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## Chapter 31

# CONTENTIOUS IDENTITIES? URBAN SPACE, CITYNESS AND CITIZENSHIP

Philippe Gervais-Lambony

> Which region do you come from?
>
> I don’t know.
>
> Don't try to be a smart ass, the detective warned, Where do your parents live?
>
> They are dead.
>
> Where did they live?
>
> What does it matter where they lived … Haven't you guys ever heard of an urban African? I am one.
>
> Meja Mwangi 1979: 336

What is it to be urban? This is not an insignificant question; over half the inhabitants of the planet today live in urbanized spaces. Yet, in many urban contexts, urbanity and citizenship are contested rather than synonymous categories. In this chapter I consider urban citizenship a matter of identification; in other words, I argue collective and individual urban identities are socially produced, not only shaped in complex ways in time and in space but also politically significant, as illustrated above by the prominent Kenyan writer Meja Mwangi.

Three contextual issues frame the question of urban citizens and identities in contemporary cities. Firstly, processes that construct identities are more complex and multi-faceted than before. In consequence, identities fluctuate and multiply more than ever (Appadurai 1996), tied to a set of globalized networks in which individuals, goods, ideas, and models circulate. Secondly, recent urban dynamics critically place in question the relationship between the urban and citizenship, evident in the trend everywhere toward increasing social inequalities and spatial separation. Third, the world's metropolises, whether northern or southern, are engaged in policies to build their global competitiveness, which lead to the adoption of neo-liberal policies that tend to be socially exclusive, favouring economic attractiveness. In African cities, the multiplication of public-private partnerships, the increasing territorialization of urban policies, for instance as Business Improvement Districts and spatially differentiated service management methods (see Dubresson and Jaglin 2008), and the eradication of informal neighbourhoods from spaces deemed economically promising, have drastic effects on the poorest residents (Bénit and Gervais-Lambony 2003). Excluded from the contemporary city, people in such spaces are either unable or able with great difficulty to access basic urban services, and politically tend to be marginalized from decision-making.

In the context of these three observations, many scholars and observers emphasize the hollowing out of 'urban citizenship', the disappearance of the possibility of a common identification at the scale of the city. At the same time, however, movements demanding a 'right to the city' are growing in number the world over, mobilizing for the right to

access the city and urban services, and for full recognition as urban citizens; in other words, for 'justice' in the urban context. In this regard, cities of the south, and African cities in particular, have some specificity. Recent evolutions have to be considered in the context of legacies of the colonial past, particularly: the 'traditional' and rural, in inter-relation and opposition with, race and ethnicity on the one hand, and, urbanity and modernity on the other.

As urban scholars, how may we understand this complex context? First, socio-spatial and temporal processes are not simply sewn together; instead they are diverse; variegated across and within space, and unevenly and dynamically developed in time. Here I draw on three scales to reflect on urban identity and its diversities evident in: individual inhabitants, differentiated by class, race, gender, age and origin; neighbourhood variations within cities, marking as different one neighbourhood from another; and, diversity in the nature and pace of change within and between cities. Through these three entry points, I explore how territorialized productions of identity and diversity combine on various scales to contentiously shape experiences and meanings of urban citizenship.

This question is particularly cogent in the African context, a region of the world largely misunderstood in urban studies debates, problematically categorized as distinct for its rural-ness or non-urban-ness. Long produced in and embodying theoretical models mainly from the north, African cities have failed to fit into urban studies models, whether from the colonial era, or based on more contemporary developmental approaches, or analyses based on globalization theories (Robinson 2006). As Edward

Said famously reminded: ‘Men have always divided the world up into regions having either real or imagined distinctions from each other’ (Said 1978: 39). Such ‘imaginary geographies’ produce the south as different from the north, too often erasing the interior diversity of southern cities, while simultaneously constructing and emphasizing their difference from *our* (northern) cities. To disrupt this tendency, this chapter does not postulate the existence of an ‘African city’ as exceptional or different. Instead, the chapter uses African urban examples to make a general argument, suggesting, as Gluckman (1961), that: whatever and wherever it is, a city is a city and an urban citizen is an urban citizen.

Drawing from debates on territory in Francophone urban studies, the chapter first provides an analysis of urban identities and citizenship, particularly discussing the ways in which these are experienced and contested in African urban contexts. From understanding the construction of territory and identity as a top-down process, the chapter turns to the ‘right to the city’, a manifesto for a bottom-up process to (re)produce city space and territory. This approach also reveals the importance in this process of the production of memory, a theme to which I turn for two reasons: in general, to explore the constant transformation of urban space; and, in particular to examine spatial identity as always also based on lived and produced memories of time and space.

## URBAN CITIZENS AND THE OTHER: MOVING ON FROM AN OLD DEBATE

The French word 'citadin' (roughly the equivalent of 'citizenship' in English) contains the root 'cité' (in English, city). Linking the urban to questions of citizenship brings to this work a political dimension. At the same time, the concept of urban citizenship itself engages all areas of individual existence, including of course a connection to space. It is impossible to consider urban citizens' identities without reflecting on their spatiality, i.e.: the effects of that which characterizes urbanized spaces. For this reason, the concept of urban citizenship, more simply translatable into English as 'cityness', goes beyond attention to mere sociological and political dimensions. It comes close to what Edward Soja (2000: 12) proposed as 'synekism', a term 'introduced to capture the most important human dynamics that arises from the very nature of urban life, from what can be broadly called cityness' and which 'connotes, in particular, the economic and ecological interdependencies and the creative - as well as occasionally destructive - synergisms that arise from the purposeful clustering and collective cohabitation of people in space'.

In adopting this approach, I ask four questions concerning the inter-relationship between scale, urban identity and citizenship:

- Does an urban citizen exist in general? In other words, are there behavioural characteristics that describe the urban citizen of every city and which could be linked to the common nature of urban space?

- Is there a form of urban citizenship specific to each city? In other words, is there a community of practice and behaviour reflected in a city's inhabitants that might be explained by the specificity of an urban space?
- Conversely, is the city by definition constituted of diverse social groups whose forms of cityness are diverse in part because intra-urban space is differentiated (and vice versa)?
- Or, in the extreme, is the city anything other than the juxtaposition of individuals each with his or her own practices, representation and individuality, all of which are spatialized in every case?

There are no simple answers to these questions and that is precisely wherein the richness of the concept of cityness and urban citizenship lies.

This type of debate has a long history in urban studies. The authors of the Chicago School, for instance, proposed determining generic behavioural traits for urban citizens, arguing that these were reflective of the city's anonymous, segmented social relations, and multi-faceted identities (Wirth 1964; Park 1952). But each city has its personality, and becoming one of its citizens does not occur until the individual codes have been understood and the symbolic has been assimilated. It is also clear that there are local urban forms of identity that manifest through a feeling of belonging to a city. In this sense, the inhabitants of a city constitute a 'socio-spatial class' (Reynaud 1981), i.e., a group that recognizes itself in its belonging to a territorial community linked to the city. Referring to 'aloofness', Fernand Braudel (1979: 432) suggested that 'Every city is, and

intends to be, its own world' to distinguish itself from the countryside and from other cities.

Yet, by its nature, the city is diverse, a mix of social, ethnic and cultural groups. An urban citizen is often first and foremost a member of a neighbourhood community, another part of the city (which itself is criss-crossed by many interior boundaries and limits), or of a social or ethnic group. Each of these layers and identities shape urban citizenship in particular ways. Moreover, rural or urban migrants from elsewhere import practices that embody other forms of cityness. And, the social distribution of work is also part of the city. Lastly, as Calvino (1972: 81) eloquently expresses:

> Zemrude takes its shape from the mood of the person looking at it. If you go along whistling, your head high, led by what you're whistling, you will get to know it from the bottom up: balconies, curtains flapping, fountains. If you walk along with your head down, your nails dug into the palm of your hand, your gaze will be lost at ground level, in the gutters, downspouts, fish bones, trash. You cannot say that one aspect of the city is more genuine than the other…

There is indeed a city for each individual as no one is exactly like anyone else. Depending on the day, mood, and personal history, each individual experiences and lives a different city. This complex socio-spatial mix emphasizes a diversity of urban citizen practices.

In consequence, contemporary cities are confronted with ever-greater socio-spatial fractures. Yet, despite striking urban social divisions, existence of an urban-citizen identity on the scale of an urban agglomeration continues to exist. A multi-scalar approach to urban identity and citizenship is therefore important, reflecting on the urban citizen: in general, as the inhabitant of a city, a member of a group in a city, and as an individual. These scales are not contradictory, they can be multiple, overlaid, produced by and shaping citizen identities in complex ways. This complexity, I argue, is clearly a general condition of the city's existence - no less in the south than the north, as I now exemplify in the African urban context.

## THE RIGHT TO BE URBAN: AFRICAN CITIES AND CONTESTED CITIZEN IDENTITIES

In the African urban context, already complex identities overlay a colonial history and practice, one that excluded most 'Africans' from the city. This cast the notion of an urban African citizen a misnomer, the point Mwangi contests in the epigraph with which I began the chapter. Colonial authorities in Africa always considered local populations by nature as rural and 'traditional', distinct from European populations. Therefore they could not fully be urban citizens or 'modern', concepts intimately linked. The extreme case of this policy was, of course, apartheid South Africa. But, throughout the colonial period, urban citizenship on the entire continent has been a political issue; that which was denied to the 'natives' was quite simply the status of an urban citizen, their 'right to the city'. As Lefebvre (1974: 236) suggests, this right 'cannot be conceived as a simple right to visit…, [it] can only be expressed as a right to urban life'. More broadly in his conception, this translates to the right to 'settle and

live. The right to work (participant activity) and the right to appropriation (quite distinct from the right to ownership)'.

This colonial past has greatly influenced the conceptualization of urbanization that has driven research on cities of the south more generally. From a sociological perspective, a large percentage of these cities' population was and still is made up of recent migrants from rural settings; urban studies has built on this dynamic, traditionally approaching cities based on the division of the urban and rural. This tendency led to proposing a migrant/urban citizen contrast as a basis for the analysis of urban societies in southern countries. French author Jean-Marie Gibbal (1974) has been particularly influential in imposing this interpretation. He developed a typology based on individual practices that distinguishes rural people, new urban citizens, and urban citizens in the Abidjan of the 1970s. The evolution of African cities was therefore understood as a process of 'citifying' the cities' inhabitants. Based on Gibbal's work, Gilles Sautter proposed ways to measure this change, arguing: 'Urban societies begin…to deserve their name from the time that a sufficient percentage of urban citizens born in the city are able to ensure that lifestyles and values that are specific to the city are transferred' (Sautter 1972: 77).

One can only be struck by the development of similar reflections in French-language urban research in sociology, starting with the foundational texts of Georges Balandier in 1955 on Brazzaville and in English with the work of the Manchester School in the early 1950s, focused on the mining cities in Zambia's Copperbelt (Mayer 1970; Mitchell 1956; Gluckman 1961). These parallel research initiatives asked the same questions at just about the same time, yet answered them separately. After attempting to determine

the degree of inclusion in the city by measuring how great the ties with the rural area of origin were, they then overturned the 'rurality myth' (Bank 2011) and demonstrated that the urbanization process was not necessarily a break with the rural world, and that urban citizens' strategies could very well be dual. In the French context, for instance, Chaléard and Dubresson (1989: 288) argued 'There is indeed an urban citizen component with various rural strategies…[and]…there are also rural components with urban citizen strategies'. This analysis recognized the invention of a form of urban citizenship that did not correspond to a dominant western model, and contrary to the official colonial discourse, it affirmed African urban citizens' 'right to the city'.

But the question of African urban citizen identities is not only scientific and historic. At the time that the Kenyan novelist Mwangi wrote the lines in the epigraph of this text, post-independence Kenya continued not to recognize (or poorly recognized) city-dwellers' status. In the wake of liberation from colonial powers, national officials of independent African countries often deemed the growth of urban populations as not only a source of economic problems but also a political threat. The city had to be a modern place and urban policies were supposed to reflect this direction through eradicating ramshackle neighbourhoods, supporting prestigious architectural creations, and modern transport infrastructure, while also promoting housing developments primarily intended for the urban middle classes. More recently still, the Zimbabwean government launched the 'Murambatsvina' operation ('cleaning up the garbage' in Shona) in Harare in 2005, a policy whose purpose was the eradication of everything that was not 'formal' from urban space, including informal businesses and sub-standard

housing. Tens of thousands of families were thrown out on the streets and thousands of market stalls and shacks in illegal neighbourhoods were razed.

In a post-colonial context, these examples reflect the same (colonial) contention: denial of the right to the city, denial of the status of urban citizens, and exclusion of the Other. These policies and practices of exclusion go hand-in-hand with the increasing complexity of African cities. They are no longer the 'dual city', described by Frantz Fanon as

> A city of the colonized or at least an indigenous city, the black village, the medina, the reservation is a rough place populated with rough individuals… A world without space, people one on top of another, boxes one on top of another.
>
> Fanon 1961: 454

In contrast to the 'White Man's' paved, lit, airy city, the contemporary African city, with its simple colonial structure, has become a much more complex mosaic; and, as mobility has become greater, metropolises have become multi-cultural (Hall 1996) with complex and diverse social structures. The city 'without space' continues to exist, but it is no longer the city that simply shelters 'natives' as distinct from 'colonial settlers'.

Colonial and post-colonial authorities have produced categories of citizens, carving up or manipulating those articulated by social science researchers, to distinguish 'citizen' from 'non-citizen' inhabitants. This is a great danger in studies on urban citizenship because these categories often lead to stigmatization. The migrant rural individual, for instance, is often the first to be distinguished, with ethnic categorization more often than

not in full play. Foreigners or non-nationals are another category of urban *non*-citizens. Successive waves from the 1970s to date of mass expulsions from the cities of West Africa attest to this (Spire 2011), but so do the attacks on and expulsion of 'foreigners' in South African metropolises in 2008 (continuing on since then more sporadically). In cases such as these, exclusionary categorizations are also internalized and remobilized by citizen groups. Armed intra-urban conflicts, for example, are both the cause and the result of the production of ethnic identities in the case of Brazzaville, for instance, in the 1990s (see Dorier-Apprill et al. 1998).

Yet, the individual who is excluded from urban citizenship is not always the person we may think she or he is; far from it, as this comparison of two capital cities in Africa shows. In Lomé, the capital of Togo, villagers from the peripheries are currently engulfed by the city's growth. In these contexts, practices of indigenous communities do not reflect urban citizenship much; for instance, appropriation of land has always been left to time-honoured inhabitants, in this case to 'villagers'. This is the case of the Bè, members of the Ewé sub-group from the village of Bè, which existed prior to the creation of the city, but it applies too also to the descendants of families of other ancient villages and communities of fishermen. These aboriginal groups are attached to their present neighbourhood the way they would be to their village. They say, 'I am from Bè' before they say they are from Lomé.

Are they urban citizens or 'villagers'? In Lomé, the urban citizen's mode of equating neighbourhood to village is wide spread. But, this type of phenomena has been described as well in working class neighbourhoods in London's East End in the 1950s

(Young and Wilmot 1957) or in the ‘ethnic’ neighbourhoods of North American cities (with the classic example of Boston’s Italian-American minority described by Herbert Gans in his 1962 work entitled *The Urban Villagers*). Yet, in many West African cities this relationship is posed in different terms: one can be a villager in the aboriginal sense. Functioning as a villager can be a means of inclusion in the city based on neighbourhood solidarity (particularly in many of the illegal neighbourhoods populated by migrants), and it can also be a rejection of the city and a claim to the right to maintain a rural identity. At the same time, it can operate strategically to ensure the dominance (often through the control of land) of one particular group in a particular part of the city of Lomé.

Conversely, in cities of purely colonial origin, like Harare, Zimbabwe, those who were considered indigenous where excluded completely from the city. Urban land, in this case, is never ancestral land, producing a different commitment and relationship. Nonetheless, the cities’ natives and Zimbabwean and foreign migrants can be distinguished. This last group is paradoxically, the most urbanized to the extent that its members often no longer have ties with their rural area of origin. Natives of Zambia, Malawi or Mozambique, for instance, explain: ‘This is my home now, I can’t go back’. Another migrant group that rejects any idea of returning to some type of rural place of origins are single female heads of families. This status would not be accepted in rural areas, while the city makes it possible, so these women describe themselves as ‘true Hararians’. The paradox in Harare is, therefore, that the foreign migrant is often more anchored in the city than the native: international migration has strengthened, if not imposed, urban citizenship in this context (Gervais-Lambony 2003).

Length of time in the city still, however, plays a fundamental role in defining urban citizenship. In the case of Lomé, Moba youth (an ethnic group from the north of the country) born in the city to migrant parents are seen to distance themselves from the 'village', explaining, for instance, 'My little brothers don't want to go to the village, it doesn't interest them'. The head of her family after her mother's death, a young Moba woman had no idea what to do to get her young siblings to 'go up north' with her for the ceremonies she deems necessary, but that seem useless to them. This does not keep the young boys in question from stating very firmly that they are 'Moba', but their ethnic identification does not seem to be linked spatially to the 'village'. They are 'Lomean Moba', an invention reflective of a new urban identity.

In Kenya, we see another twist on this pattern. The famous shantytown, Kibera, extends over 225 hectares near downtown Nairobi. The first inhabitants of Kibera were Sudanese Muslim soldiers of the King's African Rifles, colonial soldiers whose officers had authorized their settlement on this public land prior to 1914. Refused legal title to the land by the authorities however, these early grantees gradually built shacks for themselves. Chased from the countryside, new urbanites moved to this area. Throughout the twentieth century, the Nairobi housing crisis pushed more and more people toward residence in slums such as Kibera. Today a minority, the 'Sudanese' claim indigenous status, but are deemed 'foreigners' by the other inhabitants of the shantytown. In this case, the contention of 'indigenous' identity overlies issues related to control of urban space.

These examples clearly show that urban citizenship intimately relates to building a territorialized identity, ties with spatiality that must be observed and understood.

## TERRITORY, THE RIGHT TO THE CITY, AND IDENTITY

Urban citizenship as an identity reflects processes that work beyond the scale of the individual. As Norbert Elias (1939) has argued, the individual is part of a 'social configuration', which links intrinsically to others. But identity is still no less an individual choice, which marks the individual as an essential actor. 'In every case, the individual is, from the outset, attached to a number of groups: the situation he finds himself in and the events that occur over time make the choices more or less difficult, dangerous, or painful; they never eliminate the option of having to choose' (Martin 1994: 22). This is observed even when identification is imposed by external appearance, as in the cases of 'territorial stigmatization' described by Wacquant (2008). The consequences can be the internalization of stigma, or conversely, its reversal and affirmation of an identity of resistance. That is why identity is not static or simply acquired. One structure can in fact replace another quite simply when the individual changes category of age, social group or living space, or modifies an identity choice. That is also why identity is multi-fold. A number of identity constructions always superimpose themselves because everyone belongs to a number of groups at once (Young 2000), illustrated in the extract of a life history from South Africa below.

S. is the child of a migrant mineworker. His father was a Mozambican citizen who came to work on the Witwatersrand's gold mines. Upon his arrival in 1949, he was employed and given shelter by a mining company in the Benoni municipality (situated to the east

of Johannesburg, in the East Rand now the metropolitan municipality of Ekurhuleni). After living in a mine compound, he settled in Daveyton Township, following his marriage in 1953 to a Xhosa-speaking South African woman. S.'s mother was an urban dweller throughout her life, she was born on the East Rand, but her Tswana-speaking father had emigrated from Botswana to work in Johannesburg in the 1920s and her Xhosa-speaking mother had come to the East Rand from the Transkei, fifteen-hundred kilometres to the south.

Let us first consider the multiplicity of S's father's identities. Being black, he had to live in a specific area. Being 'foreign', he was not subjected to a South African Bantustan authority, but belonged to that extraordinary category invented by apartheid: 'native alien'. Being Shangaan, he belonged to an ethnic group originating from the north-west of South Africa and the south-east of Mozambique. Finally, as a mineworker, he belonged to a well-delimited social group in South Africa. These identities were not organised according to a hierarchical order, as an individual he chose one or the other according to circumstances, or had to refer to one or the other depending both on the place he found himself in, as well as the company with whom he associated.

The Witwatersrand was in fact a cosmopolitan region where ethnic mixing was common. It attracted migrants from the whole of South Africa, from the southern African region, as well as a variety of people from different regions of Europe. What real meaning then is attached to so-called 'ethnic' identities in such a context? Who is S.? A Shangaan-Xhosa-Tswana? A mineworker's son? A black South African? An East

Rander? The language spoken in his family is Xhosa. He lived in Daveyton, in a neighbourhood reserved for Xhosa-speakers and was taught in this language at school. This was a choice made by his father who gave up his Mozambican-Shangaan identity to facilitate integration.

In 1984, S.'s family bought a house in the Vosloorus Township, part of the Boksburg Municipality, the area where his parents passed away and were buried. S.'s mother died in 1996 and his father three years later. The father left his children the following instructions: 'I want to be buried next to my wife in the Vosloorus cemetery and, since there is no room left in the vault, I wish to be cremated so that the urn may be placed next to my wife's coffin'. Cremation is unusual in the Dutch Reformed Church, the family church, and is almost unknown in rural South African or Mozambican traditions. Nonetheless, S., the eldest son was obliged to carry out his father's wishes against the traditions of the church, and more importantly, the family. His late father had made a strong identity choice, privileging his identity as an urban dweller over all others, the identity that linked him forever to his beloved wife. Now a local politician, S. is himself clear when talking about Ekurhuleni: 'I have no other home', an expression pointing to a produced and chosen territorial identity in this particular part of the city.

What makes identification possible is adherence to a discourse. Central in the acquisition of the identity, this discourse is a narrative 'whose function is to make the intense feeling of belonging to a group normal, logical, necessary and inevitable' (Martin 1994: 23). For our purposes here, S's conclusion reflects the production of territory as well, a discourse on the city that links a space to complex processes of social

construction. The term territory is key in French-language geography, much less so in English-language geography, even if it can be compared to the English term 'place'[1].

On the one hand, territory is a space that an animal keeps for itself and from which it chases away other animals of the same species. This ethological definition mirrors notions of an individual's space. On the other hand, the term territory, in its legal sense, designates the space over which an authority has jurisdiction, the model being the national territory, i.e., a group's space. For example, Joël Bonnemaison takes his definition directly from ethology (Bonnemaison 1986: 103) to describe a territory that is also collective because it is 'the geographic expression of dominance that an individual or a group exercises over a place or a space; this dominance is simultaneously political, social and cultural; it is at the root of the group's or the individual's identity'. In contrast, Claude Raffestin (1980) bases his definition of territory on politics, which he defines as a space produced by power. This places him closer to the definition of a large portion of the English-language literature: 'Territoriality will be defined as the attempt by an individual or a group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area. This area will be called the territory' (Sack 1986: 19). For his part, Marcel Roncayolo (2002) firmly places territory in the domain of the collective because he conceives it simply as a mode of connection between individuals; in this case, territory is simply a form of social relation based on identification to the same 'space'.

These various definitions are simultaneously similar and different. In common, they affirm territory as a social construct. In contrast, however, 'one, which is objective,

heads in the direction of territory designated by a name, associated with a power, a form of control that helps to establish its limits and institutionalize it' (Di Méo 1998: 46). The other is based on the idea that territorial identities are produced, tied to city practices and depictions. The latter highlight, of course, discourses and demarcations dictated from 'above'. But, poles apart, the difficulty comes from the contradictions between these two co-existing logics: territorial identifications can be imposed from the top or can emerge in 'resistance' (Castells 1999) to officially proposed identities, thus 'legitimizing' them, to use Castells' terminology.

Nonetheless, the term territory indicates a specific relationship between people and their environment. In this context, then, urban citizenship has to be defined as a territorialization of urban space; in other words, urban citizenship is constructed in the alignment of a portion of space *and* an identity discourse. This places us on the level of belief: what is important is that urban citizens believe in the past, present and future possibility of this type of alignment. In this approach, our project is not to distinguish those inhabitants of cities who are urbanised (in the sense 'specifically of the city') from others, but to analyze the various forms and degrees of territorialization embedded in these identities. Territorialization is a process of enrolment in space in which the individual participates, drawing together history and personality, the various groups she or he belongs to, influential political powers and discourses, as well as the space in which she or he lives, has lived or dreams of living in.

But the passage from an individual identity to a collective territorial identity still needs to be better understood. It is too simplistic to assume that because I live in a space, I

develop certain practices similar to other inhabitants - my neighbours, for instance; and, that this implies the construction of a community. The process of recognition and belonging to a space or a group is not self-evident. In fact, the passage from the individual to the collective is inherently political, involving group organization, 'territoriality, is first expressed by the relationship between people before expressing itself through the attachment to a particular place' (Roncayolo 2002: 195). Moreover, politics is precisely a means of passing from individual space-territory to the collective, because it involves the production of a discourse about this space and group. Political parties, states, businesses, tribal chiefs, churches, unions, and institutions (starting with the family), for example, all manipulate identities in the sense that they do their best to convince individuals that they belong to a group (which, moreover, is not always territorialized).

At the local level, other forms of association also act in neighbourhoods to demarcate identity-based territories, such as neighbourhood associations, religious communities, and gangs for instance. Confronted simultaneously with discourses and a lived spatial experience, urban citizens also produce territorialities. They participate in the process of transforming space into territory: 'people do not simply pass through space, they develop memories, meanings and attachments to particular places, where they establish social relations, engage in struggles over resources and construct narratives that valorise those places, as they enter the cultural repertoire of the city' (Bank 2011: 15). While cities create themselves in inventing their history, conversely, citizen struggles are quite often struggles against forgetting. To conclude this chapter, I turn next to a discussion of urban identity and memory.

## FROM TERRITORIALIZATION TO CITY MEMORIES

Memories and discourses about the past are directly related to the production of identity and urban citizenship. They are critical to debates about territorialization as well. Contemporary African urban societies are increasingly complex, everywhere the distinction of class and 'identity' groups have evolved and blurred identifications, layering on top of (rather than erasing) legacies of past segregation and differentiation. Contemporary forms of segregation are not easily compared to old forms because territorialization processes have diversified, impacting on urban governance.

Contemporary urban governance is in fact, marked by two important evolutions, both of which involve the construction of territory. On the one hand ('from on high'), we witness demarcation processes, identifying local territories, for the purpose of creating the context and the conditions for collective action, for unifying operators and users or consumers around an immediate objective (such as access to services, facilities or enrolling voters). These processes are also intended to develop and/or legitimize the rules that will make urban governance sustainable and urban citizens governable. At the same time, urban authorities, as well as other 'development' stakeholders, propose identifications that are both credible for citizens and 'promising' in terms of image, for example representations of a clean, attractive and competitive city. These spatialized identities are proposed on a local scale to urban citizens to persuade them to buy in to the proposed urban plan. On the other hand, many groups of urban citizens point out the inefficiency of urban management by government authorities, demonstrating their dissatisfaction and expressing their demands at the local scale. Occasionally,

encouraged by government rhetoric about participatory democracy and the practices of 'development' stakeholders (NGOs, for example) whose actions are supposedly oriented towards community and the local scale, diverse urban social movements mobilise city dwellers as well as spatial identifications. Demarcation and identification are two forms of territorialization. Yet, paradoxically, even if these two forms seem to respond to a concern for adaptation to local contexts and citizen participation to expand the 'right to the city,' at the same time they imply classification by place, an imposition of urban identity categories, which can foster intra-urban fragmentation.

The construction of a 'collective memory' (or, conversely, resistance to erasing a memory) can be observed as an essential tool in both forms of territorialization, whether for the officials who wish to promote the consensual image of an urbanized community or for local city stakeholders who rely on a so-called common past to defend their identity-based territory (Candau 1998) and legitimize their demands for recognition and redistribution. There are various ways to distinguish contemporary forms of memory (Didier et al. 2007), as well as the complex relationship between individual memories and the production of so-called collective memoires (Halbwachs 1925; Lavabre 2007). If we understand memory as a 'present representation of something absent' (Ricœur 2000: 68), we can simultaneously draw on various theoretical classifications of memories.

Marcel Proust suggests as essential the differentiation of two types of memory: voluntary memory (reconstructed moments, remembered like pictures in an album of postcards one leafs through) and involuntary memory (a 'reminiscence', an 'immediate,

delicious and total explosion of the memory, which 'allows one to escape from the present' and 'be reunited with the old days', *le temps retrouvé*, 1987: 228). Often provoked by the presence of an object from the past in the present space, this involuntary memory evokes what Michel de Certeau (1980) called 'the ghosts of the city': abandoned objects and places, calls of a lost past that the policies of heritage preservation attempt to tame. Another designation could be '*tomason*' (or '*thomasson*'): urban objects whose function is no longer recognized, relics of a system from another time, forgotten by the 'creative destruction' of the neo-liberal city (Genpei Akassegawa 1987; Gervais-Lambony 2012). This approach suggests we must differentiate two modalities of the past's presence. The latter, involuntary, could be understood as Henri Lefebvre's (1974) spaces of representation, i.e. actual experience; whereas the former - voluntary - could be said to be a representation of space, i.e. conceived because it is the voluntary production of a memory and a discourse.

The importance of this categorization is that it leaves open the possibility of reflection on a third term described by Lefebvre through his analysis of practices. Within this conception, the urban resident can tip an object or a space into one or another of the categories. Thus, one must differentiate the idealization of the past, often the action of either urban authorities or economic agents that produce spaces by making reference to an imagined past, from the nostalgia experienced by urban residents (Huyssen 2003; Boym 2001; Dlamini 2009). Yet, nostalgia in looking toward the past invokes the present, and suggests a future. How many urban development plans are a projection into the future based on an idealized past? How many individual plans are a search to reproduce a lost past in the future? How much rallying for changing space is based on

nostalgia? In these processes, the 'powers of the imagination (as the dual ability to remember the past and desire the future)' (Appadurai 1996: 34) are central.

Certainly, we know three things about the most generic and contemporary forms of urban citizen memories. First, inhabitants of cities are confronted by change. This is a feature of urbanity that we have been aware of since Charles Baudelaire wrote: 'The old Paris is no more, [a city's form] changes more quickly, alas, than a mortal's heart'. This is a consequence of 'creative destruction' as described by David Harvey (1990), which produces nostalgia, what Boym calls 'historical emotion' (2001: XVI). 'Nostalgia and progress are like Jekyll and Hyde: alter egos' (Boym 2001, XVII). Ambiguous nostalgia seems to me to shape urban residents' experiences in general (Lepetit 1995), as well as their relationship with urban space (past, present and future). Moreover, nostalgia is accentuated by the acceleration of social and spatial changes, such as those characterizing African cities today. Urban residents must simultaneously manage the rapid transformations of their city, integrate new temporal referents, or alternatively, in some cases, observe a marked lack of change. Second, we also know that parts of a city change at varying paces (Roncayolo 2002). Some neighbourhoods change while others seem to be standing still, often the result of selective effects of economic globalization or urban transformation policies that are concentrated in 'promising' spaces - a city's 'shop windows' (city centres, business centres in the suburbs or neighbourhoods undergoing gentrification), as opposed to its 'back rooms' (poorer neighbourhoods, for instance) (Bénit-Gbaffou and Gervais-Lambony 2003; Lee and Yeoh 2004). And, third, proliferations of references to the past are tied to rapidly increasing processes of territorialization (Di Méo 1995).

Territorial identity demands for 'recognition' multiply tremendously, particularly in the face of change, among the richest and the poorest alike. The demands are based on local territories that they produce and on discourses about the past which are mobilized for strategic reasons. Urban residents' memories become political issues and officials, for their part, produce discourses and spaces devoted to these memories. In this contemporary urban context, it is critical to ask about the 'right to memory'. The recurrence of 'nostalgic' discourses is striking, though diverse in nature and conjured up for a multitude of purposes, for instance: by the politician constructing a rallying identification; by territorialized social movements defending their right to the use of space; by neo-liberal economic actors marketing the memory of an idealized past; by urban residents in general simply producing discourses that order their endlessly changing universe.

## CONCLUSION

Framed by the three characteristics discussed above, I suggest it is critical to study the links between processes of territorial identification, local political life and urban citizen memories. This is especially important in the context of growing interest in questions of social justice, understood as distribution and recognition (see Soja 2010 and Bret et al. 2010) and as matters of heritage (see Huyssen 2003; Kusno 2004; Gravari-Barbas 2005). The relationship between both phenomena is a significant question for contemporary cities, in general, and in Africa, no more nor less than elsewhere. In these processes, space plays a fundamental role. On the one hand, space is where evocative traces of the past survive, and 'haunted places are the only ones people can live in' (de

Certeau 1980: 191). As Vladislavic (2006: 176) suggests, these contexts demonstrate the importance of *tomasons* that 'thrive in the man-made world, in spaces that are constantly being remade and redesigned for other purposes, where the function of a thing that was useful and necessary may be swept away in a tide of change or washed off like a label… the obvious, useful facts of the city recede and a hidden history of obsolescence comes to the surface'. Space is thus a medium for discourse that makes possible the production of 'places of memory' (Nora 1984), but is also often an issue of contention challenged in these debates.

At the heart of urban citizenship, the right to remember space from the past features in resistance to the political projects of erasing, re-writing or imposing a certain selected past in the present re-making of cities. Far from leading to a single consensus, or a generalized hypothetical collective memory, the contention of memory instead rallies around and crystalizes urban identity on a number of levels. It is precisely there that the link between memory, identity, space and justice is located: the demand for a memory, whether individual or collective, is also a demand for an identity, a demand for recognition and legitimization. Memory is mobilized to demand justice, understood in the sense of 'recognition' or to support material demands for redistribution. But it can also well become an argument for demanding autochthony and can therefore also be a factor that produces injustice because it excludes the Other. Understanding processes of urban citizen identification in African cities in particular, and southern contexts more generally, is therefore intimately connected to material and political issues; not a luxury, it is an urgent condition, central to advance toward greater urban democracy and justice.

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[1] The territorialization process can be said to be a process of conversion of spaces into places, see Tuan 1971.