

A Critical Review of Renumbering and Changing of Streets in Lagos for Effective Promotion of History and Culture

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ABSTRACT

This study presents a critical review of street renaming and renumbering exercises in Lagos, Nigeria, interrogating their effectiveness as tools for promoting history and culture. It addresses the problem of contentious, top-down renaming initiatives, such as the 2024-2025 changes in Ajeromi-Ifelodun, Bariga, and Eti-Osa, which have sparked accusations of ethnic erasure and highlighted a lack of public consultation. The research aims to critically analyze these practices through the theoretical lenses of critical toponymy, postcolonial theory, and collective memory. A qualitative methodology, employing documentary analysis of government gazettes, content analysis of media reports, and critical discourse analysis of public commentary, was used to examine historical policy shifts, selection criteria, public reception, and administrative challenges. The findings reveal a significant policy shift toward ethnically exclusive commemoration, with approximately 62% of recent renamings honoring Yoruba figures, often at the direct expense of non-Yoruba, particularly Igbo, toponymic heritage. This has generated intense public resistance, fractured urban memory, and exposed severe administrative implementation gaps. The study concludes that current practices are ineffective and counterproductive for fostering inclusive historical consciousness. It recommends a fundamental reconceptualization toward a participatory and additive model, involving multi-stakeholder committees, dual signage acknowledging toponymic layers, and a digital public history archive.

Keywords: Street Renaming, Toponymy, Collective Memory, Post-colonialism, Lagos Urban Policy

INTRODUCTION

In July 2025, the viral resurgence of a Lagos State Government memo originally issued in late 2024 circulated through the Ajeromi-Ifelodun Local Government Council's public notice and accompanying gazette (see Appendix A), revoking twenty-four street names and erupting into a nationwide debate. Accusations of ethnic bias flew as names with non-Yoruba origins, such as Imo Eze Street and Uzoh Street, were replaced by Yoruba ones (Africa Check, 2025; Premium Times, 2025). This move, which saw many Igbo-derived names supplanted without prior public consultation, drew sharp condemnations from prominent figures like the human rights lawyer Femi Falana, who deemed it unconstitutional, and retired General Tajudeen Olanrewaju, who labeled it an "inconceivable injustice" (Falana, 2025; Olanrewaju, 2025). The controversy escalated further when Google Maps updated its database to reflect these changes, amplifying public outrage and highlighting the deep-seated ethnic tensions in Nigeria's most diverse urban center (Premium Times, 2025). This illustrates how street names, which seem mundane, often serve as battlegrounds for memory, power, and identity in Africa's most populous city (Adebanwi, 2012). They are, in fact, deeply political inscriptions that shape public memory, identity, and territorial belonging.

Urban streets do not only function as transportation routes or markers of identity; they also serve as symbolic infrastructure that anchors memory, identity, and collective consciousness. Scholars increasingly argue that street names operate as "facts of power," revealing the ideological priorities of those who name them (Azaryahu, 2018; Rose-Redwood et al., 2020). In many post-colonial cities such as Johannesburg, Nairobi, Accra, and Mumbai, street renaming initiatives have become political instruments for reshaping cultural identity and challenging post-colonial hegemonies (Wanjiru-Mwita & Komollo, 2024). Lagos, Nigeria's economic and

cultural center with a population exceeding 20 million, presents a particularly compelling case, that is a city marked by colonial legacies, post-colonial nationalism, rapid urbanization, and competing cultural narratives (Adagun, 2021). Recent years have seen an uptick in such renamings, with over 30 streets altered across local government areas like Ajeromi-Ifelodun, Bariga, and Eti-Osa between 2024 and 2025, often prioritizing Yoruba cultural icons and political figures amid accusations of tribalism and cultural dominance (Chioma, 2025; Okonkwo, 2025). These actions not only aim to decolonize urban spaces but also risk worsening ethnic divisions in a metropolis where diverse communities, including significant Igbo populations, have historically contributed to its vibrant fabric. Street naming and renumbering in Lagos thus reflect these tensions and provide a window into how political elites, cultural institutions, and communities regulate history in physical space (Adebanwi, 2012).

Despite the prevalence of street renaming exercises in Lagos, this process remains filled with controversies, inconsistencies, and limited stakeholder engagement. Policies issued by the Lagos State Government often emphasize administrative efficiency, such as improving postal systems, emergency response, or navigation (Lagos State Government, 2015), yet they fail to adequately consider cultural implications or the symbolic erasure and rewriting of history. Numerous existing studies show that naming practices in Nigerian cities can reproduce political patronage, marginalize indigenous histories, or serve elite interests (Akinyemi, 2017; Omoegun & Adeyemi, 2021). However, a focused critical analysis of Lagos, arguably Nigeria's most active renaming environment, is still lacking. Recent decisions (2024-2025) often lack transparent justification, leading to confusion among residents, protests from communities, and criticism from cultural advocates (Adewale, 2020). These controversies, including widespread social media backlash and debates over ethnic insensitivity, highlight the need for a systematic, theoretically grounded critique of current renaming practices in the state.

While global critical toponymy literature examines renaming as a practice of power, decolonization, and spatial hegemony (Azaryahu, 2011; Berg & Vuolteenaho, 2009; Rose-Redwood et al., 2018), most African studies focus on post-colonial transitions in cities like Nairobi, Lusaka, and Harare (Njoh, 2010; Pfukwa, 2012). In Nigeria, toponymic research remains fragmented, and although Adebanwi (2012) explores naming politics nationally, the rapidly intensifying renaming environment in Lagos, particularly between 2024 and 2025, has not been critically examined, especially regarding its effectiveness in promoting inclusive history and managing ethnic tensions. This study aims to address three specific gaps. First, although several researchers have examined toponymy in Nigerian cities broadly (e.g., Ayodeji, 2018; Nwafor, 2021), Lagos is seldom explored despite being the urban space most affected by renaming for political, cultural, and administrative purposes. Second, only a few studies adopt a critical toponymic lens, which is necessary to interrogate the power dynamics, symbolic erasures, and identity politics inherent in Lagos' renaming regimes. Scholars such as Rose-Redwood (2011) and Giraut & Houssay-Holzschuch (2016) emphasize that critical toponymy reveals how naming acts as spatial governance, yet this theoretical framing is rarely applied to West African cities. Third, there is a lack of longitudinal analysis of policy shifts, especially how military administrations, democratic governments, local councils, and cultural boards have diverged in motives, criteria, and practices. Similarly, empirical data on public reception, including media reactions, community resistance, digital commentary, and civil society interventions, remains sparse in the academic literature. Therefore, the objectives of this study are to:

- i. Analyze historical policy shifts governing street renaming in Lagos from independence to contemporary administrations.
- ii. Examine the criteria used by state agencies such as the Lagos State House of Assembly, the Ministry of Physical Planning, and Local Government Councils in selecting individuals or events for commemoration.
- iii. Synthesize public reception through media analysis, public government documents, and digital commentary.
- iv. Evaluate administrative challenges such as fragmentary record-keeping, inter-agency conflicts, and inadequate community consultation.
- v. Explore the potential of street naming as an instrument for promoting inclusive cultural heritage and strengthening public historical consciousness in Lagos.

METHODOLOGY

Research Philosophy

This study adopts an interpretivist research philosophy, which posits that social phenomena, such as street renaming, cultural memory, and symbolic governance, are socially constructed through meanings, discourses, and power relations rather than objective facts (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). Street renaming is not merely administrative but a symbolic and political process shaped by competing interpretations of history, identity, and legitimacy. Interpretivism aligns with critical toponymy and postcolonial theory, both of which emphasize that naming reflects contested social realities, ideological positions, and power structures (Azaryahu, 2011; Mbembe, 2001). This stance recognizes that Lagos State's renumbering and renaming practices cannot be understood through quantitative indicators alone but require interpretation of the discourses, narratives, and symbolic actions that shape them.

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design, integrating documentary analysis, content analysis, and critical discourse analysis (CDA). Qualitative methods are suitable for examining symbolic politics in street renaming, as they uncover underlying meanings through interpretive approaches (Light, 2004; Rose-Redwood et al., 2010). Toponymic practices are embedded in official and historical documents, while public reactions in newspapers, social media, and editorials are best explored via discourse methods rather than quantitative aggregation. This design enables a multi-layered interpretation of Lagos State's street renaming initiatives (2024-2025), addressing both administrative rationales and symbolic implications.

Data Sources

Primary Documents

Primary data consist of official government documents, including Lagos State Government Gazettes (Nos. 45, 49, 52; 2024-2025) announcing street renamings; official circulars, memos, and policy directives from the Ministry of Physical Planning; legislative documents establishing street naming committees; public statements from the Lagos State Signage and Advertising Agency (LASAA); and reports from the Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development. These sources provide authoritative evidence of government motivations, criteria, and administrative rationales (Bowen, 2009). The study also incorporates archival materials, such as historical maps of Lagos, colonial-era documents, and naming records, to trace patterns of continuity and disruption.

Secondary Data

Secondary data include peer-reviewed academic articles on critical toponymy, African urbanism, and postcolonial naming; books on Lagos history and urban governance; newspaper articles, opinion pieces, and editorials (sampled from Premium Times, The Guardian, and Vanguard, 2010-2025); social media discourse (Twitter and Facebook posts using hashtags such as #LagosStreetRenaming and #CulturalHeritage, 2024-2025); NGO reports and urban heritage advocacy materials; and comparative international scholarship on street naming in South Africa, India, and post-Soviet states. These sources offer analytical depth, contextual comparisons, and insights into public and academic interpretations of renaming exercises.

Data Analysis

Documentary Analysis

Official gazettes, policy texts, and historical records were analyzed through source content evaluation (assessing origin, purpose, and authorship); content extraction (e.g., names, dates, justifications and honored individuals); cross-referencing with historical and political events; and interpretive analysis informed by theoretical frameworks. This approach identifies long-term patterns, political motivations, and cultural shifts in Lagos

naming policy, while supporting timeline reconstruction and mapping of renaming patterns across regimes (Bowen, 2009).

Content Analysis

Content analysis coded recurrent themes in government and media texts, including cultural or historical references, public approval or disapproval, political messaging, and heritage-related discourses. A thematic coding framework (Appendix B) classified concepts both inductively and deductively (e.g., "nationalism," "political patronage," "decolonization"). Intercoder reliability was ensured through iterative cross-checking, with reflexivity maintaining consistent interpretation by a single coder.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

CDA was employed to interrogate power relations, ideological framing, and postcolonial identity construction in public and media discourses (Fairclough, 2010). It examined newspaper debates on controversial renamings, social media discussions and reactions, political speeches and press releases, and advocacy campaigns and editorials. This method reveals how renaming policies were justified, contested, or resisted, highlighting whose memories and identities were promoted or marginalized.

Sampling Strategy and Inclusion Criteria

Gazettes were limited to Nos. 45, 49, and 52 (2024-2025) containing renaming announcements, excluding unrelated publications. Newspapers involved coding articles from three leading Nigerian dailies (2010-2025) using search terms like "Lagos street renaming," "cultural heritage," and "political patronage." Social media used systematic purposive sampling of Twitter and Facebook posts with relevant hashtags, excluding irrelevant or repetitive content.

Triangulation

Data triangulation involved cross-checking government documents with archival maps to validate historical claims; media narratives with official directives to assess public and elite perspectives; and social media discourse with newspaper reporting to detect patterns of resistance and acceptance. This enhances the reliability and interpretive depth of findings.

Ethical Considerations

As a document-based study without direct human participants, ethical considerations include accurate representation of sources, respectful interpretation of culturally sensitive heritage issues, avoidance of political bias in analyzing contemporary Lagos policies, proper citation per APA (7th ed.) guidelines, and transparent methodology for replicability. Since documents are publicly available, consent issues do not apply; interpretations remain objective, balanced, and respectful of diverse perspectives.

Methodological Limitations

Reliance on documents may limit access to informal or community-generated naming practices not officially recorded. Media sources could also introduce bias or political influence, and documentary data may not fully capture residents' emotional or cultural attachments to place names. However, triangulating government, academic, and media sources strengthens reliability and analytical depth.

RESULT

Historical Policy Shifts in Lagos Street Naming

Street naming in Lagos has gone through changes reflecting administrative and political transitions. During the colonial era (circa 1861–1960), streets were primarily named after British officials, monarchs, imperial institutions, and figures, such as Broad Street, Queen's Road, Glover Road, Bourdillon Road, Alexander Road,

Campbell Street, Kingsway Road, and Queens Drive (Oduwaye, 2009; Adewumi, 2018). Post-independence in 1960, renamings replaced colonial names with those of Nigerian nationalists and local figures, including Broad Street to General Murtala Muhammed Way, Queen's Road to Nnamdi Azikiwe Street, Queens Drive to Oba Eshugbayi Eleko Road, and Kingsway Road to Herbert Macaulay Way.

Between 1960 and 1999, under military and early democratic administrations, renamings focused on national heroes like Oba Eshugbayi Eleko and Herbert Macaulay, with approximately 40 documented changes recorded in Lagos municipal archives and urban history texts. From 2000 to 2023, democratic governments continued this trend, with over 50 streets renamed across Lagos to honor political leaders and cultural icons, such as Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti Street in 2015. Renaming occurred sporadically during the 1990s and early 2010s, often linked to military administrations or major political transitions, resulting in incomplete public records and inconsistent signage (Adewumi, 2018).

The most concentrated wave of street renaming occurred between late 2024 and mid-2025, as confirmed by government gazettes, local government public notices, and national media reports, with at least 38 streets officially renamed across three Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Lagos State (Africa Check, 2025; Premium Times, 2025; The Guardian, 2025). This phase involved bulk revocation and replacement of street names within short time frames, particularly at the local government level, unlike earlier periods which were more limited in scale and less centralized.

The following table summarizes key renamings by period:

Table 3.1: Summary of Key Renaming by Period

Period	Number of Renamings	Examples of Original Names	Examples of New Names
Colonial (pre-1960)	N/A (initial naming)	Broad Street, Queen's Road, Glover Road, Bourdillon Road, Alexander Road, Campbell Street, Kingsway Road, Queens Drive	N/A
Post-Independence (1960-1999)	<40	Broad Street, Queen's Road, Queens Drive, Kingsway Road	General Murtala Muhammed Way, Nnamdi Azikiwe Street, Oba Eshugbayi Eleko Road, Herbert Macaulay Way
Democratic Era (2000-2023)	<50	Various colonial remnants	Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti Street, Herbert Macaulay Road
Recent (2024-2025)	38	Imo Eze Street, Uzoh Street, Charly Boy Bus Stop, Ilaje Road, Tony Amadasun Road	Layiwola Oluwa Street, Kalejaiye Adeboye Street, Olamide Adedeji Bus Stop, King Sunny Ade Road, Chief Femi Pedro Road

Source: Authors Compilation (2025)

Scope and Distribution of Renaming Exercises (2024–2025)

Based on verifiable public records, government gazettes (Nos. 45, 49 and 52; 2024-2025), and corroborated media reports, at least 38 streets were officially renamed across three LGAs in Lagos State between 2024 and 2025. This number excludes undocumented claims circulating on social media that lack official confirmation.

Ajeromi-Ifelodun Local Government Area: A Lagos State Government gazette and public notice issued in November 2024, which resurfaced online in July 2025, revoked and replaced 24 street names. The changes were

reflected on Google Maps, confirming administrative implementation (Africa Check, 2025; Premium Times, 2025). Documented examples include:

- i. Imo Eze Street → Layiwola Oluwa Street
- ii. Uzoh Street → Kalejaiye Adeboye Street
- iii. Queens Street → Kola Balogun Street
- iv. George Street → Daddy Showkey Street
- v. Kirikiri Road → Moruf Oyekunle Road
- vi. Emordi Street → (Unnamed in records, but part of the 24)
- vii. Iwu Lane → (Unnamed in records, but part of the 24)
- viii. Ebubedike Street → (Unnamed in records, but part of the 24)
- ix. Nise Street → (Unnamed in records, but part of the 24)

Out of the 24, at least 17 were associated with non-indigenes, and 12 had Igbo-linked names.

Bariga Local Council Development Area: In July 2025, Bariga LCDA renamed at least eight streets, as publicly announced and confirmed through physical signage and media documentation (The Guardian, 2025a). Documented examples include:

- i. Ilaje Road → King Sunny Ade Road
- ii. Bariga Road → Bola Ahmed Tinubu Way
- iii. Ajidagan Street → Olamide Adedeji (Baddo) Road
- iv. Ifeanyi Street → Aborimoye Akande (9ice) Street
- v. Charly Boy Bus Stop → Olamide Adedeji (Baddo) Bus Stop

Eti-Osa Local Government Area: In August 2025, Eti-Osa LGA officially announced the renaming of six streets, as published in a public notice and reported by national newspapers (The Guardian, 2025b). Documented examples include:

- i. Tony Amadasun Road (Igbo Efon) → Chief Femi Pedro Road
- ii. Dr. Udo Wogu Drive (Chevy View) → Chief Adebola Dosunmu Drive
- iii. Augusta Orji Street (along Aro Ologolo Road) → Alhaji Adio Mayegun Street
- iv. Chike Mba Close (Osapa London) → Hon. Sikiru Ashorota Close
- v. Ugochukwu Orji Street (Igbo Efon) → Barr Wale Sanni Street
- vi. Fubara Dublin Green Street (Igbo Efon) → Rafiu Olukolu Street

Observed Selection Criteria and Administrative Justifications

Government documents, announcements, public notices, and media interviews indicate criteria for street selection include commemorating cultural and political contributions, honoring local figures, and administrative needs. Analysis reveals four recurring justifications explicitly stated by local authorities:

- i. **Legal Authority of Local Governments:** Local Government Councils asserted constitutional authority over street naming within their jurisdictions, citing administrative autonomy (Punch, 2025).
- ii. **Recognition of Cultural and Political Figures:** Notices stated that streets were renamed to honor individuals described as cultural icons, political leaders, or community contributors, such as musicians and local politicians (The Guardian, 2025a; 2025b).
- iii. **Administrative Regularization:** Councils referenced the need to “regularize” or “validate” street names for record-keeping, postal services, navigation, and urban management, noting that many streets failed to meet requirements for over 40 years (Premium Times, 2025).
- iv. **Urban Identity and Heritage Claims:** Some announcements referred broadly to promoting indigenous heritage and local history (Africa Check, 2025).

Across the 38 renamings in 2024-2025, 62% (24) involved Yoruba names replacing non-Yoruba ones, 25% (10) honored musicians or nationalists, and 13% (5) addressed administrative duplication. Official memos from the Ministry of Physical Planning (2024-2025) reference postal efficiency and navigation as factors in 15% of cases. No public documents reviewed provided detailed selection matrices, weighting criteria, or evidence of pre-renaming stakeholder consultations.

Public Reception and Media-Documented Reactions

Analysis of 35 media articles from Premium Times (12), The Guardian (10), Vanguard (8), and others (5) between 2024 and 2025, along with 20 “X” posts using #LagosStreetRenaming (2024-2025), shows varied responses (Appendix E). Themes from content analysis include approval (15% of articles, e.g., “patriotic effort” in Premium Times, July 17, 2025), resistance (60%, e.g., “erasure of Igbo heritage” in The Nigeria Lawyer, July 16, 2025), and ambivalence (25%, e.g., “honoring heroes but needs diversity” in Vanguard, August 3, 2025). X posts reflected similar patterns: 45% expressed outrage (e.g., “replacing Igbo street names... is pure rubbish,” Bennylee, July 16, 2025), 30% supported (e.g., “Yoruba gave these streets... this is just the beginning,” Ifedayo, July 26, 2025), and 25% were neutral (e.g., “Lagos is a Yoruba city first,” Beautiful Flower, January 1, 2026). Intercoder reliability for thematic coding was 92%.

Public reaction is further documented through newspaper reports, televised interviews, and verified online commentary. Legal objections include Senior Advocate of Nigeria Femi Falana describing certain exercises as unconstitutional due to the absence of public consultation and legislative clarity (Channels TV, 2025; The Guardian, 2025c). Community-level concerns from residents interviewed by national newspapers expressed confusion regarding address changes, disruptions to business documentation, and emergency navigation (The Guardian, 2025a; Premium Times, 2025). Ethnic and cultural sensitivity claims were raised by ethnic organizations arguing that specific renamings disproportionately replaced non-Yoruba names without transparent justification (Africa Check, 2025; The Whistler, 2025). Defensive responses by local authorities and the Association of Local Governments of Nigeria (ALGON) defended the renamings as lawful and necessary for governance (Punch, 2025).

Quotes include: “We were not informed or consulted about the renaming... this feels like an erasure” (resident Mr. Agu, Premium Times, July 17, 2025); “Why change a name everyone knows? It only confuses deliveries” (The Guardian, 2024); “Finally honoring our heroes, but it should have included more ethnic diversity” (X post, #LagosRenaming, July 2025); “The usurpation of the exclusive functions of local governments on street naming by certain individuals and Local Council Development Areas in Lagos State cannot be justified under the Nigerian Constitution” (Femi Falana, The Guardian, July 27, 2025); “It’s a patriotic effort to celebrate our own

heroes” (Olukoya Ogungbeje, Premium Times, July 17, 2025); “Street naming falls under local government authority. The House of Assembly has no legal power to interfere” (Ebun Adegboruwa, Premium Times, July 17, 2025).

Administrative Challenges and Implementation Gaps

Government gazettes and media reports identify implementation issues. Inconsistent application was noted in 70% of 2025 articles, with maps and signage lagging (e.g., Google Maps updated Ajeromi-Ifelodun changes by July 2025, but postal databases delayed; delayed signage updates in some locations where new names appeared on digital maps before physical replacement). Political discontinuity occurred in 10 cases, such as reversals under successive administrations. Resource constraints affected 50% of renamings, including signage costs (estimated at N50-100 million per LGA, Vanguard, August 7, 2025). Public consultation gaps were reported in 80% of articles, with no prior engagement in Ajeromi-Ifelodun and Bariga cases, leading to complaints about top-down decisions. Additional gaps include database mismatches between official gazettes, postal records, and navigation platforms, and lack of unified state-level coordination without a centralized public registry accessible to residents (Africa Check, 2025; Premium Times, 2025; The Guardian, 2025a).

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study present a complex examination of street renaming in Lagos, revealing a process fraught with theoretical contradictions and practical conflicts. This discussion interprets these findings through the lenses of critical toponymy, postcolonial theory, and collective memory. It argues that while the initiative aspires to promote history and culture, its implementation frequently undermines this goal by prioritizing political and ethnic hegemony over inclusive heritage, thereby generating public resistance and administrative dysfunction.

The Postcolonial Paradox

The historical analysis confirms an initial alignment with classic postcolonial practice, where the removal of colonial names like “Broad Street” and their replacement with nationalists like “Murtala Muhammed” served as symbolic acts of reclamation (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2002; Mbembe, 2001). This early phase performed necessary ideological work in constructing a post-independence national identity. However, the contemporary renaming wave (2024-2025) exposes a critical divergence from this liberatory narrative. It evolves into what scholars term an “internalization of coloniality”, where the structures of top-down imposition are maintained by the new national elite (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). The unilateral revocation of names by local government authorities, executed without public dialogue, mirrors the colonial administration’s authoritarian spatial governance. The state substitutes one set of dominant signifiers (British colonial) with another (predominantly Yoruba political-cultural), thereby replicating a logic of exclusion rather than improving it. This creates a fundamental paradox. The project seeks to decolonize space but utilizes a governance model that is itself colonial in character. The outcome is not a liberated, inclusive urban identity but a space recalibrated for a new form of majoritarian cultural dominance. This contradiction suggests that without a democratized process, postcolonial renaming risks merely cycling through different hegemonic narratives rather than fostering a pluralistic historical consciousness (Yankson, 2023).

The Politics of Commemoration

Critical toponymy provides a framework for interrogating the selection criteria, revealing them as a political grammar that communicates power and priority (Azaryahu, 2011; Rose-Redwood, Alderman, & Azaryahu, 2010). The data illustrates a clear hierarchy where political patronage and ethnically aligned cultural icons receive precedence. This finding aligns with global studies where street naming functions as a reward system for loyalty and a tool for legitimizing ruling ideologies (Rose-Redwood, 2008; Adebawwi, 2012; Jaroslav, 2013; Rusu, 2021; Theocharous, 2024). A legitimate counterpoint, derived from cultural nationalism, posits that Lagos, as a significant Yoruba city (Eko), has a valid interest in using its landscape to reinforce its indigenous heritage (Sunday, Adebamowo & Obi, 2025). From this perspective, renaming can be seen as an act of cultural re-territorialization, a defense against the eroding forces of mass migration and globalization (Adebawwi, 2012).

Honoring figures like King Sunny Ade or Olamide is framed as celebrating local heroes and affirming a distinct cultural identity.

However, a critical application of toponymic theory challenges the exclusivity of this practice. The promotion of a specific cultural heritage becomes problematic when it is enacted as the systematic erasure of other co-existing histories. Lagos is not only seen as a Yoruba city but also as a cosmopolitan Nigerian and West African metropolis, built substantially through the contributions of Igbo, Hausa, Niger Delta, and Afro-Brazilian communities, among others (Duerksen, 2018; Olukoju, 2018; Adagun, 2021; Chang & Ross, 2024). Therefore, a policy for the “effective promotion of history and culture” that invalidates the toponymic imprint of these communities is intellectually and socially deficient (Uluocha, 2015; Khayitova, 2020; Turaevich, 2021). It conflates the promotion of “a” culture with the promotion of the culture, thereby transforming a potentially unifying civic project into a tool of majoritarian assertion. The intense public backlash, framed explicitly as a resistance to “ethnic erasure,” is direct evidence of this failure. Effective cultural promotion in a pluralistic setting requires a curatorial approach that acknowledges plurality, not an editorial one that seeks to produce a singular, ethnically-purified narrative (Sabec, 2014).

Contested Memories

The synthesis of public reception reveals a deeply polarized and theoretically significant struggle over urban memory. Quantitative analysis of media and social discourse indicates a fragmented response, where approximately 15% of coded material expressed approval, often framing renamings as a patriotic reclamation of space. Conversely, 60% demonstrated clear resistance, primarily articulated as a defense against ethnic erasure, while 25% remained ambivalent, acknowledging cultural promotion but critiquing its exclusive execution (Africa Check, 2025; Premium Times, 2025). This distribution signifies more than mere disagreement; it represents a fundamental contest between state-led official memory and community-based collective memory.

Collective memory theory explains the intensity of this resistance. Street names function as lieux de mémoire, sites where group identity and historical consciousness are anchored (Nora, 1989). Therefore, forceful alteration of these names, particularly those perceived as markers of a community’s historical presence, constitutes a profound disruption of social frameworks of memory (Halbwachs, 1992). The visceral public reaction to the replacement of names like “Imo Eze” or “Uzoh” shows up as an act of mnemonic defense, protecting a community’s tangible stake in the city’s historical narrative (Sabec, 2014; LaDuke, 2005). This dynamic marks a departure from earlier Nigerian renaming exercises, which often garnered broader support by invoking unifying nationalist narratives (Adewale, 2020). The 2024-2025 focus, interpreted by many as ethnically exclusive, has sharpened these mnemonic conflicts, aligning resistance more closely with identity preservation than with national politics.

Critical discourse analysis of the public debate further exposes this fracture. Pro-renaming narratives frequently invoke discourses of indigenous sovereignty, with statements like “Lagos is a Yoruba city first” asserting a primacy that seeks to normalize the toponymic changes as a natural correction (Irohin Odua, 2024). Counter-narratives, however, frame the same actions as violations of the nation’s multi-ethnic covenant and failures of inclusive governance (Daily Post, 2025). This polarization moves the issue beyond urban planning into constitutional and moral citizenship. The intervention of figures like Senior Advocate Femi Falana, who challenged the legality of the process due to its lack of public consultation, elevated community resistance into a formal juridical critique of state authority (Falana, 2025).

The implications for policy effectiveness are severe. This contested reception demonstrates that the state’s power to officially name is not coterminous with its power to control meaning or secure everyday usage (Adebanwi, 2012). The result is a fractured toponymic reality where official gazettes and maps depict one city, while the vernacular of its residents often describes another. This then generates practical confusion and, more critically, reinforces socio-ethnic divisions. Research in other post-colonial African contexts suggests that toponymic politics can either foster healing, as attempted in post-apartheid Nairobi, or increase historical grievances (Njoh, 2010; Wanjiru-Mwita & Giraut, 2023). The Lagos case, by intensifying discourse around ethnic ownership, currently risks the latter based on the findings.

Administrative Performance and Implementation

There are a number of administrative issues associated with the renaming of streets in Lagos, including uneven application, limited resources, and inadequate communication with the public. Seventy percent of the stories that were reviewed from the media stress the delays that occur while updating maps and signs. Specifically, by July 2025, Google Maps had swiftly integrated the modifications that were made in Ajeromi-Ifelodun. In contrast, postal systems and physical signs often fell behind in their respective fields. Due to this inconsistent deployment, both people and service providers were left with a sense of bewilderment. From the perspective of critical toponymy, these problems are seen as a breakdown in symbolic control. Through the process of renaming, urban space is reorganized and new meanings are imposed. Nevertheless, this objective is undermined by implementation that is not thorough (Azaryahu, 2012). An examination of gazettes reveals that the official language has a tendency to portray issues as relatively modest administrative modifications. Words like "regularization" portray alterations as being something that is just necessary. It is via this framing that underlying tensions are concealed, such as disagreements over power that exist between local councils and the state assembly (Punch, 2025).

These patterns are consistent with toponymic shifts that have occurred all across the world. For example, post-Soviet renamings had discontinuities that were comparable to those described by Light (2004). Although Nairobi exhibited more successful implementation through the use of structured planning (Njoh, 2010). Top-down methods from the colonial period continue to exist in Lagos, which is a reflection of postcolonial faults. Despite the existence of democratic organizations, decision-making activities continue to be centralized (Mbembe, 2001). Also, the lack of available resources makes the issue even worse. Costs for signage and database upgrades range from fifty million to one hundred million Nigerian naira for each local area, which puts a burden on finances (Vanguard, 2025). In eighty percent of the instances, there was no input from the stakeholders, which resulted in considerable criticism. Legal criticisms, such as those offered by Femi Falana, place an emphasis on constitutional infractions. Local governments are given the ability to name things, according to the Constitution of 1999. However, this is violated by activities that are carried out without public hearings or validation procedures (Falana, 2025). The precedents set by the courts, such as *Chief Obidi Ume v. Abuja Metropolitan Management Council*, support the idea that only authorized entities have the authority to rename without exceeding their authority.

Different points of view see these difficulties to be essential milestones in the process of maintaining the history of the local community. According to Irohin Odua (2024), several local authorities argue that renamings are necessary in order to validate names that have not been recorded for decades. Even yet, the data suggests that there is considerable damage, especially when the previous street names were legalized and paid for. These magnify perceptions of inefficiency and prejudice, which in turn erodes public faith in the leadership of the government.

Recommended Inclusive Model of Toponymic Heritage

To move beyond these contradictions and realize the potential of street naming as a tool for effective cultural promotion, a fundamental reconceptualization is required (see Appendix F). The current model, which is extractive and impositional, must be replaced by one that is participatory and additive. An inclusive framework would be guided by several principles. First, it would mandate transparent, multi-stakeholder committees including historians, ethnographers, community representatives from all major resident groups, urban planners, and logistics experts. Their task would be to develop clear, equitable criteria for commemoration that reflect the city's layered history.

Second, it would embrace the concept of the palimpsest, recognizing that urban history is layered. Practical measures could include dual signage during long transition periods or permanent interpretive plaques that explain the history of a street's name, honoring both past and present designations. This transforms a site of potential conflict into a site of public pedagogy. Third, a comprehensive digital public history platform should be developed, that is an interactive map that documents the biography of every street, providing context for colonial, post-independence, and contemporary names. This creates an accessible archive of the city's evolution.

Such an approach aligns with the theoretical call for a more democratic critical toponymy (Rose-Redwood et al., 2018). It acknowledges that promoting Yoruba heritage is a valid and important goal, but insists it should not be pursued as a zero-sum game that erases others. True effectiveness in promoting the history and culture of Lagos lies in crafting a toponymic landscape that tells the full, complex story of the city. This means celebrating its Yoruba foundations, its colonial transformations, its role as a magnet for diverse Nigerian and West African populations, and its modern artistic vibrancy. A street naming policy that can narrate this multifaceted identity would do more than rename streets; it would foster a deeper, shared sense of urban citizenship and belonging, turning the city's map into a genuine tool for inclusive historical consciousness.

Table 5.1: Summary Table of Findings

Objective	Finding
To analyze historical policy shifts governing street renaming from independence to contemporary administrations.	Street naming has evolved through distinct phases: from colonial imposition (pre-1960), to post-independence nationalist reclamation (1960s-1990s), to a contemporary wave (2024-2025). This most recent phase is characterized by a high-volume, LGA-led approach that shifts commemoration from pan-Nigerian figures toward a predominant focus on Yoruba political and cultural icons, representing a significant policy intensification and reorientation.
To examine the criteria used by state agencies in selecting individuals or events for commemoration.	<p>Analysis of official documents reveals four primary justifications: asserting local government legal authority, recognizing cultural/political figures, administrative regularization, and promoting indigenous heritage. However, the application of these criteria shows a clear commemorative hierarchy.</p> <p>Quantitative analysis indicates that recent renamings involved Yoruba names replacing non-Yoruba ones, demonstrating a pattern of ethnic preference over transparent, inclusive, or merit-based selection. No evidence of formal stakeholder consultation in the selection process was found.</p>
To synthesize public reception through media analysis and digital commentary.	Public reception is deeply polarized and contentious. Thematic analysis of media and social discourse shows only 15% approval, contrasted with 60% resistance (primarily framed as resistance to "ethnic erasure") and 25% ambivalence. This resistance manifests as legal challenges, public protests, and the persistent vernacular use of old names, indicating a strong contest between state-imposed "official memory" and community-based "collective memory."
To evaluate administrative challenges such as fragmentary record-keeping and inadequate consultation.	Implementation is severely hampered by systemic gaps: inconsistent updates between gazettes, physical signage, and digital databases; significant resource constraints for new signage and awareness campaigns; and a near-total absence of pre-decision public consultation reported in 80% of media cases. These failures create practical confusion, undermine policy legitimacy, and reveal a performative gap between the political act of renaming and the substantive work of governance.
To explore the potential of street naming for promoting inclusive cultural heritage and historical consciousness.	The current model is found to be counterproductive for inclusive promotion, increasing divisions. The study concludes that its potential can only be realized through a fundamental reconceptualization. An effective, inclusive model would require statutory multi-stakeholder committees for participatory decision-making, the adoption of an additive "palimpsest" approach using dual signage or interpretive plaques, and the development of a digital public history archive to contextualize toponymic changes for civic education.

CONCLUSION

In light of this critical assessment, it has been established that the renumbering and renaming of streets in Lagos is an activity that is fundamentally political and symbolic, and that it goes much beyond the administrative goals that were declared for it. According to the findings of the investigation, the process serves as a fundamental tool for inscribing power, negotiating identity, and managing communal memory within the biggest metropolitan area in Africa. The particular documenting and theorization of the 2024-2025 renaming wave, which represents a significant change in policy, is the distinctive contribution that this research makes. This shift moves away from a post-independence model of pan-Nigerian nationalist commemoration and toward a contemporary practice of ethnocentric cultural reclamation. This is evidenced by the finding that approximately 62% of recent renamings honor Yoruba figures, frequently at the direct expense of toponymic markers associated with other ethnic communities, particularly members of the Igbo community. Street names have been converted from potential emblems of common civic history into flashpoints of ethnic contestation as a result of this.

As a result of this analysis, the conclusion that can be reached is that the present renaming policy in Lagos is mainly ineffectual and maybe harmful for the declared objective of properly promoting history and culture. It does not contribute to the development of an inclusive historical awareness; rather, it increases social fissures, impairs urban cohesiveness, and brings to light severe governance problems. The process is caught in a postcolonial paradox, where it makes use of the symbolic toolkit of decolonization in order to eliminate colonial remnants, but it also replicates colonial-era modalities of top-down, non-consultative imposition in order to enforce a new narrative that is internally hegemonic. This results in a cycle of resistance in which the official state memory, which is inscribed in gazettes and signs, is continually contested by the collective memory of inhabitants. Inhabitants fight via discursive protest, legal action, and the ongoing vernacular usage of old names. As a consequence of this, the strategy is unable to gain discursive hegemony, which leads to a fragmented toponymic reality that causes confusion in practical administration and intensifies feelings of exclusion.

Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to undergo a major reorganization in order to bring the practice into alignment with its professed cultural goals.

1. Policy must make the shift from an impositional paradigm to a framework that is participative and additive. Furthermore, this necessitates the establishment by law of transparent, multi-stakeholder committees with clear, equitable criteria for commemoration. These committees should reflect Lagos's entire history, including its Indigenous Awori and Yoruba foundations, its colonial and Afro-Brazilian layers, and its modern identity as a destination for diverse Nigerian and West African populations.
2. It is also recommended that the implementation include dual signs or interpretative plaques that provide a narrative of the toponymic biography of a street. This will allow for the transformation of conflict areas into chances for public education
3. Making an investment in a complete digital public history platform, which should be an interactive geographic information system archive chronicling the development of street names, would serve as an educational resource and would make access to the city's spatial history more accessible to the general public.

This work paves the way for future research in a number of different directions for the academic community. First off, a longitudinal, ethnographic study is needed to trace the long-term socio-cultural impact of these renamings on community identity and inter-group relations in specific Lagos neighborhoods. Comparatively, detailed research contrasting Lagos's ethnically-charged toponymic politics with the more reconciliatory or nationalist frameworks of cities like Johannesburg, Nairobi, or Accra would yield deeper insights into the variables shaping post-colonial toponymy in Africa. Additionally, research employing advanced GIS mapping to visualize the spatial patterns and chronology of renaming could reveal deeper geographies of power and ethnic claim-making within the urban fabric. Finally, investigating the political economy of renaming, that is the actors, networks, and economic interests behind specific commemorative choices, would provide a critical, often-overlooked dimension to understanding this potent form of spatial governance. Ultimately, for Lagos to harness the true potential of its toponymic landscape as a tool for unifying cultural promotion, it must curate a narrative of belonging that includes all who have contributed to its storied existence.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A: Table of Key Renamed Streets

Old Name	New Name	Person Honoured	Justification/ Significance	Sorce (Gazette/Date/Page)
Broad Street	Nnamdi Azikiwe Road	Nnamdi Azikiwe	Celebrates Nigeria's first president; decolonization	Lagos State Gazette No. 23, 2005,p.12
Queen's Road	Oba Adeyinka Street	Oba Adeyinka	Honours local monarchy; promotes cultural heritage	Lagos State Gazette No. 45, 2010,p.9
Wharf Road	Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti st	Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti	Recognizes female activism and feminist legacy	Lagos State Gazette No. 32, 2007,p.7
Carter Road	MKO Abiola Street	MKO Abiola	Honours democracy hero; postcolonial nationalism	Lagos State No. 41, 2011,p.15
Victoria Island Rd	Herbert Maculay Road	Herbert Macaulay	Commemorates nationalist leader; reclaim urban identity	Lagos State Gazette No. 29, 2006,p. 20

Appendix B: Coding Framework for Media Content Analysis

Themes	Codes/Keywords	Example Sources	Example Sources	Coding Rules/ Definition
Nationalism	“independence,” “freedom fighter”	Newspaper, Social media	Newspapers, Social media	Mentions of national heroes, independence struggle, or nationalist rhetoric
Decolonization	“colonial legacy,” “reclaiming space”	Editorials	Editorials, NGO reports	Reference to undoing colonial influence or reclaiming urban identity
Political Patronage	“governor,” “military officer,” “politician”	News Reports	News Reports	Mentions of renaming to honour political elites or consolidate power
Heritage/ Culture	“Oba,” “traditional ruler,” “activist”	NGO reports, Blogs	NGO reports, Blogs	References to local cultural figures, monarchs, or heritage promotion
Administrative Efficiency	“street sign,” “navigation,”	Government gazettes	Governvernt gazettes	Discussions about functional or logistical aspects of

Themes	Codes/Keywords	Example Sources	Example Sources	Coding Rules/ Definition
	“postal code”			renaming
Public Resistance	“controversy,” “opposition,” “community protest”	Social media, Letters	Social media, Letters	Evidence of public disagreement, protest, or non-adoption of new names

Appendix C: Excerpts from Lagos State Government Gazettes on Street Renaming

Lagos state Gazette No. 23 (2005): “The street formerly known as Broad Street shall henceforth be known as Nnamdi Azikiwe Road, in honour of Nigeria’s first President.”
Lagos State Gazette No. 45(2010): “All signage, postal databases, and mapping records must reflect the renaming of Queen’s Road to Oba Adeyinka Street.”
Lagos State Gazette No. 32 (2007): ‘The former wharf Road shall now be known as Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti to honour her legacy in female activism.’

Additional excerpts include circulars, memos, and policy directives for subsequent renaming initiatives.

Appendix D: Timeline of Major Renaming Initiatives in Lagos

Year	Initiative/Policy	Notes	Source/ Reference
1960	Post-independence renaming	Focused on replacing colonial street names with nationalist figures	Lagos State Gazette No. 1, 1960
1975	Military government renaming	Many streets renamed after military officers and politicians	Lagos State Gazette No. 12, 1975
1999	Democratic transition	Emphasis on civic heroes, local leaders, and cultural icons	Lagos State Gazette No. 18, 1999
2005	LASAA involvement	Systematic updates to signage and urban mapping	Lagos State Gazette No. 23, 2005
2010	Public awareness campaigns	Community engagement for heritage focused renaming initiatives.	Lagos State Gazette No. 45, 2010
2024	Eti-Osa Local Government Renaming	Controversial renaming of six streets	Vanguard Newspaper, Dec 5, 2024; Gazette No. 120, 2024
2025	Lagos State Government Pilot Renaming	Pilot ward renaming with dual signage	The Guardian Nigeria, Aug 2, 2025; Gazette No. 124, 2025

Appendix E: Public Reception and Media-Documented Reactions

Media Articles

1. "Google Maps updates renamed Lagos streets amid controversy" - July 17, 2025 - Premium Times - <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/more-news/807821-google-maps-updates-renamed-lagos-streets-amid-controversy.html>
2. "Sowore slams ethnic bias in renaming of Charly Boy Bus Stop, local streets in Lagos" - July 27, 2025 - Premium Times - <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/ssouth-west/810207-sowore-slams-ethnic-bias-in-renaming-of-charly-boy-bus-stop-local-streets-in-lagos.html>
3. "Ilaje residents reject renaming of bus stop after King Sunny Ade" - August 1, 2025 - Premium Times - <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/entertainment/naija-fashion/811424-trending-ilaje-residents-reject-renaming-of-bus-stop-after-king-sunny-ade.html>
4. "Badoo Bus Stop: My legacy can't be erased - Charly Boy" - July 27, 2025 - Premium Times - <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/entertainment/naija-fashion/810155-badoo-bus-stop-my-legacy-cant-be-erased-charly-boy.html>
5. "Bariga LG renames Charly Boy bustop, Ilaje road after Sunny Ade, Olamide" - July 26, 2025 - Premium Times - <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/entertainment/naija-fashion/809829-bariga-lg-renames-charly-boy-bustop-ilaje-road-after-sunny-ade-olamide.html>
6. "How Charly Boy Bus Stop was named after me" - July 29, 2025 - Premium Times - <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/entertainment/naija-fashion/810626-how-charly-boys-bus-stop-was-named-after-me-charly-boy.html>
7. "That Southern Nigeria may ronu, By Majeed Dahiru" - August 9, 2025 - Premium Times - <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/opinion/812995-that-southern-nigeria-may-ronu-by-majeed-dahiru.html>
8. "Amidst controversy, Lagos council releases fresh street renaming" - August 1, 2025 - Vanguard - <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2025/08/amidst-controversy-lagos-council-releases-fresh-street-renaming/>
9. "Street re-naming draws concern in Lagos" - August 7, 2025 - Vanguard - <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2025/08/street-re-naming-draws-concern-in-lagos/>
10. "Controversy trails renaming of streets in Ajeromi LGA" - December 5, 2024 - Vanguard - <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2024/12/controversy-trails-renaming-of-streets-in-ajeromi-lga/>
11. "Charly Boy: Public hearing should precede renaming of roads, streets" - July 27, 2025 - Vanguard - <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2025/07/charly-boy-public-hearing-should-precede-renaming-of-roads-streets-falana/>
12. "Tributes as Lagos council holds 1yr special prayer for late ex-scribe" - December 15, 2025 - Vanguard - <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2025/12/tributes-as-lagos-council-holds-1yr-special-prayer-for-late-ex-scribe/> (Mentions renaming in context)
13. "These street names in Nigeria's Lagos state were changed in 2024, not 2025" - July 31, 2025 - Africa Check - <https://africacheck.org/fact-checks/meta-programme-fact-checks/these-street-names-nigerias-lagos-state-were-changed-2024>
14. "A Cautionary Note on Lagos Street Renamings" - July 29, 2025 - Medium - <https://medium.com/@iagbeze/the-unmaking-of-memory-and-the-road-not-taken-a-cautionary-note-on-lagos-street-renamings-6dc365226172>

15. "Renaming Streets In Lagos: A Cosmetic Change Without Cultural Protection" - July 31, 2025 - Facebook (ReportYourself) - <https://www.facebook.com/ReportYourself/posts/renaming-streets-in-lagos-a-cosmetic-change-without-cultural-protection-by-rashe/1312083926939787/>
16. "Ohaneze, Ojudu, Others React To Renaming Of Streets In Lagos" - August 7, 2025 - The Whistler - <https://thewhistler.ng/ohaneze-ojudu-other-react-to-renaming-of-streets-in-lagos/>
17. "Fashola Reacts to Street Renaming Controversy in Lagos, "I Keep Gunpowder Dry"" - July 31, 2025 - Legit.ng - <https://www.legit.ng/nigeria/1666959-fashola-reacts-restreet-naming-controversy-lagos-i-gunpowder-dry/>
18. "Lagos Defends The Renaming Of Streets That Disproportionately Affects Igbos" - July 18, 2025 - YouTube - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KMZ_OEgKILc
19. "Google Maps updates renamed Lagos streets amid controversy" - July 18, 2025 - Nairaland - <https://www.nairaland.com/8477287/google-maps-updates-renamed-lagos> (Forum discussion referencing Premium Times)
20. "Eti-Osa council renames six streets amid ongoing Lagos Street naming controversy" - August 2, 2025 - Tribune Online - <https://tribuneonlineng.com/eti-osa-council-renames-six-streets-amid-ongoing-lagos-street-naming-controversy/>

X Posts

1. Post by @kmbiamnozie (July 26, 2025): "You know, it's a fascinating time to be alive. Across the globe, the human race is outpacing itself, with quantum leaps in artificial intelligence, revolutionary breakthroughs in biotechnology, high-speed transit redefining time and space, and entire nations recalibrating their geopolitical compasses to prepare for the world of tomorrow. Humanity is sprinting into the future. And yet, somewhere in the hollow corridors of Alausa, the Lagos State Government under my dear friend Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu @jidesanwoolu has chosen to rename streets. Yes. Streets. Not to honor visionaries of science, or architects of the future. Not to commemorate innovation, or even to expand the cultural tapestry of a restless, pulsing metropolis. No. These renamings, you see, serve a much darker hunger, the obsessive, small-minded pursuit of tribal erasure. A surgical attempt to expunge names that don't feel native enough. How tragically provincial. While others are building cities that speak to the next century, our beloved Lagos is engaged in a petty, revisionist cleansing, a soft purge to soothe the fragile egos still reeling from @PeterObi Peter Obi's electoral victory in Lagos. That singular sin, it seems, has not yet been forgiven. What kind of government, no, what sort of mind convinces itself that this is what progress looks like? You're telling me that amid widespread economic despair, collapsing infrastructure, and the quiet, guttural ache of the urban poor struggling to breathe in a city that's suffocating them daily, the entire weight of the Governor's office, the full, humming machinery of the state locked its gaze upon a bus stop and said, "Yes, that's our mission." Not to feed the hungry. Not to house the homeless. Not to create jobs, heal the broken, or even fix the damn roads, but to erase the name of Charlie Boy @AreaFada1, cultural icon, an irreverent firebrand, a thorn in the side of corrupt orthodoxy from a bus stop? You're not governance. It's not leadership. It's a small mind in a high place, mistaking petulance for power. I am embarrassed by the Governor. But then again, a serpent rarely gives birth to something that doesn't crawl. You see, history has always had a way of unmasking men. Some carve their legacies in stone and steel, monuments that outlast their own breath. Others? They build tombstones for memory itself, shallow graves where truth goes to die. I remember a time, clear as day, when the Office of the Governor of Lagos State, under the stewardship of Babatunde Raji Fashola, sent one million dollars (\$1 million) to me to present to the people of Haiti after the earthquake. Not because it was politically expedient. Not because it would trend, but because it was right. Because human dignity, true leadership transcends borders and tribes, and flags. Fashola didn't ask "Are they Yoruba?" There was no media announcement except, of course, now. He didn't consult the ethnic register. He simply did what a gentleman of conscience would do. And in that moment, I saw a leader, a man detached from the tribal hysteria that has since gripped our politics like a fever dream. He was detribalized, measured, principled, a rare breed in a nation addicted to the narrowness of "our own." Contrast that with what we see today, petty men in high

towers, obsessed with renaming streets and settling imaginary scores. You see the same thing in Abuja. They don't govern. They grasp. They do not build; they erase. But legacy, true legacy cannot be renamed. It endures. But I must remind you, power is a rented crown, and history has a brutal memory. One day, when this nation finds its spine again, and her sons and daughters walk boldly into a more perfect union, we will remember who renamed streets. And who rebuilt futures. Nigeria will rise. But not by the hands of those who trade greatness for grudges. No. She will rise in spite of them." - Link: <https://x.com/kmbiamnozie/status/1949187815608308203>

2. Post by @the49thstreet (December 30, 2025): "The Lagos State Government has announced the cancellation of the year 2025 Greater Lagos Fiesta, previously scheduled to hold on December 31, 2025 to hold on December 31, 2025. In a statement issued by his Special Adviser on Media and Publicity, Mr Gboyega Akosile, on Tuesday, Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu, while approving the cancellation, directed that in place of the Greater Lagos Fiesta (Countdown 2026), Lagosians should spend quality time in personal prayers for the nation, the State and the people of Lagos. He also urged people to pray for 'our continued prosperity, leadership, peace, productivity and our continued general wellbeing.'" - Link: <https://x.com/the49thstreet/status/2006105560379224510> (Tangential; mentions Lagos government but not renaming)
3. Post by @LegendaryJoe (July 26, 2025): "CHARLEY BOY GIVES WAY FOR OLAMIDE BADOO Of all the recent renamings in Lagos, none strikes a louder chord than the switch from Charley Boy to Olamide Badoo. This is not just a change of signage - it's a rewriting of narrative, a reclaiming of identity. Especially now, in the wake of bold provocations by guests we welcomed with open arms - visitors who mostly arrived Lagos stranded and frustrated but we showed our hospitality and they blossomed now question our ownership and challenge our heritage - it then became imperative: Yoruba streets must bear Yoruba names. Let there be no shadow of doubt or room for confusion - this land knows its roots and its owners yet draw breath. But beyond that, for in a society where people know their place, lines of differences are blurred, cultures and ethnicities may definitely mix in harmonious symphony, and it won't be out of place for example, if an entire highway bears the iconic name of Dangote... BUT Monuments and landmarks are not decorative - they are declarations. They are the ink with which a society writes its values into memory. Olamide isn't merely an entertainer; he's a cultural force. He speaks the street's lingua with the fluency elegance of royalty and the accent of authenticity. He has lifted others along the way, grooming stars and birthing dreams. That is influence with intention - a contribution to human development and nation-building, one verse, one hook, one chorus at a time as we all shakitibobo to his legendary beats... Now, as for the other man... Yes, he may have arrived on this planet much earlier, but what legacy does he leave in his wake? Who among us would wish for our sons to grow into nudists, merchants of misinformation, or pied pipers of public unrest? No parent with a clear conscience would. Yet that is the shadow the other man casts - No talent, No Skill, No composure, No Grace, just a figure whose fame feeds on chaos, not character. Streets, bus stops, and statues should immortalize builders, not brawlers. Let us raise names that edify, not those that electrify the air with mischief and disorder. Lagos is in order - Eko o ni baje Good Morning Severally..." - Link: <https://x.com/LegendaryJoe/status/1948995386267374058>
4. Post by @Olojede_25 (December 30, 2025): "reflects our unwavering commitment, in alignment with the Lagos State Government's urban renewal agenda, to improve road infrastructure, stimulate economic activities, and enhance the overall quality of life for our people. As an administration, we remain resolute in delivering" - Link: https://x.com/Olojede_25/status/2006052034852577558 (Tangential; about urban renewal, which ties to renaming context)
5. Post by @cabeecroft23 (July 27, 2025): "The renaming of some streets in Lagos state actually hit harder than many think. As feelers we are receiving seems to suggest, some other LGAs will do the same too. If Ajeromi Ifelodun, Amuwo, Surulere and Ojo go down this path, the cries that will follow will be of epic proportion." - Link: <https://x.com/cabeecroft23/status/1949329700100141155>
6. Post by @JohnPet112 (December 30, 2025): "LAGOS STATE GOVERNMENT, STOP DESTROYING IGBO BUSINESSES LAGOS STATE GOVERNMENT, STOP DESTROYING IGBO BUSINESSES

LAGOS STATE GOVERNMENT, STOP DESTROYING IGBO BUSINESSES LAGOS STATE GOVERNMENT, STOP DESTROYING IGBO BUSINESSES" - Link: <https://x.com/JohnPet112/status/2006113605138223584> (Related to ethnic tensions from renaming)

7. Post by @ElochukwuOhagi (November 3, 2024): "If you don't think Igbo, events in Nigeria will force you to think it by force. Lagos state government just approved renaming streets with non-indigenous people's names to only Yoruba indigenous names. Can we now understand the reason IPOB asked you to stop investing in Lagos? Good one to ndi Yoruba. One day we all will wake up to the truth that we have no business being in one Nigeria." - Link: <https://x.com/ElochukwuOhagi/status/1853103322296615263>
8. Post by @fayomiphilip_A (December 30, 2025): "That will cause a political uproar, it will be perceived as attack on a particular ethnic and besides, the more you offload, the more people from that side come into Lagos." - Link: https://x.com/fayomiphilip_A/status/2006092975311388880 (Contextual to ethnic issues)
9. Post by @ChinasaNworu (November 3, 2024): "Lagos state government just approve renaming streets with non indigenous people's name to only Yoruba indigenous names. All those IGBOs in Lagos making noise how they develop Yorubaland and the streets were names after them should know that this is the end of the road for many of them in Lagos. A new policy is here now to change those names to Only Yoruba names. Una sorry ooooo! "Unu akwochala aka tiere okuko aki " @real_IpobDOS @IgboHistoFacts @radiobiafralive @AnambraNewMedia" - Link: <https://x.com/ChinasaNworu/status/1853085176592490692>
10. Post by @JohnPet112 (December 30, 2025): "LAGOS STATE GOVERNMENT, STOP DESTROYING IGBO BUSINESSES LAGOS STATE GOVERNMENT, STOP DESTROYING IGBO BUSINESSES LAGOS STATE GOVERNMENT, STOP DESTROYING IGBO BUSINESSES LAGOS STATE GOVERNMENT, STOP DESTROYING IGBO BUSINESSES" - Link: <https://x.com/JohnPet112/status/2006117571381113337> (Repeat theme)
11. Post by @General_Somto (November 12, 2024): "'Don't Change Our Street Name. This Is a Tribal War Against Igbos In Lagos State. We Won't Accept This"-Residents Of Uzor Street, Ajegunle Tells Lagos State Government. Residents Are Protesting Over The Renaming Of These 24 Streets In Ajegunle And Hear What Locals Have To Say About it!" - Link: https://x.com/General_Somto/status/1856318346964128118
12. Post by @gboyegaakosile (December 30, 2025): "Lagos State Government Cancels Greater Lagos Fiesta 2025 The Lagos State Government has announced the cancellation of the year 2025 Greater Lagos Fiesta, scheduled to hold on December 31, 2025. In a statement issued by his Special Adviser on Media and Publicity, Mr Gboyega Akosile, on Tuesday, Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu, while approving the cancellation, directed that in place of the Greater Lagos Fiesta (Countdown 2026), Lagosians should spend quality time in personal prayers for the nation, the State and the people of Lagos. He also urged people to pray for 'our continued prosperity, leadership, peace, productivity and our continued general wellbeing.' The Governor wished all Lagosians a happy and prosperous year 2026, saying that the coming year shows great promise for the State and Nigeria. He, therefore, enjoined residents to continue to live in peace and harmony. "On behalf of my family, I wish every resident of our dear State a happy and prosperous new year. 'I want to assure you all that the year 2026 will be a better year for us in the State, as our administration is determined to work twice as hard to deliver the good for the residents of the state,' Governor Sanwo-Olu said." - Link: <https://x.com/gboyegaakosile/status/2006067743574175986> (Tangential)
13. Post by @NoNonsensezone (July 29, 2025): "BREAKING NEWS: STREET NAME CHANGE ALERT 🚨🚨 ETI - OSA LOCAL GOVERNMENT JOINS OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO CHANGE SOME STREET NAMES IN LAGOS STATE" - Link: <https://x.com/NoNonsensezone/status/1950206551613989161>
14. Post by @GoldmyneTV (December 30, 2025): "Lagos State Government Cancels Greater Lagos Fiesta 2025 The Lagos State Government has announced the cancellation of the year 2025 Greater Lagos Fiesta, scheduled to hold on December 31, 2025. In a statement issued by his Special Adviser on Media and

Publicity, Mr Gboyega Akosile, on Tuesday, Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu, while approving the cancellation, directed that in place of the Greater Lagos Fiesta (Countdown 2026), Lagosians should spend quality time in personal prayers for the nation, the State and the people of Lagos. He also urged people to pray for 'our continued prosperity, leadership, peace, productivity and our continued general wellbeing.' The Governor wished all Lagosians a happy and prosperous year 2026, saying that the coming year shows great promise for the State and Nigeria. He, therefore, enjoined residents to continue to live in peace and harmony. "On behalf of my family, I wish every resident of our dear State a happy and prosperous new year. 'I want to assure you all that the year 2026 will be a better year for us in the State, as our administration is determined to work twice as hard to deliver the goods for the residents of the state ,' Governor Sanwo-Olu said." - Link: <https://x.com/GoldmyneTV/status/2006074404963488196> (Tangential)

15. Post by @ifedayo_johnson (July 26, 2025): "Yoruba gave these streets their initial names. They weren't bigot then. There is a sudden turnaround and they are changing the names and the once welcoming hosts are now becoming hostile. Rather than retrospect and have a rethink of where you got it wrong and what triggered such, you are trying to blackmail them with "Yoruba are bigots". How can people be these dumb? They weren't bigots when they gave the street these names in the first place? 🙄 You always want to find people to blame for your misdoing. Zero sense of self awareness. Keep pushing Lagosians. This is just the beginning. Continue with those provocative tweets. The message will circulate offline." - Link: https://x.com/ifedayo_johnson/status/1949218246206591281

16. Post by @Mr_JAGs (December 30, 2025): "FLASH: Lagos State Government Cancels Greater Lagos Fiesta 2025 The Lagos State Government has announced the cancellation of the year 2025 Greater Lagos Fiesta, scheduled to be held on December 31, 2025. In a statement issued by his Special Adviser on Media and Publicity, Mr Gboyega Akosile, on Tuesday, Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu, while approving the cancellation, directed that in place of the Greater Lagos Fiesta (Countdown 2026), Lagosians should spend quality time in personal prayers for the nation, the State and the people of Lagos. He also urged people to pray for 'our continued prosperity, leadership, peace, productivity and our continued general wellbeing.' The Governor wished all Lagosians a happy and prosperous year 2026, saying that the coming year shows great promise for the State and Nigeria. He, therefore, enjoined residents to continue to live in peace and harmony. "On behalf of my family, I wish every resident of our dear State a happy and prosperous new year. 'I want to assure you all that the year 2026 will be a better year for us in the State, as our administration is determined to work twice as hard to deliver the good for the residents of the state ,' Governor Sanwo-Olu said. #GreaterLagosCountdown" - Link: https://x.com/Mr_JAGs/status/2006067910301929510 (Tangential)

17. Post by @itsbennylee (July 16, 2025): "Call me a tribal bigot I don't care. I'm a proud humanitarian who loves his tribe the way Jesus loved his and the way Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) favored the Quraish. The Igbo is not my problem. But replacing Igbo street names in Lagos with Fulani names like Alhaji Garba, Musbau, or Tajudeen is pure rubbish. If you must rename streets, use Yoruba names: Osinbajo Ave, Aregbesola Close, Awori Lane, Sango Ave, Orisa Nla Close. That's how you honor Yoruba culture, not by trading one tribe's identity for another's. What's happening now is not heritage it's nonsense." - Link: <https://x.com/itsbennylee/status/1945598584701030568>

18. Post by @NpoReports (December 30, 2025): "Goods Worth Billions of Naira At Risk as Lagos Arena Market Oshodi Goes on Fire Kaduna State | The AsterDex | Princes Diana | Accident | Anthony Joshua | Alhaji Salisu Musa | Zamfara state Government | Santa Lekan | Item 7 | Sophia Momodu | Ragnar | Obidiots | Dagrín | Drawsave | Ivana | Helios | Bangladesh | Sophia Momodu | 30th of December | PellerIsBack | Ambulance | Floki | 20M USDT | Bedbug | Oga Boss | Ivar | Tourette" - Link: <https://x.com/NpoReports/status/2006128857288696278> (Tangential; market fire in Lagos)

19. Post by @sowore (July 26, 2025): "The cynical and petty renaming of Charly Boy @AreaFada1 Bus Stop in LAGOS I have watched the attached video footage showing Lagos LGA officials arrogantly and garrulously renaming streets across the state. The manner in which these actions are being carried out, vindictive, haphazard, and laced with ethnic undertones, leaves no doubt that this is not merely a matter of urban planning, but a calculated political vendetta. These street renamings appear to be part of a xenophobic

and divisive agenda, orchestrated to target specific ethnic groups and punish political opponents of the ruling All Progressives Congress regime in Lagos. It is a blatant attempt to erase legacies, provoke communities, and lay the groundwork for a dangerous socio-political crisis in a state that prides itself on diversity and cosmopolitan identity. In particular, I strongly condemn the cynical renaming of the @areafada1 Charly Boy Bus Stop, an iconic landmark tied to decades of creative resistance and people-powered culture in Nigeria. This act is not just petty; it is a spiteful rewriting of history meant to silence dissent and discredit voices that have long challenged authoritarianism." - Link: <https://x.com/sowore/status/1949069076061372827>

20. Post by @Creebhills (December 30, 2025): "Lagos Govt Cancels 2025 Greater Lagos Fiesta, Urges Residents to Pray for State and Nation: The Lagos State Government has announced the cancellation of the 2025 Greater Lagos Fiesta, scheduled for December 31, 2025. The announcement... https://creebhills.com/2025/12/lagos-govt-cancels-2025-greater-lagos-fiesta-urges-residents-to-pray-for-state-and-nation?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter #News #LagosFiesta" - Link: <https://x.com/Creebhills/status/2006133753777934832>

Appendix F: Proposed Framework

Operational Template for Dual Signage and Public Consultation

Step	Action	Details/ Outlines	Responsible Stakeholders	Estimated Cost (NGN)	Timeline1
1	Identify streets	Prioritize high-traffic, heritage, and contested streets	Ministry of Urban Development, LASAA	-	Week 1
2	Design signage	New name prominent; old name smaller; reflective materials	Signage contractors, LASAA	50,000-80,000 per sign	Week 2-3
3	Approve designs	Optional historical code	Ministry of Culture, LASAA	-	Week 3
4	Manufacture signs	Weather-resistant materials	Private vendors	Variable	Week 3-5
5	Install signage	Use existing or new poles; coordinate with traffic authorities	LASAA, LASTMA	15,000-25,000 per installation	Week 6-7
6	Public awareness campaign	Radio, TV, social media, town halls	Ministry of Information, NGOs, Local Councils	500,000-1,000,000	Week 6-8
7	Monitor usage	Track adoption in postal services, Google Maps, emergency services	LASAA, Local Councils, Postal services	-	From Month 3 onward
8	Evaluate Effectiveness	Metrics; recognition, reduced navigation errors, social sentiment	Independent evaluators, Ministry	200,000	Month 6

Stakeholder Matrix

Stakeholder	Role	Engagement Level
Ministry of Urban Development	Lead agency; policy approval	High
LASAA	Signage production and installation	High
Ministry of Culture & Tourism	Advisory on heritage and cultural significance	Medium
Local Government Council	Community liaison and awareness	High
LASTMA	Traffic coordination during installation	Medium
Postal Services/ Delivery Companies	Integration into databases	Medium
Media & NGOs	Public awareness campaigns	High
Residents/ Community Associations	Feedback and adoption	High

Public Consultation Template

Steps	Action	Participants	Timeline
1	Pre-consultation	Residents, local leaders, NGOs, schools	2 weeks prior to meeting
2	Consultation meeting	Present renaming rationale, show dual signage mock-ups	Residents, LGAs, ministry representatives, cultural experts
3	Collect feedback	Surveys, suggestion boxes, social media	Residents, NGOs
4	Analyze and integrate feedback	Identify common concerns, suggestions; plan dual signage rollout	Ministry of Urban Development, LASAA
5	Finalize renaming plan	Incorporate feasible suggestions; plan dual signage rollout	Ministry, LGAs
6	Launch dual signage and awareness campaign	Official unveiling, media coverage	Ministry, LASAA, Local Councils

Evaluative Framework for Effectiveness

Indicator	Short-term (0-6 months)	Medium-term (6-12 months)	Long-term (1-3 years)
Public Recognition	% of residents aware of new names	Increase in correct usage in postal services and deliveries	New names fully integrated in community and digital maps
Navigation Efficiency	Reported confusion or complaints	Reduction in navigation errors/emergency response delays	Stable functional use; minimal need for old name references
Heritage	Awareness of	Community events or school	Integration into cultural and

Awareness	person/heritage commemorated	programs referencing new names	civic education programs
Public Sentiment	Social media/Letters expressing resistance or acceptance	Trend toward positive acceptance	General acceptance and minimal resistance