-independence period in this study is considered as the first 25 years after Kenya gained independence and it is characterised by intense contestations relating to street name changes.

## **5.2 Street toponymy and the politics of identity and memory**

The way of assigning names to streets is one way of determining the importance of people, institutions, and events within a specific system of values. When names change, the values they represent also fade and new ones are introduced into the system (Kearns and Berg 2002). In Nairobi, street toponymy played an important role in the colonisation and decolonisation of the urban landscape. Colonial Nairobi had completely different values from independent Nairobi, and street toponymy reflected this.

In assessing the role street naming plays in asserting identity, Azaryahu notes that the naming of streets is an administrative and political action that is influenced by interested parties competing for the symbolic control of the public arena (Azaryahu 1996). This notion alludes to Alderman's discussion of naming as a means of symbolic resistance, whereby he suggests that naming streets can be likened to creating "arenas." These arenas are public spaces where social groups of varying power, debate the past in current terms, such as: how to identify with notions of heritage, or how and where best to carry out commemoration in urban spaces. He adds that though street names may appear mundane, it is their inevitable daily use which makes them significant as arenas of public memory (Alderman 2008).

Street toponymy also provides an opportunity to commemorate historically prominent people in space. This translation of memory into space is carried out on various levels. In Nairobi, the rank of a person in society is translated into the size of the street that they would be memorialised by. Street renaming also functions as a political and cultural balancing arena. Using the case of post-colonial Singapore, Yeoh explains that it was important to have street names "reflect the multi-lingual, multi-racial and multi-cultural context of the society" (Yeoh 1996). In Singapore, the dominant ethnic group was the Malay, but both the Chinese and the Indians demanded adequate representation in the street toponymy. Similarly, the need for ethnic balance in toponymy was apparent in post-independent Nairobi since the city was ethnically diverse, with most if not all, of the more than 40 ethnic tribes forming part of the city population.

## **5.3 Post-colonial politics and street toponymy in the African context**

Independent Kenya inherited a Euro-centric toponymy just like many other countries which were colonised by European countries. The founding president of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta, pushed for a complete overhaul of the toponyms, especially in Nairobi. Important streets, buildings, neighbourhoods were steadily replaced by Kenyan names during his tenure.



In a different approach in South Africa, which gained independence in 1994, a more careful method was used by Nelson Mandela, the first black president of South Africa. He promoted reconciliation and unity between the native African population and the apartheid regime. During Mandela's tenure, only a few prominent public places and natural features such as presidential residences, airports, and dams had their names changed. Many white South Africans opposed the change of names in post-apartheid South Africa. For example, G. E Turley of Port Elizabeth, South Africa, argued that city toponyms of the time symbolised a civilisation that would otherwise not have happened if the colonial agency that the new names aimed to denounce had not been in power. Turley wrote: "If it is necessary to rid this province of every last vestige of colonial rule why not demolish all the cities, towns, roads and factories built by colonialists and start afresh?" (Ndletyana 2012, p. 95). This kind of strong sentiment from the white population in South Africa showed the other side of society that was opposed to renaming. They saw this exercise as a waste of resources and others thought that such funds injected into the renaming exercise should have been focused on addressing more important development challenges such as health and unemployment.

## **5.4 Street naming and renaming processes in post-independent Nairobi**

### **5.4.1 A background to street naming and renaming exercises**

Upon gaining independence in 1963, the decolonisation process began not only by purging the 'intruders' from positions of power but also through the removal of other colonial symbols such as street names and monuments, replacing them with nationalist memorials in honour of those who fought for independence. Street names thus became representations of change in political leadership and ideology. They also acted as iconic references for restitution of justice and a means of exoneration for ostracised freedom fighters.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o, in his novel, *A Grain of Wheat*, set in the period on the verge of independence, shows one of the main characters, Gikonyo, reflecting on the changing face of Nairobi and how he begins to identify with the city:

The Uhuru Highway (formerly Princess Elizabeth), was lined on either side with columns of the new black, green and red Kenya flags coupled with flags from other African countries. For a time, Gikonyo forgot his mission to the city as his heart fluttered with the flags. He got out of the bus and walked down Kenyatta Avenue feeling for the moment as if the city belonged to him (Thiong'o 1966, p. 59).

Street name changes, as shown in this first excerpt, started to take effect at the dawn of independence. These, together with other nationalist symbols, began to shape a new identity for the city. The second excerpt shows that the African had never identified with the city of Nairobi. The social, economic and political life of the city was dominated by Indians and Europeans, as further stated by Thiong'o, Gikonyo thinks to himself, "In fact, Nairobi, unlike Kampala (Uganda) was never an African city. The Indians and Europeans controlled the commercial and the social life of the city" (Thiong'o 1966, p. 59).

#### **5.4.2 Policy and legislative factors influencing street toponymic changes**

Street naming and renaming involves not only broad ideological or cultural considerations but also administrative decision-making procedures and policies (Azaryahu 1997). This statement in part reflects the challenge that was faced by the MoLG (Ministry of Local Government) and the CCN (City Council of Nairobi) in adhering both to the street naming policy and satisfying public demands at the same time. Various authors have stressed that official street and place renaming is often opposed and resisted resulting in unevenness in how the process is carried out (Rose-Redwood 2008, Berg 2009).

In Nairobi, there was a need to create a balance between government policy and public expectation and to re-align toponymic inconsistencies from one street to another, a street and its subsidiary lane, or a street and the buildings along it. The responsibility of creating a balance between government policy and public opinion lay with the street naming subcommittee, which was created in 1964, as a section of the town planning committee of the CCN. This committee operated without a clear street naming policy until 1972 when The Annual Law for Naming and Renaming Streets and Allied Places was adopted (CCN 1972). This 8-year period (1964–1972) when naming and renaming was done without a policy, caused much confusion because the government often made decisions about street names without a proper policy justification. However, after the adoption of the law of naming and renaming streets, many street name changes happened between 1973 and 1974. Before 1973, colonial street names were the majority, at 252 names, followed by African street names at 166 and Indian names at 164 names. The number of African street names had risen due to the changes that had occurred between 1964–1973. However, after the major renaming exercise, including the proposed names, only ten colonial street names and 1 Indian street name were to be retained, whereas 582 streets would now have African names (table 8). The ten colonial street names were: Cork Lane, and Crescent, Kirk Road, Protectorate Road, Processional Way, Cross Road and Lane, Westwood

Road, Rose Avenue and Wood Road. According to the city council of Nairobi minutes, the only street name associated with the Indians that was retained is called Agha Khan Walk and is located in the CBD, it was named after The Lord Agha Khan. The name Agha Khan was also retained due to his numerous philanthropic work in Kenya and support of education and healthcare. There is currently Agha Khan Hospital, Agha Khan Primary, Secondary and University among other development projects.

The number of streets with African names after independence indicates that there might have been streets which were adopted or unnamed before, which were given African names after independence. Some of the colonial names retained such as Cross Lane and Crescent, Processional Way, Rose Avenue and Wood Road was because they did not have an apparent British colonial name connotation but sound like neutral English names. For example, Cross Lane was named after a colonial settler who owned about 18 acres of land in early colonial central Nairobi. However, the name cross could simply mean intersection, and so there was no dire need to erase it like other easily identifiable names of British settlers.

Table 8. Street name changes in post-independence Nairobi. Most of the changes occurred between 1973–1974.

Nairobi street names (Before 1973)					Nairobi street names (After 1974)				
Area	Name				Area	Name			
	Neutral	Indian	Colonial	African		Neutral	Indian	Colonial	African
Central	22	46	21	54	Central	27	1	2	123
Southern	0	35	3	15	Southern	0	0	0	53
Karen	10	0	7	28	Karen	8	0	1	37
Woodley	2	0	19	5	Woodley	1	0	0	25
Eastleigh	20	9	8	0	Eastleigh	20	0	0	17
Gikomba	0	2	14	2	Gikomba	0	0	0	18
Industrial	7	0	47	0	Industrial	7	0	0	47
Upperhill	16	2	17	14	Upperhill	17	0	2	29
Western	34	70	116	48	Western	33	0	5	233
<b>Total</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>582</b>

Source: City Council of Nairobi, minutes of meetings held by the Town Planning Committee.

Several years after independence, there was mounting pressure to fast-track the renaming of streets in Nairobi's central area. There were other requests to hasten the renaming of streets, for example in the Kileleshwa neighbourhood where many streets still had colonial names such as Cambridge Street, Lavington Road, Hurlingham Road and Kenton Drive. In response to the call for haste, the then mayor of Nairobi, Isaac Lugonzo, reiterated that all proposals for street

renaming were subject to ministerial approval in accordance with number 160(i) of the local government regulations of 1963, a process that required ample time (Daily Nation 1968). By 1976, the street toponymy of Nairobi had changed and reflected a nationalist and pan-Africanist identity. Streets such as Kenyatta Avenue, Moi Avenue, Tom Mboya Street represented nationalist leaders who were involved in the struggle for independence. However, there was a bias on the political elite and not those who were involved in the grassroots movements. The political elite who were at the national scene and later took positions of power in the post-colonial government are the ones who were represented on the urban landscape. Names such as Uhuru (freedom) and Harambee (together in unity) were a celebration of independence. Pan-Africanism was portrayed through names of other African leaders such as Kaunda (former Zambian president), Kwame Nkrumah (former Ghanaian president), Haile Selassie (Ethiopian leader) among others as well as names of other African cities such as Monrovia, Accra, and Kigali as shown in figure 25.

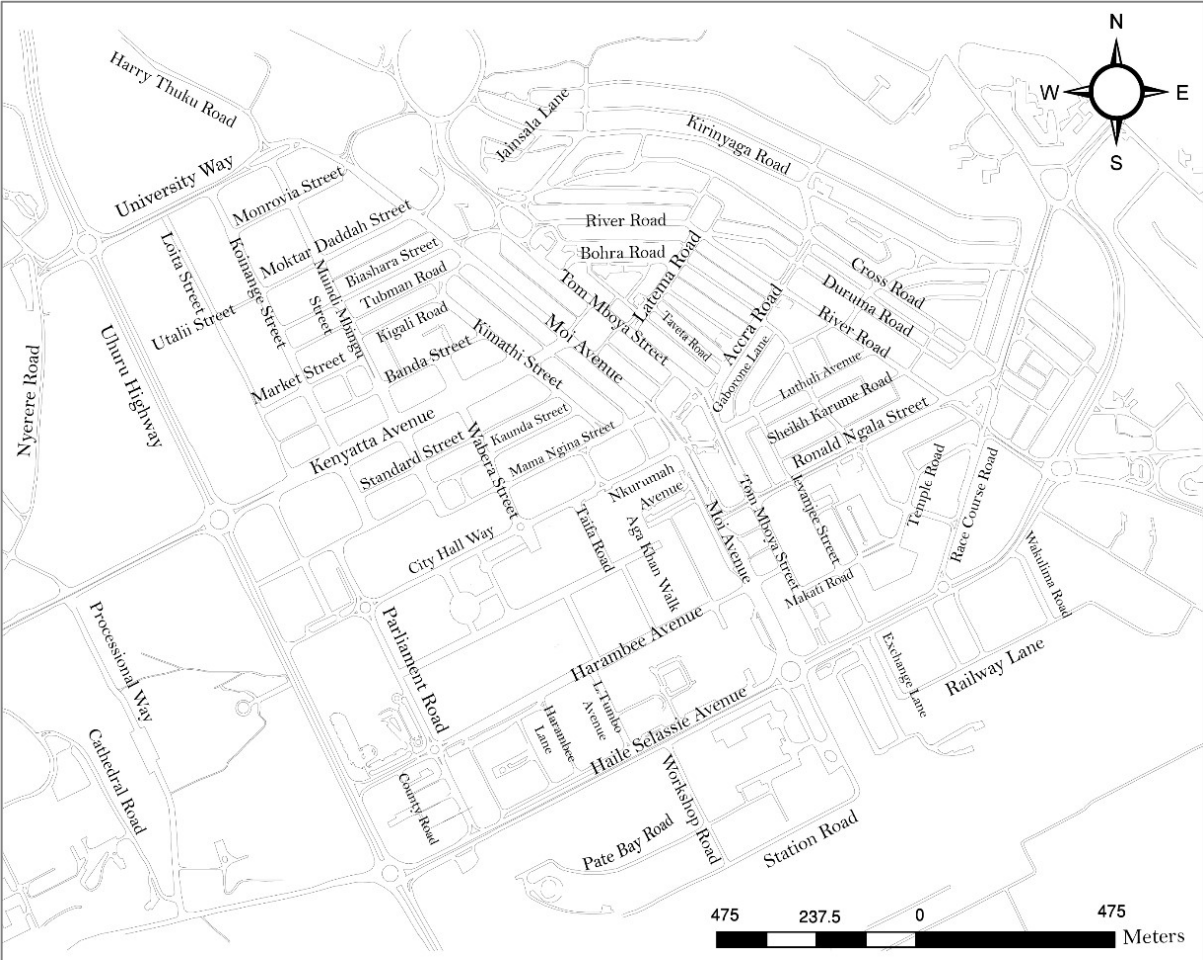


Figure 25. Street toponymy in post-independence Nairobi  
 Source: Nairobi topocadastral series, 1976

### **5.4.3 Contests between government and public on street naming and renaming**

Street renaming in post-independence Nairobi showed that the process of decolonisation was not monolithic, rather it took on an uneven meaning and impact. A poorly constructed platform for consultation between the government and the public led to more contentions than concessions, further adding on to the unevenness of the renaming process.

In Nairobi, while many wanted the colonial past forgotten, some argued for the need to retain some colonial place and street names as part of our heritage. Onek Frank, a resident of Nairobi, saw the need to retain names such as Whitehouse (chief engineer of the Uganda Railway), Delayered (settler farmer who introduced wheat to the Kenya Highlands) and Kraft (the first person to write a Swahili dictionary). According to Onek, these people made a lasting contribution to the development of Kenya (Onek 1973). However, majority of the residents as shown in the newspaper articles, wanted the names to be changed and for that to happen quickly.

The slow pace of the renaming exercise may have been a symptom of poor execution of government procedure, but it also speaks to the fact that the process of erasing a certain public memory and inscribing a new one is a time-consuming process. The council was making efforts to ensure that street name changes were consistent. This required cooperation from private developers who were often reluctant to make the changes because of the cost implications. In a letter dated May 8, 1979, the then chief planning officer at the CCN advised the owners of a residential building in the South C area to rename it in line with the street. The street which was previously Cawnpore Street had been renamed to Hodari Avenue. The letter request was made six years after the street had been renamed. It read in part: "As Cawnpore Avenue was renamed Hodari Avenue in 1973, it would be therefore advisable for you to name your flats Hodari Flats" (CCN 1979). Such renaming efforts were done by the CCN in a bid to create a consistent image for the street and the buildings along it. In another example, the CCN was requested to change the name of an already existing street (Kipipiri Road). The council denied this request citing the fact that the name of the street had already been changed from an Indian name and had been in use for five years. Hence the change would not be good for the public. This case shows that having an African street name in front of an Indian Mosque was not very desirable for the Mosque users. Hence, the letter evidences that racial prejudices had not been resolved, by the time it was written in 1977.

During a parliamentary motion entitled: "The extension of the life of the city commission," the then Assistant Minister for Tourism and Wildlife, Mr. Njuno, stated that streets which had been

renamed from colonial to African names still had buildings and lanes which bore colonial names. One example of this was Sadler Street, which had been renamed Koinange Street in 1964, but in 1986, over two decades later, still had along it, Sadler House and Sadler Lane (KHR 1986). This partial decolonisation, in his view of the city, gave it an inconsistent image, since it still had remnants of its colonial heritage, which many Kenyans did not want.

Although the process was difficult, after decolonisation, most street names now commemorate Kenyan and African freedom fighters and nationalist leaders, national events and slogans, and regional Kenyan and African cities. In the decolonisation of the urban landscape of Nairobi, street names acted among other roles as sites for justice restitution, arenas for reputational politics, spatial scales of memory, and symbols of ethnic representation.

## **5.5 The symbolic role of street names in post-colonial Nairobi**

This section looks at the specific processes that were involved in the street naming and renaming exercises. The cases selected apply critical toponymy to see the actual socio-political factors that influenced the street naming, the actors behind them and the contestations that resulted from this. Street names were found to play several symbolic roles such as sites for the restitution of justice, arenas for reputational politics, spatial scales of memory and symbols of ethnic representation and exclusion.

### **5.5.1 Street names as sites for the restitution of justice**

Nationalism was a major theme in the street renaming process. In the first major street renaming exercise, seven out of the nine street names proposed commemorated political and nationalist leaders who had steered Kenya to independence. A newspaper article entitled “Now Nairobi to have an Uhuru Highway” listed the first streets to be nominated for change (Daily Nation 1964). These were Princess Elizabeth Way to Uhuru Highway, Connaught Road to Parliament Road, Coronation Avenue to Harambee Avenue, Hardinge Street to Kimathi Street, Sadler Street to Koinange Street, Kingsway to University Way, Stewart Street to Muindi Mbingu Street, Elliot Street to Wabera Street and General Smuts Avenue to Lt. Tumbo Avenue. In addition, during this time, there was a wave of Pan-Africanism, since many African countries had just gained, or were on the verge of gaining independence. Consequently, several streets in the central area of Nairobi were renamed after important African leaders of the time. Among these were Haile Selassie (Ethiopian emperor), Nyerere (Tanzanian president), Kaunda (Zambian president), and the great pan-Africanist Nkrumah (Ghanaian president). Streets were also named after African cities such as Gaborone in Botswana, Accra, and Kumasi in Ghana, and Lagos in Nigeria, to

give Nairobi a strong African identity. Underlying the notion of nationalism was restitution for those who suffered injustice under the colonial government necessitating the commemoration of many political elites as exemplified by the case of Harry Thuku. Restitution as a concept can be likened to what other authors have referred to as symbolic reparation or transformation. The notion of street names as a means of “symbolic reparation” was put forward by Swart, who investigated the role of commemorative street naming in Post-World War II Germany and post-apartheid South Africa. She states that street names can function as a means by which the victims of repression and discrimination can reclaim dignity and identity (Swart 2008). “Symbolic transformation,” on the other hand, was a phrase coined by James Duminy in his analysis of the renaming of places in Durban, South Africa. Symbolic transformation, according to Duminy, provided a platform for the redress of painful memories of racial exclusion as well as the representation of new visions of South African history and culture (Duminy 2014, p. 311). Similarly, street name changes in post-colonial Nairobi were a means for symbolic reparation and transformation, to reclaim the dignity and identity of those who fought for independence and represent new visions for the newly independent nation.

The case of renaming College Road to Harry Thuku provides an example of restitution of justice through street renaming. College Road, which cut through the Royal Technical College (now Nairobi University), was renamed after Harry Thuku on July 4, 1972. Thuku was one of Kenya’s pioneer politicians in the fight for independence. He was also one of the founders of the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA), a pioneer African political party formed in 1920 (Daily Nation 1973).

Thuku was arrested on March 14, 1922, for protesting the use of forced African labour. The day following his arrest, many protestors came to the Central Police Station located along the then College Road and about fifty of the protestors, who were also KCA supporters, were arrested. Thuku was released from detention in 1930. The renaming not only represented an attempt to restore justice for the wrongful arrest and unjust detention of Harry Thuku, but also for all the people who were arrested or killed while protesting. After his release, he joined up with other young people in Pangani area where he was living in the 1920’s to form the East African Association (EAA). It was named as such to give it a more international face since it included members from Tanganyika and Uganda who also resided in Pangani (King 1971).

### 5.5.2 Street names as arenas for reputational politics

Reputational politics as the way in which “reputations of historical figures are often debated on the landscape through material culture, transforming the landscape into a dialogue and a process of cultural means and meaning” (Post 2009, p. 93). Beneath the hype of commemorating nationalist leaders, some groups which were directly involved in the struggle for independence, seemed to be forgotten, as most attention was given to the elite political leaders.

The Kenya Land and Freedom Army, known colloquially as the Mau Mau, was led by Field Marshall Dedan Kimathi. The movement’s role in the fight for independence has been highly debated over the years. The Mau Mau uprising was instigated by the shooting of senior chief Waruhiu on October 9, 1952 (Tsuda 2012). It was then that Sir Evelyn Baring, the then Governor of the Kenya Colony, declared a state of emergency. By 1957, the Mau Mau groupings were largely defeated, and in 1959 the colonial government lifted the state of emergency. Owing to the approaches they used to resist the colonial regime, the Mau Mau were branded terrorists both before and after independence. As noted by Furley, “Mau Mau was presented by the colonial government as pure gangsterism and terrorism; at no time was it acknowledged to be a rebellion.” For instance, in a British parliamentary debate, Alan Lennox Boyd, Secretary of State for the colonies from 1954, is quoted as saying “Mau Mau is a conspiracy based on the total perversion of the human spirit by means of the power of the oath, by witchcraft and intimidation.” He added that the aims of Mau Mau were “twisted” but did not elaborate on what those aims were (Furley 1972, p. 110). Anderson in his book *Histories of the Hanged*, states that in actuality, these were grievances about stolen lands, and calls for wage improvement and political equality for the African with the Europeans and Asians (Anderson 2005).

Soon after independence, the memory of the Mau Mau as freedom fighters started to be suppressed. The first President of Kenya, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, in his book, *Suffering without bitterness: the founding of the Kenya Nation* stated that “the Mau Mau was a disease that had been eradicated and must never be remembered again” (Kenyatta 1968). Thus, the Mau Mau freedom fighters remained uncelebrated. This alienation was a reverse symbolic resistance by the post-colonial government aimed at silencing the Mau Mau. As boldly suggested by Ngugi Wa Thiong’o in his book *Barrel of a pen: resistance to repression in neo-colonial Kenya*, the government resisted the Mau Mau because of the influence they thought it would yield in the new era. In addition, he referred to the elite leaders in the post-colonial government as “betrayers who concealed compromise under nationalist slogans” (Thiong’o 1983). Thiong’o



asserts that the post-colonial government was a neo-colonial agency which acted as a continuum of colonial repression, and side-lined the real freedom fighters. The Mau Mau represented violence that perhaps the post-colonial government wanted to bury and leave behind. The desire to suppress memory was typical in many African nations at that time. Ngugi further goes on to protest the celebration of some leaders instead of the whole movement that led the country to freedom. He further quips in his book:

Kenya day or Mau Mau Fighters Day! What's in a name? Everything, especially if it has to do with the past, that is, with history. How we look at our yesterday has important bearings on how we look at today and on how we see possibilities for tomorrow. The sort of past we look back to for inspiration in our struggles affects the vision of the future we want to build. What heroes or heroines do we identify with?...Kimathi or Kenyatta? Peoples leaders or colonial chiefs? Patriots or loyalists? Mau Mau fighters or Homeguards? (Thiong'o 1983, p. 8)

The Mau Mau had not only been forgotten by not being memorialised publicly, but they also suffered political and economic alienation especially by losing their land, which ironically, they fought to obtain from the colonial government but ended up losing to the independent government (Coombes 2011). In his book, Thiong'o contrasts various individuals depending on the role they played in the fight for freedom and points to how a nation's memories of the past affect its visions for the future. It is interesting that he chooses to contrast Kenyatta and Kimathi, whereas a superficial look at the anti-colonial movement in Kenya would assume that these two men were on the same side. But as has been discussed earlier in this chapter, though the Mau Mau are considered to have played the biggest role in the fight for independence, they were vilified after independence had been attained. Thiong'o states that the people who were recognised did not deserve it, that is the colonial chiefs, loyalists and home guards. These made their way into government, were celebrated after independence and even got recognised on the urban landscape of Nairobi.

The Mau Mau legacy is debated because of some of the unlawful activities they engaged in in the quest for independence. One of the events that is most controversial is the Lari Massacre which occurred on March 26, 1953. The Lari Massacre happened in a small village in what is now known as Kiambu County, in the central part of Kenya. The Mau Mau unleashed terror on the family of a colonial chief who opposed the Mau Mau and killed 13 people in one homestead, before embarking on a killing spree that left a little less than 200 people dead. In retaliation, the colonial government killed around 5,000 people who were thought to be Mau Mau supporters. It is the initial attack by the Mau Mau among other things that led to them being viewed as a

terrorist group. The Lari Massacre itself is debated, with some saying that it is not the Mau Mau attack but rather the retaliatory attack by the colonial government which was the actual massacre, even by merely comparing the number of people that were killed (Daily Nation 2011).

The word Mau Mau was later adopted into the English language with the Oxford dictionary defining it as,

An African secret society originating from among the Kikuyu that in the 1950's used violence and *terror* to try and expel European settlers and end British rule in Kenya. The British eventually subdued the organisation but went on to institute political and social reforms which led to Kenya's independence in 1963.

Merriam Webster dictionary defines the word as: “to intimidate; or to make timid or fearful or by or as if by threats.” The adoption of the Mau Mau word into the English language and the meaning attached to it goes on to show how hard the struggle is for the veteran Mau Mau freedom fighters to repudiate the negative image they have been given especially by the west. The Mau Mau have in the past attempted to reject the name Mau Mau itself as is seen in one of the articles published by Kimathi, their leader. It says in part: “we reject to be called Mau Mau. We are Kenya Land Freedom Army (KLFA)” (Thiong’o 1983, p. 12).



Figure 26. Dedan Kimathi's statue located along Kimathi Street in central Nairobi

Source: Field survey by author, 2016

The suppressed memory took a different turn when President Kibaki, who took power in 2002, revoked the 30-year ban which had been imposed on them. This culminated in the installment and unveiling of a Kimathi Statue along Kimathi Street in 2007, 50 years after Kimathi's death as a way to reinstate the reputation of the Mau Mau. In his address, President Mwai Kibaki said that the monument was to honour a great man who sacrificed his life for the liberation of Kenya and inspired others to fight against colonial oppression (Wangui 2007). The Kimathi statue along Kimathi Street (figure 26) is seen as the official monument to memorialise the Mau Mau rebellion which had been previously subdued through amnesia endorsed by the government (Larsen 2012).

### **5.5.3 Street names as spatial scales of memory: A case of Tom Mboya Street**

Spatial scaling of memory is defined as 'a socially contested process of determining the geographic extent at which a leader or an event in history should be memorialised.' Derek Alderman has carried out extensive studies on street naming after Martin Luther King (MLK) in the United States. The question he asks and which often is asked by African Americans when looking at streets named after MLK is: "is this street fit for a King?" He focuses on contestations between the African American community, white community, and local authorities. The debates revolved around the size of the named street, the degree or level of prominence within a given hierarchy of roads, and the degree to which the street transcended the spatial confines of the black community. The fitness in the question mentioned earlier refers its suitability to carry the name of a "King" (Alderman 2003, p. 167). Scholars have increasingly become concerned about how geographic scale is constructed and reconstructed through social practice and political struggle. One dimension has been the study on the scaling of public memory as an exercise of power over space (Alderman and Inwood 2013). This section exemplifies the case of Tom Mboya, and how the public contested with the government to control the street scale at which he would be memorialised. It became one of the most controversial street re-namings in post-colonial Nairobi.

Tom Mboya is known to have been a bright and pragmatic nationalist leader in post-colonial Kenya. He was tributed with the localisation of Kenya's agricultural sector, commerce, and industry at a pace that was consistent with growth in the 1960's. Mboya was also the co-founder of the African-American Students Foundation (AASF) in 1959, which raised money to subsidise the cost of flights for East African students to study in America. There were 230 beneficiaries including 2004 Nobel Peace Laureate — Prof Wangari Maathai and Barack

Obama — father to United States President Barack Obama. He published his first book, *Freedom and after* in 1963 and was in the process of releasing his second book, *The Challenge of Nationhood: Speeches and Writings*, before his sudden death on July 5, 1969, when he was assassinated along Government Road in Nairobi’s central business district (CBD).

After his assassination, an extensive debate ensued regarding how best to pay tribute to the nationalist leader. It was agreed that a street would be named in his honour, the problem, however, was determining what street was befitting for a man of his stature. The selection of a fitting street to name after the young leader, would not only commemorate him, but would also place importance on the causes which he fought for including: education for the youth; worker’s rights; and his service to all Kenyans as a government minister.

In a letter to the editor of the Daily Nation entitled “Many ways to honour Mboya’s memory,” Jaffer, a resident of Mombasa proposed the renaming of Government Road to Mboya Avenue. He also proposed that Kilindini Road in Mombasa, as well as one street in each town in the country, be named after Mboya (Daily Nation 1969).

Tom Mboya was so popular that a resident of Mombasa Mohamed Nazir, dedicated a poem to his honour in the same paper entitled “Thy name will live on” (Daily Nation 1969c). It read in part:

Death, the leveller, seized you early Tom,  
But who believes thou art gone?  
They’ve hewn you down but physically,  
So where’s the reason to mourn?

Thy name will live and linger on,  
In the hearts, thou has left behind,  
That death itself will knuckle under and exclaim:  
“What manner of man, what kind!”

The memorialisation of Tom Mboya was a matter of national interest and thus was debated in the media and parliament. There was increasing speculation in the press about the CCN’s stance on the renaming.

#### **5.5.3.1 Option 1: Government Road**

The Town Planning Committee of the CCN had also proposed the renaming of Government Road to Mboya Road and had forwarded the proposal for the ministers’ approval (Daily Nation 1969b). However, the renaming was never approved (Daily Nation 1970).

In a parliamentary debate question entitled “Change of name of Government Road to Tom Mboya Road,” a member of parliament (MP), Mr. Mbori posed a question to the Minister for Local Government, Dr. Kiano, on whether Government Road would be renamed after Mboya. The minister in his reply said that the main aim of local authorities in renaming streets was to remove names that were reminiscent of the colonial era and substitute them with national names. He stated that it was not appropriate to replace the name Government Road because it symbolised the government of Kenya. To counter the minister’s response, Mr. Mutiso another M.P, stated that since the name Government Road had been installed during the colonial period, the name signified the colonial government and not the independent government. The observation concerning the time when Government Road was named, was crucial because it highlighted that the period of naming is of symbolic importance and that this affects how people perceive a name.

On the other hand, Mr. Mbori who had earlier raised the question alleged that Government Road was being reserved for some future renaming, implying hidden political interests. He is quoted asking: “Mr. Speaker Sir, would the minister (referring to then Minister of Local Government Dr. Kiano) deny that the name of Government Road is reserved for some future naming?” (KHR 1970, p. 747).

As seen in Mr. Mbori’s question in the excerpt above, it is difficult to ignore the apparent political interests that affect the scale to which an individual is commemorated. All efforts by the public and members of parliament to have Government Road named after Tom Mboya proved futile and the name Tom Mboya was eventually given to the less prestigious Victoria Street. Later in 1978, in what may seem to be Mr. Mbori’s prediction coming true, Government Road was renamed Moi Avenue after Daniel Arap Moi became the second President of Kenya (Daily Nation 1978). It is not clear the circumstances that allowed for government road to be named after President Moi, but it was the first in what would be a long series of renamings after the second president. Many primary and secondary schools and even one public university were named after him after he ascended into office.

### ***5.5.3.2 Option 2: Victoria Street***

Although many people preferred Government Road to be renamed after Tom Mboya, some could see sense in having the former Victoria Street named after him. A letter to the editor of Daily Nation newspaper, alluding to most of the sentiments on renaming Government Road after Tom Mboya, stated:

Our wish and expectation was that government road along which the tragic incident occurred, would be named Tom Mboya Road-to remind us of the tragic end of that Kenyan hero. I am surprised to learn that Victoria Street which had nothing at all to do with the late minister, is named after him (Onyango 1969, p. 6)

In response, another Nairobi resident, V.N Ludindi objected heavily especially to the claim that Victoria Street had nothing to do with Tom Mboya, showing that there were different opinions from Nairobi residents on which street was best fit to memorialise Tom Mboya. He stated in his letter which he titled “it had just everything to do with him”:

It would appear the only reason he (Abdul) feels Government Road should have been named after the late minister is the fact that he was assassinated there....but if our formula for naming streets will always be the place where one meets a fatal accident, we may have to change the names so often.....if the idea of naming a street after a person is meant to be a tribute to him for what he has done for the community, then my feelings are that Victoria Street was the best street to be named after the late Mboya.....those who remember the early days of his political and trade union fame, surely know where the famous Alvi House stands. Victoria Street was the place where Tom Mboya was looked upon as the “messiah” by many a-would be students wishing to go to American universities. He fought colonialism with all his might, while his office was then standing on a street with a colonial name (Ludindi 1969, p. 6).

The two excerpts show the different ways in which people sought to remember Tom Mboya. On the one hand, the ‘site of life’ and on the other hand the ‘site of assassination.’ This is also interesting to consider in the case of Mboya, what people choose to remember fallen heroes for, is how and where they lived or how they died. This argument, is, however, not as simple, because the people who contended to have Government Road named after Mboya, was not just because of the place where he died but the reason he was killed. It appears that memorialising Tom Mboya in the place he died would make people remember what he lived for since it is for this reason that he died. The assassination was attributed to political enmity due to his fast ascendancy to a position of influence and power. At some point, there was talk that he was being groomed to succeed Jomo Kenyatta to be the second president of Kenya, a move that did not go well with other politicians especially those who were eyeing the same position.

### ***5.5.3.3 Option 3: St. Austins Road or Njenga Road***

St. Austin’s Road, going through Lavington Estate, is the street on which Tom Mboya lived, was also suggested as an alternative when attempts to have Government Road named after him had failed. However, this also failed because the street was seen to be too peripheral for Mboya’s name (EAS 1969). Another public objection came via a letter to the editor of the Daily

Nation newspaper. In his letter, Omukune suggested that Njenga Road in Kaloleni Estate, bear the name instead of St. Austin's Road. It read in part:

On behalf of Kenyans and Nairobi residents, I would request the City Council of Nairobi to consider changing Njenga Road at Kaloleni Estate to Tom Mboya Road. This, I believe, will be in the interest of the wananchi because this street will be seen by more people than the proposed St. Austin's Road (Omukune 1969).

In the end, neither St. Austin's Road nor Njenga Road were renamed after Tom Mboya. St. Austin's Road was renamed James Gichuru Road, after a Finance Minister in the post-colonial government. On the other hand, the suggestion to have Njenga Road named after Tom Mboya received little consideration. It was Victoria Street which was bestowed with the honour of immortalizing Tom Mboya as shown in figure 27. It was here that he had an office for the African-American Students Foundation (AASF). According to one Nairobi resident, V.N Ludindi, "Victoria Street was where Tom Mboya was looked upon as the Messiah by many would-be students wishing to go to American universities" (Ludindi 1969, p. 6). The case of Tom Mboya shows that the link between the geographical scale of a street and the political power of the person being commemorated (Azaryahu 1996).

The ability of place names to "reconstitute the scalar delimitation of geographical spaces" has been highlighted by (Tucker and Rose-Redwood 2015, p. 3), in their account of how the naming of the Salish Sea was an example of toponymic rescaling. The term Salish is used to refer to indigenous language groups in North America, and naming the Sea as such was a political statement with neo-political connotations since it is primarily a Western term for the indigenous peoples some of who do not identify with the name. However, the name turned a seemingly amorphous water body into a scalable geographical unit known as the Salish Sea. A study of street naming after Martin Luther King (MLK) in the United States, suggests that 'politics of scale' highly influenced the process the renaming of streets after MLK (Alderman 2003)The contests that arose over the 'scale of memorialisation' of Tom Mboya, were quite similar to those of MLK. Tom Mboya's supporters felt short-changed when the government refused to rename the street where he was assassinated after him, just like the African American community often protested when a peripheral street or one with a bad reputation was renamed after MLK instead of a prominent and reputable street. In the case of Nairobi, when the government failed to rename government Road after Tom Mboya. Unlike the case of MLK, where these contestations were not necessarily occurring on the street where he lived, worked or died, this was the case for Tom Mboya. The contests relating to the spatial scaling of Mboya's

memory were related to memorialising his death or what he died for (the more popular notion), his life — where he lived and worked (the less popular notion). The former supported Government Road, but the latter, Victoria, St. Austins and Njenga Road, with Victoria being the most popular among the latter three.

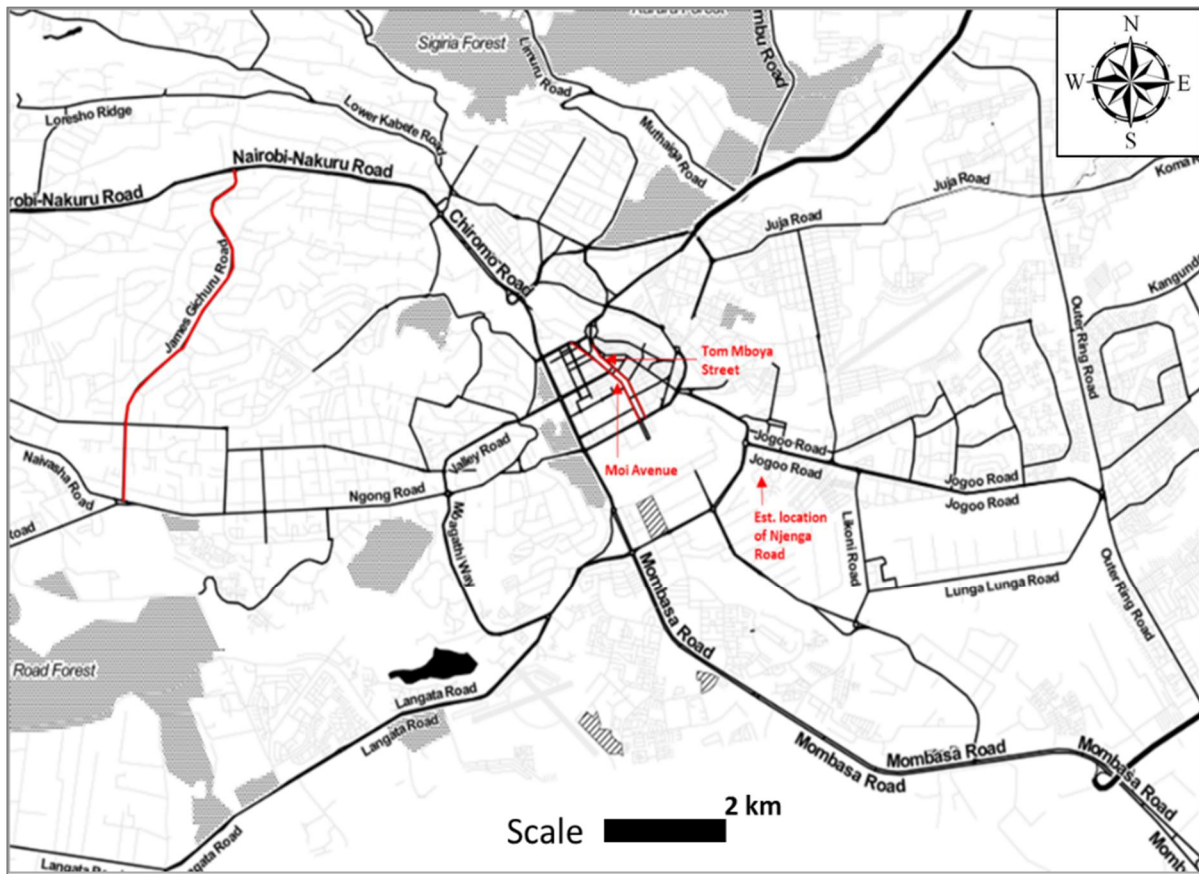


Figure 27. The location of Moi Avenue and Tom Mboya Street (CBD) and James Gichuru Road in Lavington Estate.

Source: <http://mapstack.stamen.com/edit.html>

Defining scale as it relates to a street includes three facets: size, level and relation within a set hierarchical structure in the urban landscape. Size refers to the length and width of a street. The size of a street can then be translated into the number of residences or businesses which bear the name of the person or event commemorated. Level refers to a streets' prominence/centrality within the road hierarchy (Howitt 1998). In many cases, there is a positive relationship between the strategic importance (level) of a street and the person or event they are named after (Azaryahu 1996). The third facet (relation), refers to how a street name creates association or linkages between different people and places in the city which would otherwise have been disconnected.



A street which transcends real or perceived political, ethnic or socio-economic boundaries can connect actors who may not identify with the event or person being commemorated with those who do. To add to Azaryahu's concept of relation, the relationship the street could have had with an event, cause, activity or even residence of a person can influence its renaming.

St. Austin's Road and Njenga Road were in Lavington and Kaloleni Estates respectively and had a 'personal' relation to Mboya, as he lived in both estates. However, this could not suffice as a reason to rename the streets after him, because Mboya's leadership was at a greater level — national and international and not neighbourhood level. Government Road scored on all three facets: level, size, and relation. The road is relatively long and wide, it is centrally located in Nairobi CBD, and Tom Mboya was killed along it. These three reasons made it a reasonable choice. Victoria Street on the other hand, among the four streets, qualified in all the three facets but came second to Government Road, because it is smaller (shorter and narrower) compared to Government Road. The case of Tom Mboya exemplifies the struggle faced when naming or renaming a street and how, the scale at which to memorialise a person adds to that struggle.

Though it was not the people's choice as a memory site for Tom Mboya, the former Victoria Street has come to embody "the spirit of Tom Mboya." This is because of its vibrancy, and pragmatism ranging from the bustling traffic to the wide range of businesses along the street. There are many supermarkets, fast food enterprises, clothing shops and offices.

Tom Mboya Street has been characterised as being the "dividing line" between the city's Central Business District and the "Third World" (Daily Nation 1988a, p. 11). However, it may be more appropriate to see Tom Mboya Street as a linking rather than a dividing line between the CBD (good part) and Third World (bad part) of the central area of Nairobi. This is because Tom Mboya himself, despite being highly educated, was a representative of the common and poor people especially through his involvement in the labour rights movement. In what may seem as a bridge between what would have been and what is now Tom Mboya Street, a monument of the late Tom Mboya was erected between Moi Avenue and Tom Mboya Street. Another poem written to liken Mboya's character to the street he was named after, indicates that it may have been the best choice after all.

The poem titled: It's no wonder it is named after him, partly reads:

It's no wonder it's named after him,  
It cuts the city at the center, the center of the active city,  
Between the high-class streets and the ordinary ones,

Just like him.

Highly learned he was, stood between the high-class and the oppressed poor,  
It's no wonder it's named after him,

It bears more stages than any other street in the city,  
It is the street of travelers,  
Just like him.

Kampala in the morning, Dar es Salaam in the afternoon,  
Next day in London, the week after with Kennedy, in New York City,  
It's no wonder it's named after him.

It has 19 open air bookshops,  
Unique it is, unlike any other street, Academic Street,  
Just like him.  
Makerere graduates can tell,  
The value of his wit,  
It's no wonder it's named after him. (Daily Nation 1988b, p. 12)

As in the case of Kimathi Street, a statue of Tom Mboya was installed to commemorate him, in addition to the street name. However, in the case of Tom Mboya, this statue was installed in between the two streets — Moi Avenue and Tom Mboya Street. The two were the reason for the heavy contests regarding renaming a street after Tom Mboya, with many preferring that the former Government Road be renamed after him. The location of the statue is a middle point between the two streets.

#### **5.5.4 Street names as symbols of ethnic representation and exclusion**

Ethnicity, as applied to Africa, refers to a group of people sharing a common ancestry, language, symbol, and territory. It comes from combined memories and visions for the future (Tarimo 2008). According to Mbiti, ethnic identity in Africa, be it in rural or urban areas, remains a powerful force, though it changes from time to time depending on the prevailing political situation (Mbiti 1969).

A major challenge of the decolonisation process was to ensure equitable representation of the more than 42 ethnic communities and to ensure that the street toponymy echoed the multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi-cultural nature of the Kenyan society. To highlight the

dynamics surrounding street toponymy and ethnic representation, we will discuss three cases showing the issues surrounding ethnic representation in street toponymy. The first is the view that the naming of streets was biased towards the Kikuyu (the largest community in Kenya), the second the erasure of Indian street names, and the third is on naming streets after the marginalised Nubian community who reside mainly in the informal settlement of Kibera.

#### ***5.5.4.1 Street naming and the Kikuyu political elite***

The first street renaming exercise was for major streets in Nairobi's central area. These streets were renamed after the political elite, a good number of whom came from the Kikuyu community. Some of the new streets named after Kikuyu leaders were: Kenyatta Avenue, Koinange Street, Kimathi Street and Harry Thuku Road. There seemed to be an ethnic over-representation of the Kikuyu over other communities in the street names. In a parliamentary question number 1113 entitled: 'Colonial names of Nairobi Streets,' asked in the national assembly on December 8, 1970, MP Mr. Barmalel asked how the MoLG would ensure that future street names would represent all ethnic groups in the country. The assistant minister, Mr. Munoko, replied that their criteria for selecting street names were mainly based on suggestions from the public. These suggestions were then analysed by the street naming sub-committee of the CCN to ensure consistency and equitable representation, after which they would be forwarded to the minister for approval. He denied the claim that the street names were biased according to tribes (KHR 1970b, p. 2779 ).

#### ***5.5.4.2 Erasing the Indian street toponymy***

The presence of Indian street names during the colonial period suggests that the racial and ethnic politics of naming were not just white and black. During that time, Indians were regarded by the British, as higher than Africans. They were good at entrepreneurship and were considered great contributors to the city's development compared to the Africans. Preston in his book *Oriental Nairobi* looks at the role played by Indians in Nairobi. He says the following about Jevanjee, a pioneer Indian businessman in Nairobi.

The name Jevanjee is inseparable from the history of Nairobi, and the part played by the members of his family is truly astounding. Messrs A.M. Jevanjee and Co. were very closely associated with the building of the Uganda Railway, when they acted as general contractors for the supply of foodstuff for the workmen, as also other materials necessary in the building of the Railway (Preston 1938, p. 46).

Politically, Indians had more representation in the local government compared to the Africans. Hence, Africans had always viewed Indians as part of the colonial regime and accomplices to

the colonial government in taking away their land, freedom, and opportunities (Olima 2001). While many Indians migrated to the UK and India after independence, a good number remained in Kenya.

There was a mass erasure of Indian street names after independence, and in their place, African names were inscribed. This functioned to alienate the Indians and minimise their significance on space. In 1973, streets bearing Indian names in Nairobi's South C area were replaced with African names. However, many Indians continued to reside there. Among the names changed were Jamnagar Avenue to Idado Avenue, Hoshiapur Road to Mukarati Road, and Almagir Avenue to Muhuti Avenue (CCN 1973). Later, all Indian street names in the Western Area of the city were replaced (CCN 1973a), and then streets bearing Indian names in the central area of Nairobi were replaced except for Aga Khan Walk (CCN 1973b).

#### ***5.5.4.3 Nubian street names in Kibera: A disguise for social injustices?***

The challenge of ethnic representation in street toponymy was also exemplified by the renaming of streets after leaders of Kenyan Sudanese (Nubian) community of Kibera. Nubians, originally from South Sudan, served as soldiers for the British in the Kenya African Rifles (KAR) (Parsons 1997). After independence, perhaps because of their association with the British, Nubians were denied citizenship and the right to land ownership in Kibera area where they lived. It was not until 2009, during the national census, that the Nubians were recognised as a legitimate community in Kenya (Chrimes 2011).

However, the recognition of Nubians as one of the communities in Kenya did not reflect the actual treatment they received from the government, pertaining to basic rights of citizenship and land ownership. The Nubian Council of Elders (NCE), claimed that the land occupied by estates neighbouring Kibera, including the Kibera Government Housing Scheme, belonged to the Nubians, having been allocated to them by the colonial government for their service in the KAR. This land was later taken from them by the post-colonial Government with no compensation. Currently, their total land, which had previously occupied 4,198 acres has been reduced to 700 acres, the rest having been taken over by the government and other private developers (NCE 2015). The NCE mentioned that despite the promise given by the government that they would get compensation from the estate constructions by being allocated houses in the new estates, the elders say that they received less than 20 houses from all the estate constructions.

In an even more ironic move, the CCN gave Nubian names to streets in estates neighbouring the Kibera informal settlement. The street renaming subcommittee minutes for the meeting held on March 30, 1971, show that ten street names were suggested for the Kibera Government Housing Scheme. These were: Ihura Road, Toi Road, Kambui Road, Sarangombe Road, Chief Sulleman Road, Lemule Road, Apollo Road, Kambi Muru Road, Lain Shaba Road and Adhola Marongo Road. Except for Ihura and Kambui Road, all the other names are of Nubian origin (CCN 1971).

This case illustrates the potential for names to be used as disguises for social and political injustices. The recognition of the Nubian Community through street names was superficial because the real issues they wanted to be addressed, were largely ignored. However, this naming indicates that the government considered the place names originally given by the Nubian minority group as well as their leaders since they were the original occupants of the land. The place naming process may act as an arena whereby the cultural, political and legal rights of minority groups are debated (Alderman and Inwood 2013). These debates serve to reshape the identity of urban places and the corporate identity of cities and nations.

### **5.6 Current state of street names in Nairobi**

A sample was taken to show the current state of street names in Nairobi. It was not possible to use all the street names in Nairobi because they are not verified, and many streets remained unnamed. UREPI which at the time this data was collected was collecting all the street names and preparing a comprehensive map of street names in Nairobi. As mentioned earlier, the only street name policy for Nairobi had been prepared in 1972 by the City Council of Nairobi, but little to no updating has been done since then. Different themes of naming, i.e., commemorative, alphabetical or numerical in different areas, and which still follow the colonial template causes toponymic ambiguity in the city (figures 28, 29 and 30). The ambiguity was caused by a lack of logical integration between the different toponymic zones in the city.

According to Bigon and Njoh (2015), the problems of toponymic inscriptions in SSA cities can be categorised into three. The first is the failure of municipal authorities to prioritise toponymy, thus rendering many of the cities non-descript. The second is the toponymic ambiguity which is rooted in colonial occupation. Bigon and Njoh assert that during the colonial period, place naming reflected the racial hierarchical structure and spatial segregation created by the Europeans. After independence, this segregation was not eliminated, rather, it was transformed from racial to socio-economic segregation. Third, they suggest that lack of toponymic clarity is

a result of power struggles over space since the colonial period up to the present.. The problem of toponymy in Nairobi in many ways resonates with the three toponymic challenges highlighted by the two scholars.

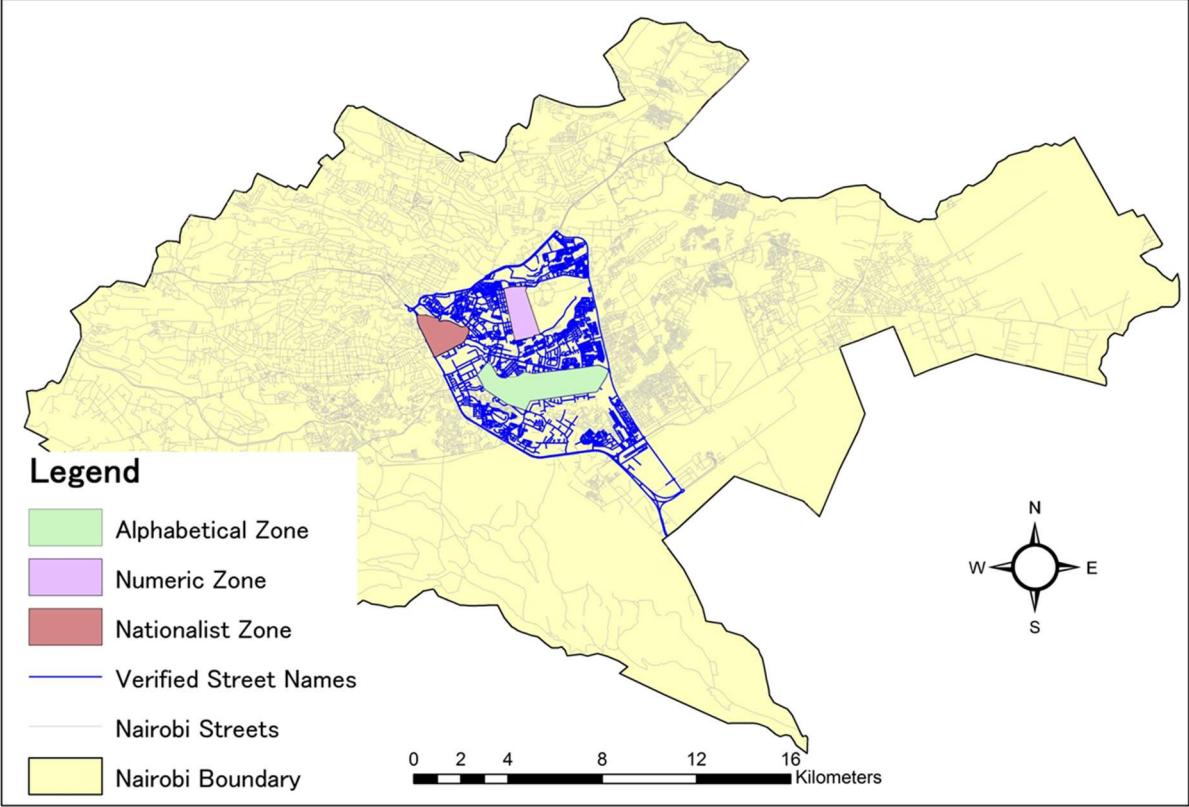


Figure 28. A sample of street names taken from the Nairobi city map. nationalist, alphabetical and numerical zone.

Source: UREPI, 2015

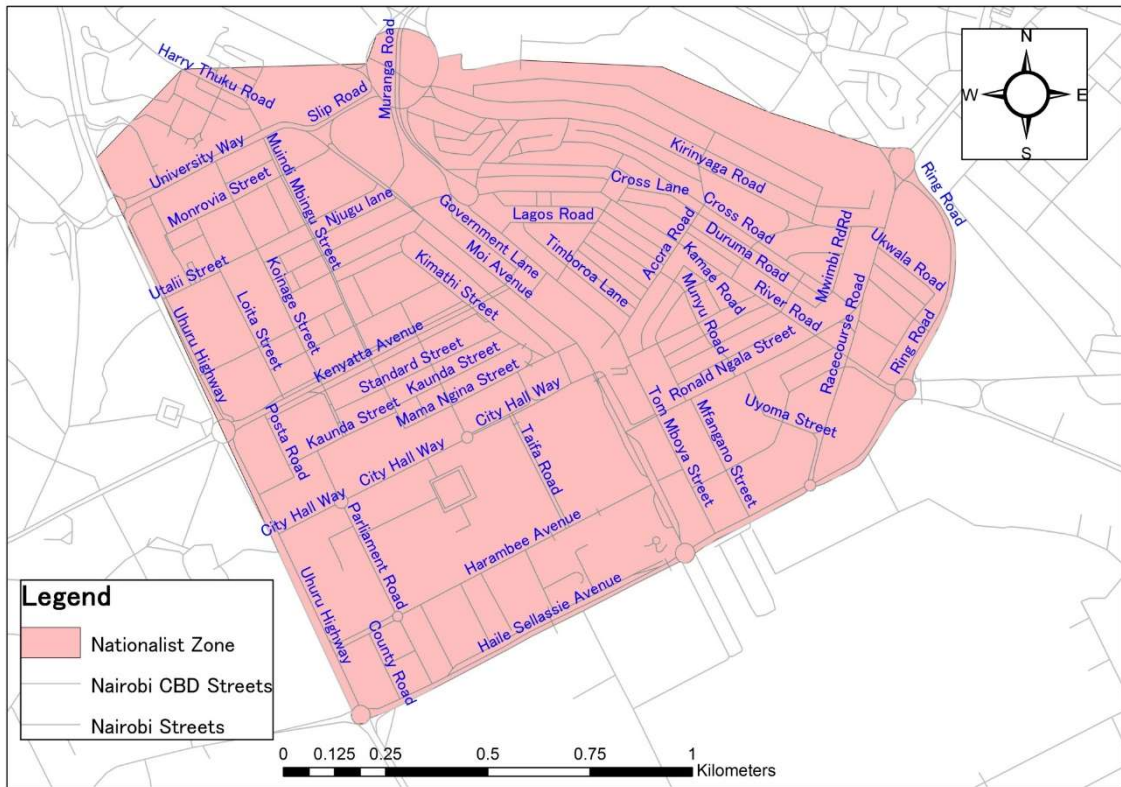


Figure 29. Nationalist street name zone in Nairobi (The Central Business District)  
Source: UREPI, 2015

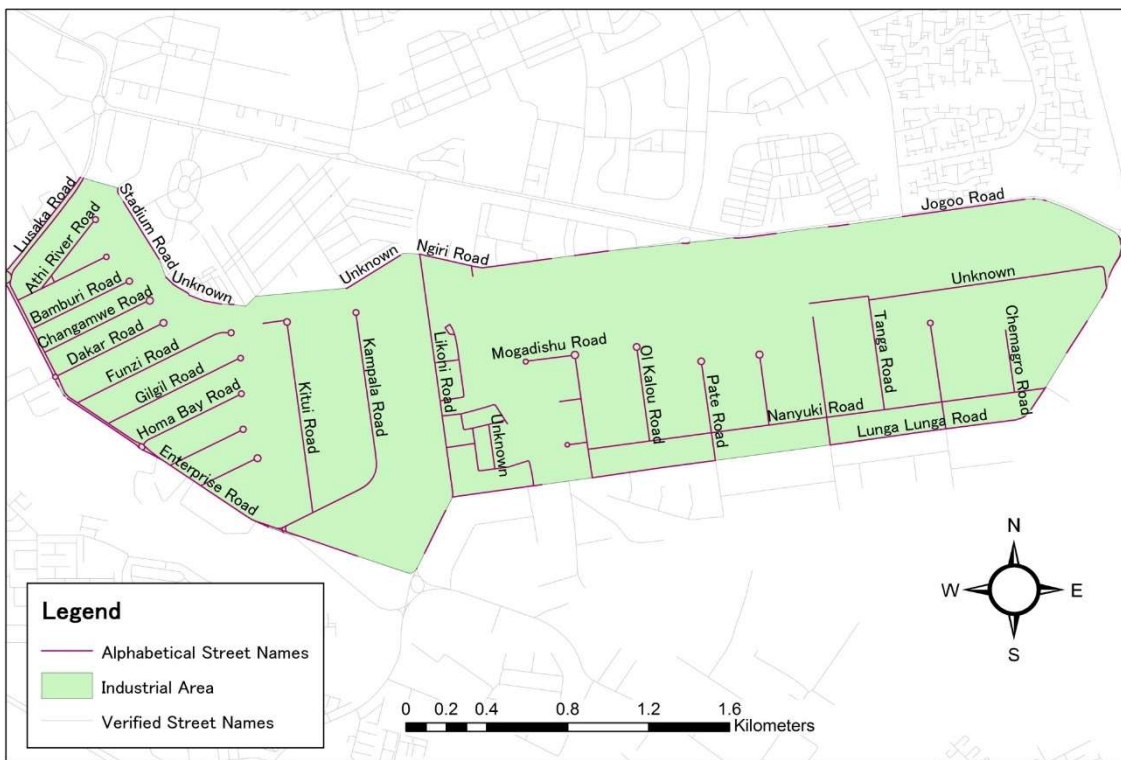


Figure 30. Alphabetical street name zone in Nairobi (Industrial Area)  
Source: UREPI, 2015

## 5.7 Chapter discussion

Street naming and renaming in post-independence Nairobi indicates that toponymy can and does create opportunities for engaging with and responding to the decisions of those in power, remembering and forgetting events and people in history, and rearticulating values in pursuit of both political or nationalistic interest (Adebanwi 2012). As indicated in this and other scholarly works on street toponymy, research on street naming should be attentive to power relations, highlighting the complexities and dynamics behind naming practices especially after major political transitions.

Change in the street toponymy of Nairobi and other urban areas in Kenya was inevitable in the bid to Africanise and nationalise the landscape after independence. This process was challenging especially because there were inconsistencies and unevenness caused by the diverse social, political and administrative interests that needed to be accommodated. Consolidating all these interests into the street toponymy of Nairobi was an enormous task for the new government. It was imperative to secure a balance between government policy and public opinion and to ensure proper representation in the street toponymy as a way of promoting national unity.

The novel findings of this chapter are mostly regarding the performative role played by street toponymy in decolonising the urban landscape of Nairobi. The term performative points to the fact that streets were metaphorical sites where actions of decolonisation took place. A critical toponymic analysis of the processes involved revealed some interesting concepts from the Nairobi as outlined below.

In the case of street names functioning as sites for justice restitution, Harry Thuku Road provided a good case study. The former College Road was renamed to Harry Thuku Road. On this street, Central Police Station where Harry Thuku was arrested is located. The renaming represents a kind of justice restitution for a specific wrong action against an individual, i.e., the wrongful arrest of Thuku. This is a unique case because the renaming can point to a specific event in history, related to a political hero and the resultant street toponymy.

The contested reputation of the Mau Mau was also played out in the renaming exercise of Kimathi Street. Although Kimathi has been widely recognised as a freedom hero, the actions of the Mau Mau under his leadership have been under a lot of scrutiny, with many including other lauded heroes of independence such as Jomo Kenyatta denouncing the group as being a 'terrorist group'. The presence of a Kimathi Street in Nairobi CBD was an indication that the



notion of the group being 'terrorist' was not widely accepted and was in fact rejected by some. Ngugi wa Thiong'o the prolific writer of postcolonial literature opposes the exclusion of the Mau Mau from among the heroes of independence. Another endorsement of the Mau Mau was in 2007 when Kimathi's statue was erected in his honour at the junction of Kimathi Street and Mama Ngina Street. Kimathi Street and statue therefore played the role of arenas for contesting the reputation of the Mau Mau and how they would be remembered.

Commemorating Tom Mboya was one of the most contested processes of the street renaming exercises in post-colonial Nairobi, partly because of his dominant role in politics as well as nation building and more so, the circumstances of his death. In celebrating Tom Mboya, the big question was what street was befitting for such a man? And would he be celebrated for his life or his death? For his life, this would point to what he did while he was alive, not very different from his death because his death pointed to what he lived for. Many thought he should be remembered through the street on which he died (Government Road), while others still, where he lived and worked (Victoria Street, St. Austin's Road and Njenga Road). Using Howitt's model of scale (size, level, and relation), it emerged that both Government Road and Tom Mboya scored on all points. However, Government Road was more popular since it was longer and bigger, but on the other hand, Victoria Street despite being smaller in size and level, it was lively and seemed to embody the spirit of the fallen leader. Records from parliamentary debates show that leaders and the public suspected that politics was behind the refusal to rename Government Road after Mboya. That is not verifiable because the renaming may have been derailed by policy constraints as suggested by the then minister for local government on the need avoid setting a precedent of naming streets after those who died alongside them. Hence, apart from the geographical scaling of memory, policy issues also played an essential role in the renaming of a street after Tom Mboya.

Street names during the post-colonial period could play a unifying or dividing role, mainly along ethnic lines. Immediately after independence, the ruling political elite consisted of allies of the first president, Jomo Kenyatta. It was felt that there was an over-representation first, of the political elite on the street names and second, on the Kikuyu political elite. The street names then served to represent those who were in power (and maintain the political hegemony), like that of the colonial period. The resultant effect was a 'transformed political hegemony' which defeated the purpose of the fight for freedom, which was to promote inclusivity and power for the Kenyan people and not the politicians.

Street names after the minority Nubian ethnic group played an important role in disguising injustices. The names of Nubian leaders were inscribed on streets within neighbourhoods which were built after land was taken from the Nubians. In addition, Nubians had been promised that they would be allocated houses in those estates based on affirmative action-for being a minority group. However, the NCE claimed that very few of those houses were allocated to the Nubian community. The irony of having Nubian street names in those housing estates exemplifies the performative role of street names as disguises for social and political injustices against marginalised groups.

## CHAPTER 6: TOPONYMY IN NAIROBI'S INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

### 6.1 Introduction

Nairobi's urban informal settlements (slums) are cosmopolitan settlements wherein most of the ethnic communities of Kenya coexist. There are an estimated 135 informal settlements which occupy a paltry 1% of the city area but are home to half the population in Nairobi. Although much scholarship has focused on the poor state of living conditions in slums, very little has been researched on the socio-political challenges faced in the slums and their impact on the cultural landscape. In the previous chapter, I discussed how street toponymy was used as a tool to decolonise and Africanise the urban landscape of Nairobi after independence was attained. Another important phenomenon that occurred after independence was the large influx of population into the city from the rural areas. This was because previously, under British colonial rule, the residence of native Africans in the city was highly restricted. Now that Africans had the freedom to move to the city, they did so in large numbers leading to a deficit in the housing available. This resulted in the exacerbation of informal housing areas which had begun in the colonial period, for example in Kibera and Mathare and the growth of more in other parts of the city.

The objective of this chapter is to investigate the ideology behind and the manifested pattern of place-naming in the informal settlements of Nairobi based on critical toponymic theory. The informal settlements are mainly organised in villages. These villages have an eclectic variety of names that provide a unique perspective on their history and that of Nairobi at large. Slum toponymy in Nairobi showcases how naming, rather than being merely a symbolic act, takes place within and perhaps contributes to the larger geographies of social opportunity and marginalisation, cries for justice and other forms of symbolic resistance. This chapter showcases that toponymy in informal settlements is indeed a representation of the social and political struggles of the urban poor. The media in reporting the struggles within the informal settlements have advanced the negative image of these places through the negative nomenclature applied in newspaper reports. From the sample of 278 newspaper reports on struggles of demolitions and evictions, informal settlements have been referred to as shanty towns, slums, tumbledown shacks, cardboard jungles, igloos, carton cities, majengos (meaning temporary structures), huts, villages among other derogatory terms. However, these terms to a large extent depict the poor living conditions of informal settlement residents who account for about half the population of Nairobi.

The main argument in this chapter is that the poor living conditions in the slums are caused by poor housing conditions and a lack of social and infrastructural facilities; and social and political injustices. These challenges faced by informal settlements residents have resulted into a unique village toponymy — which is inscribed by the residents themselves, reflecting their daily lives in the context of these struggles. The major conflicts experienced are related to evictions and demolitions of these settlements as the government attempted to eradicate the slums to ‘modernise’ the city, and as the rich who bore the name ‘developers’ attempted to obtain the land occupied by the slums for their gain. Slum toponymy provides a good basis for analysing the socio-political struggles experienced in the slums within their historical context.

Toponymy in the informal settlements in Nairobi is reflective of ongoing global issues being reflected in a local context to represent: impoverished neighbourhoods with crime and insecurity of tenure. Many of the highly eclectic names have a negative connotation and imply difficult lives of those in the settlements and even a desire for the lives to improve.

## **6.2 Historical background**

Informal settlements in Nairobi can be traced back to the colonial period when the African native was supposed to be a temporary resident of the city. Only those who worked directly for the colonial government could have legitimate city resident status — which was mainly restricted to the African male. They lived in working quarters and were not allowed to bring their families to the city. Despite these restrictions, some Africans still found their way to the city and with their illegitimate status, could only construct shanties on unused land. These shanty towns (slums) were from time to time destroyed, and the occupants forced back to their rural homes. These evictions had been legitimised by the enactment of the 1922 Vagrancy Act which made provisions to segregate, evict, arrest, expel and limit the movement of the natives and indentured worker (Macharia 1992). The attitude of the municipal authority towards African housing was as follows:

It seems only right that it should be understood that the town is a non-native area in which there is no place for the redundant native, who neither works nor serves his or her people. The exclusion of these redundant natives is in the interest of natives and non-natives alike. (Zwanenberg and King 1975, p. 268).

Nairobi’s current socio-spatial structure has always been seen as a legacy of its colonial past. Spatial planning was based on racial segregation which majorly excluded the natives. The first

three spatial plans for the city were: The 1898 plan for a railway town, the 1926 plan for a settler capital and the 1948 Nairobi Masterplan for a colonial capital (Nevanlinna 1996).

In the 1898 and 1926 plans, housing areas were explicitly racially segregated confining whites on raised grounds to the west and north areas of Kilimani, The Hill, Upper Parklands and Muthaiga. The natives were restricted to the environmentally inapt east (because of poorly drained black cotton soils and a hotter climate) in Eastleigh and Eastlands areas. Most of the Eastern part of the city at the time had undefined land uses. The Asian community mainly resided in the area North of the commercial district

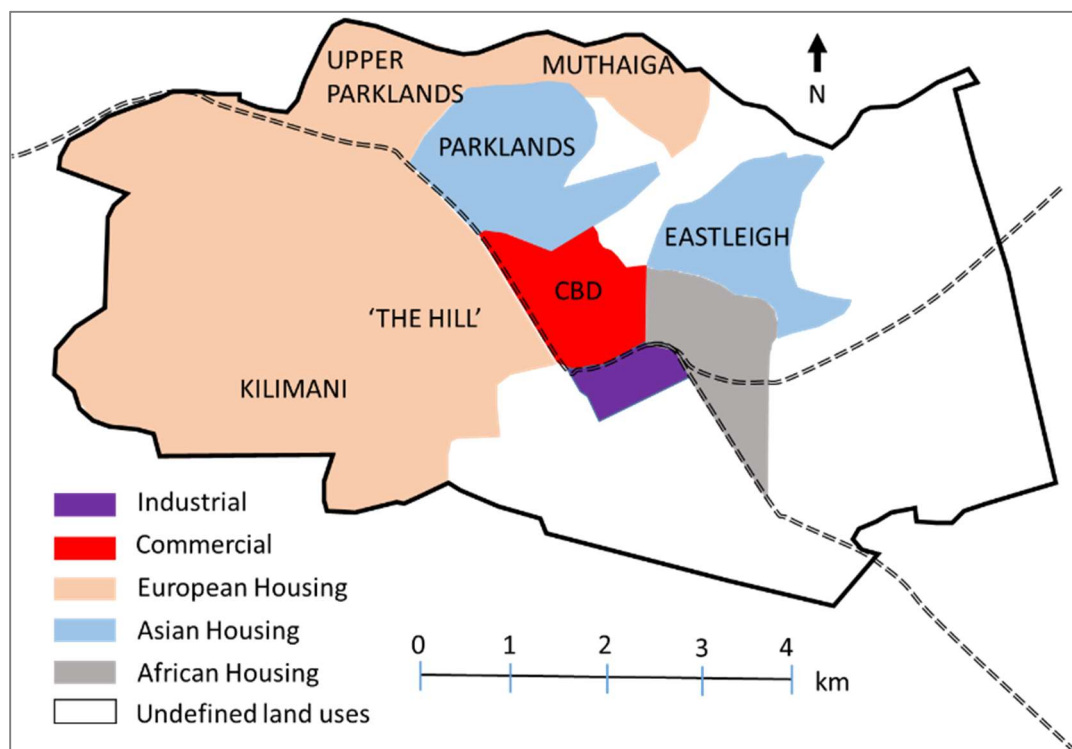


Figure 31. Racial segregation in Nairobi, Kenya, the 1926 plan for Nairobi.

Source: Adapted from Morgan W. and Halliman D., 1967

When Kenya gained independence in 1963, native Africans were given the right to live anywhere in the country; this included the urban areas which were previously heavily restricted. Thus, many people moved to the city to look for opportunities especially employment. Nairobi was ill-prepared to handle such an influx of population. Inadequate provision of housing led to the expansion of informal settlements and efforts to curb them through demolitions failed (Obudho and Aduwo 1989).

It took over a decade after independence, to have a new plan for Nairobi prepared. This was the 1973 Nairobi Metropolitan Growth Strategy (MGS), which was formulated by a foreign firm called British Colin Buchanan and partner (Huchzeymer 2011). This plan did not succeed in dismantling racial, spatial and social segregation but continued to reinforce the status quo (Olima 2001). Both the colonial government and more so, the post-independence government have made efforts to deal with informal settlements over the years as shown in table 9.

Table 9. Some government initiatives on dealing with informal settlements

<b>Date/Period</b>	<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Proposal/Recommendation</b>
<b>1927</b>	Report of the Feetham Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restrictions of African natives from urban centres</li> </ul>
<b>1941</b>	Report on Housing of Africans in Nairobi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction of houses for accommodation of 6000 Africans.</li> </ul>
<b>1943</b>	Housing Ordinance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estate planning</li> </ul>
<b>1949</b>	Housing Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employers to build African urban workers lodging houses with only bed space.</li> </ul>
<b>1954</b>	Carpenter Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing schemes for neighbourhood units</li> </ul>
<b>1965</b>	United Nations Mission Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 44,000 housing units were required per year within 1964 and 1970</li> </ul>
<b>1965-75</b>	Sessional Paper No. 5 on Housing Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop housing projects for urban dwellers at ‘lowest possible cost.’</li> </ul>
<b>1966-70</b>	Development Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritised for expanded housing programme for mass production of low-cost housing</li> </ul>
<b>1966</b>	Housing Finance Company of Kenya (H.F.C.K)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mortgage funds to middle and upper-income earners to boost private housing production</li> </ul>
<b>1967</b>	Housing Amendment Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Created a separate Ministry of Housing and set up the National Housing Corporation (NHC)</li> </ul>
<b>1967</b>	Housing Research and Development Unit- University of Nairobi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research into various socio-economic and technical aspects of housing and community development</li> </ul>
<b>1967</b>	Rural Housing Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural housing alternatives and stop rural-urban migration.</li> </ul>

Source: EAS, 22 July 1983.

The legacies of the colonial and immediate post-colonial plans are still manifested in the city's socio-spatial structure to date especially with the poor majority confined to the less favourable parts of the city. Various studies, including the global report on human settlements which indicate that currently, more than half of Nairobi's population live in informal settlements, yet, these settlements occupy less than 1% of the city's area and less than 5% of the residential area (Mitullah 2003).

### **6.3 Toponyms as cultural arenas for socio-political justice and symbolic resistance**

The place naming process and the names themselves may act as arenas whereby the cultural, political and legal rights of marginalised groups are debated. These debates serve to reshape the identity of urban places and the corporate identity of cities (Alderman and Inwood 2013). Naming can also be used as a conduit to challenge dominant ideologies and administrative processes. This has been typical of informal settlements in Nairobi, whereby the residents themselves have the responsibility of naming their neighbourhoods instead of the local government or private developers as in other areas of Nairobi. Some of these names have eventually been adopted into the formal system of naming as explained in the case study section 6.4.

Names in informal neighbourhoods can act as 'arenas' or 'sites' where complaints of social exclusion, injustices in land allocation and can be contested and debated. Names also can be used to distinguish certain settlements from others since they represent certain groups of people. To illustrate this, Myers who studied the case of Ng'ambo in Zanzibar, noted that the place names were often used to demarcate neighbourhoods, leading to an association of certain places with certain social groups or classes. In addition, as cultural arenas, names were spheres of performance which could be used as vehicles of empowerment or ridicule. Myers states that the performance role of names in informal settlements also indicate an 'us versus them' consciousness, like in Zanzibar, where Ng'ambo estate emerged as a colonial construction of the city's 'other side.' Ng'ambo's literal meaning in Swahili is the other side. Informal settlements in Nairobi fit into this metaphor of the city's other side because, since their inception during the colonial times, it is where 'the others' (native casual labourers, the soldiers, the unemployed and the illegal immigrants) lived (Myers 1996, p. 237).

Meanings of spaces and places are influenced by forces of globalisation which affect the spatiality of the contemporary social organisation due to increased global forces of connectivity (Aminy 2002). This study illustrates the importance of showing how particular communities

define the 'local' and link different scales "by symbolically (through names or otherwise) associating the fate of the local with that of the global." Hence, resulting in significant " political implications for the 'political construction of geographic scale', and also the global politics of human rights, liberty, and democratic self-determination" (Adebanwi 2012 p. 642).

Since the colonial period, instances of slum evictions, demolitions, and arson attacks were rampant. This excerpt from Meja Mwangi's novel, *Going Down River Road*, which was written right after independence illustrates efforts by the City Council of Nairobi to evict the people and demolish their shanties and how these were re-built quite as fast by the residents.

The whole of Nairobi valley is awake in chaos. Up and down the stinking murky river fire, huge tongues of red-hot fire, lick up contraptions of paper and wood and extend impotent black smoke to the dark heavens above. Shanty dwellers mill around saving whatever is possible

There is something malignant about shanty huts. They go up in the smoke at dawn, spring to life again at twilight. One just cannot keep them down. The council knows this. Char them as many times as you like, and they mushroom back just as many times. Sticks, wires, paper and iron sheets are all it takes (Mwangi 1976).

Due to these injustices, slum residents would express themselves in various ways, one of which was through naming their settlements. In Nairobi, there is a considerable number of slums which bear the names of other places in Africa and around the world which are directly associated to human rights issues, indicating the effect that globalisation has had on the landscape of Nairobi.

#### **6.4. Case study analysis**

According to the land use map for Nairobi, figure 32, informal settlements were considered as a separate land use on their own. This shows how these settlements have become part and parcel of the land use pattern in Nairobi and that they can no longer be ignored. This map prepared by the City Council of Nairobi ascertains that the settlements are present and are categorised as a land use called 'informal settlements' in yellow colour, and thereby legitimising the choice to use them as case studies. The three informal settlements were chosen for this study, Kibera, Mathare and Mukuru are indicated in highlighted in red colour.



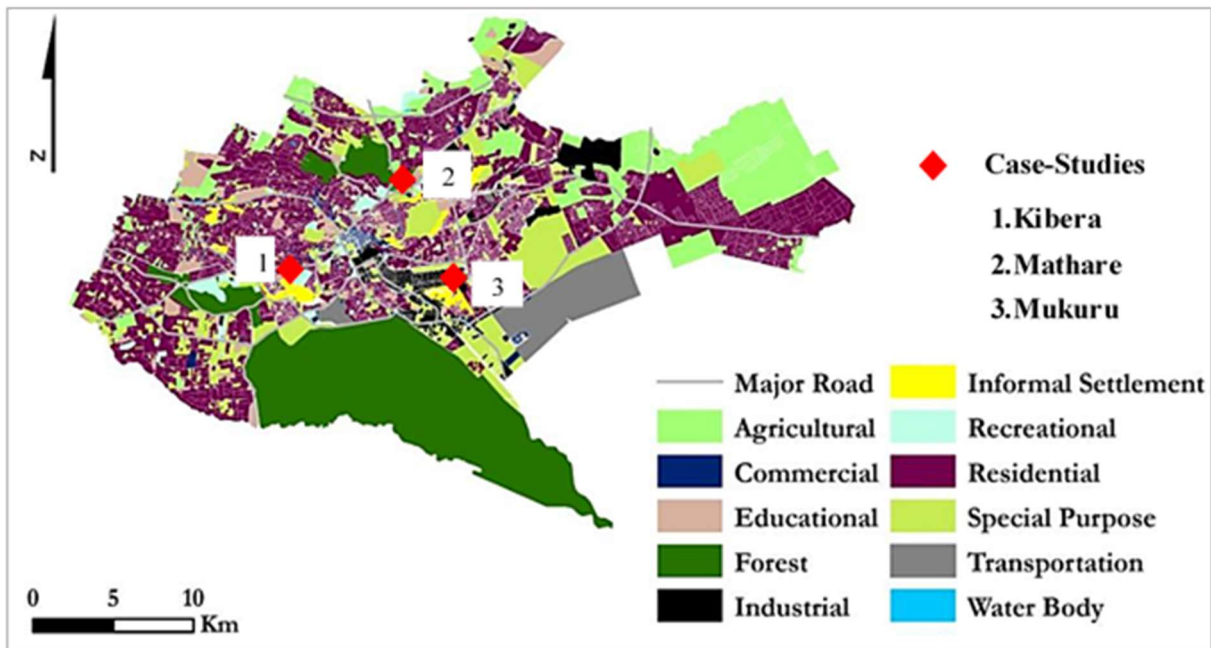


Figure 32. Nairobi land uses, 2010  
 Source: City Council of Nairobi

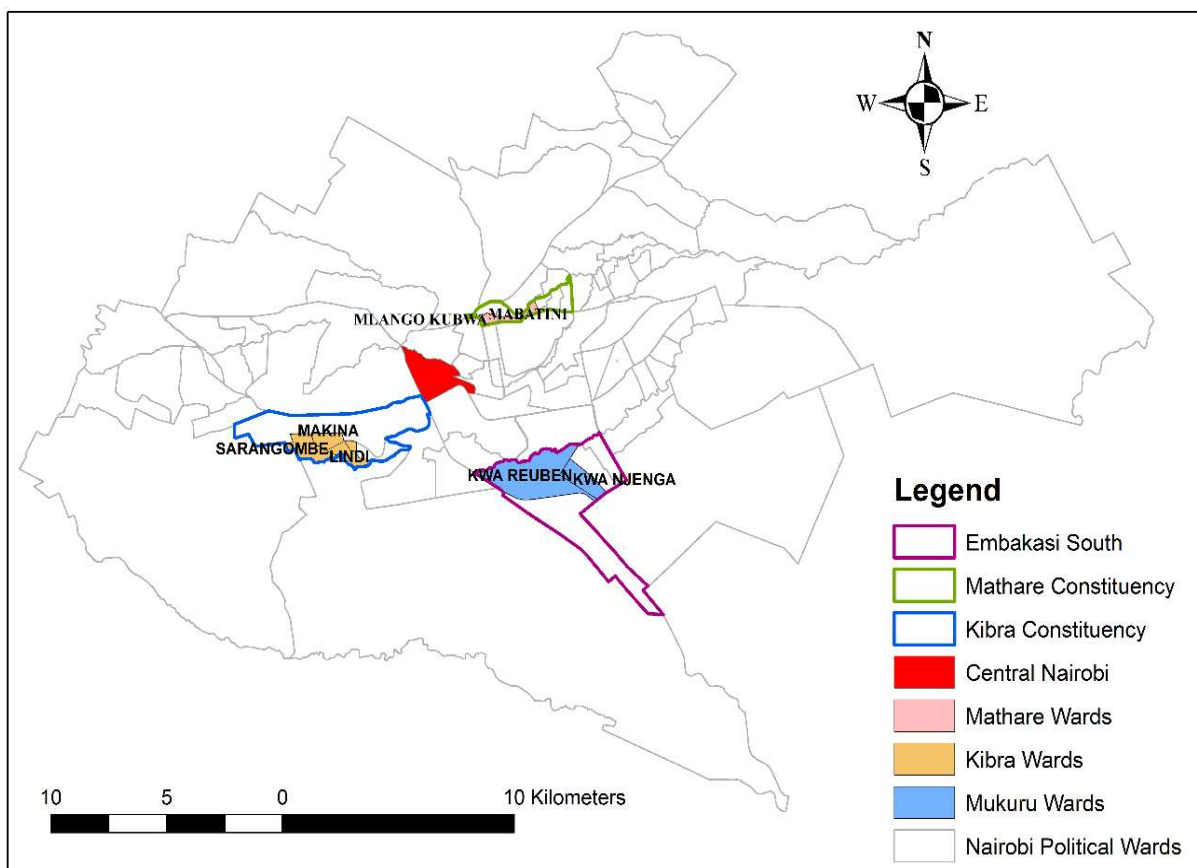


Figure 33. Location of the informal settlements' case studies (Kibera, Mathare and Mukuru) within political wards in Nairobi.  
 Source: data.ilri.org

According to Mutisya and Yarime (2011), the major slums in Nairobi are Kibera, Mathare, Mukuru. These three informal settlements in Nairobi are used as the case studies to exemplify the toponymic landscape. These are Kibera, Mathare and Mukuru slums (figure 33). These three settlements were chosen because they are the oldest and largest in Nairobi and hence their study is expected to give a representative picture of the toponymic situation in the whole of Nairobi. The settlements are organised into villages which are decided on by the villagers based on physical features, ethnic groupings, socio-economic factors, etc. They are organised within the framework of wards (sub-counties) and constituencies.

The names of these wards and constituencies reflect current or previous village names within the informal settlements. For example, Makina, Sarang’ombe, Lindi and Laini Saba were names of villages in the old Kibra settlement. These village names now represent wards in Kibra constituency. Kibra Constituency was previously part of Lang’ata Constituency, but now, Kibra is an independent constituency after new boundaries were established in 2010. Likewise, in Mathare, one of the village names — Mabatini is a ward name. There are also two formal Wards, Mathare Hospital and Mathare North which are ward names. In Mukuru slums both Njenga and Reuben, which were the original village names now represent ward names. The villages in slums have boundaries which are informal and are recognised by the residents. However, some of the boundaries are recognised and adopted by the government for administrative procedures.

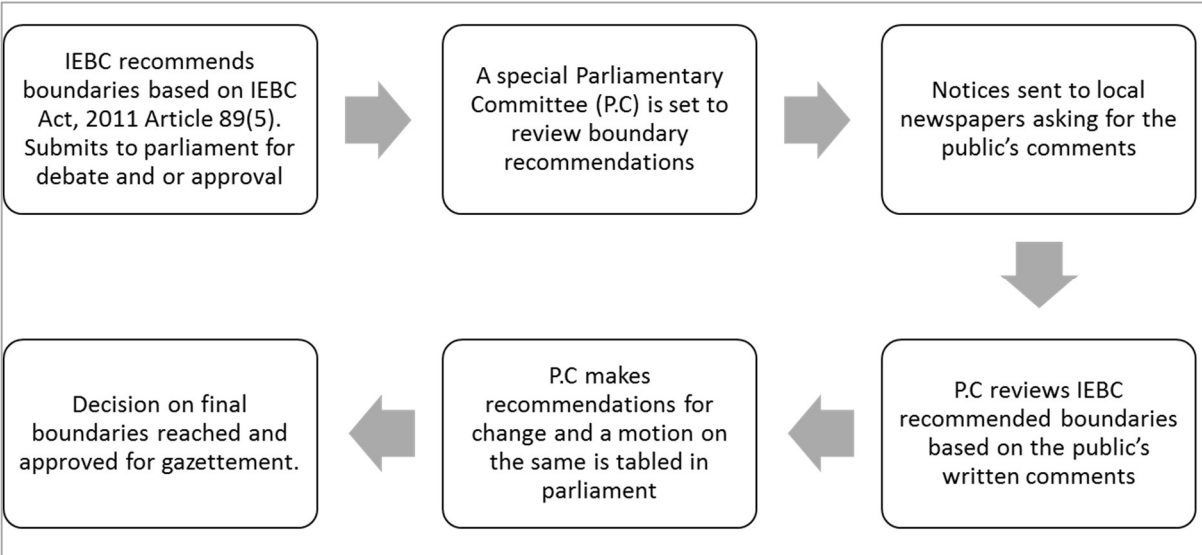


Figure 34. The process of boundary delineation for wards and constituencies in Kenya  
 Source: IEBC Act, 2011

The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), has the constitutional mandate

based on the IEBC Act of 2011 to make recommendations for boundaries. The boundaries should be reviewed within not less than eight years and not more than twelve years. The basic criteria for delineating boundaries is population distribution as laid out by the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) Act of 2011. The ward and constituency boundaries are decided through dialogue between the government through its agency, the IEBC and the public. The process is participatory such that the public can submit their comments regarding the recommendations given by the IEBC, who can respond to the comments through the special parliamentary committee (P.C). The criteria for delineating boundaries is population distribution (IEBC 2011). The process followed in boundary delineation is shown in figure 34.

During Kenya boundary delineations in 2012, a boundary issue on Kibra Constituency emerged. The P.C recommended that Sarang’ombe Ward should be divided into two: Katwekera and Kianda-Ayany Ward to cater for minority representation of the Nubian Community. The P.C noted that while the basic criteria for delineations were population, other factors such as geographical features, urban centers, the community of interest, historic, economic and cultural ties and means of communication also mattered in the choice of wards delineations. In this case the consideration by the public was the Nubian community to get better representation by having a ward allocated to where many of them were residing (KHR 2012). In this study, the main parameter for analysis was the names of villages within the informal settlements. The three settlements considered, Kibera, Mathare, and Mukuru each had their toponymic peculiarities (table 10).

Table 10. Case studies of the selected informal settlements

Name	Est. Year	No. of villages	Estimate Pop.	Est.Area	Location within Nairobi	
				Sq.km	Ward	Constituency
Kibera	1910	12	500,000	2.38	Laini Saba, Lindi, Makina, Sarang’ombe,	Kibra
Mathare	1950	13	200,000	0.6	Mathare North and Hospital, Mabatini,	Mathare

Mukuru	1980	26	450,000	1.82	Mukuru kwa Njenga and Reuben	Embakasi South Makadara
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Source: mapkibera.org, 1999 population census and field surveys 2015 and 2016.

## 6.5 Case study 1: Kibera informal settlements

### 6.5.1 History and development

Kenya's Sudanese (Nubians), the first settlers in Kibera are originally from South Sudan. In Kenya, they served as soldiers for the British King's African Rifles (KAR) during World War 1 and were given official registration like other Kenyans by the British colonial government as shown in figure 35. In 1911, Nubians were settled informally, by the British government in the KAR training ground a few kilometres south west of Nairobi city center. The settlers were mainly survivors and widows of Sudanese soldiers fighting for the British KAR. By 1912, the area was officially sanctioned for the residency of 291 Sudanese soldiers in what was now known as the 'KAR shambas'. This settlement came to be known as *Kibra* a Nubian word for jungle. In the period between 1912 to 1929, Kibera remained a military reserve. The only people who could settle there are those who had a special pass showing that they had worked for the military for at least 12 years. This requirement was only met by Sudanese ex-soldiers and a few Borana ex-soldiers. The other two tribes that came into Kibera at the time were the Meru and Kikuyu who were workers on the Nubians' farms (Clark 1970). In 1918, the colonial government officially gazetted the 4,198-acre plot of land as a military reserve (Parsons 1997).

In 1939, after many plans to evict the Nubians failed, the colonial government conceded to let the Sudanese remain in Kibera. However, the government did not develop it or provide necessary amenities like water, sanitation, electricity, schools and hospitals. A strategy meant to make life unbearable and drive the Sudanese away, but the settlement continued to grow especially due to the influx of Kenyan natives. By the end of World War 1, Kibera was under direct European administration. The colonial government could no longer ignore the fact that Kibera was a permanent settlement.

5861 ORIGINAL  
**CERTIFICATE OF IDENTITY**  
 Regn. No. **ID/NBI/0983019**  
 (Quote all letters and figures in frame)

REPUBLIC OF KENYA  
**CERTIFICATE OF IDENTITY (A)**  
 (Registration of Persons Act)

Regn. No. **ID/NBI/0983019**  
 (Quote all letters and figures in frame)

Name of holder (in full) **IBRAHIM FARAJI**

Signature of holder

Photograph or left thumb impression

Place of Residence and Postal Address (if any): —

District **NAIROBI** Trib. **NUBIATV**  
**KAMAU** Location **NAIROBI**  
 Sub-Location **PANGANI** Age Grade **35 YRS.**

Declared National Status **Kenyan** \*Occupation **TEACHER**  
 Date of Birth **1885** Sex **M**  
 Date of Registration **8.12.20** Office of Issue **NBI**  
 Signature of Issuing Officer **Mwambi 10-12-24**

NOTICE  
 Please read the instructions contained in the inside of the back cover.

If photograph affixed, certificate is valid till

\* Includes profession, trade or employment.

Figure 35. Certificate of identity of a Nubian. It shows that Ibrahim Faraji was born in 1885, and was registered at Pangani, Nairobi in 1920 at the age of 35 years. Source: NCE office at Kibera Mosque.

By 1947, only 1700 acres of the original 4,198 acres of land of Kibera remained, and by then, Kibera had grown into a heterogenous settlement which housed most of Nairobi's poor people. During the emergency period between 1952–1957, Kibera was a political hotbed, and the rising African political elite also became more interested in Kibera because of its high population, and its potential as a political stronghold. The Kikuyu who had settled there during the colonial period moved out because of their association with the Mau Mau anti-colonial movement. Later, after independence in 1963, the land was gradually excised from Kibera to give way to residential estates and schools, by the post-colonial government, without proper compensation. This led to many eviction and demolition struggles between the government and the residents.

## 6.5.2 Toponymy in Kibera

### 6.5.2.1 Nubian heritage and the village toponymy of Kibera

Kibera's toponymy is influenced by the names given by the pioneer ethnic group, the Nubians. The NCE gave the names in old Kibera as Sarang'ombe, Galalima, Gumberedu, Makina, Lindi, Laini Saba, Kambi Lendu, Kambi Muru and Kambi Alur. Sarang'ombe was initially called Sarabagara (a place for grazing cows). Bagara meaning cows in the Nubian language. It was later called Sarang'ombe — which means a place for grazing cows in the Swahili language.

The change in name happened after other communities moved to Kibera and they could not easily pronounce Bagara. Hence the word Sarang'ombe is a blend of Nubian and Swahili words. Galalima on the other hand, was initially Gala Halima which means 'Hill of Halima.' Halima is a person's name. Halima was one of the clan leaders; Toi was used to refer to the large field; Gumberedu means 'wake up and shower' — it was referred to as such because there was a stream flowing through the settlement and the people used to shower there. Makina was originally known as Makan — which in Nubian language means home. Lindi was referring to a big hole, this is because the area where it is located is a kind of valley. In addition, since the Nubians were originally soldiers with KAR, they organised their settlements in camps as it was normal for them to do in the military barracks (NCE 2015). Lain Saba, which originally was known as Lain Shaban, meant a rifle range area. It was used as a place for military training. The settlement also had three villages referred to as Kambis (Swahili word for camp). These were Kambi's Lendu, Alur, and Muru. An estimation of where the old Nubian villages of Kibera were located was done by Smedt in his thesis titled: *The Nubis of Kibera: a social history of the Nubians and Kibera slums*, where he showed that the current villages in Kibera are located close to where the old Nubian villages with similar names were located. The old names which have turned into village names are Makina, Lain Shabaan (now Laini Saba), Lindi and Kambi Muru (Smedt 2011). Toi, an old village name is currently the name of a market, while Sarang'ombe is the name of a Ward in Kibra constituency.

The current village toponymy of Kibera can be closely linked to the ethnic groupings found in the settlement. After Kenya gained independence in 1963, other ethnic tribes moved into Kibera and started co-existing with the Nubian community. In 1978, following the death of the first president of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta, there was the 'Kibra invasion' whereby other Kenyan communities moved into Kibera. The first group were those people who were forced out of Langata area due to the housing initiative by the National Housing Corporation were moved to Kibera. As other communities came in, they had difficulty in pronouncing the original Nubian names, and so, they also started naming the places they occupied, claiming those areas for themselves through the names, making the current toponymy of Kibera multi-ethnic in nature.

#### **6.5.2.2 Current village toponymy of Kibera**

Kibera is currently divided into 13 villages. The villages and the years they started are estimated as follows: Makina, Kambi Muru, Lindi, and Laini Saba were the original Nubian settlements in the early 1900's. After Kenya gained independence, other tribes moved into Kibera as follows, Kianda (1977), Soweto West (1979), Gatwekera (1979), Kisumu Ndogo, Silanga,

Mashimoni, Soweto East (2001), and most recently, Raila (2008). The village toponymy is now more reflective of an ethnically diverse settlement, but with a strong, rich and resilient Nubian heritage. The Nubian village names that have been retained in the village toponymy are Makina, Kambi Muru, Lindi, Laini Saba. Except for Laini Saba, three of those remaining village names have been formalised into ward names. One of the old village names, Sarangombe is not recognised as a village in the current village toponymy of Kibera, but as a ward in Kibra Constituency.

The meanings behind the names of the current 12 villages are: Kianda (valley in Kikuyu language); Mashimoni (quarry holes in the Swahili language); Silanga (water pond) and Lindi (meaning hole in Nubian language) are reflective of the geographical conditions. Gatwekera was the name of a bird called katulteer which was found in the forest area before the settlement began; Makina referred to Makan meaning home, and Kambi Muru was one of the Nubian camps. These names still speak of the Nubian heritage of Kibera. According to one of the community elders in Kibera, Kisumu Ndogo was named as such because those who settled there were people of Luo ethnic origin who came from Kisumu in Western Kenya. Soweto East and West refer to the 1976 Soweto Uprising and Soweto informal settlement in South Africa.

### ***6.5.2.3 Toponymy and ethnicity in Kibera***

Among the three settlements, Kibera provides a unique case whereby, ethnicity played a major role in shaping the toponymic landscape because of its history-intricately tied to the Nubian community which settled in the area in the early 1900's. They named their settlements per their socio-economic organisation, clans, and their physical surroundings. These names of Nubian ethnic origin have remained on the urban landscape and have remained resilient up to date. The ethnic toponymy has however been changing due to the social and political changes that the settlement has undergone over time. For instance, the influx of other communities into Kibera led to the change of some of the original Nubian names because they could not pronounce the names correctly.

The name Kibera was initially Kibra in the Nubian tongue. But the other native communities who settled in Kibera slowly changed it to Kibra, and this is how the settlement is known as today. However, the Nubian community refused to pronounce the name differently and still refer to it as Kibra. Thus, the government in 2010, after the establishment of new political and administrative boundaries in Kenya, named the constituency where Kibera informal settlement is located, Kibra. This was a form of toponymic restoration for the name Kibra which in its original form was being lost.

The influx of many communities into Kibera after Kenya gained independence also led to the creation of new names. Some of the names that have pointed to this diversity include Kisumu Ndogo (small Kisumu). Small Kisumu implies that the area is occupied by the Luo community whose origins are Kisumu in the western part of Kenya. There is also a village referred to as Raila which is the name of a political leader in Kenya. By naming this settlement as such, the residents were pledging allegiance to their leader Raila Odinga. Table 11 shows the major political changes in Kibera and how they influenced the village toponymy.

Table 11. Effects of political changes on the village toponymy of Kibera

<b>Year</b>	<b>Political Event</b>	<b>Result</b>
1979	‘Kibra Invasion’	Immigration of other tribes into Kibera leading to multi-ethnic toponymy.
1980’s	‘Jenga yangu, Jenga yako’ (Build mine, build yours)	Nubians countering the Kibera invasion, by inviting
1986–87	Election of Achieng Oneko as Member of Parliament.	Many Luos immigrated to Kibera to increase the voter base. Kisumu Ndogo village was born.

Source: NCE FGD. 7 September 2015

Some of the ethnic conflicts occurring in Kibera can be directly linked to the ethnic groupings in the villages. A ministerial statement given in parliament in the year 1995 shows how conflict occurred in two villages- Kisumu Ndogo and Makina and the two ethnic communities involved. Kisumu Ndogo is associated with the Luo community and Makina with the Nubian community. Hence the names of the villages are a verification of the ethnic occupancy in those villages (KHR 1995).

In the categorisation of village names in Kibera, (table 12) it emerged that names in old Kibera were all signifying different things but had as a common denominator, the Nubian heritage.

The names in new/current Kibera can also be linked to various ethnic communities living in the area. It is only Soweto East and West village names which could not trace their origin to a specific ethnic community.

The table shows the names of villages in old and new Kibera.



Table 12. Factors that influence the toponymy of villages in Kibera

Toponymic factors	Village	
	Old Kibera	New/Current Kibera
Topography	Galalima, Toi, Shilanga, Lindi	Kianda, Silanga, Lindi, Mashimoni, Gatwekera
Spatial Politics		Raila, Kisumu Ndogo, Soweto East Soweto West
Socio-economic activities/organisation (Nubian Heritage)	Makina, Gumberendu, Sarang'ombe, Laini Shabaa, Kambi Aluru, Kambi Lendu, Lomle and Kambi Kirwa	Makina, Laini Saba, Kambi Muru

Source: Author's construct

The table also shows that the village toponymy of Kibera can be divided into toponymic categorisations which show an extent of correlation with the ethnic groupings that make up the villages in Kibera (see figure 36).

The Nubian ethnic heritage of Kibera is represented in most of the names speaking of the socio-economic activities as well as the topography. In addition, the village toponymy of Kibera as shown in figure 36 points to how the distribution of ethnic communities in Kibera has directly affected the village toponymy.

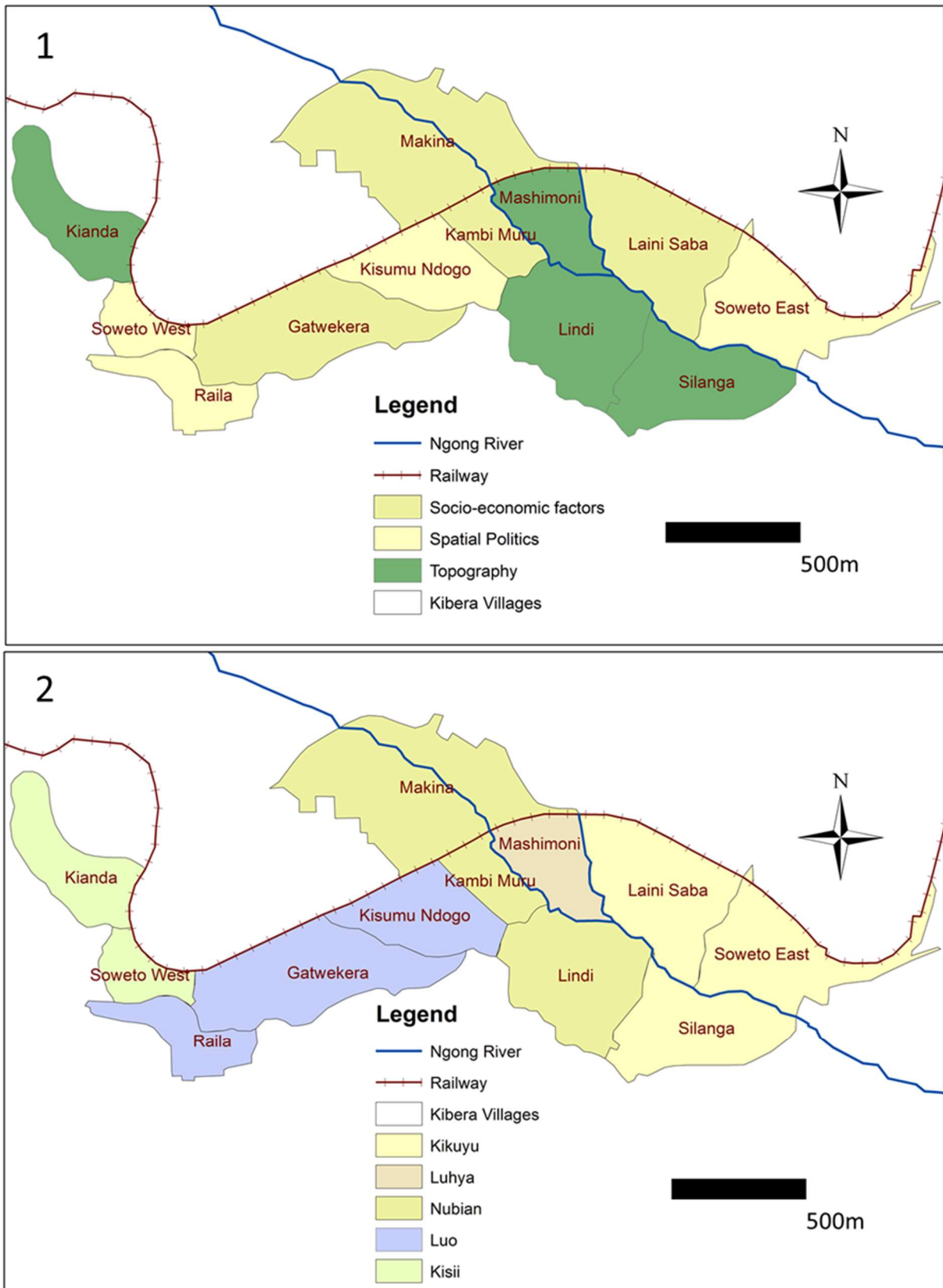


Figure 36. The village toponymy of Kibera. 1) based on prevailing issues in the settlement and 2) ethnic distribution

Source: Author's adaptation from mapkibera.org and FGDs interviews in Kibera

### **6.5.3 Socio-political injustices, evictions and demolitions in Kibera**

In 1973, a group of residents was evicted from the land belonging to Langata Military Barracks, and they settled in what is currently Laini Saba and Soweto East. In 1977, Kianda people were moved from the Roland area; in 1982, Nubians were ejected, and Moi Girls School was built and fenced; in 1992, there was the construction of highrise estates referred to as 'Jirongo Highrise.' The evictions started during the multi-party movements when young politicians like Cyrus Jirongo, Stephen Kalonzo, and Kimani Rugendo subdivided land for themselves around Kibera and evicted Kibera residents.

The events of evictions, demolitions and arson attacks in Kibera were recorded in the local newspapers. The newspapers sampled were: EAS and DN as well as Kenya Times, and The People Daily for supplementary information. The articles depicted a lack of humaneness in dealing with the residents of these settlements is what has continued to cause conflict with the authorities and eventually to result in a toponymy that speaks of these struggles. Another article titled 'slum dwellers send askaris, and chief fleeing' shows the retaliatory responses of the slum residents to the government authorities who seek to evict them (Kenya Times 1991). Names like Soweto East and West point clearly to such struggles with the authorities in an 'uprising style' just like the Soweto Uprising, which was a high school student revolt against the apartheid authorities in Soweto Townships of South Africa.

A statement by a Soweto resident alludes to the newspaper recordings of evictions and demolitions and how they reflected on toponymy. Soweto East and West in Kibera which were named after the Soweto Uprising in South Africa, are an expression of the struggle faced as people who lived in the Lang'ata area were evicted to make way for government developments and hence had to move to the Kibera area.

When the Soweto Uprising began in South Africa, the first settlement called Soweto East in Kibera was just starting. This was when the people who were then residing in Soweto were forced out of Langata area. Because of this eviction struggle, the people identified with the Soweto uprising in South Africa and hence named their settlement after it.

(Paul Owino, Resident of Kianda Village in Kibera, 27 May 2016).

However, it is to be noted that not all the demolitions and evictions in Kibera and other informal settlements are. Since many of these settlements are in environmentally fragile areas and sometimes encroach on transport wayleaves, the evictions are necessary even for the sake of the residents themselves. The following excerpt about encroachment on the railway reserve

by residents of Soweto Village in Kibera exemplifies the danger posed to the residents and the challenge the government faces in dealing with these sporadic settlements.

In the Soweto area of Kibera where the train derailed, businesses and shacks are located dangerously close to the railway line. The (railway) tracks themselves have been turned into a market, and hawkers display their wares right in the middle of the railway line (Sunday Nation, 5 January 2014).



Figure 37. A train passing through Kibera in a highly congested area, where businesses are located very near to the railway line, posing a serious safety risk.

Source: Field survey, 17 May 2016

**6.5.4 Thematic issues in Kibera**

The analysis of the FGD transcriptions revealed the major thematic issues that have occurred in Kibera over time and how they have influenced the toponymy. Codes were created based on the main issues raised by the villagers during the interviews. Two interviews were carried out, one on 7 September 2015 with the NCE and another one on 27 May 2016 with representative Kibera community members. The thematic issues that emerged are shown in figure 38.

The NCE highlighted many issues but were mainly concerned with their rights as a community. The entrance of other tribes into the settlement upset the community life of the Nubians and hence, they saw ethnic diversity and conflict to be a major issue. The elders were also keen to highlight their marginalisation by the colonial and post-independence government, even though they considered themselves to have been of great service to both political regimes.

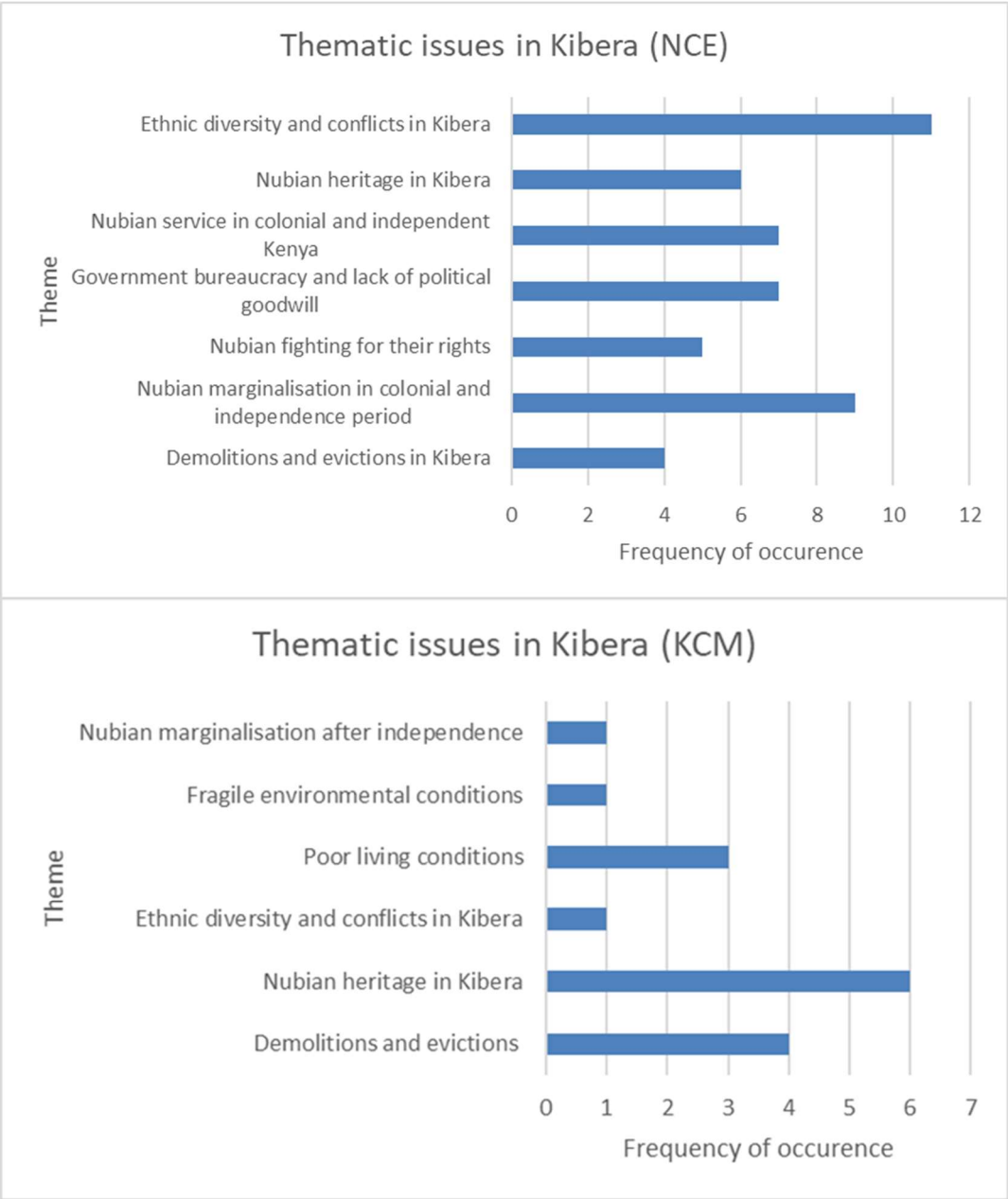


Figure 38. Issues facing Kibera according to NCE and KCM  
 Source: Nubian Council of Elders and Kibera Community Member’s FGD interviews

Kibera community members explained the origin of the settlement and how the Nubian heritage had a major influence on the toponymy. They also pointed to the demolitions and evictions that have occurred in the settlement as being one of the major problems they have encountered as residents of Kibera. The community members also highlighted that different ethnic groups tended to reside together within villages. The residents also pointed out to the poor living conditions which led to names such as Mabatini (meaning iron sheets).

In both FGDs the Nubian heritage of Kibera, ethnic diversity and conflicts, demolitions and evictions and the marginalisation of the Nubians after independence were highlighted as issues that influenced the toponymy of Kibera. From the narratives given by the residents, it emerged that the Nubians are still considered pioneers of the Kibera settlement, even by other communities. The tribal divisions among the people are a cause of conflict together with demolitions and evictions which are done by government agencies and other private developers.

#### **6.5.5 Discussion of the Kibera case study**

The remnant of Nubian names on the toponymic landscape of Nairobi is an indication of toponymic resilience. Although many other tribes have since moved into Kibera, it is clear from the three remaining Nubian village names in figure 36, that the Nubian heritage is still evident. Another unique toponymy in Kibera is that of foreign names which identify with global struggles, e.g., Soweto East and West named after the Soweto Uprising in South Africa also reflected the effect of globalisation on toponymy of informal settlements.

Toponymic resistance is observed when the Nubians refuse to pronounce Kibra as Kibera like the other ethnic communities, leading to the toponymic restoration of the name Kibra from Kibera. More recently, there was a toponymic formalisation of the name Kibra by the creation of Kibra Constituency. Names also acted as arenas for social justice against the challenges faced by the Kibera residents such as denial of rights to land ownership, poor living conditions, and forceful evictions resulting in names such as Soweto East and West Villages.

The village toponymy of Kibera as shown in the maps obtained from [mapkibera.org](http://mapkibera.org), as well as the issues highlighted in the interviews, helped to map and interpret the toponymy of Kibera. Evidently, the toponymy has been influenced by socio-economic, ethnic and political issues.

## **6.6 Case study 2: Mathare informal settlements**

### **6.6.1 History and development**

The name Mathare was derived from the Kikuyu word (the largest ethnic group in Kenya) for *Dracaena* Trees. Mathare is also often referred to as Mathare Valley, due to its location along the valley where two rivers intersect, Mathare and Gitathuru Rivers. It has a long history of informal settlements, with the first residents arriving after 1920's and others who had been displaced from Pangani moved here in the 1930's (Etherton 1971). Initially, the settlement had a very rural character as if it was a rural village transplanted into an urban area and on the boundary areas, rock quarrying activities limited it. It lies approximately 6-km to the northeast of Nairobi's CBD.

Mathare was perceived as a historical center for political opposition. Participation in the Mau Mau anti-colonial movement made the settlement a constant target of demolition and arson attacks during the emergency period in colonial Kenya from 1952–1957. Thus, the main road cutting through the settlement was named Mau Mau Road (CURI 2012). After independence in 1963, Mathare residents attempted to improve their settlements by establishing their community organisations for lobbying for services from the City Council of Nairobi (CCN) and for assembling resources to buy plots and build their own houses. The small groups included: Bondeni Properties, Muoroto, Kwirera, Quick, and Kamuingi. These groups operated in buying up agricultural land from the previous (mainly white and Asian) owners and were mainly organised by the predominant Kikuyu community.

The residents of Mathare also provided cheap manual and domestic labour for the surrounding settlements and institutions such as the police barracks, Kenya Airforce base, Mathare Mental Hospital and the medium class neighbourhood of Eastleigh. This proximity to other areas and availability of employment opportunities led to high population increase in the settlement.

### **6.6.2 Toponymy in Mathare**

#### ***6.6.2.1 Politics, land issues and village toponymy in Mathare***

The land buying and selling processes were not always transparent, whether it was with the Indian quarry leasers, the State or Nairobi City Council. The land brokering deals happened between the local members of parliament, ward councillors, provincial administrators and village elders. Two prominent personalities in the land buying deals were the then member of Parliament, Dr. Waiyaki and the local headman of Village 2, Mr. Ndururu Kiboro. The

companies evicted a large number of the poorest squatters from the land they obtained, and this resulted in unending land disputes (Ross 1974).

In an FGD held with Mathare residents, they confirmed that members of parliament, local councillors, chiefs, and village headmen were involved in land subdivisions and allocations, many of which led to various conflicts in the settlements. An example is seen in these two excerpts from an FGD with village members:

Now Village 2, used to be called Kiandururu. Gichagi Kia Ndururu (Village of Ndururu). Ndururu used to be a councillor, and during the colonial period, those people together with the chiefs were powerful. At Kosovo, there was even a primary school called Kiandururu at the time. In Kiandururu, the councillor's full name was Ndururu wa Kiboro. Consequently, there was a school called Ndururu and later Kiboro Primary School.

(Mathare Residents, FGD, 2 June 2016).

Mathare has often been associated with social ills such as crime, alcoholism, drug peddling among others. In a parliamentary debate on the 5 May 1993, titled 'Crime rate in Mathare, the state of security in Mathare Valley slums and surrounding settlements of Mathare North, Kariobangi, Korogocho and Ngomongo Villages was discussed. In the question, Member of Parliament, Mr. Muraya said that "...in Mathare, one cannot walk 200m from his house without being attacked". He also added that "Mathare is composed of the poorest people in Nairobi, and is the most densely populated settlement" (KHR 1993). The community members in Mathare alluded to this saying that some of the notorious gangs which came from Mathare settlement included: 42 brothers, Ninjas, and Mbiri Mbiri stars.

Mathare residents claim that in 1999, some villagers residing in Kiamutisya Village were evicted from the land set apart for a mosque. They were to be resettled in the current Kosovo Village, but other people from outside the settlement were brought in to settle there, causing a major conflict that led to the name Kosovo after the Kosovo War which was happening at the same time between 1998 and 1999. This conflict persisted until 2000 when most of the current residents received ballot papers (figure 39) as their ownership documents for the plots they were allocated. This ballot paper No. 960A belonged to a Kosovo resident after he was allocated a plot in the year 2000. The picture on the left shows the District Officer's signature, and the one on the right shows the area chief's signature. At the same time, young people in the area wanted to rename Kosovo Village to New Millennium since it was during the year before the turn of



the millennium and to give it a positive image. However, the name Kosovo prevailed because the older people felt it was more reflective of the struggles in the settlement.



Figure 39. Ballot papers allocated to residents of Kosovo Village in Mathare slums

Source: Interview with Mathare resident, May 2016

#### **6.6.2.2 Analysis of the village toponymy of Mathare**

Mathare is currently comprised of 13 villages. These are Mashimoni, Mabatini, Village No.10, Village 2, Kosovo, 3A, 3B, 3C, 4A, 4B, Gitathuru, Kiamutisya and Kwa Kariuki. In addition to these names, which are the most commonly used names in Mathare, there are alternative names which are used in the settlement. These are mainly aliases for the numerical village names. Ironically, the original names of the villages celebrating village pioneers are now the alternative toponymies. The villages with alternative names in Mathare are Village 2 (Kiandururu), Mathare 3B (Kwa Josphat), Mathare 4A (Mandera), Mathare 4B (Kwa Gitunguru) and Mathare No.10 (Kwa Nyangau) as shown in figure 40. Kiamutisya is named after Mutisya who was a village elder in the 1950's when the village began, Kiandururu was named after Ndururu wa Kiboro — a former politician/administrator, Mathare 3B had been named after Josphat a former village elder, Mathare 4B (Kwa Gitunguru) and Kwa Kariuki villages were named after Gitunguru and Kwa Kariuki respectively, who also were former village elders.

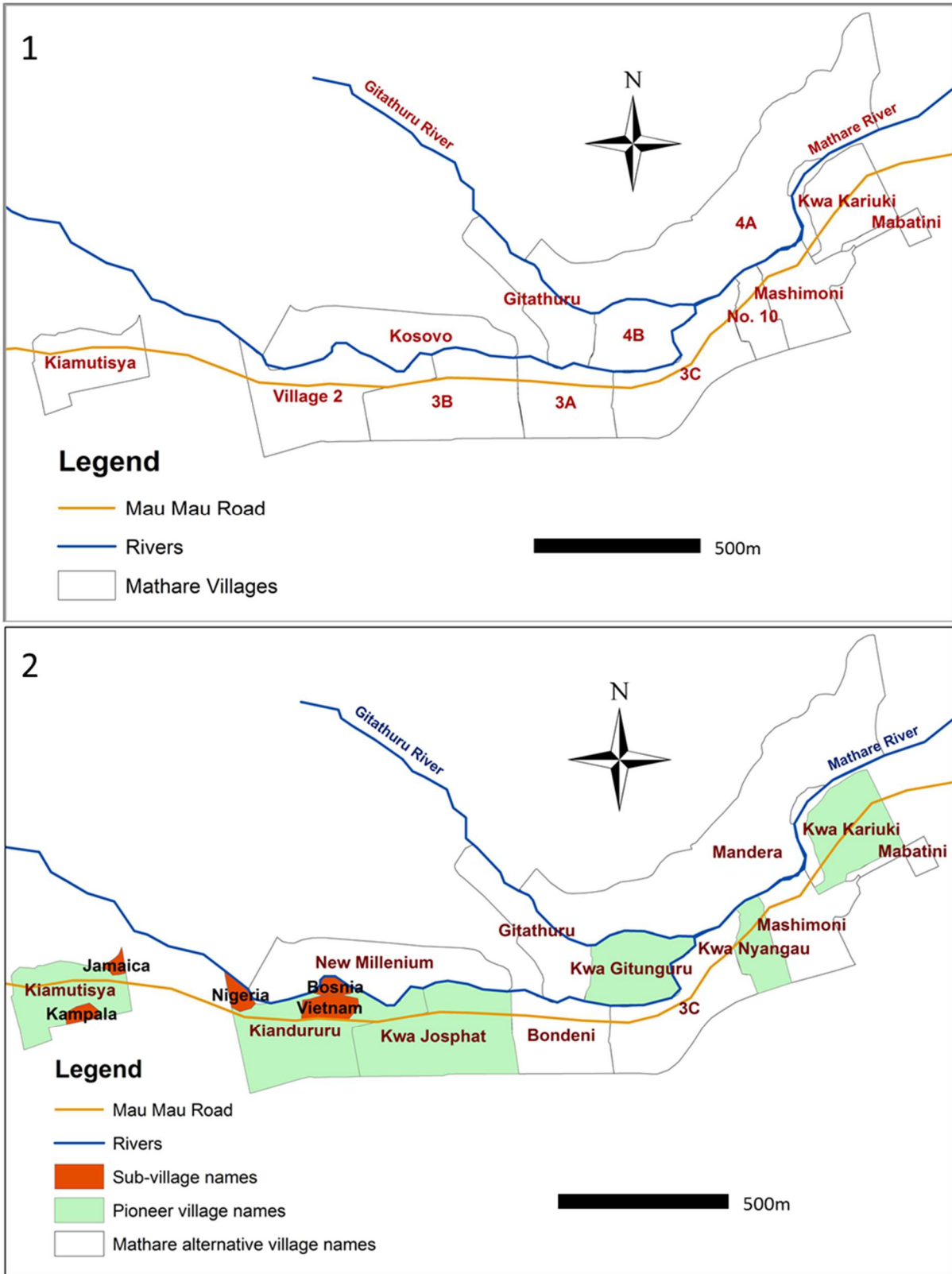


Figure 40. 1) Current and 2) Alternative and sub-village toponymy in Mathare  
 Source: Author's construct from Mathare FGD

Mathare also has micro toponyms which have emerged because of the peculiar social, economic circumstances within sections of villages (sub-villages) in the settlement. For example, there is a small village referred to as Nigeria, which was named as such because the residents associate it with illegal businesses such as drug peddling done by people from West Africa and especially, Nigeria. There is also another section in Kiamutisya Village which is referred to as Kampala because there are many illegal immigrants from Uganda who work in the area. Jamaica, another subsection, is associated with the Rastafarian lifestyle and the smoking of bhang. Vietnam and Bosnia are other sub-villages which are hideouts for gangs in Mathare slums. The sub-village names of Mathare are quite global and are shown in orange colour, and the villages with alternative names are shown green colour in figure 40.

**6.6.3 Thematic issues in Mathare**

Mathare residents have over the years faced evictions, demolitions and even arson attacks from the government and private developers who want to make use of the land as recorded in the FGD interviews. The residents considered their biggest problem to be poverty, crime and poor living conditions, followed by issues of land tenure and political pioneership and cases of demolitions, evictions and arson attacks from government agencies and private developers as shown in figure 41.

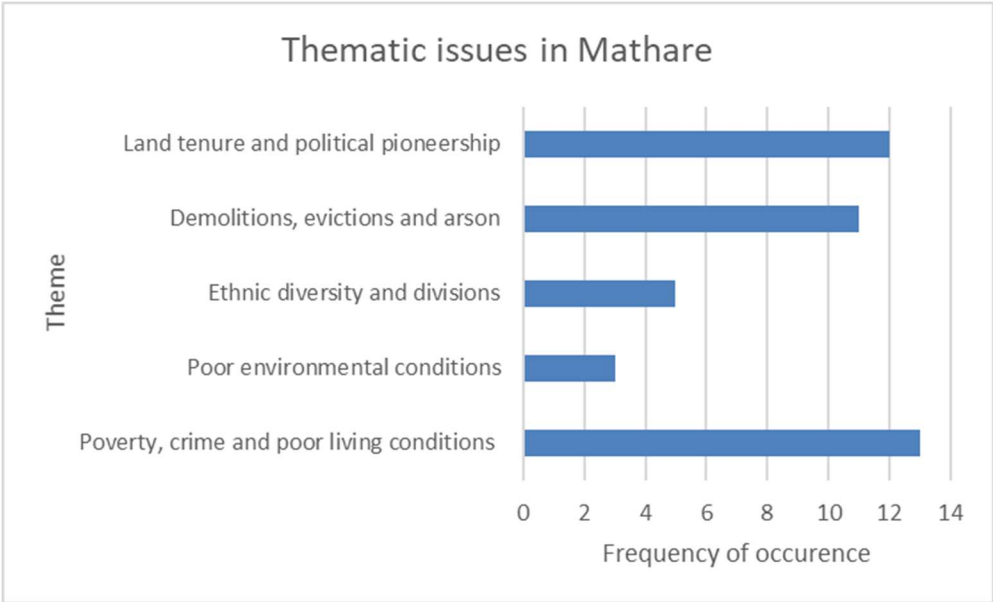


Figure 41. Issues facing Mathare residents  
 Source: Mathare residents FGD interview. 2 June 2016

The thematic issues which arose from the FGD narratives corresponded with the issues facing Mathare as collected from other sources. The names given by the residents and the meanings behind them were verified by the existing village toponymy of the settlements. While names of the larger villages such as KiaMutisya and KwaKariuki represented political pioneership, names of the sub-villages such as Nigeria, Bosnia, and Kampala represented the issue raised by the residents of poverty, crime and poor living conditions. The other toponymic relationship that arose from the issues in Mathare was demolitions and evictions. The resident's accounts relate names such as Kosovo (which is also positively referred as New Millenium) to demolitions and evictions from other areas, and hence the residents identified themselves with the struggles faced by other countries.

#### **6.6.4 Discussion of the Mathare case study**

In Mathare, a series of toponymic layers emerge from the fact that residents have different ways of referring to the settlement. The first and most obvious layer was the one that people utilise the most now, which is mainly the numerical toponymy and is associated with the land buying companies that community members had formed in order to improve the living conditions in the settlements. Second, is what has been termed in this study as alternative toponymy which was influenced by the pioneers of the villages (village elders) who mandated themselves the role of allocating plots to slum residents. Thus, the areas where they have the mandate to allocate land, are also named after them. Such names were mainly used by the older generation as compared to the young people. Five of the thirteen villages were named after pioneer village elders and chiefs. The other toponymic layer in Mathare is that of micro toponymies (referring to names of sections within villages which point to a certain peculiarity, but mostly in a negative light and using names of other places). Names of sections within villages in Mathare include Kampala (referring to the illegal residents from nearby Uganda and Vietnam (an area associated with notorious gangs in Mathare)).

### **6.7 Case study 3: Mukuru informal settlements**

#### **6.7.1 History and development**

Mukuru is a major composite slum in Nairobi. In area, it is the largest among the three settlements discussed in this paper. In population, it comes second after Kibera. It is also the newest, having developed in the 1980's. The name 'Mukuru' means valley in the Kikuyu language. The initial settlements began on a large farm owned by a man named Reuben, a white

settler farmer, the government and other private individuals took over the farm. Two of the individual pioneer settlers were Munyao and Njenga (CURI 2012). In the 1980's much of the land originally taken over by the government was handed over to private developers. Thereafter, since the plots were undeveloped, people began squatting on the land, and the settlements continued to grow. In the case of this study, we will consider Mukuru settlements as being comprised of Mukuru Kwa Reuben, Kwa Njenga and Lunga Lunga settlements. There are other Mukuru settlements in Nairobi, for example, Mukuru Kayaba, Mukuru Fuata Nyayo but they fall outside the scope of this study. The settlement is located about 8 km from the city center of Nairobi and next to the main industrial area of the city. The proximity to the center and the industries has led to the growth and expansion of the settlement because of the employment opportunities it provides to the Mukuru residents.

### **6.7.2 Toponymy in Mukuru**

Mukuru settlement is composed of the following villages, Mukuru Kwa Reuben (Gatope, Feed the Children, Mombasa, Kariobangi, Wes-Nya, Railway, RAP, Diamond, Gateway, Rurii, Simba Cool, Reuben Kijiji Mpya, Kosovo, and Bins); Mukuru Lunga Lunga (Kingstone, Jamaica, Lunga Lunga, Sinai); Mukuru Kwa Njenga (Sisal, Vietnam, Riara, Milimani, Wape Wape, Moto Moto, Zone 48, and MCC). Mukuru residents, in an FGD, gave the meaning of village names as they understood, and what they had heard about the villages' development and based on these names, toponymic categorisations were created and shown on a map of Kibera (figure 42). In Mukuru Kwa Njenga, Sisal was the oldest village in Mukuru; it started in 1976. It was named as such because the white settlers who previously occupied Mukuru were sisal farmers. Vietnam Village was occupied at a time when there were conflicts in Mukuru around 1998–1999. Zone 48 Village which started in 1998 was named as such to represent all the communities in Kenya. Showing that anyone, regardless of their ethnicity, could live in Mukuru. Wape Wape Village was named after a large busaa bar. Busaa is a traditional brew prepared by Luhya community in Kenya. Wape Wape in its literal meaning in Swahili means, “give them more” (in this case liquor). MCC Village, which started in 2000, was named after the Mukuru Community Center which was started as a corporate social responsibility by Kenya Airways (the national air carrier in Kenya). Moto Moto (Swahili for ‘fire fire’) was named as such because the village has experienced many fires due to illegal connections. The residents claimed that the fires became rampant from the year 2000, and that's when the village was born.

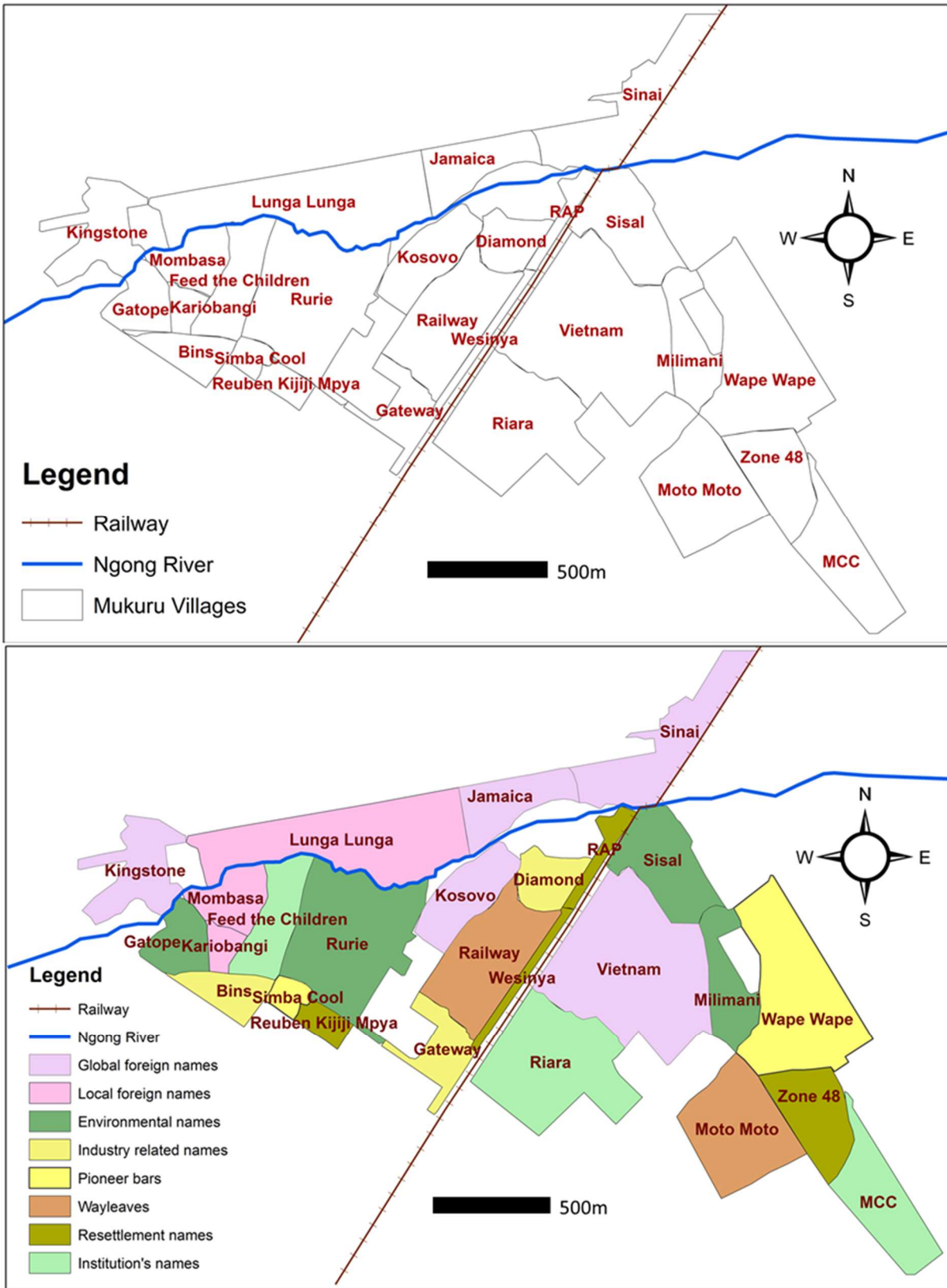


Figure 42. Mukuru informal settlements. 1) Current village toponymy 2) Village toponymy according to thematic issues  
 Source: Authors construct from Mukuru FGD

In Mukuru Kwa Reuben, the residents gave their understanding of the village names and the years they started as follows: Gatope was the first settled village in Mukuru Kwa Reuben in 1976, was named that way after the Swahili word (Matope which means muddy). The first settler who was a senior woman called Cucu Gatoto (grandmother Gatoto). Simba Cool Village was named after a local bar called Simba Cool (1982) and whose owner was called Simba (Swahili name for Lion. Mombasa Village (1995) was named as such because the area was prone to flooding. Mombasa is a coastal city in Kenya, and so in the namer's imagination, it was an area prone to flooding. Residents who were evacuated from the flooding Mombasa Village were taken to an area which is now named Reuben Kijiji Mpya which means Reuben the new village started in the year 2000. Kariobangi is another local importation of a name. This time the village gets its name from another area in Nairobi which is associated with illegal brews. Feed the Children was an orphanage after which the settlement that formed around it was formed. It is now known as Feed the Children Village.

Several villages got their names from the neighbouring industries. Bins Village (1986) was named after an industry known as Binscape, while Gateway Village was named after a Bus company called Gateway which was in the nearby Industrial area. Diamond Village first developed as a staff residence for people who were working for a quarrying company called Diamond. Due to area politics, residents of the area were incited by the local MP at the time (Mr. Mwenje) to eject the company which was owned by the Indians from the area. However, even after the company relocated, the name of the village remained.

Wes-Nya Village means Western-Nyanza. It started in the year 2000 and was named as such because the people who settled there came from the Western and Nyanza regions of Kenya. RAP Village is an acronym for Resettlement Action Plan for people who were resettled because they were living very close to the railway. RAP Village is estimated to have started in 2005. Diamond, Wes-Nya, and RAP are treated as one zone in the village. Riara Village was named after Riara group of schools which is located near the settlement. Finally, Kosovo village was named as such because the land on which it is located was contentious from the beginning of the settlement which led to infighting among the residents.

Figure 43 gives an outline of how settlement progressed in Mukuru kwa Njenga and kwa Reuben informal settlements, starting with the pioneers Reuben, Njenga, Cucu wa Gatope and Ahonya.

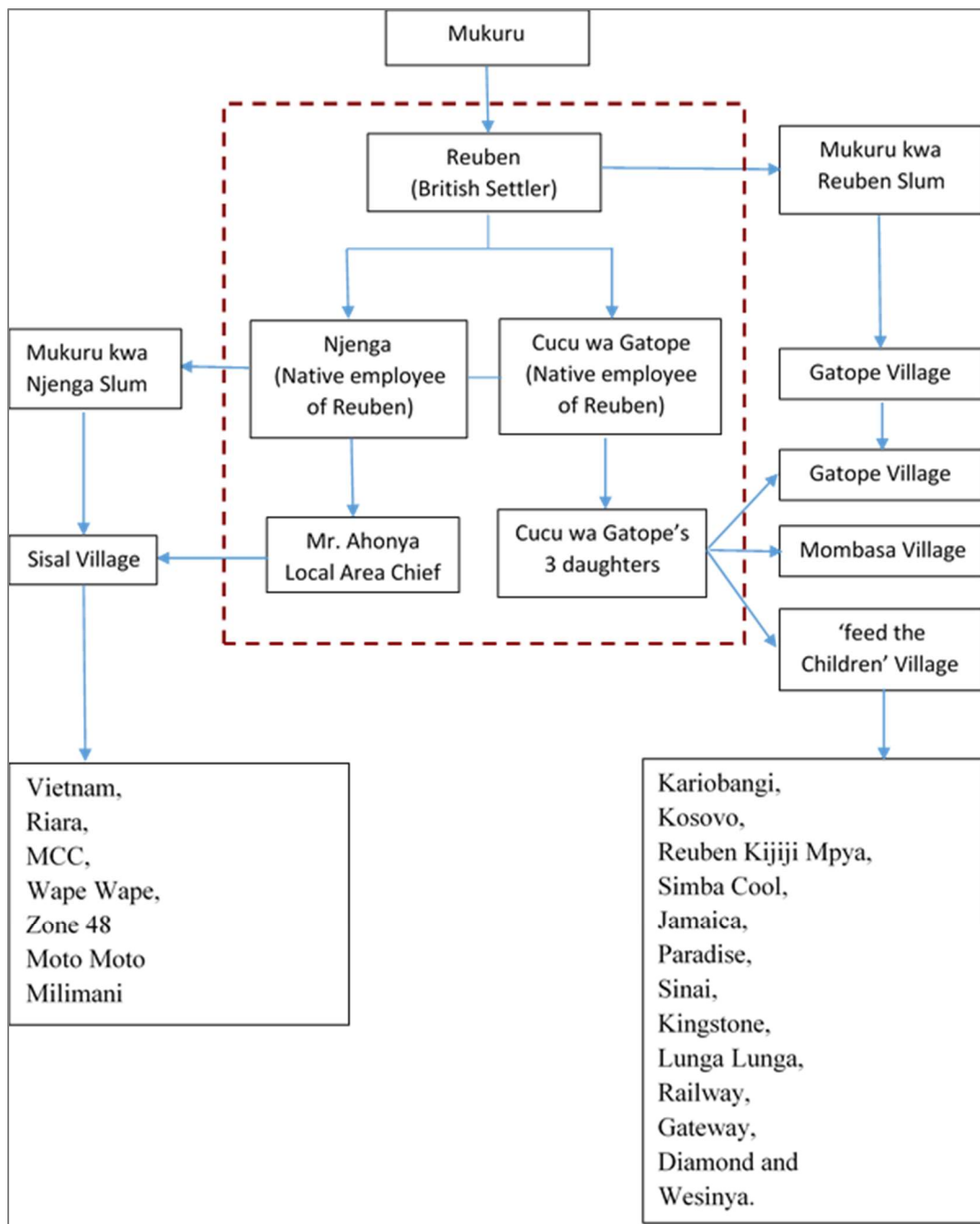


Figure 43. Settlement progression in Mukuru Kwa Reuben and Kwa Njenga settlements  
 Source: Author’s construct from Mukuru FGDs and secondary sources.

Mukuru Lunga Lunga is the other settlement which makes up Mukuru. It has four main villages: Kingstone, Jamaica, Lunga Lunga, and Sinai. Kingstone is a town in Jamaica. The two villages were named as such because the area is characterised as having people who like the Rastafarian lifestyle. Lunga Lunga is another area in Southern Kenya while Sinai is a mountain in Israel. The village was named that way because it is on raised ground.



**6.7.3 Socio-political injustices, evictions and demolitions in Mukuru**

Newspaper articles provided a record of evictions, demolitions, residents efforts against demolitions and attempts at resettlement were. The articles also report on the poor and hazardous living conditions in the slum which lead to many risks for the residents. A recent news article in the standard digital newspaper referred to a court ruling that ordered residents who were living in the electricity line wayleave to be removed as had been petitioned by the Kenya Power Company (EAS 2015). In Mukuru, one of the fatal accidents was that of Sinai fire in 2006 caused by oil from the pipeline which passes through the settlement. This tragedy led to many promises from the government for resettlement. However, these plans were never established. Mukuru is a particularly hazardous settlement to live in because of the oil pipeline, the electricity line and the river highly polluted Nairobi River that passes through the settlement.

According to the residents, land ownership is one of the biggest problems in Mukuru. The residents are aware that they are considered to be illegal residents and do not have a permanent claim on the land or the houses they occupy. The method of land or plot acquisition in Mukuru is quite informal and is not recognised by the law. There are two main ways of acquiring a plot of land as shown in figure 44. 1) a resident buys a plot directly from the village elder and 2) a resident to resident sale which is done through the village elder and chief. Neither of these processes has any legal standing hence, ownership of land can be revoked and the residents have no way of legally proving ownership. The insecurity of land tenure has led to many conflicts between the residents themselves and between the residents and the civic leaders of the villages (chiefs and village elders).

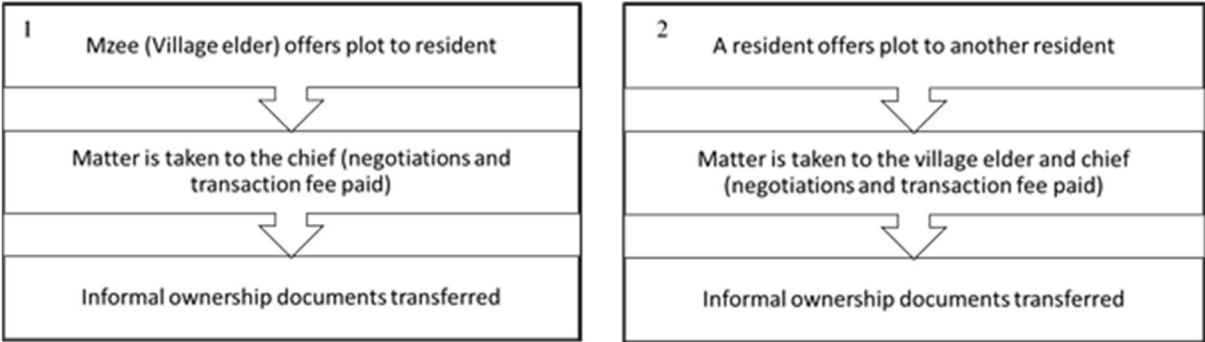


Figure 44. Land acquisition processes in Mukuru informal settlements  
 Source: Mukuru FGD interviews, 24 May 2016

**6.7.4 Thematic issues in Mukuru**

To understand the perspective of Mukuru residents about the social and political issues facing them, codified, thematic charts were derived from the FGD interview transcriptions. Poor environmental conditions, poverty, and poor living conditions, demolitions and evictions, ethnic diversity and divisions as well as pioneer settlers were the major issues deduced from the residents’ narratives.

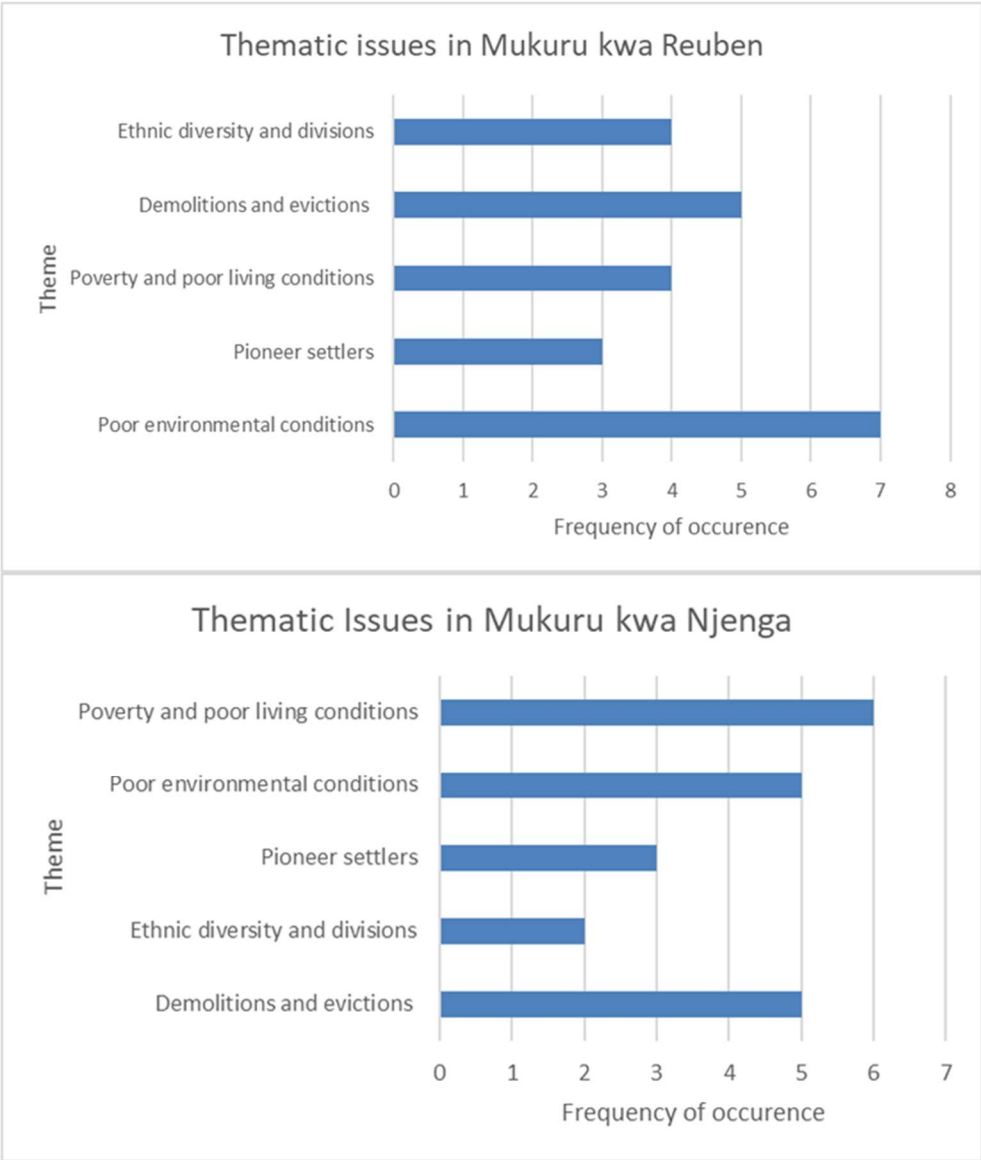


Figure 45. Issues facing Mukuru residents  
 Source: Mukuru Kwa Reuben and Njenga Residents, FGD interview, 24 May 2016

Poor environmental conditions were reflected in the toponymy whereby names like Mashimoni (quarrying holes), Gatope (muddy area), Mombasa (flood prone area) are common in the village toponymy. These conditions result from the fact that the settlement itself is in a Mukuru (valley). Poverty and poor living conditions were reflected in names such as Feed the Children (a village that was named after a center for destitute children) and Wape Wape (a village named after a beer pub called Wape Wape). These two names are an indication of poverty in the settlement. The names of foreign places in Mukuru were directly linked to other themes such as land tenure insecurity, evictions, and demolitions. The themes derived here are inextricably linked, i.e., a global name like Vietnam expresses the issue of land ownership insecurity that is a major cause of evictions and demolitions. The relationship between these foreign names and the issues facing Mukuru residents was an indication of the effect of globalisation on the naming patterns. Pioneership as a theme was based on naming the villages after the people who initially occupied them or started an initiative to help the community such as a school. Mukuru Kwa Njenga is named after pioneer African settler Mzee Njenga who came to the settlement and was working for a white settler Reuben after whom Mukuru Kwa Reuben is named. Hence, there is a direct correlation between the pioneer settlers and the village toponymy.

### **6.7.5 Discussion of the Mukuru case study**

Five of the names in Mukuru settlement: Kingstone, Jamaica, Sinai, Kosovo, and Vietnam are named after other places in the world. This gives the settlements a global identity. There is an identification with global struggles relating to wars and the quest for social justice. In this study, these names have been referred to as global foreign names. The excerpt below exemplifies this:

The name Vietnam came from some conflicts. There was a country which was at war (Vietnam). This was the time when the village was formed. At first, people were evicted, and police were harassing people, and that is where the name originated from around 1998–1999. In Kosovo, the village elder who oversaw allocating the plots wanted people to build permanent structures. There was a scramble for the plots, and that led to fighting among the residents.

(Mukuru residents, FGD, 24 May 2016).

Unique names in Mukuru is not just from places outside of Kenya or Africa. From the residents' accounts during the FGDs, toponymic importation also happened from other places in Nairobi and Kenya. For example, Mombasa and Lunga Lunga — coastal towns of Kenya and Kariobangi which is a neighbourhood in another part of Nairobi. These names resulting from local toponymic importation have been referred to as local foreign names. The toponymy of

Mukuru is also influenced by the proximity to industries, to the extent that three of the villages are named after industries. These included Bins Village, Gateway, and Diamond. Names of institutions are also integrated into the village toponymy. These are Riara (a nearby school), MCC and Feed the Children (both in the settlement). The two institutions were created to assist the children and villagers improve their livelihood. They represent hope and expectation to the residents, and hence the residents own the names as their own. Mukuru's toponymy has also been associated with pioneership. Those people who previously owned land there, for example, the white settler Reuben, and the others who followed like Njenga, now have the settlement named after themselves.

## **6.8 Chapter discussion**

The case study analysis revealed that each of the three settlements each represented a unique character. Kibera's names represented a Nubian heritage as well as ethnic diversity and socio-political struggles. In Mathare, the effect of political struggles was more since it was a hideout for the Mau Mau rebel group during the struggle for independence. Mathare has a layered toponymy, with the older (alternate) names celebrating the village pioneers and political administrators who were responsible for land subdivision and newer (currently used) names, which were put in place by landowning groups being numerical. Mukuru on the other hand, being the newest settlement, reflected a more global toponymy, with up to five large villages in the settlement having foreign names. The three settlements, through their toponymy, reflected on the landscape issues of marginalisation, social and political injustices as well as the effect of globalisation. Three major ways in which toponymy takes shape on the urban landscape are revealed in this chapter. These are pioneership, ethnicity and globalisation.

In the informal settlements, the pioneers, defined as those who settled in those places first as well as political leaders such as village elders had villages named after them. The prevalence of names with pioneer leaders reflected the political power they yielded. This was clearly showcased in the Mathare village toponymy.

Ethnicity has played a major role in how the settlements are organised. The villages also doubled up as ethnic blocs, and in some cases, the names of the villages reflected this. In Kibera, for example, A village called Kisumu Ndogo (means small Kisumu, Kisumu being the place of origin of the Luo community) also has the Luo as the majority in population; Makina (from the Nubian word 'Makan' which means home) also has a majority as Nubi, etc. In some cases, these ethnic groupings cause conflict, and some residents have sought to do this using the actual

names. For example, the village called zone 48 in Mukuru settlement was purposefully named that way to represent the over 40 ethnic communities in Kenya, and to imply that any of them were welcome to live there. Hence names reflected ethnic inclusivity as well as exclusivity.

The effect of globalisation is observed in the case where names identifying with other places in the world, which were undergoing civil conflict, war and other social injustices were imported by the slum residents and inscribed on their landscapes. They were inscribed in the form of village names such as Soweto, Vietnam, Kosovo, Jamaica, Nigeria, and Bosnia.

## CHAPTER 7: TOPONYMIC COMMODIFICATION OF PUBLIC SPACES IN NAIROBI

### 7.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters, this study examines toponymy in the context of informal settlements in Nairobi whereby globalisation emerged in the form of village toponyms identifying with social and political injustices happening in countries around the world. In this chapter, globalisation has taken the form of global corporates entering the Kenyan market and seeking naming rights of public spaces as a marketing strategy. In the face of contemporary urban challenges, one of the biggest tasks of urban governance has been the creation of urban conditions which can attract investors and enhance the development prospects of cities (Beriatos and Gospodini 2004). Hence, the private sector has become very instrumental in shaping the urban development processes in contemporary times as cities around the world have increasingly take up the entrepreneurial agenda focusing on investment and capital building (Harvey 1989). This has mainly occurred through PPP's (Public Private Partnerships). PPP's refer to medium to long-term arrangements between the public and private sectors, whereby the services and obligations of the public sector are provided by the private sector with clear agreements on shared objectives for service delivery. PPP has recently been applied in the privatisation of public spaces through the sale of naming and management rights and corporate branding of public spaces. In Nairobi, the financing of recreational facilities is a burden for the government whose resources are strained. Hence for the sector to grow a level of private participation is inevitable (Mpuhia 2014).

This trend has recently started to be examined within critical toponymic studies. The new scholarship focuses on developing "the critical toponymy research agenda by focusing on the economic dimensions of naming practices and linking these to the wider socio-cultural and political contexts of urban change" (Light and Young 2014b, p. 437). The most common way in which toponymic commodification is taking place in Nairobi is through the sale of naming rights of public spaces and the use of the money to revitalise those spaces. This phenomenon though relatively new in Nairobi has been around for a few decades. In the United States, the first naming rights agreement is recorded in 1971 when Schaefer Brewing Company paid 150,000 USD to rename the New England Patriots NFL Stadium to Schaefer Field (Crompton and Howard 2003).

In Nairobi, the first attempt of selling naming rights was with Nyayo National Stadium, whose naming and branding rights were to be transferred to Coca-Cola, the international beverage company for a period of 3 years from 2008–2011. However, the deal valued at 124.5 million Kenya shillings — hereafter Ksh. or (1.5 USD) was cancelled when the Coca-Cola company refused to yield government's conditions regarding how the renaming would be done. Similarly, in 2013 when a big Samsung advertising billboard was put up on an iconic building in Nairobi the Kenyatta International Conference Center (KICC), it was immediately met with a public uproar. The KICC management board had signed a contract with the company in charge of the advertisement in 2012, and it was to run for three years. An attempt to bring down the advertisement was met with a court petition, and the advertisement remains on KICC to date, five years later. Another example is that of Moi International Sports Center-Kasarani. In 2013, Kenya's leading telecommunication giant, Safaricom secured a three-year branding rights deal from the SSMB. The deal valued at Ksh. 210 million (2 million USD) was also met with public opposition, but the deal was maintained. The Stadium now bears Safaricom's brand name and colours with the tagline 'Home of Heroes'. However, officially its name remains Moi International Sports Center.

These case studies exemplify how the phenomenon of the sale of naming rights and place branding is contributing to the scholarship on the economic dimensions of space. They also show the impact of globalisation and how public-private partnerships are influencing the politics of power over space, and how this, in turn, influences the urban landscape of the city.

## **7.2 Toponymy as commodity**

Place names can be theorised as a form of symbolic capital and can be used to associate places with useable and exclusive visions of the past (Alderman 2008). That is why the critical study of place names is important because it exposes the power exercises on public spaces to serve political, ideological and more recently commercial interests (Karimi 2016). One of these commercial interests has been the sale of naming rights of public spaces by local authorities as a way of raising revenue. Through the sale of naming rights, the capital bore by these names is appropriated in terms of monetary value thereby being made into a commodity. This commodity is receiving more attention and debates regarding their use value, and their exchange value are continuing to take a more prominent role in critical toponymic studies.

Scholars have claimed that commercialisation of public place names is one of the major transformations that will possibly reshape the toponymic landscape of the next century (Rose-

Redwood 2011). However, some scholars have cautioned that the excitement towards the commodification of place names especially public spaces “poses serious risks to the very notion of public space as a site of social life beyond the commercialised world of corporate culture”(Rose-Redwood et al. 2010, p. 466).

The current dynamics of urban networks have been heavily influenced by economic globalisation. Markets for goods and services have transcended the borders and national interests of countries (Beriatos and Gospodini 2004). The current condition of economically globalised cities has also shifted urban politics, and this has led to coining of new terms such as new urban politics (NUP) (Cox 1993, 1995). Further NUP has been theorised as a discourse of commodifying cities. In this metaphor, the local government, and institutions are the manufacturers, the cities themselves are the product, and consumers include tourists (Boyle and Rogerson 2001). It is inevitable that the names of cities would also be commodified along with the cities under the NUP discourse, which is a reality in contemporary cities. Globally, corporates have utilised the opportunity of toponymic commodification as a way of marketing themselves. The English Premier League Club Stadium names are a sterling example of how the effect of globalisation is reflected through toponymy. Names such as Emirates Stadium and Etihad Stadium show the extent of place name commodification in the global arena.

An important aspect of toponymic commodification literature is the concept of place branding. When naming rights are sold, in some instances a completely new name is adopted, and in others, the toponym is turned into a brand name. This leads to “depicting the name in a figurative setting so that visually it reveals something of the qualities of the place product”(Medway and Warnaby 2014, p. 155). It also involves the incorporation of a slogan or tagline to convey some of the inherent qualities of the place product. However, it is worth noting that a new slogan or memorable logo which often accompanies new place brands do not guarantee a new identity (Kavaratzis and Ashworth 2005). Some scholars argue that when a corporate name is attached to a place that already has a strong identity, then it is not on the “tip of the tongue” of stakeholders (Guzzo 2001, p. 8), hence limiting the success of the new brand. A brand instead needs to embody a whole set of physical and socio-psychological features which are associated with the service or product (Simoes and Dibb 2001). In Nairobi, the successful sale of branding rights for Moi International Sports Center also incorporated the slogan ‘Home of Heroes’, to depict the qualities of the place (i.e., the stadium) since it is used for local and international sports competitions.



As commodities, toponyms should be credible, both to the local (residents and businesses) and to outsiders (e.g., tourists). The lack of credibility of commodified toponyms, due to the perceived loss of their civic value, has sometimes resulted in bitter contests. These contests can be simply through public uproar on social media, or through debates in parliament and the more serious cases, legal battles in court. These processes are just as political as those faced in commemorative place names and other aspects of critical toponymy. Hence, as much as the major focus of toponymic commodification is the economic value of names, the politics that surround this sale of naming rights and branding activities are equally important.

This chapter focuses on several case studies of attempts at toponymic commodification through the sale of naming rights, corporate branding, commercialisation of street names in Nairobi. While other authors have claimed the political role of names differs from their economic role, based on this study, I found that the two are interlinked. The commodification of toponyms is a highly political process that requires (but sometimes cannot achieve) the consensus of all interested parties (government, public, and the private sector). Both the successes and failures and the social and political processes surrounding them are important in enhancing the scholarship on toponymic commodification, taking the case study of a city in the global south. As Whelan states, “there is much scope for a renewed interrogation of the naming strategies at work in contemporary urban spaces” (2011, p. 9).

### **7.3 Toponymic commodification through sale of naming rights and corporate branding**

#### **7.3.1 Nyayo National Stadium**

Nyayo National Stadium (hereafter NNS) is the second largest stadium in Kenya. It was built in 1974 and has the sitting capacity of 30,000 people (Nyende 2008). The name Nyayo can be translated to mean ‘footsteps.’ The term is political referring to the country’s leaders following in the footsteps of the first president Jomo Kenyatta. The second President Daniel Moi took up the Nyayo name after the Nyayo philosophy which he created after he became the second president of Kenya in 1978. Hence, many Kenyans still think that the Stadium was named after him. As a philosophy, nyayoism was supposed to steer nation building as stated by Moi in his book *Kenyan African nationalism: Nyayo philosophy and principles*: “...Nyayoism incorporates, articulates and revitalises what is traditional and endemic to the African thought pattern and ways of life. It can form a fruitful foundation for nation-building...” (Moi 1986, p. 22).

NNS was to be renamed after its naming rights were transferred to the Coca-Cola Company of East and Central Africa. However, a dispute arose, since the company wanted exclusive naming rights for the stadium from Nyayo National Stadium to ‘Coca-Cola National Stadium.’ The Sports Stadia Management Board (SSMB) had advertised a tender in the local media for the sale of naming rights for Nyayo National Stadium in September 2008. This was in a bid to raise funds for the maintenance and revitalisation of the stadium. Coca-Cola won the tender for three years at the cost of Ksh. 98 million (1 million USD). Soon after Coca-Cola began rebranding the stadium. However, The Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs at the time — Dr. Hellen Sambili had concerns over the name, and in March 2009, in a meeting with the Coca-Cola company directors and the SSMB the name was revised to ‘Coca-Cola Nyayo National Stadium’. The move was to ensure that the name Nyayo (which implies a nationalistic movement of ‘following in the footsteps’ of the founding president of Kenya — Mzee Jomo Kenyatta) was retained. Because of this, the cost of the contract dropped drastically to Ksh. 67 million (about 740,000 USD).

However, in May 2009, there was a lot of negative public reaction as well as from the parliament on the sale of the naming rights, with some being against the name change. A section of MPs (members of parliament) while referring to the renaming saga are quoted as saying that: “Moi’s achievements could not be ignored” (Daily Nation 2009, p. 33). They associated the name Nyayo with the former President Moi and associated the renaming with an attempt to erase his memory from the Stadium and belittling his ‘achievements.’ It was then that the government through the Head of Public service decided that the name should remain Nyayo National stadium. However, after discussions between the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs, the SSMB and the Coca-Cola company directors, the stadium was to be named: ‘Nyayo National Stadium - Coca-Cola Sports Center.’ In an unexpected turn of events the Coca-Cola Company withdrew from the deal and stated that they were not interested in buying the naming rights anymore. Since then the Nyayo National Stadium retains its original name, but some of the refurbishings done by the Coca-Cola Company, e.g., painting the stadium with their red brand colour can still be seen up to date.

In the deliberations as seen in the National Assembly report of the parliamentary debate on this matter dubbed ‘Controversy over the Naming of Nyayo National Stadium,’ it emerged that there were disagreements between the government (Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs) and the SSMB. The SSMB was very keen to get funding from the corporate sponsor, but the government had to ensure that public interests were considered (retaining the symbolic

significance of the stadium) and at the same time get funding. Therefore, they settled for a lesser amount of money (700,000 USD versus 1 million USD). However, not all the interested parties were satisfied and especially the Coca-Cola Company which decided to withdraw from the deal. In her defense regarding why the deal failed, the minister said:

Whereas this initiative by SSMB was a good idea for raising funds for the development of sporting facilities, it did not originate as a Cabinet Paper to seek cabinet approval for the intended change of name of the stadium. If this trend is allowed, what would stop institutions like Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA)...Kenyatta International Conference Center (KICC)...from tendering for naming rights and changing their names, thus erasing the country's historical landmarks? (KHR 2009, p. 30)

Many were displeased at the decision to reject the renaming deal. Some MPs and other legislators, even the then Prime Minister Raila Odinga, expressing that it would be better to sell the naming rights and refurbish the stadium. The then MP from Thika in Kiambu County, Mr. Thuo, expressed that he would propose for the Coca-Cola Company to re-brand Thika Municipal Stadium instead of Nyayo Stadium. His statement shows an indifference to the existing toponym, indicating a greater inclination to the exchange value of the name versus the use/ heritage value. He is quoted as saying:

We have the Thika Municipal Stadium which does not have the word Nyayo or Kenyatta. Could the Minister of Sports (referring to Dr. Sambili) consider this stadium for that deal? They can even call it Sprite or Fanta. We do not care. We just need the money. (KHR 2009, p. 35)

In another parliamentary debate titled 'Nyayo Stadium Tragedy,' which was addressing a stampede that had happened in Nyayo Stadium, the then Prime Minister of Kenya, Raila Odinga is quoted as saying:

Coca-Cola had offered to spend Ksh. 100 million in upgrading the Nyayo National Stadium. The only problem was: do we change the name Nyayo and so on? With due respect, we have given Kasarani Sports Complex the name of the former president, Kisumu Stadium is also called Moi Stadium, but Nyayo is not the name of a person. It is footsteps. Period. That is why we have said that we have no problem changing the name from footsteps to Coca-Cola. (KHR 2010, p. 29)

These statements reflect part of the society who think the revitalisation of such facilities is far more important than the name or brand they bear. However, Light and Young, (2014, p. 437) see a need to "manage the tension between capitalizing on the exchange value of a name and recognizing the significance of its use value for stakeholders particularly fans and the general

public.” Similarly, some sports commentators in national newspapers who were supporting the sponsorship thought that the Nyayo was more of a political rather than nationalistic philosophy and hence did not provide credible grounds for rejecting the Coca-Cola offer. George Ogola in an article appearing in the Business Daily states:

The so-called ‘Nyayo Philosophy’ was... a political project and not a national belief. Consequently, Nyayo Stadium maybe a national stadium, but not because of the name ‘Nyayo.’ We need to begin to dissociate political projects from national ones.... Coercing sponsors to preserve political projects because of sentiment and deliberate construction of national treasures that never were, must be discouraged (Ogola 2009, p. 14)

Similar articles in national newspapers in the year 2009 show that there were many who supported the idea of selling the naming rights for NNS as shown in table 13.

Table 13. Newspaper reports showing support for the sale of NNS’s naming rights to Coca-Cola in 2009

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Basic Argument</b>	<b>Publication</b>	<b>Writer</b>
20 April	Stadium's board must put its act together	Article supports name change for raising funds to maintain stadiums. It calls the idea of retaining NNS’s identity ‘laughable’.	Daily Nation	Not named
30 April	Mwai defends Coca-Cola deal	SSMB boss was defending the sale of naming rights for Nyayo stadium	Daily Nation	Charles Nyende
22 May	Nyayo not on the coke side of life	Coca-Cola withdraws from the Nyayo stadium deal	Daily Nation	Charles Nyende
23 May	Run-down stadium is Sambili’s idea of 'national heritage'	Minister of Sports (Hellen Sambili) wanted out of the stadium deal	Saturday Nation	Charles Nyende
23 May	‘Nyayo’ froze Coca-Cola deal	Coca-Cola withdraws from the Nyayo stadium deal after denial of exclusive naming rights	Saturday Nation	Charles Nyende
23 May	Has minister derailed the gravy train	Talks about the Minister withdrawing from the Coca-Cola deal. The author supports the deal calling it ‘groundbreaking’.	Saturday Nation	Sam Karanja
26 May	Coke Uncorks Sh. 117m farce	Article pointing out that the rejection of the deal by the minister was a mistake	Daily Nation	memo
28 May	‘Nyayo’ weak reason to fight Coke deal	Opinion column against the withdrawal of the Coke deal	Business Daily	George Ogola

Source: Nation Media Group Library

In 2015, after the failed attempt by Coca-Cola to buy the naming rights for Nyayo Stadium, an international insurance company British American Insurance Company which goes by the name Britam successfully bought the branding rights for Ksh.100 million. In this case, however, the company was not interested in renaming the stadium as a way of avoiding potential public uproar (Business Daily 2015). The various attempts over the years of selling the naming rights of NNS are shown in figure 46.



Figure 46. The process of the attempt by Coca-Cola to buy NNS naming rights  
 Source: Daily Nation and Business Daily newspapers (2008-2015)

NNS is currently branded with blue and red colours, with the name Britam appearing on its walls as shown in figure 47.



Figure 47. Nyayo National Stadium branded with Britam's blue and red colours  
Source: Field Study, 2017

### **7.3.2 Moi International Sports Stadium-Kasarani (MISC-K)**

The MISC-K was built through an agreement between the Kenyan government and China 27 years in 1987 for the fourth all African games in 1987. The sports arena has been part of the country's national sporting life with the ubiquitous mention of the country's second president and one of the continents longest-serving leaders.

In December 2013, the Kenyan parliament rejected a proposal SSMB to have Kenya's leading telecommunications company, Safaricom, buy the naming rights for MISC-K (figure 48). The move was considered 'disrespectful' to the 2<sup>nd</sup> president of Kenya — Daniel Moi, after whom it is named. Adan Keynan the MP for Eldas is quoted as saying: "an attempt to rewrite or erase the history of this country would be opposed" (Kiplang'at 2013, p. 68). The Central Organization of Trade Unions also stated that ".....a national monument named in recognition of those who made Kenya what it is today, are being overlooked and their names trashed into dustbins" (Kwalimwa 2013, p. 66). It is clear from such statements that even the country's legislators saw the name as the carrier of the nation's heritage and a removal of the name could be equated to an erasure of history.

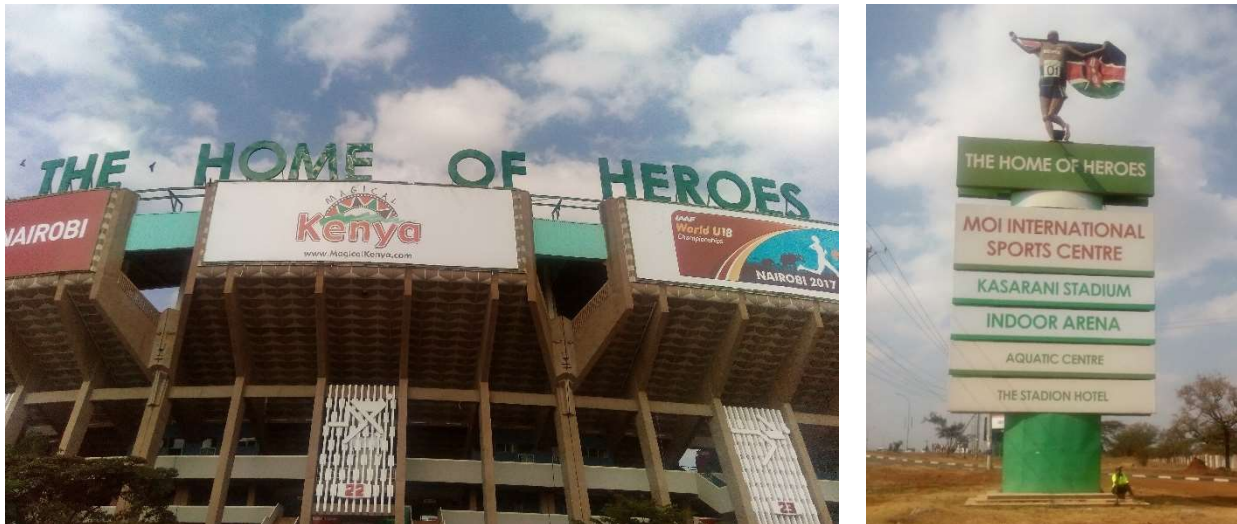


Figure 48. Moi International Sports Center Kasarani ‘The Home of Heroes’  
Source: Field Study, 2017

The naming rights deal was to cost the company Ksh. 210 million (2.3 million USD) with Ksh.55 million (600,000 USD) set to go to the SSMB directly, Ksh. 95 million (1 million USD) to rebranding and rehabilitation of the main soccer stadium and Ksh. 65 million (about 719,000 USD) for the rehabilitation and branding of the indoor gymnasium. A parliamentary debate which was held on 4 December 2013 led to Safaricom (the corporate sponsor in this case) to clearly state that they did not intend to erase the name Moi from the Stadium. The rebranding contract deal stated that the Stadium would retain its name.

There were other members of parliament who partially supported the deal, were opposed to the renaming cost. Adan Duale, the majority leader in the National Assembly, is quoted as saying: “we are not going to allow a stadium to be renamed for Ksh. 55 million. Safaricom makes billions of profits, and they should be asked to pay more” (Mutegi 2013, Business Daily, p. 8). These statements also indicate that the issue is not the renaming itself but the monetary value of the renaming. This begs the question as to how the heritage value of a name can be assessed. Hence the reference to the name as being a commodity, Safaricom has a lot of money and so is expected to buy the commodity (the name) at a high price by the seller (includes the SSMB, legislators and the public).

### 7.3.3 Kenyatta International Conference Center (KICC)

KICC (Kenyatta International Conference Center) provides another example of how place branding is taking place in Nairobi. This building which is at the centre of Nairobi CBD has

been the icon of the city landscape since it was built in 1974. It was named after the first president of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta. Kenyatta himself commissioned it in 1967.

In 2013, the building management signed a contract with Samsung to brand it with a Samsung advertisement banner (figure 49). This move led to a massive public uproar and some unresolved issues in the contract that saw the big Samsung banner that had been installed in the building pulled down (Mutegi 2013c). The banner was pulled down for only ten days after which it was reinstated by a court order (Mumo 2013). Commenting on the banner following public protests especially on social media, the then Minister for Youth and Sports, Mr. Hassan Wario is quoted as saying: “any interventions on historical sites should not be permanent, they should be controlled and done within a framework of proper consultations” (Mutegi 2013a). The banner was installed on a one-and-a-half-year contract worth Ksh. 41 million. It was put up all around the building on the 26<sup>th</sup> floor of the 28-storey building.



Figure 49. Kenyatta International Conference Center bearing the Samsung Brand  
Source: Field Study, 2015

#### **7.4 Commercialisation of street names through outdoor advertisements**

The adoption of corporate sponsor adverts below street names is another way in which toponyms are being commodified in Nairobi. These are also referred to as Street Ads whereby the corporate entities sponsor a street sign and pay a certain amount to the City County of Nairobi, and in return, they get to advertise their brand to a larger audience. Typically, the corporate brand comes below the street name. Figure 50 shows a street in Upper Hill area



Nairobi known as Kilimanjaro Road. This street on one end is a simple street name with no additions, while the other end of the street has a sign, which is much bigger and more elaborate. Below the street name, is the advertisement of Insurance Regulatory Authority (IRA) and an arrow showing the direction of the IRA. Hence, the street name in the second scenario serves a bigger role of providing direction and orientation as well as advertisement. Before corporate sponsors began targeting street names, there was an initiative called ‘adopt a light’ whereby companies would install a streetlight on any road in Nairobi and turn advertise themselves on the street light. However, this was not done within a proper policy framework, and the project failed to meet its objectives. The City County of Nairobi came up with a policy to direct this exercise called the *Outdoor Advertising and Signage Policy*. In the policy, street name signs are categorised as advertisements on road reserves. A typical advertisement for a street name post costs Ksh. 25,000 per year. This gives companies such as IRA a platform to advertise their products and services, and provides a revenue stream for the City County of Nairobi.



Figure 50. A street name sign post which has been commercialised through advertising  
Source: Author’s field survey, 2016

## **7.5 Chapter discussion**

### **7.5.1 Summary**

This chapter primarily focuses on the current trend of toponymic commodification through the sale of naming rights of public spaces to private corporations. This strategy has been utilised for decades in developed countries as a way for local governments to raise revenue for the management of these spaces and their overall budget. However, in Nairobi it is a relatively new initiative. The role of toponymy in the “creation of new place identities within broader economic development strategies” is continuing to grow (Light 2014, p. 143). Many cities around the world are aiming to be competitive and Nairobi is one of them. In sports, the city has wanted to be the host of many international events but the stadia were in deplorable conditions. The SSMB which is charged with the responsibility of managing the two National Stadia resorted to the privatisation of the naming rights in exchange for funds to revitalise the stadia. Similarly, iconic buildings such as KICC have also been taken through a similar path. The sale of naming rights exemplifies the role played by public-private partnerships in revitalising public spaces. One of the effects of globalisation is that international corporations such as Coca-Cola and Samsung have pursued buying of naming rights in Nairobi. Other public spaces that have been commercialised are street names through outdoor advertising. The case studies highlighted in this chapter show that the heritage value of public place names is being turned into economic value through the sale of naming rights. This process has resulted into contestations between the government, the private corporations and the public. Opinions regarding whether this new trend should be allowed to continue are varied as seen in the discourses discussed in this chapter. The subject of commercialising public place names and the contest between heritage and economic value is a useful addition to critical toponymic scholarship.

### **7.5.2 Toponymic value — heritage versus exchange value**

The case of sale or privatisation of naming rights in Nairobi has shown the contests arising from, on the one hand, the proposals to temporarily sell the naming rights of public spaces to private corporations in exchange for monetary support and the need to retain the current names for their heritage value. The lines are not clear as to who supports or opposes this newfound venture. This is because some people in government support the idea while others oppose it, the semi-autonomous government body charged to manage sports stadia — SSMB, started the initiative since government funding was not enough. However, sections of people in government, e.g.,

one-time minister in charge of youth and sports opposed the idea. Also in the public realm, some Kenyans have actively supported the sale of naming rights while others oppose the idea. In this chapter's discussions, it emerges that there have been attempts to mix both heritage and economic value through co-branding (e.g., Coca-Cola Nyayo National Stadium). This attempt failed. Some corporations have opted for the easier way, which is branding the stadia with their names, products, and services without officially changing the names of the public places. This is what happened with Safaricom who branded MISC-K and Britam who branded Nyayo National Stadium after Coca-Cola refused to co-brand the stadium. Hence in Nairobi, toponymic commodification still faces the challenge of a greater attachment to the heritage value of names versus the economic value. Co-branding or a forgoing of acquiring any naming rights on the side of the private corporations remains the only option at the current stage.

## **CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

### **8.1 Overview**

This study examines the evolution of place-naming (toponymy) trends in Nairobi from the colonial period, through the post-independence, up to the current (contemporary) time. The aim was to explore the meaning and processes that are behind these seemingly mundane symbolic representations about the identity of the urban landscape of Nairobi. The study was done in relation to the spatial politics of power, memory and identity and their manifestation in space. Three important political periods in Kenya were considered. The colonial (1899–1963), post-independence (1964–1990) and what has been referred to as the contemporary period (1991–2017). The contemporary period contains two phases: 1991–2008 (focusing on informality in informal settlements) and 2008–2017 (whereby the trend of toponymic commodification emerged).

These four chronological and toponymic thematic periods provide unique perspectives on how names have been inscribed on the urban landscape and how they have in-turn, influenced the symbolic landscape of the city. Each of the periods has a dominant toponymic theme which has led to its selection. In this conclusion chapter, the four analytical chapters of this thesis are synthesised to show how they are all logically fit together into one toponymic narrative of Nairobi.

### **8.2 Review of research objective and questions**

This study has been able to answer the main research objective which was: to investigate the meaning and processes behind the inscription of place names in Nairobi, and their role in the spatial politics of power, on the urban landscape. The study was based on critical toponymic theory and exemplified how the politics of naming have manifested on the urban landscape of Nairobi in a thematic and chronological format. The study sought to answer four fundamental questions which also formed the basis for the four analytical chapters that have been discussed. The questions were as follows: 1) How did toponymy emerge as a symbol of cultural and political dominance on the urban landscape in colonial Nairobi? 2) What was the role of toponymy in decolonising and Africanising the urban space in post-independence Nairobi? 3) How is toponymy manifested in contemporary Nairobi and especially in the informal settlement areas? 4) How is toponymic commodification, through place branding and sale of naming rights occurring in Nairobi?

The four analytical chapters were informed by an interpretive framework developed by Giraut et al. This interpretive framework coupled with the chronological toponymic conceptual framework that was developed for this study were used to organise this study into four analytical chapters, each one tackling one research question. This section gives a summary of the four analytical chapters: toponymy in British colonial Nairobi, street toponymic (re)inscriptions in post-independence Nairobi, toponymy in Nairobi's informal settlements, and toponymic commodification in Nairobi.

### **8.2.1 Toponymy in British colonial Nairobi**

The setting of the origin, growth, and development of Nairobi city as a railway town is described in detail in this chapter. Colonial Nairobi's physical structure and urban symbols were highly influenced by the British through the architecture of the buildings, monuments and other urban features. In addition to these symbols was a significant symbol, the names of places, streets, parks and neighbourhoods which so often goes unnoticed-toponymy. Toponymy as an intangible symbol, rightly fit among these other tangible features of the city and was used to reinforce the colonial hegemony.

Names of streets, businesses and the buildings that housed them were analysed in relation to how the city developed physically, economically as well as politically. The toponymy was dominated by British and Indians, whereas the Africans, who formed the bulk of the population were ignored. These three were the major ethnic groups in Nairobi. The names themselves showed the power imbalance which favoured the Europeans and alienated the Africans. Hence, what the Europeans presented as efforts to develop a modern town were only perceived as colonisation efforts by the native Africans. Many toponyms in the city commemorated British monarchs, colonial administrators in Kenya, settler farmers and prominent Indians. Hence, the racial inequalities were tightly linked to the symbolic construction of the city at the time. In this way, toponyms were a direct reflection of the cultural and political dominance of some groups over others.

### **8.2.2 Street toponymic (re)inscriptions in post-independence Nairobi**

Toponymy performed a great role as a symbol of change on the urban landscape in post-colonial Nairobi. Street naming and renaming in post-independence Nairobi evidenced that toponymy can and does create opportunities for engaging with and responding to the decisions of those in power, remembering and forgetting events and people in history, and rearticulating values in

pursuit of both political and nationalistic interest. Change in the street toponymy of Nairobi and other urban areas in Kenya was inevitable during the decolonisation of the landscape after independence. This process was not devoid of challenges. There were inconsistencies and unevenness owing to the diverse social, political and administrative interests. Consolidating all these interests into the street toponymy of Nairobi was an enormous task for the new government. From the analysis, it was clear that in the post-independence period, street toponyms played performative roles such as sites for justice restitution and reputational politics, spatial scales of memory, and symbols of ethnic diversity and unity on the urban landscape of Nairobi.

### **8.2.3 Toponymy in Nairobi's informal settlements**

The effect of globalisation on toponymy and the role of names as sites for contesting social and political injustices were well illustrated in this chapter, where the names in informal settlements were analysed. Urban informality is a reality in Nairobi, with over half the population living in these settlements — commonly referred to as slums. Taking the case of Nairobi, and further, taking three case studies (Kibera, Mathare, and Mukuru) among the many slum settlements, the study showed how names play an important role as symbolic representations of the daily struggles of urban life. The settlements are subdivided into villages, and the village toponymy was used as the main parameter for analysing toponymy in the informal settlements. The village names represent issues that people go through on a day to day basis, the condition of their environment, their achievements, even dreams, and aspirations and hence each settlement through its names represents a unique history and character.

Kibera's names talked more about the Nubian heritage as well as the ethnic diversity and socio-political struggles. Mathare settlements reflected more political struggles than Kibera. The settlement was a stronghold of the largest tribe in Kenya—the Kikuyu, who were highly involved in the struggle for independence through the Mau Mau rebel group. The struggle for multi-partism in Kenya was also highly connected to Mathare. Mathare has a layered toponymy, with the old names mainly celebrating the village pioneers and political administrators who were responsible for allocating land in the settlements. They further stamped their power by naming the areas they owned after themselves. The names are also highly influenced by the constant evictions and demolitions and ethnic conflicts. Mukuru on the other hand, being the newest settlement, reflected a more global toponymy — with up to five large villages in the settlement having foreign names. These names tended to identify mostly with countries or regions which

faced war in the 1980s and the 1990s when the settlement began. The three informal settlements' case studies present issues of marginalisation, ethnic heritage and conflicts, social and political injustices, the effect of globalisation and how these are translated into the toponymy of Nairobi.

#### **8.2.4 Toponymic commodification in Nairobi**

The chapter on toponymic commodification uses illustrative examples (case studies) to show how names of public spaces are being turned into commodities through the sale of naming rights. In addition, a case of outdoor advertising on street names signs has been discussed to show another aspect of toponymic commodification. From the three case studies on the sale of naming rights and place branding, it emerged that the sale of naming rights has not been fully embraced. Instead, place branding of public spaces using public corporations' names, brand colours, products, and services has been a more acceptable option, since the official name of the spaces are not changed. This has led to the conclusion that in Nairobi, the heritage value of names is still preferred over their economic or exchange value.

### **8.3 Research contributions**

Based on the four themes explored in this study, important research contributions — empirical and methodological, as well as theoretical, can be drawn.

#### **8.3.1 Empirical and methodological**

Empirically and methodologically, this study is useful in the following ways: 1) In the colonial period, this study showed explicitly how British colonial names were imprinted and how they served to impose a colonial political ideology on the urban landscape. British colonial names were retrieved from archival sources such as old maps, and plans, and the process of their inscription traced from books and monographs; newspaper articles as well as official government documents such as gazette notices and Hansard records. Through this process, it was possible to explain the connection between the toponymy of the time and the city pioneers — namely, the British. 2) In the post-independence period, the massive street name changes that occurred were identified, compiled and organised. These street name changes which were recorded by the City Council of Nairobi (CCN) and highly contested in the public sphere through the media and in parliament served to prove a key point of critical toponymy — that the process of naming is highly political. This section showed that the process of renaming places and more specifically streets during a major political change is not monolithic but can be highly contested and divisive. The information gathered from newspaper records and letter

correspondences from the CCN were important in showing how people contributed to the renaming process through their letters to the editor and opinion articles. A balanced view of government and public contribution in the renaming process was a novel finding in this section.

3) In the first phase of the contemporary period which focused on names of informal settlements, there were novel findings about the names of villages that make up the settlements. The names were obtained from online mapping sites for informal settlements in Nairobi, and their meanings from the extensive interviews carried out through Focus Group Discussions. Newspaper articles were also useful as supplemental sources of data on evictions, violence and other challenges faced in the informal settlements. The names of villages also referred to herein as the village toponymy were largely borrowed from places or events signifying violence or opposition to the ruling class. These included names such as Soweto (named after the Soweto Uprising in South Africa), Vietnam (named to signify the Vietnam War), Kosovo (named to signify the war in Kosovo). Other names also represented the physical conditions of the settlements for example, Mashimoni (Swahili word for holes), Mabatini (Swahili word for tins and or iron sheets), and Moto Moto (meaning ‘fire fire’ in Swahili). These names Mashimoni, Mabatini, and Moto Moto symbolised the difficult terrain on which the settlements are located; the inferior building materials used for housing; and the constant dangers that face the residents such as fires due to illegal electricity connections and congested buildings. Hence this study proved that names in informal settlements could be useful in understanding the social, political, economic and environmental problems facing residents of informal settlements.

4) In the second phase of the contemporary period, this study shows, through illustrative examples the contest surrounding the privatisation of naming rights of public spaces. Taking as an example the case of Nyayo National Stadium (NNS), a timeline of the debates surrounding the sale of the stadium’s naming rights to The Coca-Cola Company was created. This timeline, coupled with records of debates in parliament and newspaper articles regarding the renaming, showed how political the process was. NNS and other public spaces were used as illustrative examples of this emerging phenomenon otherwise known as toponymic commodification. Through use of illustrative examples, this study showed that in Nairobi, the heritage value of names still superseded the exchange value, since no single proposal on the full transfer of naming rights to a private company has succeeded yet, resulting in branding of spaces with company colours without change of names of those spaces has been the current trend.



### 8.3.2 Theoretical contributions

Theoretically, this study enhances the existing critical toponymic literature by positing that three major factors that have influenced toponymy on the urban landscape of Nairobi. These are: pioneership, ethnicity and globalisation.

This study posits that although the celebration of administrative and political leaders has been explored as a concept in critical toponymic scholarship, under the theme of commemoration, it has often been depicted as an honour bestowed on them by other people. However, this study shows that leaders can claim this for themselves, by branding themselves as pioneers. Pioneership has been an overarching issue in all the four themes that have been explored in this thesis in the following ways, 1) In the colonial period, in addition to the commemoration of the British monarchs, British colonial administrators, railway officials and settler farmers named streets, parks and other public spaces after themselves to signify that they were pioneers in the early development of the city. 2) In the post-independence period, names of streets and prominent public spaces and facilities were named after political leaders considered to be pioneers in the fight for independence. 3) In the contemporary period, names of informal settlements signified pioneer settler groups or individuals. Kibera, for example, comes from the Nubian word *Kibra*, which means jungle. The Nubians were the first settlers in Kibera, and the name signifies their pioneership. In Mathare informal settlement, the names of pioneers are reflected in the village toponymy. Many of the villages such as KiaNdururu, KiaMutisya, Kwa Nyang'au are named after their respective village elders who were also responsible for allocating land to the villagers. In Mukuru, the two main settlements: Kwa Njenga and Kwa Reuben are named after their initial settlers — Njenga and Reuben respectively, the latter being a white settler. The settlement was later demarcated into informal villages but those names remain to date. 4) Finally, the impact of pioneership is also felt in the latter phase of the contemporary period, whereby the public facilities which have been used as case studies were also named after pioneers of post-independence Kenya. For example, the first president of Kenya — Jomo Kenyatta, after whom Kenyatta International Conference Center is named and the second president of Kenya — Daniel Moi, after whom Moi International Sports Center Kasarani is named. These pioneer's names are considered by some to be of heritage value, and that is why it has been difficult to replace them with names of private companies.

The second overarching theoretical contribution is the role of ethnicity in the toponymic landscape of Nairobi. In this study, it emerged in the following ways, 1) In the colonial period,

the population of Nairobi was mainly distinguished based on racial ethnicities. The three main racial groups were Europeans, Asians, and Africans. The Europeans had the most political and economic power followed by the Asians and lastly the Africans, and this was reflected by the toponymy of Nairobi at the time. Most of the street names in colonial Nairobi were European, followed by Asian and least of all were African street names. Though Africans were the majority in terms of population, their presence was least felt and their identity least represented on the urban landscape of colonial Nairobi. 2) In post-independence Nairobi, and with the exit of the Europeans and many Asians, politics shifted from being racial to tribal, i.e., determined by ethnic tribes. In Kenya, there are more than 40 ethnic tribes. Some tribes such as the Kikuyu, Luo, and Luhya have high populations compared to tribes such as the Maasai and Turkana. The Kikuyu prided themselves in pioneering in the fight for independence through the Mau Mau movement. Many prominent political independence leaders came from that tribe. This dominance was opposed by other ethnic groups since independence was meant to bring about equality for all Kenyans. Debates surrounding street naming and renaming in post-independence Nairobi focused on the need to ensure that the street toponymic landscape represented ethnic equality among all the tribes in Kenya. 3) Ethnic politics had the biggest effect on the toponymic landscape of informal settlements in Kenya. Ethnic communities tended to occupy certain areas within the settlements and naming these areas in accordance to their preferences. A name like Kisumu Ndogo in Kibera was named as such because the predominant ethnic group is Luo, most of whom come from Kisumu in Western Kenya. Another village, Raila, was named after Raila Odinga in 2007 elections. Raila Village is mainly occupied by the Luo tribe (who fully supported his bid for the presidency at the time) and Kisii tribe, some who also supported him. Hence, the political affiliation of these groups led to the village name. The village toponymy in informal settlements in Nairobi was also a marker of ethnic territories.

The final theoretical contribution of this study was linking globalisation to toponymy in all the four periods investigated. 1) Colonisation of Africa by European powers was a manifestation of globalisation in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century, leading to a supplantation of European culture onto African soil using different means. One of the ways was through the naming of streets, neighbourhoods and public spaces such as parks. Nairobi hence bore the identity of a British City due to names such as Victoria Street, Princess Elizabeth Way among others. This study claims that this was the way in which globalisation influenced the toponymy of Nairobi during the colonial period. 2) In the post-independence period, the effect of globalisation was reflected

but more from a regional scope of influence, i.e., the African context. In addition to many street names in post-colonial Nairobi bearing names of Kenyan heroes of independence, they also bore names of honoured leaders of African descent from around the world. For example, in Nairobi Central District, there are streets named after people such as, Kwame Nkrumah — former president of Ghana and a pioneer of the pan-Africanism movement. Albert Luthuli — a South African activist who led the nonviolent struggle against the apartheid regime and for which he received the 1960 Nobel Peace Prize. Ralph Bunche — an African American and the 1950 Nobel Peace Prize winner for his role of mediation in Israel. This naming and renaming of streets in post-independence Nairobi celebrated not just Kenyan, but also globally recognised leaders. 3) In the first phase of the contemporary period, taking the case of informal settlements, a substantial number of them were named after other places in the world which had undergone violence and war. The people in the informal settlements identify with these struggles due to the constant evictions and demolitions they face in their settlements. They also inscribe these names to symbolise them fighting for their rights. These names include, Soweto — after the Soweto Uprising in South Africa; Kosovo, Vietnam, and Bosnia — due to the war and political struggles experienced in those countries. The names are evidence of the free flow of information in a globalised world, residents of informal settlements can know about events happening in other places in the world and identify with them enough to name their spaces after them. 4) In the second phase of the contemporary period, the privatisation or sale of naming rights of public building and facilities such as sports stadia was examined as an emerging phenomenon to address a contemporary urban challenge. This challenge is the continued dilapidation of public facilities and the lack of funds to manage or revitalise them. The managing institutions such the SSMB (Sports Stadia Management Board) have been forced to look for alternative funding schemes.

Following the worldwide trend of place branding and sale of naming rights, global and local corporates have taken this opportunity to fund the revitalisation of these public spaces in exchange for naming rights. In the current conditions of global complexity, brands can be seen as “global fluid” which is flowing across the world and is “uneven and unpredictable” as well as “super territorial and super organic” (Urry 2003, p. 60). Global companies such as Coca-Cola, Britam and Samsung are some the companies involved in these contracts. The fact that global corporates have been keen to venture into the Kenyan market for such opportunities shows the effect of globalisation on this current trend of privatisation of naming rights — which is also referred to as toponymic commodification.

#### **8.4 Synthesis and toponymic inference**

This thesis concludes by synthesising the main findings and contributions, and formulation of three main toponymic inferences based on the three periods: colonial, post-independence and contemporary (Figure 51). 1) The colonial period was characterised by the conquest of a new land by the British colonial government. This study has proved that the British used toponymy as a tool impose their political and cultural ideology. 2) In the post-independence period, the new government which was led by Kenyan leaders, most of whom participated in the struggle for independence, toponymy and, especially, street toponymy was re-written by erasing the British colonial names and inscribing African names that celebrated freedom and embraced a new spirit of unity and nationalism. The mass erasure of British colonial names and Indian names and the inscription of indigenous names was a powerful re-appropriation of toponymy by the new post-independence government. 3) The contemporary period is one of toponymic innovation and has been highly influenced by globalisation forces. First, the people in the informal settlements come up with names that delineate villages according to ethnic communities. Further, they embrace names of other places in the world that have undergone war and violence and identify with them. This informal toponymy, which comes from the people themselves is very innovative and communicates a powerful message about their struggles as a marginalised urban community. These names express the universal human experience of oppression, conflict, and desolation. Second, toponymic commodification is an innovative strategy for global companies to market themselves using public spaces and on the other hand, it provides a source of funds for those facilities to be improved so that they can serve the urban communities better. Hence the names of these public spaces have become marketable assets of cultural value or toponymic commodities whose heritage value is being transformed into an exchange value. The final toponymic inference of this research for the three periods, i.e., imposition, re-appropriation, and innovation, shows how toponymy in Nairobi has evolved over the years and how it has been instrumental in shaping the symbolic urban landscape of Nairobi.

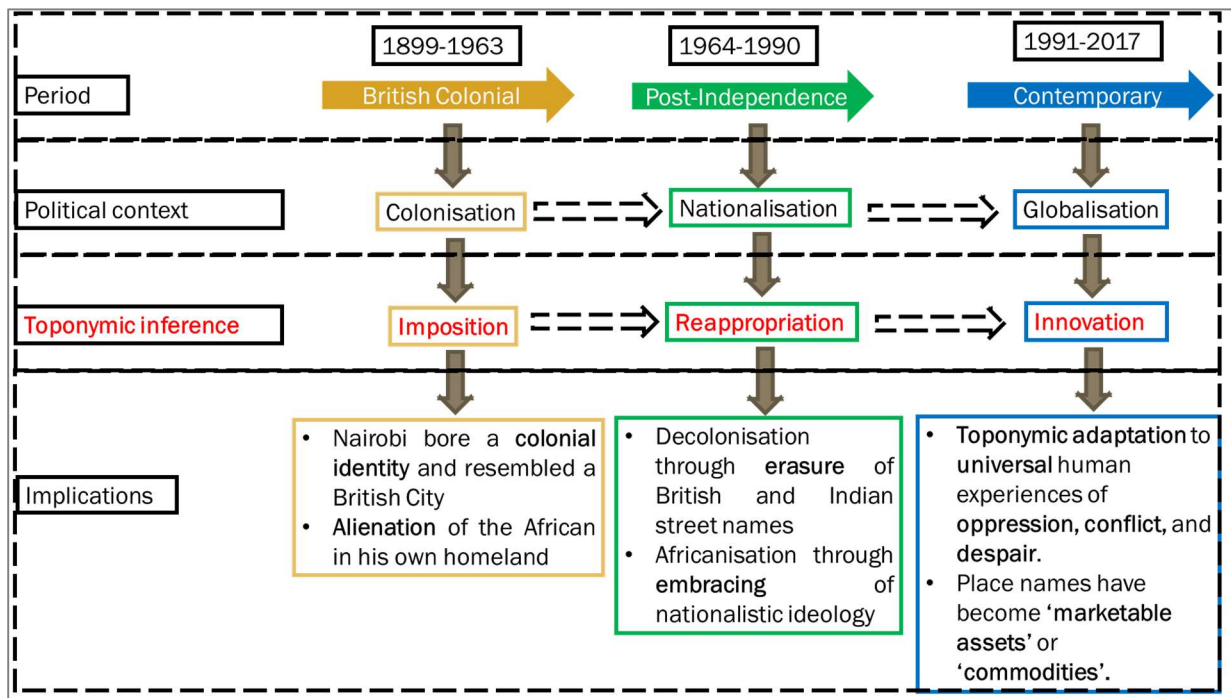


Figure 51. Toponymic inference on the urban landscape of Nairobi

Source: Author's construct

### 8.5 Further areas of research

This research has focused on the social, political, and economic processes that have influenced the inscriptions of place names in Nairobi over time and the relationship to critical toponymic discourses. In the case of Nairobi and other cities in the Global South, there is still much to be done in toponymic research.

First, the compilation of a comprehensive street name encyclopaedia for the whole of Nairobi. For this to be achieved, it will require that all the unnamed streets in Nairobi are named, and the meanings of the existing street names are searched and compiled. The encyclopaedia will provide a reference material for understanding the meaning behind street names in Nairobi and will act as a guide for future naming exercises. Moreover, the City County of Nairobi should update the 'annual law of naming and renaming streets and other allied places' which was formulated in 1972. The guidelines provided therein should be created to suit Nairobi in its current state of development in Nairobi.

Second, more research needs to be done on the commodification of place names especially in high-end neighbourhoods where names are used for promotional purposes. Currently, names that suggest an idyllic rural and serene environment such as gardens, heights, downs are used

for these neighbourhoods. Further, names of famous Kenyan tourist attraction sites such as, national parks, lakes, and rivers are also being used. These include names such as Sibiloi Court (Sibiloi is a national park), Amboseli (a national park and lake) among others. Hence, naming of modern neighbourhoods in Nairobi provides an interesting area for further research in toponymic commodification.

Third, further research on the 'broader history of spatial identification' or more specifically, the relationship between place naming and addressing or what is currently referred to as 'governmentality studies' (Rose-Redwood et al. 2010). This is in the wake of a growing advocacy for more studies to be done on governmentality and the politics surrounding the creation of calculable spaces (Rose-Redwood 2006, 2008). Place naming being a spatial practice, needs to be linked with practices such as addressing, creation of signage systems in the city as well as digital mapping. This will enable the creation of a more legible and navigable city with where utility functions such as geo-coding, postal coding, and coherent residential addressing systems can be implemented. In Nairobi, there is no proper addressing system hence it is difficult to locate a residence or business using google maps or other navigation tools. The postal services still use the post office box (P.O BOX) system whereby one must go to the post office to collect their mail. Proper place and street naming linked with house numbers and postal codes can be useful to the government regarding services such as tax collection, policing, and provision of emergency services. It is also useful for investors who wish to target potential consumers. Delivery services can also be improved in Nairobi if this is enforced. Currently, there is an overreliance on landmarks rather than exact addresses making the system quite inefficient.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Peer-reviewed articles, book chapters and conference proceedings

#### A-1.1 Peer-reviewed articles

1. Melissa Wangui WANJIRU and Kosuke MATSUBARA. Street toponymy and the decolonisation of the urban landscape in post-colonial Nairobi, *Journal of Cultural Geography*, Volume 34, Issue 1, January 2017, p. 1-23.
2. Melissa Wangui WANJIRU and Kosuke MATSUBARA. Slum Toponymy in Nairobi, Kenya. A Case Study Analysis of Kibera, Mathare and Mukuru. *Urban and Regional Planning Review (URPR)*. Volume 4, March 2017, p. 21-44.

#### A-1.2 Book chapters

1. Melissa Wangui WANJIRU. 「ケニア ー都市のアイデンティティ」 木田剛、竹内幸雄 (編) 『安定を模索するアフリカ』 ミネルヴァ書房、2017年3月、p. 246–256。
2. Melissa Wangui WANJIRU. 「ナイロビ—鉄道がつなぐアフリカ」 布野修司編 『世界都市辞典』 昭和堂. (2018 expected)

#### A-1.3 Conference proceedings and presentations

##### A-1.3.1 Peer-reviewed

1. Melissa Wangui WANJIRU and Kosuke MATSUBARA. The slum toponymy of Nairobi: a cultural arena for socio-political justice and symbolic resistance. *Proceedings of the 17<sup>th</sup> International Planning History Society Conference*. Held on July 17–21, 2016. Technical University Delft, The Netherlands.
2. Melissa Wangui WANJIRU and Kosuke MATSUBARA. Identity and interpretation of the built environment of Nairobi's CBD, through urban nomenclature: the transformation from a colonial to an indigenous city core. *Proceedings of the 16<sup>th</sup> International Planning History Society Conference*. Held on July 20–23, 2014. St. Augustine's, Florida, USA.

##### A-1.3.2 Not Peer-reviewed

1. Melissa Wangui WANJIRU. Toponymy and the Spatial Politics of Power on the Urban Landscape of Nairobi, Kenya. Paper presented at the workshop on “The Narratives of Africa Rising: Challenges and Opportunities for International Development and African Studies. Sophia University, Japan. December 9, 2017.

2. Melissa Wangui WANJIRU and Kosuke MATSUBARA. The Sowetos of Nairobi. Glocal toponymy and social justice in urban informal settlements. *Book of abstracts for the Tunisia-Japan Symposium (TJS)*. Held on September 17–18, 2016. University of Tsukuba, Japan, p. 24
3. Melissa Wangui WANJIRU and Kosuke MATSUBARA. Segregation as a basis for spatial segregation in Nairobi, Kenya. A Colonial Legacy. *Proceedings of the International Conference of Asia-Pacific Planning Society (ICAPPS)*. Held on August 26–27, 2016. Taipei, Taiwan, p. 160–163
4. Melissa Wangui WANJIRU and Kosuke MATSUBARA. Street naming and the scaling of memory: case of Tom Mboya Street, Nairobi, Kenya. *Book of abstracts for the Tunisia-Japan Symposium on Science, Society and Technology*. Held on February 23–24, 2016. University of Tsukuba, Japan, p. 136
5. Melissa Wangui WANJIRU. Street (re)naming and the contest for representation on the urban space: a case of post-colonial Nairobi. Workshop held at Reading University, U.K. February 17, 2016.
6. Melissa Wangui WANJIRU and Kosuke MATSUBARA. The perception of identity through the street nomenclature of Nairobi CBD. *Proceedings of the International Symposium on City Planning*. Held on November 6–8, 2014. Hanoi, Vietnam.
7. Melissa Wangui WANJIRU and Kosuke MATSUBARA. Building Nomenclature and Urban Identity: A case of Nairobi, Kenya. *Proceedings of the 10<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Architectural Interchanges in Asia*. Held on October 14–17, 2014. Hangzhou, China.

## Appendix 2: Data collection instruments

### A-2.1 Newspaper articles entry sheet

#	Date	Article title	Article summary or basic argument	Type of article (news, opinion or letters to the editor)	Author	Newspaper print (e.g. Daily Nation)
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						
8.						
9.						
10.						

### A-2.2 Entry sheet for street name changes in post-independence Nairobi (CCN minutes)

Area in Nairobi				
#	Old Name	Proposed Name	Adopted Name	Meaning/reason for name choice
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

### A-2.3 Individual interview guide

1. Informants information

Name	Age	Gender	Length of time lived in settlement	Occupation	Village

2. When did this settlement begin?
3. What were the circumstances that led to people settling here?
4. Where did the people who are settled here come from?
5. What is the origin of this village's name? When was this name given? Was there another name before this one?
6. What problems have you faced here with the government or the City Council of Nairobi?
7. Do you think those problems have led to the naming of this settlement as it is?
8. What do you know about the development of this settlement since its inception?
9. Do you think that the people living here identify with the name of this settlement? If so how and why?

## A-2.4 Interview guide for focus group discussions (FGDs)

### 1. Participants information

Name	Age	Gender	Length of time lived in settlement	Occupation	Village

### 2. Please give a brief history of this settlement

### 3. What are the villages constituting this settlement, their year of inception, name and meaning of the name?

Village name	Year of inception	Meaning of village name

### 4. Are there ethnic groupings within this settlement? If so which is the majority ethnic community per village?

Village	Majority ethnic community	Reason for ethnic grouping

### 5. Are there other areas or sub villages in this settlement? What are their names, the meanings of those names and their location within the settlement?

Sub village name	Meaning/reason for name	Location within the settlement

### 6. What (social, political, or economic) challenges do you face as residents in this settlement and what is the cause of them?

### 7. Do you as residents identify with the names in this settlement? If so how and why?

### Appendix 3: Example of street name changes in post-colonial Nairobi

(Obtained from the city council of Nairobi minutes of the town planning committee meetings held between 1973–1974)

#	Old name	New Name	Reason
	<b>Bernard Estate</b>	<b>Gitanga Estate</b>	<b>Name known by old residents</b>
1	Apple Cross Road	Mbabane Road	After Capital of Swaziland
2	Churchill Avenue	Kabarsiran Avenue	Last Scene of British conquest in Marakwet. Bombed in 1912.
3	Speke Road	Musa Gitau Road	The first African reverend of the presbyterian church
4	Hampton Road	Ewaso Ngiro Road	One of Kenya's main river in the Rift Valley
5	Hampton Park	Ewaso Ngiro Park	One of Kenya's main river in the Rift Valley
6	Rathfarnham Drive	Tugen Drive	Kenyan Tribe
7	Tara Road West	Manyani Road West	After detention camp during emergency
8	Newton Close	Jipe Close	After largest lake in Taita
9	Wellington Close	Nduma Close	Local food crop
	<b>Lavington Estate</b>	<b>Muthangari Estate</b>	<b>Area previously called Muthangari (couch grass)</b>
5	Cottesbrook Road	Mugumo Road	After famous Mugumo tree behind the end of colonisation prophesy
6	Pytchley Road	Ndoto Road	Ndoto Mountains in Eastern Province
7	Flowerdale Road	Mijikenda Road	Name of a tribal community in Kenya
8	Strathcona Road	Mzima Road	After Mzima Springs in Tsavo National Park
9	Torrindon Drive	Tende Drive	Swahili name for dates
10	Attadale Close	Huri Close	Huri Hills in Eastern Province
11	Riverside Drive West	same	The road runs along the river
12	Jacaranda Avenue	same	Jacaranda tree
13	Graffham Road	Ramisi Road	Ramisi River in Kwale District
14	Naseby Road	Naseby Road	Gede Ruins in Kilifi District
	<b>Park Road Area(1973)</b>		
1	Champa Lane	Irungu Lane	Main Kikuyu Rika which remains in power over 100 years
2	Nargis Crescent	Mwangi Crescent	Next Kikuyu Rika after Irungu
3	Nargis Lane	Mwangi Lane	Name of a person (Kikuyu tribe)
4	Chanam Singh Road	Giriama Road	Ethnic group in Kilifi district
5	Badrinath Road	Thingira Road	Traditional Kikuyu elders hut
6	Babu Allah Bux Road	Simbi Road	Small Lake in Karachuonyo
7	Neurgaonkar Road	Webuye Road	Town in Western Province
8	Delhi Road	Kinshasa Road	Capital of Zaire
9	Nahar Singh Road	Bilesha Road	Bilesha Plains in North Eastern Province
10	Madras Road	Yaounde Road	Capital of Cameroon

## Appendix 4: Focus group discussions (FGDs)

### A-4.1 List of FGD participants (names removed for privacy purposes)

#### 1. Kibera – Nubian council of elders (7<sup>th</sup> September 2016)

Name	Position	Years lived in Kibera	Gender
	Chairman, Nubian Council of Elders	-	Male
	Coordinator, Nubian Council of Elders	-	Male
	Member Nubian Council of Elders	-	Male
	Community Organiser, Kibera Slum	-	Male
	Research Assistant from Umande Trust	-	Male

#### 2. Kibera Community members (27<sup>th</sup> May 2016)

Name	Village	Years lived in Kibera	Gender
	Kianda	-	Male
	Laini Saba	-	Male
	Gatwekera	-	Male
	Gatwekera	-	Male
	Makina	-	Male

#### 3. Mukuru kwa Reuben and Kwa Njenga Informal Settlements (24<sup>th</sup> May 2016)

Name	Village	Years lived in Mukuru	Gender
	Kosovo	15	Female
	Wes-Nya	15	Female
	Gateway	9	Male
	Simba Cool	15	Male
	Rurie	27	Female
	Feed the Children	14	Female
	Bins	25	Female
	Mombasa	34	Female
	Zone 48	10	Male
	Milimani	15	Male
	Sisal	25	Male
	Moto Moto	21	Female

#### 4. Mathare Informal Settlements (Mathare Police Station on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2016)

Name	Village	Years lived in Mathare	Gender
	Mathare 4B	40	Female
	Kosovo	37	Female
	Mathare 3B	40	Male
	Mathare No.2	37	Male
	Kiamutisya	35	Female
	Kiamutisya	38	Female
	Coordinator Mathare Community Centre	44	Male



## A-4.2 Example of coded transcription of Kibera (Nubian Council of Elders) FGD

Date: September 7, 2015

<p><b>Elder 2:</b> Kibera consists of many villages and Langata was one of the villages in Kibera. Therefore, it was wrong to have Kibera as a village within Langata. What is now Jamhuri was previously Sarang'ombe.</p>	<p>Codes (9410-10179) Nubian heritage in Kibera</p>
<p><b>Elder 1:</b> Sarang'ombe means grazing ground. Nubians used to keep cattle.</p>	
<p><b>Elder 2:</b> So everybody would go graze their cows at Sarang'ombe. Sara means to look after and ng'ombe means cows. But we have a very good word for ng'ombe which is Bagara. So previously it was Sara Bagara but it was too much for them, so it was easy for them (other tribes) to say Sarang'ombe. So the actual (original) boundaries of Kibera were City mortuary, Mbagathi way, Langata Police Station and then it joins towards Kenya science, that side, the show ground e.t.c. So that was the extent of Kibera.</p>	<p>Codes (10188-10387) Nubian fighting for their rights</p>
<p><b>Elder 1:</b> When the IIEBC were delimiting or creating new constituency boundaries, we put in a petition, and because of that we managed to get a Kibra Constituency. Ken Okoth is the Member of Parliament (MP).</p>	<p>Codes (10396-10820) Nubian heritage in Kibera</p>
<p><b>Elder 2:</b> By 1880, people were already in Kibra. My great grandson was in Kibra by 1889. His name is in the original map of Kibra. He is among the people who were the initial settlers. Kibra was surveyed in 1917 and then commissioned in 1918, but it was existing, people were living, its only to demarcate. The map we have is of 1934, with the owners and the acreage they own, about 400 people, and also the grazing places available. This map was obtained from KNA in 1998, a Danish researcher obtained it, but when we went as Nubians, everything was hidden from us. We were surprised that a foreigner could access these things, but us, we couldn't access. Some pictures were moved from the KNA to the Marumbi collection.</p>	<p>Codes (10820-10821) Nubian heritage in Kibera Government bureaucracy</p>
<p>Some information regarding Kibra and the Nubians, even if you were to go to London, where the colonial records were kept, you might not be able to find them.</p>	<p>Codes (10821-11265) Government bureaucracy</p>
<p><b>Elder 1:</b> This is actually very bad because it leaves the nation with gaping holes.</p>	
<p><b>Elder 2:</b> The government itself has failed in providing civic education to tell Kenyans, who are the Nubians? Hence people only know the Nubians in a negative light. "We hear you came with the colonialists; you came from Sudan" sometimes somebody says "go back to your country". People do not know what we contributed to this country.</p>	<p>Codes (11357-11682) Independence period</p>
<p>The young people who do not know the history think that we came here as colonialists. But our role was different at that time. During the fight for independence we supported the Mfua Mau and gave them weapons/guns. Due to collaboration with the Mau Mau, the Nubians were not given their titles, but the Indians and the Europeans were. All the 18 settlements in Kenya all do not have these titles. These are: Mazeras in Mombasa, Meru, Isiolo, Nanyuki, Eldama Ravine, Mogotio, Mumias, Kabarnet, Kibigori, Kibos, Kisii, Kericho, Kaptumo, Kitale. None of these have titles. Most have allotment titles. Only the Nubians were not given titles. The house in which Kenyatta was hosted in during the emergency is still there. The era of 'the envelope'. In the Army Library in Eldoret, there is a picture of a man called Khamis Juma, a Nubian RSM and MBE. He hailed from Makina in Kibra. There were about 5 RSM (Regimental Sergeant Majors) who were Nubians.</p>	<p>Codes (11809-11896) Nubian fight for Kenya independence</p>
	<p>Codes (11896-11897) Nubian fight for Kenya independence Colonial period</p>

## Appendix 5: Example of newspaper reports (retrieval spreadsheet) for street name changes

(The articles are arranged chronologically)

	Date	Title	Basic Argument/Content	Type of Report	Writer
1.	January 1, 1952	Street named after Nairobi Pioneer	A road linking Govt Rd and Princess Elizabeth Way named after Sergeant Ellis, Sgt. Ellis Avenue	Article	Standard Reporter
2.	June 3, 1952	Suggested Names for New roads	Unnamed roads in Industrial Area to be named after industrial centers in UK, after residents registered difficulty in locating premises: City Engineer, H.R. Bridger said	Article	Standard Reporter
3.	November 17, 1961	Streets named after men who built Kenya	African governments contemplated changes to be made after achieving independence. Notable were Dar-es-salaam and Nairobi who replaced foreign name and honored foreigner respectively.	Opinion article	Colin Gibson
4.	December 4, 1963	Kenyatta Ave	NCC agreed to rename Delamere Ave to Kenyatta Ave after a report from Local Govt	Article	Standard Reporter
5.	February 4, 1964	Street Names Group formed	Sub-committee by General Purposes Committee to rename Princess Elizabeth Way	Article	Standard Reporter
6.	April 8, 1964	City Council changes street names	NCC approved without comment, a resolution to change some street names in Nairobi	Article	Standard Reporter
7.	April 26, 1964	What's in a name?	Some questioned changing of colonial names across E. Africa e.g. King George VI to Kenyatta National Hosp. and some streets in Nairobi	Article	Standard Reporter
8.	July 3, 1964	Moves for renaming more City streets	Renaming streets, statues, monuments after independence by NCC. Demolish some features like fountain for celebrating independence suggested.	Article	Standard Reporter
9.	November 6, 1964	Preserve historical street names	renaming western section of Grogan Road to Kijabe Street raised concerns	Article	Standard Reporter
10.	September 30, 1965	Roads named for leaders	President Jomo named 2 roads at Jamhuri Park, Kaunda Rd&Kenyatta Way, during an ASK Show	Article	Standard Reporter
11.	February 9, 1966	City roads renamed	NCC changed names of roads to State House to reflect its new status: Hosp Hill-Mackenzie; Caledonian-Statehouse Rd.	Article	Standard Reporter
12.	July 29, 1966	Street names under review	Minister explained legal procedure for renaming streets in the country during parliamentary session	Article	Standard Reporter
13.	April 5, 1967	City Rejects Ruling on Street names	NCC Gen. Purposes Committee disagreed with Min. Local Govt for rejecting their recommendations due to allowances row	Article	Standard Reporter
14.	April 19, 1967	Nairobi's Grogan Road to be Pinto Road soon	NCC proposed changes to: Grogan-Pinto; Donholm-Jogoo; Quarry Rd (Lower Kabete)-Kapenguria Road	Article	Standard Reporter

## Appendix 6: Example of newspaper articles on eviction related land disputes in Nairobi's informal settlements

(The articles are arranged chronologically)

No	Date	Title	Synopsis/Content	Settlement	Writer	Newspaper
167	25 October 1989	Faced with eviction: Laini Saba village to be demolished	An eviction notice was served by Govt to Laini Saba residents to vacate land and give way for the construction of mortgage houses by the NHC. Notice was signed by local chief on behalf of his D.O.	Kibera	Joseph Nyanoti	Kenya Times
168	15 May 1990	Move to pull down 300 houses opposed.	Members of Kariobangi Housing and Settlement Cooperative Society appealed to the Office of the President to nullify a resolution by the directors to demolish over 300 shanties at the sprawling Kiamaiko slums.	Kiamaiko	Kimani wa Mwangi	Daily Nation
169	23 August 1990	Kanu officials back demolition of slums	Kanu Maendeleo ya Wanawake officials issued a statement backing demolition of buildings in Quarry village, Dandora. They said APs did well to rid place of unwanted structures put up by wealthy persons pretending to be poor.	Quarry	Opala Kennethy	Daily Nation
170	13 November 1990	Another village flattened in city	Over 150 families of Kyambio village, Eastleigh, rendered homeless when askaris and APs pulled down their houses. No quit notice was given.	Kyambio	Xavier Lugaga	The standard
171	21 November 1990	Huge shanty village demolished in city	A combined force of city askaris, youth wingers and administration descended on the sprawling Kibagare village and gave residents 20 minutes to vacate. They bulldozed the shanties as panic-stricken mothers and children could not stop crying.	Kibagare	Muthui Mwai	The standard
172	22 November 1990	70 slums demolished	Armed APs and city askaris flattened about 70 slum shanties of the sprawling Kangemi village, leaving thousands homeless	Kangemi	Mwicigi Njoroge	Kenya Times
173	22 November 1990	Kangemi shanties flattened	City Commission askaris demolished temporary structures at Kangemi market.	Kangemi	David Rogoncho	Daily Nation
174	23 November 1990	Askaris flatten more Kibagare shanties	City askaris, armed security men and Kanu youth wingers flattened what had remained after the last Tuesday's massive demolition operation.	Kibagare	Wainainah Kiganya	Daily Nation
175	23 November 1990	More shacks pulled down in city clean-up	Over 10,000 people evicted after City Commission askaris continued demolition of shanty dwellings in Kibagare village near Kangemi. Residents were forced to demolish their shanties as city askaris supervised.	Kibagare	Eliud Miring'uh	Kenya Times

## Appendix 7: Research permission documents


### A-7.1 Research permit from Nacosti

**THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:**  
**MISS. MELISSA WANGUI WANJIRU**  
**of UNIVERSITY OF TSUKUBA, 0-8573**  
**Japan, has been permitted to conduct**  
**research in Nairobi County**

**on the topic: TOPONYMIC**  
**INSCRIPTIONS AND URBAN IDENTITY IN**  
**NAIROBI, KENYA: ASSESSING THE**  
**HISTORICAL AND CURRENT DYNAMICS**  
**OF PLACE NAMING.**

**for the period ending:**  
**31st March, 2017**


**Permit No : NACOSTI/P/15/2691/6864**  
**Date Of Issue : 24th July, 2015**  
**Fee Received : Ksh 2,000**



*[Signature]*  
**Applicant's**  
**Signature**

*[Signature]*  
**Director General**  
**National Commission for Science,**  
**Technology & Innovation**

### A-7.2 Receipt of research permit fee

 **KCB** Date: 02/06/2015

**CREDIT ADVISE**  
**CASH DEPOSIT**

**KCB SYOKIMAU**  
Account AT **KCB KIPANDE HOUSE**

**ACCOUNT DETAILS**  
A/C NO: 1104162547  
A/C REF: 005241970364  
NAT COMM FOR SCI ,TECH AND INNOV  
Current Account-Corp Inst. Banking

We have credited your above account with **2,000.00 KES**

**Kenya Shillings TWO THOUSAND ONLY**

**CASH PAID IN BY: MELISSA WANGUI WANJIRU**  
**RESEARCH PERMIT FEE**


**Signature** *[Signature]*

Transaction Number: TT151536WKDS at 13:19:41 On 02/06/2015

Thank you for banking with us. You were served by: **ROSALIA NTHAMBI KINYUNGU**

\*\*\* Advice not valid unless Transaction Number is shown \*\*\*

PAP 1064 Brnsm Version 11 (Revised Sep 2010)



A-7.3 Permits for access to Kenya National Archives (2015-2018)

Permit No. 18960

Name: MELISSA WANJIRA

Address: 2908-00100 NBB

Valid from 2/9/15 to 3/9/16

KENYA NATIONAL ARCHIVES  
P. O. Box 49210  
NAIROBI

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RENEWAL DATES:  
1 .....  
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Permit No. 19874

Name: Melissa Wangui Wanjira

Address: .....

Valid from 20/03/17 to 20/03/18

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A-7.4 Cards for access to various libraries in the UK

