



The Impact of Local Social Contexts on Naming Practices in Algeria

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Abstract

Understanding the impact of associations in naming systems and the socio-cultural context in which they exist holds methodological significance within sociological analysis. Names cannot be approached in isolation from the social environment in which they emerge. A name is not merely an identifying label, but a social discourse imbued with symbols and meanings that reflect social reality and align with its representations and aspirations. From this perspective, analyzing the social context is crucial to understanding the underlying factors that govern naming choices, given the decisive role this context plays in producing meaning and shaping naming mechanisms. Accordingly, overlooking the local social context in the study of names constitutes a methodological shortcoming, as it strips the name of its cultural and social significance, reducing it to a superficial level that fails to convey its symbolic depth. Thus, integrating social analysis within the onomastic approach is a fundamental condition for understanding names in relation to the social structures that produce and continuously interact with them. This article focuses on the names of private-sector institutions in Algiers, examining the way in which multi-categorical names are formed and interpreted within local social interactions. This analysis is based on a database of private business names in the capital city of Algeria. From this, the following questions arise: How is a private institution's name chosen? And how do local contexts influence the naming process?

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Introduction

Naming plays a pivotal role in shaping the identity of institutions. It is not merely an identifying tool but rather a reflection of a set of cultural, social, and economic values that surround the local community. The characteristics of institutional names vary from one society to another, depending on the social contexts in which they emerge. Language, customs, religion, popular symbols, and even economic aspirations all influence the selection of names that express a sense of belonging, aim to attract a specific category of clients, or highlight a certain local or modern character.

In this context, the study of private institution names gains significant importance in understanding the interactive relationship between linguistic and social structures, and how

these names express the reality of society or its aspirations. This phenomenon also reveals the mechanisms of negotiation between the local and the global within economic discourse. Some institutions may lean toward foreign names as a way to express modernity or quality, while others prefer names inspired by the local environment to reinforce trust and belonging.

Every institution that chooses a name for its activity is, in essence, seeking to build a linguistic identity aligned with the characteristics of its target audience, while also reflecting the prevailing social values in its surroundings. For instance, institutions targeting a popular or working-class demographic tend to use simple, familiar, and often local or colloquial names. In contrast, elite-oriented institutions usually select names that evoke luxury and sophistication, frequently turning to foreign languages—especially French or English—due to their cultural and social symbolism in Maghrebi societies.

On another level, analyzing the social context allows for a deeper understanding of the symbolic and semantic dimensions behind certain names that may appear ordinary or random on the surface but are, in fact, rich with meanings related to identity, belonging, collective memory, and religious or regional representations. A name like “Al-Baraka” (Blessing), for example, does not only signify economic value or profit-seeking intent but also intersects with the religious and cultural dimension that glorifies the notion of “blessed livelihood” in popular consciousness. The sociological analysis of institutional names also reveals the transformations within society itself, as the evolution of naming patterns can help track social changes—such as rising consumerism, the ascent of modern values, or the emergence of sub-identities in the public sphere. This makes the study of social context a methodological tool for understanding the dynamic interaction between language and society in the commercial and economic space.

1. The Linguistic Context and Multilingualism as Determining Factors in Institutional Naming

A trade name is not a random choice; rather, it is a deliberate linguistic act carrying marketing and communicative connotations that contribute to shaping the institution’s image in the minds of the audience. Within this framework, the linguistic context and multilingualism emerge as decisive elements in the naming process, especially in societies marked by evident linguistic diversity.

The local linguistic context forms the background against which institutional names are crafted. Many institutions resort to using the dominant or native language in their environment to facilitate communication with the target audience and establish symbolic and cultural proximity. However, the linguistic reality in many countries—particularly in postcolonial or pluralistic contexts—renders the naming process more complex. The coexistence of official and unofficial languages imposes itself on the selection process, prompting many institutions to adopt hybrid or compromise naming strategies.

In this regard, multilingualism presents both a challenge and an opportunity. On one hand, it leads some institutions to select linguistically neutral names or those based on global symbols (such as English words) to avoid ambiguity or exclusion. On the other hand, institutions may capitalize on this linguistic diversity by adopting names with multiple layers of meaning that resonate with different social and cultural groups. Hybrid names that combine two or more languages are also used in an attempt to convey a multifaceted identity that appeals to more than one demographic.

Despite the marketing advantages of this approach, multilingualism poses practical and legal challenges as well. These include difficulties in protecting the name from imitation, poor translations that could harm the institution’s image in another language, or issues with pronunciation and comprehension among a multilingual audience. Therefore, institutions

operating in multilingual environments must adopt precise linguistic strategies when selecting their names—strategies that take into account the linguistic, cultural, and legal dimensions of the context in which they operate.

Ultimately, this topic highlights the importance of considering naming within a broader linguistic and social framework, where a name cannot be isolated from the cultural and linguistic contexts that surround it. Accordingly, understanding the linguistic context and cultural diversity can contribute to the development of more effective institutional names—ones that are better able to adapt and communicate with a diverse audience.

This aligns with the principles of **Competitive Market Theory**, which posits that every institution seeks to differentiate itself from others through various means, among which the trade name plays a vital role. This theory has gained significant traction in the corporate world in analyzing company behavior in their pursuit of economic distinction. It has led to the emergence of the concept of companies striving to gain **market power**¹ in the face of competitors.

Among the real-world examples of business names written in Arabic in Algiers, these are not merely spontaneous labels—they represent deliberate linguistic choices that reflect multiple social, economic, and cultural stakes. The use of Arabic in names such as “*Al-Waha*” (The Oasis), “*Al-Itqan*” (Mastery), and “*Al-Riyada*” (Leadership) is not arbitrary; rather, it reflects an intentional linguistic positioning within a pluralistic linguistic marketplace in which Arabic, French, Amazigh, and even English intersect. This linguistic stance is particularly significant in an urban Algerian context like Algiers, where a colloquial dialect mixed with French dominates daily communication, while Classical Arabic retains strong national and cultural symbolism and is often employed to affirm the institution’s local identity and Algerian character.

Names such as “*Al-Nakhla Al-Dhahabiya*” (The Golden Palm), “*Al-Bayt Al-Andalusi*” (The Andalusian House), and “*Itr Al-Jaza’ir*” (The Scent of Algeria) evoke powerful cultural symbols rooted in the collective memory, such as nature, generosity, Andalusian heritage, or patriotism. These symbolic references show how businesses invest in shared cultural capital to create emotional connections with customers and to stand out in a competitive market. Additionally, naming practices reveal nuances in class-oriented discourse. For instance, a name like “*Qahwat Al-Madina*” (City Café) reflects a popular conception targeting middle and lower-income groups, whereas names such as “*Al-Riyada*” (Leadership) or “*Al-Lamsa Al-Sharqiya*” (The Oriental Touch) convey elite aspirations or upward social mobility, targeting clients with higher socioeconomic ambitions.

From this perspective, naming becomes a tool of **sociological targeting (ciblage sociologique)**²—a means of positioning the institution within the social and economic field and tailoring the marketing message to align with the expectations of a specific audience.

Some names—such as *Tazwit*, *Iyil*, *Tafsut*, and *Izem*—belong to the traditional Amazigh

¹ - McGee, J. (2014, January 1). *Competitive Market Theory*. Retrieved February 20, 2025, at 11:15 a.m., from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280246634_Competitive_Market_Theory.

² - The concept of “**sociological targeting**” (**ciblage sociologique**) refers to the practice of directing products or messages (including brand names) toward a specific social group based on its class, cultural, or linguistic characteristics. Although the term is not attributed to a single theorist, its theoretical roots trace back to the work of **Pierre Bourdieu**, particularly in his seminal book *La Distinction: Critique sociale du jugement* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1979). In it, Bourdieu demonstrates how aesthetic and cultural tastes are conditioned by class affiliation, and how social agents make choices within a “market of symbols” shaped by their social position.

This concept is also employed in the fields of marketing and sociolinguistics, where discourse is understood as socially oriented language tailored to a specific target audience.

lexicon and are rich in cultural and environmental connotations. These terms carry positive symbolic meanings tied to nature (e.g., spring, hills, bees) or to values (e.g., friendship, solidarity, strength). Linguistically, they possess a distinct phonetic quality that captures attention and builds a unique institutional identity. This choice of naming reflects the transition of the Amazigh language from a primarily domestic or cultural mode of communication to a tool of economic and institutional expression.

Furthermore, there are instances of hybrid naming that combine Amazigh with French or English. This syntactic structure allows institutions to preserve their cultural identity while simultaneously appealing to a broader clientele within a multilingual environment like Algiers.

The concept of “**cultural reappropriation**”³ refers to a collective social behavior in which individuals or groups seek to reclaim control over their cultural symbols that have been marginalized by language policies or historical dynamics. The use of Amazigh terms in naming businesses can be interpreted as an identity-driven movement aimed at reintegrating Amazigh culture into the public sphere, particularly in the economic domain. This reflects a transformation in the relationship between culture, market, and power.

A significant observation regarding the names of private economic institutions in Algiers—especially those titled in English—is the striking blend of modern aspirations and local identity. Many of these names adopt strong, globally recognizable terms such as *Optimum*, *Solutions*, *Group*, and *Energy*. These are commonly used in international business environments and reflect a desire among these companies to present themselves as modern actors integrated into the global market.

Conversely, we notice the incorporation of local symbols in names like *Sahara Logistics*, *El Djazair Bank*, and *Atlas Software*, where references to the Sahara, Algeria, and the Atlas Mountains evoke deep-rooted cultural and geographic imagery. This hybrid naming strategy reflects what Calvet (1994) terms “*linguistic compromise behavior*”⁴, wherein local identity negotiates with global symbols through language. Calvet introduces key notions such as the “**linguistic market**” and “**language dominance**”, highlighting how the value of a language varies according to economic and social contexts.

Such a framework helps explain why many economic institutions in Algeria opt for foreign (primarily English or French) names to represent themselves in the public sphere. These languages are often perceived as carrying greater symbolic weight within the “market” compared to Arabic or Amazigh, depending on the context. Therefore, the choice of a commercial name becomes a socially and culturally loaded act, going far beyond mere aesthetic preference or marketing appeal.

In this light, language does not function independently of collective memory; rather, it integrates that memory into a modern naming structure with commercial intent. This merging of the local and the global is far from arbitrary—it reflects an institutional strategy to construct a **dual commercial identity**: one grounded in trusted roots and reaching toward modernization and market expansion. From a sociological standpoint, these names mirror the

³ - The concept of **cultural reappropriation** emerged within the literature of **postcolonial studies** and **critical cultural theory**, where it was addressed by thinkers such as **Frantz Fanon**, **Edward Said**, and **Stuart Hall**. It is viewed as a **symbolic act** through which marginalized groups seek to **reclaim ownership of their cultural symbols and reinvest them with meaning in contemporary contexts**.

⁴ - The book *Les politiques linguistiques* by **Louis-Jean Calvet** (1994) is one of the most important theoretical references that has contributed to deepening our understanding of the relationship between language and society, particularly in multilingual contexts such as Algeria. The book is part of the renowned French series *Que sais-je?*, which is known for simplifying complex academic concepts. What distinguishes this work is its approach to language policy from a **sociolinguistic perspective**, where language is not seen merely as a tool for communication, but as an active element in symbolic positioning within society.

dynamics of contemporary Algerian society, where foreign languages—particularly English—serve as symbolic markers of power, efficiency, and professionalism, while local references affirm authenticity and belonging.

Here, language is not detached from collective memory; rather, it integrates that memory into a modern naming structure with a marketing orientation. This fusion between the local and the global is not arbitrary—it reflects a deliberate attempt by institutions to build a dual commercial identity: one rooted in cultural authenticity and another that reaches toward modernity and market integration. Such naming practices sociologically translate the dynamics of contemporary Algerian society, where foreign languages—especially English—dominate as symbolic tools of power, competence, and professionalism, while local references remain essential to assert authenticity and belonging. These names do not merely refer to an economic activity; they express the institution's self-perception, ambitions, and the social group it seeks to engage.

These foreign names serve as symbolic tools for reshaping the relationship between the institution and the consumer within a socially stratified city like Algiers. They represent not just commercial function but also social aspiration and cultural positioning, with the name acting as a bridge between economy and identity, between the market and the collective imagination.

Moreover, the Turkish language was largely absent from Algerian discourse until the rise of Turkish television series and the opening of Algeria to the global market through the import of Turkish products and the entry of Turkish investors. In recent years, "Algeria has been Turkey's largest trade partner in Africa since 2006⁵".

In conclusion, regarding this section of the presentation on the **linguistic context and multilingualism as a determining factor in institutional naming**, and the various examples of names in different languages that were presented, it is clear that the issue of **language and cultural exchange with the "Other"** plays a central role. The use of foreign-language names by economic institutions reflects a process of **imitation and influence by the Other**, echoing what Jacobs suggested: "*Language and culture apply in a mutually supportive way; language should be regarded as an integrated part of social life*⁶."

The adoption of foreign-sounding names contributes to defining the product's identity **for the Other** through the language used—whether French, English, or even Chinese. As it has been noted, "*A multilingual situation is a space where the relationship between the dominant language and the dominated one is not fixed. In Algeria's shifting linguistic context, languages are not opposed in binary terms—such as between two standard forms (Modern Standard Arabic / French), or between standard and colloquial (MSA / Algerian Arabic), or between local and standard languages (Tamazight / Arabic / French)—but rather, all these languages coexist simultaneously*⁷".

2. The Geographical Environment as a Determining Factor in Naming Institutions

The geographical environment is one of the most influential factors in commercial naming systems, playing a central role in shaping the identity of an institution and linking it to the spatial and social field in which it operates. This environment falls under what is known in onomastic studies as the *spatial context*—the natural, urban, and locational structure from

⁵ - Boushentoof, Nawal, Fettane, Tayeb, & Ben Sghir, Rania. (2023). "Economic Cooperation and Trade Exchange between Algeria and Turkey." *Journal of Political Studies and Economic Research*, Issue 02.

⁶ - JACKOBSON, R. (1963). *Essai de linguistique générale*, Les Editions de Minuit.

⁷ - Cherrad-Benchefra, Y., Derradji, Y., et al. (n.d.). *French in Algeria: Lexicon and Language Dynamics*. Duculot Editions, Paris, p. 110.

which commercial institutions draw their names. Many names are derived from direct geographical features such as cities, neighborhoods, streets, or natural landmarks, serving various purposes, including facilitating customer recognition, embedding the institution in collective memory, and reinforcing local affiliation.

In urban contexts such as Algiers, naming institutions after neighborhoods or local areas expresses a clear sense of belonging to the place. Names like *Bab El Oued Clothing* or *Belcourt Market* reflect the institution's integration into the social fabric of the neighborhood and express the merchant's desire to establish a presence within a familiar collective memory. Such naming strategies make the customer feel that the institution is "of and from them"—that is, it belongs to the same environment as they do, thereby strengthening trust and a sense of belonging. According to *Pierre Bourdieu*⁸, using the names of specific neighborhoods can be seen as a strategy to build symbolic capital. For example, the name *Hydra Design* capitalizes on the image of the upscale Hydra neighborhood to give the institution an aura of sophistication and prestige—even if it is located elsewhere.

The business name also becomes a tool for symbolic class-based communication⁹, as each institution selects what aligns with its target audience and the values it seeks to instill in customers' minds. In this context, the commercial name can be understood as an expression of symbolic positioning within the economic and social field. The concept of *symbolic class-based communication* is part of the sociology of culture and social classes. It refers to the use of symbols—such as language, clothing, names, or taste—by individuals or groups to express their class affiliation or to differentiate themselves from other classes. While this concept is not always explicitly named by all researchers, it is strongly present in the works of several foundational sociologists.

Accordingly, the geographical environment context is considered a determining factor in the naming of economic institutions. In our case, the study sample drawn from economic institutions in Algiers reveals that naming strategies often involve a well-thought-out marketing dimension. Spatial symbolism is employed as a means of emotionally influencing the audience and linking the institution to a shared local or national identity. These examples confirm that the geographical environment is not merely a material determinant of naming, but also a semantic and cultural structure that frames the institution's relationship with its surroundings and contributes to the construction of a clearly localized commercial identity.

Third: The Religious and Cultural Context as a Determining Factor in Business Naming

Religious and cultural references constitute one of the most prominent factors in naming commercial establishments in Algiers. These names reflect the interaction of business owners with the local symbolic heritage and their attempts to root their enterprises within a conservative social environment. The prevalence of such names is not a mere spontaneous linguistic choice, but rather serves to bestow a sense of religious legitimacy upon commercial activity, mirroring the community's perception of the link between religiosity and credibility.

Additionally, some names are inspired by religious or historical figures of symbolic importance, used to affirm an Arab-Islamic cultural identity. In the same vein, names of local saints are sometimes adopted, particularly in older neighborhoods, to emphasize a sense of

⁸ - **Debbab, Zahia.** *Issues and Concepts of the Sociology of Education in the Thought of Pierre Bourdieu.* Dafater Al-Makhabar Journal, Vol. 16, No. 01, 2021, p. 144.

⁹ - In this context, we find the work of Pierre Bourdieu—one of the foremost pioneers in this field. Among his major works is *“La Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste”* (Bourdieu, P., 1979), in which he developed key concepts such as *class-based taste, field, habitus, and symbolic capital*. Bourdieu argues that social classes are distinguished not only by material factors, but also through symbolic and cultural representations, including ways of speaking, eating, dressing, and naming.

cultural continuity and spiritual identity tied to the capital. It is evident that this religious and cultural naming dimension serves not only a semantic function but also forms part of a marketing strategy aimed at aligning with prevailing societal values.

The religious and cultural dimension in the names of private economic institutions in Algiers constitutes a sociological phenomenon that expresses the close relationship between the market and society. It is a symbolic act imbued with cultural and social meanings. In the Algerian context—especially in Algiers—business names often carry a clear religious and cultural aspect, reflecting how economic actors perceive themselves and their efforts to integrate into the local social environment.

An analysis of names such as *Al-Baraka* (Blessing), *Al-Nour* (Light), *Al-Kawthar* (a river in Paradise), or *Tayba* (a name for Medina) shows that naming is not neutral; rather, it expresses a value system rooted in the collective religious imagination. Using vocabulary drawn from the religious lexicon lends commercial activity a morally legitimate character and reassures customers of the institution's trustworthiness. Thus, the name becomes a tool for linking business activity with social acceptance.

Some institutions also adopt names such as *Ibn Khaldun*, *Al-Andalus*, or *Al-Yara'* (a classical term for pen), which are culturally charged symbols with Arab-Islamic resonance, evoking associations with knowledge, eloquence, and a rich historical legacy. The use of such names lends the institution a cultural depth that enhances its image in the eyes of customers, presenting it as a project that respects the civilizational values of society.

The Impact of Social Religiosity on Business Naming Social religiosity is also reflected in naming practices through the widespread use of religiously inspired names in the economic sphere. These names are not viewed merely as religious symbols, but rather as indirect guarantees of integrity and uprightness—marketing tools that evoke trust and respect in a local society that regards religion as a behavioral reference. This is consistent with Max Weber's interpretation of the connection between social action and religion as a driving force in economic behavior. According to Weber, "**economic ethics are a religious product.**"¹⁰ Moreover, some names are inspired by local religious or historical figures such as Sidi Abderrahmane or Sheikh Mohieddine, who hold a strong presence in the collective memory of Algiers' inhabitants. Naming institutions after these figures gives them a spiritual dimension within the urban spaces in which they operate, especially in traditional and older neighborhoods.

Among the names that deepen religious identity—celebrated as symbols of purity and moral virtue—are examples such as Qasr al-Muhammadiyya (The Palace of Muhammadiyya), which bears reference to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and Qasabat al-Rahma (The Market of Mercy) in the El Kouba district. The name Rahma (mercy) holds moral and social significance, with emotional appeal to customers due to its religious weight, as in the Qur'anic verse: "**Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. And those with him are firm against the disbelievers and merciful among themselves...**" (Surah Al-Fath, 48:29).

Through naming, private-sector institutions attempt to integrate into the cultural value system of society and build a positive image in the eyes of consumers. Thus, the business is not merely presented as an economic actor, but as a participant in the local system of values and social norms. Pierre Bourdieu affirms this by viewing the name as a form of cultural capital, which grants legitimacy to the institution within the social sphere. The name is a product embedded in a cultural field, reflecting collective taste and shared values. In this context,

¹⁰ - **Jamila Khidher**, *The Religious Phenomenon in the Thought of Max Weber*, *Al-Hikma Journal for Philosophical Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 2021, p. 946.

cultural capital represents a set of symbols, skills, and cultural competencies¹¹. It also manifests as cultural resources or goods that hold value within the social marketplace—resources through which individuals can achieve distinction or occupy high social status.

In conclusion, the religious and cultural dimension in the naming of commercial establishments in Algiers serves as an indicator of the economic space's interaction with the symbolic system of society. Naming, therefore, is not merely a communicative function—it becomes a mirror of the institution's affiliation with its religious and cultural context and a tool for building trust and reinforcing both social and economic presence.

Fourth: The Feminine Context as a Determining Factor in Business Naming

The feminine context in the naming of private economic institutions refers to the social and cultural dimension in which the image of women is invested—either directly or indirectly—in the naming process. This is manifested through the use of female names or words traditionally associated with femininity, such as delicacy, beauty, tenderness, or care. These elements are employed as a means to express the identity of the institution or to attract a specific segment of customers.

In Algiers, this naming trend reflects a complex reality: on one hand, it signals the growing presence of women in the economic sphere, either as business founders or as target consumers. On the other hand, it reproduces stereotypical images of women in the market, especially in sectors such as beauty, health, education, and child nutrition. The feminine dimension here is used not only as a symbol but also as a strategic tool with clear cultural and marketing implications.

In major cities like Algiers, commercial naming has gone beyond a mere tool for identifying or distinguishing a business in the market. It has become an active element in the construction of meaning within the economic and social field. This dimension deepens when names carry a feminine character—either through proper female names like *Nadia* or *Suhā*, or through emotionally charged symbolic concepts like *Amal* (Hope). In this context, business names such as "Fatima al-Zahra Contracting," "Nadia Advertising," "Suhā Import-Export," and "Amal Transport" represent cases worth exploring for their cultural, class-related, gendered, and broader symbolic implications.

According to **Émile Durkheim**, names are an expression of collective consciousness more than individual choices. Thus, a name like *Fatima al-Zahra Contracting* can be understood as a collective symbol linked to religious and moral values deeply rooted in traditional or conservative neighborhoods, where such a name carries connotations of respect and credibility. Meanwhile, **Pierre Bourdieu**, through his concept of *symbolic capital*, shows how simple names like *Amal* or *Nadia* can produce a strong intangible effect in the market, despite lacking any direct material content. These names carry a symbolic charge that generates trust and appeal—especially in a society marked by class disparities and a general lack of trust in the market.

On another level, **Erving Goffman** views the name as part of the "symbolic front" that an institution presents to its audience. In his view, the first thing a customer interacts with is the name of the business, and for this reason, it is chosen carefully, as it forms the first impression that may define the future relationship between the two parties.

When examining the local context of Algiers—a city marked by multiple identities and social classes—naming patterns emerge as indicators of this social diversity. In popular neighborhoods such as Bab El Oued or El Harrach, names often evoke religious or traditional references, like *Fatima al-Zahra*, due to their resonance with the collective imagination and public trust. In contrast, more modern neighborhoods such as Hussein Dey or Ben Aknoun tend

¹¹ - **Zahia Debbab**, *Previously cited reference*, p. 144.

to feature more contemporary names like *Nadia* or *Suhā*, which are used to appeal to an urban middle class that embraces modernization and a modern aesthetic.

These names also reflect the gender distribution within the economic market. When institutions in traditionally male-dominated fields such as construction or transportation adopt female names, this is not merely a superficial choice. Rather, it may represent an effort to humanize or emotionalize the activity, and to challenge prevailing stereotypes. In fact, some female entrepreneurs choose to name their businesses after themselves—a symbolic act of reclaiming public space, which has long been male-dominated.

Femininity also acquires symbolic significance conveyed through culture and language, since individuals absorb their community's culture through language. The study of women's names offers a rich perspective on the linguistic, cultural, and social dimensions of femininity, and their role in shaping and transforming identities over time. In the past, the public mention of a woman's name was often seen as a social taboo, which led some women to conceal or avoid using their real names—whether in real life or on social media¹². However, a close examination of Algeria's linguistic reality—particularly through the names of economic institutions—reveals a significant decline in such traditional perceptions of femininity. This shift is largely due to the fact that naming decisions in the private sector now rest with business owners, who prioritize professional goals such as maximizing profit flow and ensuring competitiveness in the market.

Conclusion

What we observed throughout this study on the impact of local social contexts on naming in the Algerian setting is that naming becomes an institution embedded within a linguistic dynamic that expresses plurality. Arabic is often used to signify authenticity and national or religious affiliation, while French is employed for various reasons, including the colonial legacy, but also for commercial and marketing considerations, as it still carries connotations of “prestige” and openness to the Other. On the other hand, Tamazight (Berber) has increasingly asserted its presence, particularly in regions experiencing active identity movements, where Amazigh names are used in institutions as an expression of pride in local cultural identity. English is often used in names that have a modern or technological character, symbolizing engagement with globalization and modernity. This linguistic diversity reflects not only cultural plurality but also market dynamics, the interplay between the local and the global, and the ongoing effort to construct an attractive symbolic image for the institution in a diverse and evolving society.

Geography also plays a tangible and influential role in shaping the names of institutions, as many names are based on geographical or spatial references, whether directly or symbolically. Choosing the name of a region, city, neighborhood, or natural landmark grants the institution a local identity and strengthens its connection to place, thereby conferring local legitimacy and social trust within its operational environment. For instance, an institution may be named “Hoggar,” “Aurès,” or “Oasis” in southern Algeria, signaling the geographical depth and cultural uniqueness of the area. Similarly, some institutions may adopt the names of major cities as a form of economic positioning (e.g., “Algiers Capital Distribution Company”). In such cases, the name is not merely a spatial reference but becomes a tool for reinforcing the geographical and social identity of the institution, linking it to the symbolic and emotional capital of the place.

¹² - Women have started using pseudonyms, whether in real life—by referring to themselves as “mother of so-and-so”—or on social media, in the virtual world, without mentioning their actual names. This practice is not mandated by any law, and even during the time of the Prophet, women participated in public life using their real names.

Spatial names, in this sense, function as brands rooted in local soil while also open to expansion beyond geographical borders, transforming place into a transferable symbolic identity.

Religious and cultural references are also strongly present in institutional names, clearly reflecting the centrality of religion in the Algerian social imaginary. Naming here is not neutral; it is produced within a value-laden discourse that seeks to lend credibility and moral legitimacy to the institution. Thus, we find frequent use of Islamic names such as “Al-Baraka” (Blessing), “Al-Taqwa” (Piety), and “Al-Huda” (Guidance). These names are not randomly chosen; they are strategically used as markers that build trust and reassure customers of ethical conduct. Other names are drawn from popular Islamic culture, such as “Kawthar,” “Firdaws,” “Zamzam,” or “Rihana,” all of which refer to religious symbols or values related to purity, chastity, and paradise. In other cases, names are inspired by local cultural heritage, proverbs, or folk tales, giving the institution a distinctive character that reflects deep roots in collective culture. In this way, naming becomes a symbolic practice rich with meaning, linking the institution to social values and grounding its presence within a culturally symbolic environment.

The feminine context also emerges as a significant factor in institutional naming. Many business names—especially in sectors such as fashion, beauty, women’s services, and restaurants—tend to adopt feminine names, reproducing the image of women in the public sphere as symbols of beauty and allure. In this context, naming becomes a tool for constructing a commercial discourse that capitalizes on the cultural and social meanings associated with women, whether as consumers or as brand icons. In some cases, these names are chosen for emotional or personal reasons (e.g., naming a business after one’s mother or wife), adding an intimate dimension that reflects a subjective aspect of naming. However, despite these dimensions, the presence of the feminine in naming also reveals the continued use of femininity as a symbolic resource in marketing and promotion, raising questions about the boundaries between symbolic appreciation and commercial commodification.

Business names are not merely identifiers or symbols; they are semantic spaces saturated with meaning, constructed at the intersection of language, geography, religion, and culture. Onomastic analysis of these names shows how these elements are strategically invested by social actors seeking to build a strong, impactful, and socially resonant symbolic image. In this sense, naming is a profoundly cultural act that reflects a deep social awareness of local contexts and reveals the potential of names to serve as carriers of identity, means of public engagement, and instruments of positioning within the market and society.

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