

Onoma 54
Journal of the International Council of Onomastic Sciences

ISSN: 0078-463X; e-ISSN: 1783-1644
Journal homepage: https://onomajournal.org/

An analysis of the relationship between toponyms and a variety of historical and cultural specificities in the discursive construction of identity in a regional town in Zimbabwe

DOI: 10.34158/ONOMA.54/2019/5

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To cite this article: Zuvalinyenga, Dorcas & Libert, Alan. 2019. An analysis of the relationship between toponyms and a variety of historical and cultural specificities in the discursive construction of identity in a regional town in Zimbabwe. *Onoma* 54, 77–98. DOI: 10.34158/ONOMA.54/2019/5

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.34158/ONOMA.54/2019/5

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An analysis of the relationship between toponyms and a variety of historical and cultural specificities in the discursive construction of identity in a regional town in Zimbabwe

Abstract: This study analyses how toponyms discursively construct identity in connection with a variety of historical and cultural specificities in Bindura, Zimbabwe. The analysis unfolds from a position of noting the functional and symbolic significance of place names and naming practices in society's everyday life. We advance the idea that toponymic practices in Bindura (re)present various types of identities, have power relations embedded in them and can communicate various messages in addition to being manifestations of linguistic, cultural and social heritage. They also have an economic value attached to them. This study uses a combination of archival research, participant observation, interviews and ethnographic methods in its exploration of the people's views pertaining to the nature of the relationship between naming practices, identity, power and communication in a multi-lingual, multi-cultural society. Preliminary findings indicate that history, memory and culture are important components of identity formation and these constituents are carried in a place's toponymic practices. Official names of features in the study area serve as indicators of the official views and ideological perceptions of the political, social and historical events of the place.

Keywords: Toponyms, Bindura, culture, history, identity, critical discourse analysis.

Une analyse de la relation entre les toponymes et une variété de spécificités historiques et culturelles dans la construction discursive de l'identité dans une ville régionale du Zimbabwe

Résumé : Cette étude analyse la manière dont les toponymes construisent dans le discours l'identité en fonction de diverses spécificités historiques et culturelles à Bindura (Zimbabwe). L'analyse se déroule à partir de la constatation de la signification fonctionnelle et symbolique des toponymes et des pratiques de dénomination dans la vie quotidienne de la société. Nous défendons l'idée que les pratiques toponymiques à Bindura (re)présentent divers types d'identités, qu'elles sont porteuses de relations de pouvoir et qu'elles peuvent communiquer divers messages en plus d'être des manifestations du patrimoine linguistique, culturel et social. Elles ont également une valeur économique. Cette étude utilise une combinaison de recherche archivistique, d'observation des participants, d'entretiens et de méthodes ethnographiques dans son exploration des points de vue de la population sur la nature de la relation entre les pratiques de dénomination, l'identité, le pouvoir et la communication dans une société multilingue et multiculturelle. Les résultats préliminaires indiquent que l'histoire, la mémoire et la culture sont des composantes importantes de la formation de l'identité et que ces composantes sont portées par les usages toponymiques. Les noms officiels des lieux de la zone étudiée servent d'indicateurs des points de vue officiels et des perceptions idéologiques des événements politiques, sociaux et historiques du local.

Mots-clés : Toponymes, Bindura, culture, Histoire, identité, analyse du discours critique.

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Eine Analyse der Beziehung zwischen Toponymen und einer Vielzahl historischer und kultureller Besonderheiten bei der diskursiven Identitätskonstruktion in einer regionalen Stadt in Simbabwe

Zusammenfassung: Diese Studie analysiert, wie Toponyme im Zusammenhang mit einer Vielzahl historischer und kultureller Besonderheiten in Bindura, Simbabwe, diskursiv Identität konstruieren. Die Analyse entwickelt sich aus der Position heraus, die funktionale und symbolische Bedeutung von Ortsnamen und Namenspraktiken im Alltag der Gesellschaft festzuhalten. Wir vertreten die Auffassung, dass toponymische Praktiken in Bindura verschiedene Arten von Identitäten (re)präsentieren, in denen Machtverhältnisse eingebettet sind und die nicht nur Manifestationen des sprachlichen, kulturellen und sozialen Erbes sind, sondern auch verschiedene Informationen vermitteln können. Sie haben auch einen wirtschaftlichen Wert, der ihnen beigemessen wird. Diese Studie verwendet eine Kombination aus Archivforschung, teilnehmender Beobachtung, Interviews und ethnographischen Methoden, um die Ansichten der Menschen über die Art der Beziehung zwischen Namenspraktiken, Identität, Macht und Kommunikation in einer mehrsprachigen, multikulturellen Gesellschaft zu erforschen. Vorläufige Ergebnisse deuten darauf hin, dass Geschichte, Erinnerung und Kultur wichtige Bestandteile der Identitätsbildung sind und diese Bestandteile in den toponymischen Praktiken eines Ortes getragen werden. Offizielle Namen im Untersuchungsgebiet dienen als Indikatoren für die politischen, sozialen und geschichtlichen Ereignisse des Ortes in ihrer offiziellen Sichtweise und ideologischen Wahrnehmung.

Schlüsselbegriffe: Ortsnamen, Bindura, Kultur, Geschichte, Identität, kritische Diskursanalyse.

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Onoma 54 (2019), 77–98. DOI: 10.34158/ONOMA.54/2019/5

An analysis of the relationship between toponyms and a variety of historical and cultural specificities in the discursive construction of identity in a regional town in Zimbabwe

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1. Introduction

Toponyms are used every day and people often take their existence for granted. However, close analysis shows that they do much more than just denote a place (Ameel & Ainiala 2018). Toponyms and naming practices have a functional and symbolic significance in society's everyday life. They (re)present various types of identities, are manifestations of linguistic, cultural and social heritage, have an economic value attached, power relations embedded in them and can communicate various messages (Ainiala & Östman 2017). This reading of toponyms is a departure from traditional toponymic studies that had etymology and typology as their focus.

Critical toponymy continues to produce numerous research outputs especially for regions in the global north (Rose-Redwood et al. 2018). However, critical toponymy seems not to have been taken up on a similar scale in the global south and the few works thus far produced tend to focus on major cities (Bigon 2016; Nyambi et al. 2016). Therefore, this study is a response to the call in critical toponymy and Linguistic Landscape studies (LL) to closely analyse the substantive power of toponymy from a regional town's perspective (Azaryahu 2009; 2011) and contribute to these fields.

The study uses a combination of archival research, participant observation, semi-structured interviews and ethnographic methods in its exploration of people's views pertaining to the nature of the relationship between place naming practices, identity, power and communication in a multi-lingual, multi-cultural society. 658 toponyms were retrieved from various sources: encounters with residents, urban and rural planners, community leaders, the public (both the old and young), maps, gazetteers and archives (both physical and those hosted on the Internet). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), both as a theoretical framework and an analytical toolset, was employed to investigate how and why people give places the names which they do and what the cultures and histories behind these naming practices are. The study aimed to find out the answer to the question, how and why toponymies work with history and culture in Bindura, Zimbabwe, to discursively construct individual, collective, local, regional, national and international identities.

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In line with previous studies, findings indicate that history, memory and culture are important components of identity formation and these constituents are carried in a place's toponymic practices. Official toponyms in the study area serve as indicators of the official views and ideological perceptions of the political, social and historical events of the place. Major historical and cultural events such as the pre-colonial, colonial period, War of Liberation, attainment of independence and Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP), together with their attendant ideologies, are reflected in the area's toponymies. In this sense, the toponyms represent a reflection of the area, since they are elements of cultural retention, forms of resistance and are important for the construction of identity and memory.

Identity is a pertinent yet complex notion that is contextually defined in two broad ways. Firstly, identity is referred to as a people's sense of who they are. Secondly, identity is envisaged in terms of place, place-names and language (Edwards 2009). People's sense of who they are is often intricately connected to the language they speak and this is usually reflected in the names they give to people, other things and places, including streets, creating place attachment and place identity (Kostanski & Puzey 2016: XIII). Identity is subjective and there can be various identities of a place and people.

Although identity is polysemantic, there is a mutual interrelation of individual and collective identity. The interrelationship becomes evident when belonging to a group means that an individual accepts the group's standards of behaviour, its mutual history and culture that makes up the group's social memory. This scenario may best be understood in two ways. Firstly, when toponymic practices and identity are considered in terms of scale, that is, local, regional, national and international. For example, toponyms can represent these identities which are connected to individuals, personalities or concepts and events that the community can relate to. *Musvosvi Street* encompasses both individual and collective identity. Interview respondents indicated that *Musvosvi* was a local teacher who served the community for a long time and was honoured by having a street named after him. Local identity is reflected in that he was born in Bindura and his clan hails from the area. Regional identity becomes apparent in that the name *Musvosvi* is Shona for 'enticer' and this connects with the area enticing people to visit or settle due to abundant resources. National identity can be read from the name *Musvosvi* being Shona, a language argued to have the most speakers in Zimbabwe (Bottcher 2002; Mlambo 2009; Magwa 2010; Kadenge & Mugari 2015). Further to that, the qualities of service to humanity and valuing education attest to the national ideology that is often taken to project a good international image in Zimbabwe (Shizha & Kariwo 2012; Shizha 2013).

Secondly, toponyms are seen as examples of political language which is related to political culture and the way politicians adapt a global ideology to local political circumstances to persuade the electorate (Kranert 2019). This

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may be the case where toponyms are used as ideological symbols to convince people to accept certain political cultures and worldviews. For instance, in Zimbabwe, politicians have been promoting nationalist and pan-African ideologies through their naming systems. To champion the nationalist agenda, they have been memorialising the War of Liberation by having most odonyms and oikonyms named after war veterans. These include odonyms like *Leopold Takawira Avenue, Eliot Manyika Avenue* and *Robert Mugabe Way*. As for the pan-African ideology, toponyms feature leaders of other African countries, with *Sam Nujoma Street, Samora Machel Avenue, Nelson Mandela Avenue, Kwame Nkrumah Avenue* and *Julius Nyerere Avenue* being examples. Overall, the analysis of toponyms made it evident that they are embodiments of a place's historical, cultural and social memories, and these are essential components in the development of individual and collective identity. However, powerful actors in society acknowledge their versatility and are using them to advance their political ideology that undermines diverse views. Thus, there is need to revalidate the use-value of toponyms associated with creating and maintaining more inclusive place-naming systems through democratic decision-making processes as well as various informal toponymic practices.

The article is structured as follows: a background and contextualisation of the research area and study is given, and then the theoretical framework, methods and analytical tools are presented. In addition, definitions of key terms are given and the related literature is discussed. Further to that, the findings are presented together with a discussion of these results. A conclusion summarises the study.

2. Background and the research context

Place naming has always not only been for its sake but significant to societies the world over in many ways (Neethling 2000; Kostanski 2011; Helleland et al. 2012; Nash 2013; Clark et al. 2014; Nyambi et al. 2016; Puzey & Kostanski 2016). Naming is considered an act of speaking about and recalling shared experiences and beliefs (Mushati 2013). Sengani (2015: 2) aptly contends that, "[a]mongst the *Vhavenda,* most names encode their history, culture and heritage". Sengani (2015) cites Tonkin (1980), who argues that names are perceived as expressions of personal aspirations as well as means of social control. Further, Chabata (2012) cogently argues that an overview of the literature on names demonstrates that the conferral of names is important, because each particular name reflects the expectation of the individual giving it. Moreover, except for a few names whose origins or reasons for being given might be obscure, most toponyms mirror the way of life and reasoning of the people that gives them (Chabata 2012; Mapara 2013; 2016; Mapara & Makaudze 2016; Mapara & Nyota 2016).

Commemorative toponyms are noted to be highly ideological (Nyota et

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al. 2009; Chabata 2012; Mapara 2013; Mushati 2013; Mamvura 2014; Mapara & Nyota 2016). According to Mushati (2013: 69) and Shoval (2013: 1), in commemorating historical people, narratives and events, these names may reproduce a nation's authority and hegemony. This statement is sound in view of changes in high proportions of toponyms after governments change, as was the case with Zimbabwe after it attained its political independence (Pfukwa 2018) and in post-apartheid South Africa (Ndletyana 2012). Therefore, a juxtaposition of these established facts leads one to argue for close analysis of place naming for a better understanding of it.

Payne (1985: 12) additionally maintains that names are connected to historic points in the advancement of our "feeling of place", something that is critical in our general development. Seen along these lines, toponyms ought not to be seen only as a system of reference as there can be considerable connections between the name, what it alludes to and the person giving it (Nash 2013; Nyambi 2016; 2017). Nyambi & Mangena (2015: 139) suggest that names give information on their suppliers' history, their qualities and desires, or just their perspective. They are elements through which one perceives and comprehends oneself and one's encompassing world. Therefore, this study argues that through CDA, toponyms can be analysed to unravel the ways in which they are used to discursively construct various identities and ideologies of certain people and places. This critical analysis, thus, exposes unequal power relations that are extant in some ideology-driven toponymies since in most cases it is the political elite who decide the naming of features, streets and city sites.

Onomastics helps in ascertaining the meaning of names, while critical discourse analysis clarifies the power struggles that are in toponymic practices (Wodak 2015: 1). CDA can be used to reveal the problems caused by partisan, ideological naming practices and the way people react to them, as few studies in Zimbabwe examine these issues (Mapara & Nyota 2016: 289). Therefore, this study unravels the discursive construction of various identities, motives behind place-naming in the selected site.

Although there has been onomastic research in Zimbabwe, this article is proposing a different focus, as it integrates issues of identity, power and communication as motives for place naming in Bindura, which is a multilingual, multicultural society that has an urban setting as well as a rural hinterland. The multiculturalism results from the mines and farms that make-up the area's socio-economic structure which has seen people from diverse backgrounds converging to work in these mines, farms and the linked industries.

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3. A history of Zimbabwe

To gain a clearer understanding of the matter, a brief history of Zimbabwe will suffice. Critical toponymic studies (Berg & Vuolteenaho 2009; Rose-Redwood et al. 2009; Azaryahu 2011; Puzey & Kostanski 2016; Rose-Redwood et al. 2018) are increasingly interested in analysing toponyms within their encompassing socio-political setting and what they signify. The context of our study traverses pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe.

Pre-colonial Zimbabwe is argued to have been inhabited by the San, especially in the later Stone Age period (Garlake 1982) and was probably one of the most powerful and enduring kingdoms, in the history of Zimbabwe, the Mutapa Kingdom (Randall-MacIver 1906; Hall 1909; Pikirayi 2001). Mlambo (2014: 8) states that the San may have been displaced around 900 CE by the Bantu, who may have migrated from Central Africa to the south. These migrations are argued to have taken place between the 9th to 13th centuries. Mlambo (2014: 8) also states that the Bantu first settled around the Mapela, Mapungubwe and Great Zimbabwe sites. He further attests that these settlements declined and people moved to the northwest of present-day Zimbabwe, which is almost the position of Bindura today. It is noteworthy that the migrations were not systematic and the absence of written records during that time makes it difficult to verify assertions on such matters.

The San are presented in historical and archaeological accounts as having been a nomadic and hunter-gatherer population and there are rock paintings and toponyms that can be linked to these people (Garlake 1982: 11). However, the origins of the Early Iron Age and Bantu-speaking peoples have been the subject of considerable interdisciplinary research. This research has produced considerable diversity of opinion, but scholars agree that changes in technology, economy and society in Zimbabwe are the product of immigrants from Central and or West Africa (Garlake 1982; Mlambo 2014). These Bantu-speaking people brought with them domestic stock, cultivated crops, metal technology and a settled village life (Garlake 1982: 12). These are argued to be the ancestors of the present day Bantu people who include the *Shona, Nsenga, Chewa, Nyanja* etc. (Mlambo 2014: 8).

In terms of ideology, the pre-colonial period is argued to have been largely egalitarian with no apparent distinctions of wealth and class (Garlake 1982: 12–13). Garlake (1982: 12–13) argues that pre-colonial societies were matrilineal due to the fact that grain was the main source of food; with work in the fields being primarily the responsibility of women, this gave them a dominant role in the economy. Garlake's (1982) arguments are pertinent given that oral narratives also testify to the equality, classlessness and matrilineal nature of the pre-colonial period. However, these states of affairs changed with the coming of colonisation.

Zimbabwe was colonised by the British in the 1890s (Mlambo 2014: 30).

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This period was characterised by antagonistic race relations. The colonialists dominated, segregated and discriminated against the indigenes by displacing them and enacting legislation that was repressive. The indigenes resisted and this resistance took many forms – both passive and active – resulting in the protracted War of Liberation that eventually brought independence to Zimbabwe in 1980. It should, however, be noted that these race relations were seldom Manichean, as there were other reactions and dispositions to this contact situation. There were both liberals and radicals in the settler government (Lentz 2014). In addition, the indigenous population was also not unilateral in its reaction to the ensuing contact. There are numerous accounts of indigenes who exhibited tendencies of siding with the colonists (Chung 2006). On the whole, the colonial period was embodied by pluralism characterised by contact (linguistic, cultural and economic); thus, as with most contact situations, it resulted in tensions and contests that had a bearing on the identity, power relations and communication of the people involved (Kinloch 2003).

Imposition of a system of institutionalized racism by the colonists on the indigenous population had a bearing on race and political relations. Segregatory legislation, pronouncements and practices were passed. These included the Morris Carter Commission of 1925, the Land Apportionment Act of 1931, the Natives (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act of 1946 & 1951, the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951, the Land Tenure Act of 1969 and also the Regional Town and Planning Act of 1932. Fitzmaurice (2015) aptly explains the situation (including the post-colonial period) when she argues that:

> The legislative record of the colony, the republic and finally independent Zimbabwe tells the story of seizure, settlement, protection, containment, redistribution, occupation and resettlement of the land. The impact of the definition along racial lines of citizens and subjects was *evident in the nomenclature* that marks the public discourse about the settlement of the land. Through the twentieth century, Africans were continually displaced from their homes and removed from their farms. (Fitzmaurice 2015: 331, emphasis added by the authors)

Thus, from the above quotation, naming practices during the colonial era were segregatory, created separate places and spaces for the races and caused tensions.

Zimbabwe attained independence in 1980 and soon after, many place names were changed. This renaming was premised on the acknowledgement of the power of naming and as an exercise of reclamation. However, the divisions caused by colonization endured and exist even to the present, although they may have different forms. Kinloch (2003) and Fitzmaurice (2015) explain the continuation of discriminatory practices in post-independence Zimbabwe.

Kinloch (2003: 252–253) elucidates that the colonial setting is both

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replicated in and developed by the developments that have been taking place in the period after independence. He argues that this post-colonial period is bringing to the fore popular and mixed cultures, renewal in particular cultures, migration and contact situations that has led to merging and formulation of divergent identities. Kinloch (2003: 253) refers to the emergence of an elite indigenous ruling class that is reminiscent of the white minority ruling elite and continuous ethnic violence as examples. Therefore, independence in Zimbabwe has not changed social relations, it has only changed the race of the dominating elite – from a white to a black ruling bourgeoisie – perpetuating the same segregation and discrimination of the powerless majority. Ethnicity is also more pronounced with tussles between different groups such as the *Zezuru, Karanga, Ndebele, Tonga* etc. on a number of issues (Dube & Ncube 2013). Interestingly, Kinloch (2003: 252) acknowledges that the tensions can be traced historically to the colonial period, although they have been worsened and encouraged by current political and economic pressures. The ensuing situation can be likened to that presented by Shakespeare in *The Tempest* where Caliban retorts to Prospero that "You taught me your language, now I know how to curse!" The black ruling elite could be saying something similar, "We learned from the best and we have since perfected the art of dominating over others".

Fitzmaurice (2015: 334) concurs, as she posits that the post-colonial situation shows a continuation of the struggles and tensions that were brought about by the colonial usurpation of land, eviction and resettling of its occupants via unjust legislation and cultural practices. She posits that the identity of the white settlers in pre- and post-independence periods, is intricately connected to the notion of land. One could then infer that this link can be traced in toponymic practices. This importance of the land in identity construction can also be read in the Land Reform programme that was initiated by the Zimbabwean government from the year 2000 and continues up to date, as well as in various studies on the subject (Magosvongwe & Nyamende 2015; Mlambo & Chitando 2015; Musanga 2017).

Overall, Zimbabwe has been battling with issues of identity and autonomy amid the seemingly inexorcisable ghost of colonial vestiges, as well as with ethnic and social tensions associated with multilingual, multicultural groupings. Various contributions from history, cultural studies, geography, social sciences and linguistics are being made. However, the tensions seem to be unrelenting, as evidenced by debates about (re)naming places, minority and endangered languages, indigenisation, black empowerment and equity issues. This study is an added voice to onomasticians' contributions in trying to understand the Zimbabwean situation.

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4. Methods and theoretical framework

The study uses a blend of archival research, participant observation, semi-structured interviews and ethnographic methods. Participants have been interviewed and observed in the field. Notes were taken during field observations and data collected from interviews was transcribed and thematically analysed. Triangulation was achieved by reviewing documents such as maps, gazetteers, pictures and the naming and planning Acts (both urban and rural).

In analysing the data, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was employed. It is a framework that borrows from a range of different fields in linguistics, the humanities and social sciences to highlight how discourse derives from and is driven by society. Thus, discourse can be used in establishing and sustaining social identities and to perpetuate unequal power relations (Wodak & Meyer 2009). The framework asserts that language is a social construction just as much as society constructs language itself (Wodak 2007: 203). This dialectical relationship of society and discourse has seen language being used by powerful actors in society in ways that are prejudicial to less powerful groupings. CDA thus calls for pointing out this scenario to advance just ways of using discourse (Reisigl 2017: 44). Therefore, CDA has been adopted in this study in as far as it highlights how language in use can be a powerful tool of inclusion and exclusion for society. Furthermore, the framework enables the researcher to point out what the toponyms, which can be ideological in most cases, mean to ordinary people as well as their relationship to the wider linguo-socio-economic context prevailing in society. Toponymy is multidisciplinary and CDA enables a multidisciplinary analysis since it is an eclectic, multidisciplinary enterprise (Flowerdew & Richardson 2017).

5. Findings

A database of 658 toponyms was compiled. However, only selected examples are presented here. The toponyms were grouped into themes following guidelines of Braun & Clarke (2006) and Tent & Blair (2014). Interviews were conducted with municipal officials, planning professionals, community leaders such as chiefs and headmen as well as elderly people or residents who had some knowledge on place naming. These were transcribed and thematically analysed.

Unlike many other countries, Zimbabwe does not have a policy on place naming. The only guidelines that the councils follow are the ones in the Urban Councils Act and the Rural Development Councils Act. These are not as elaborate and seem not to be followed from what was gathered from the interviews with some municipal officials. Further evidence that the guidelines are not followed can be seen from the recent (21 November 2019) renaming of roads, where cabinet simply announced that they have renamed certain roads without the knowledge of the councils and citizens (Blomfield 2019; Nyoka 2019).

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Also, there is a lack of documentation and literature on place naming. The councils do not have up-to-date maps except for torn ones that are hardly readable. Council officials have no documents to show how and when some places were named. Most of the officials interviewed do not know the sources and meanings of these names. This raises the need for further research and verification. In most areas place-name signage is very poor. In most suburbs in the urban areas there are no sign posts showing names of streets. This scenario could be likely the cause of unofficial names, as people end up giving streets their own names because they do not know the official ones. Those with signage, the signs are in disrepair and illegible (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Signage of odonyms that are in disrepair or illegible.
Photos ©: Dorcas Zuvalinyenga, July 2018.

It has not been easy to determine whether certain names were given to places prior or during the colonial period due to the lack of written records pertaining to the pre-colonial period. Most of the information was passed down through oral narratives.

Thematic analysis, which is a method of recognizing patterns or themes within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke 2006), enabled the grouping of the toponyms into five themes. These are geographical (botanical and wildlife), commemorative (historical events, institutions or personalities), directional, metonymic and other (Table 1). However, these themes are not distinct from each other, as some names could be classified under more than one category. They are also classified by scale.

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Table 1. Summary of themes in the place names

THEME	EXAMPLES	COMMENTS
Botanic	*Damba* 'monkey orange' *Street, Dandazi* 'web' *Street, Fleetwood Avenue, Hute* 'waterberry' *Lane, Mutsonzowa* 'duiker berry' *Road, Plum Close, Popgum Road, Tamarind Loop, Maize lands Farm, Pimento Farm, Chomkuti* 'forest water berry' *Village, Hay Mine*	These toponyms derive from vegetation or tree species. These do not necessarily exist in the area although some do. Apparent is the people's desire to have places named after the trees and other vegetation that can be found in the region as well as countrywide. Some tree species were introduced to the area by colonial settlers who wanted to have familiar vegetation and trees as they had in their home countries.
Wildlife	*Bimha* 'reedbuck' *Way, Haka* 'pangolin' *Avenue, Manzou* 'the elephants' *Street, Mhara* 'impala' *Avenue, Mhofu* 'eland' *Avenue, Leopards Vlei Farm, Lions Den Estates, Kudu* 'antelope' *Vlei Farm, Chamakunguwo* 'of the ravens' *Village, Mashambahaka* 'the pangolins' bath place' *Village*	Some places bear names of wildlife and other animals. Probably a way the people cherish this natural resource.
Commemo-rative	*Anthony Avenue, Bidson Mangirazi Street, Cambridge Avenue, Cardiff Road, Centenary Drive, Chenjerai Hunzvi Avenue, Chipadze Village, Jesmond Dean Estates*	These toponyms commemorate individuals, events and foreign places. Most of these commemorative toponyms are given after men.
Directional	*Central Avenue, Shamva Road, Light Industry Road, Red Cross Road, Station Road*	Central Avenue signifies the centre of the town. Other roads lead to the places they are named after, such as *Shamva*, the light industrial area.
Metonymic	*Chawagona* 'What have you done!' *Road, Shashi* 'moon' *View Hospital* (located on *Shashi View Road*), *Hay Road Day Care* (from *Hay Road*), *kuMagarden*	These stand for ways of life and types of businesses in the area. For example, the Faculty of Science and Engineering Campus is popularly known as *kuChawagona* because the road on which it is situated leads to the *Chawagona Prison and Correctional Services*.

There are names that can be categorised as local scale showing local identity. Under this category, some names are related to the physical (local relief – *Mutungagore Mountain*, river – *Mazowe*) and human (factory – *Valley Graders*, tower – *Bemberero*, church – *ZAOGA Prayer Mountain and Cathedral*) geographical attributes of the area (farms and mines), its territorial units (administrative wards) or architectural buildings (*Mutungagore*

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Complex), those that tell the direction of how to find certain features/objects (*Shashi View*) and those that show the town's historical events (*Ndodahondo Building* [War of Liberation]) and personalities (commemorative toponyms).

Bindura's linguistic landscape bears testimony to the area being a predominantly farming and mining community. Toponyms such as *Arundel farm, Bamboo Creek Farm, Green Farm, Bonzo Mine, Freda Rebecca Mine* and most odonyms in the *Aerodrome* suburb commemorate local people who participated in the War of Liberation in and around the area creating a regional identity and history. Most of these names include personalities, events and institutions whose activities helped with the development of the region's culture, economy, history, art or political self-determination.

The national scale and national identity can be noted in those toponyms that exude a national meaning, for example, most place names that commemorate heroes of the War of Liberation (*Kid Marongorongo Street, Magamba Way*) and nationalists (*Robert Gabriel Mugabe Street, Joshua Nkomo Avenue, Jaison Moyo Avenue, Josia Tongogara Avenue, Herbert Chitepo Avenue*). The prevalence of names honouring war heroes gives the area a nationalist identity to the extent that it has been labelled a no-go area for opposition political parties (Compagnon 2011; Helliker & Bhatasara 2018; Helliker et al. 2018).

There are also toponyms that are international in nature and these are associated with people, events outside Zimbabwe. Under this group fall most farms, mines and some odonyms that were transferred from Europe. Examples are *Sussex Farm, Usk Farm, Kimberley Reefs Mine, Cambridge Street*, and *Oxford Street*.

Historical events and cultural practices in toponymy that work together to discursively create perceptions of identities of place and people can be read in many ways. Toponyms connected to the San or pre-colonial communities are botanical, of wildlife and those connected to stone structures (Great Zimbabwe in Masvingo). Examples include *Manzou* ('the huge elephants'), *Chavadzimu* ('the ancestors' place'), *Rock Art Shelter*, *Chikupu Rock Paintings*, *Chisvingo Ruins* ('the fortress'), *Mashambamhuka* ('the animals' bathing place'), and *Pinduramhuka Hill* ('turn the game meat'). According to interview respondents, Bindura had wildlife and forest areas that their ancestors relied on for food, shelter and other livelihood needs. This relationship was shown by naming places celebrating these aspects of their lives. The rock paintings also have pictures of people and animals in most cases. Garlake (1987; 1990; 1995) and Mguni (2005) argue that the rock art also depicts the culture of the people and it is cemented in the toponyms.

The divisions among races during the colonial period can be read in the European versus African toponyms. Since the colonisers developed policies of separate livelihoods and development for blacks and whites, toponyms mark places along racial lines. English, Dutch, Afrikaans, Greek, Portuguese, Spanish,

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Italian and Germany toponyms can be seen in Bindura in areas that were discernibly European. For instance, most of the farms have European names, giving them a European identity. Examples include *Ballantrae Farm*, which has Scottish roots because it can be traced to a community in Carrick, South Ayrshire Scotland; *Crewkerne* has Scottish roots, as do *Glen Kermus/Kermos*; *Geluk Farm* is Dutch and Afrikaans, meaning happiness or good fortune. Respondents indicated that the farmer was always happy and successful in his farming business; this could be the reason why he named his farm that way. He was also said to have Dutch roots. De Bruyne (2016) also argues that the Dutch had and still have strong links with Zimbabwe. There are several *Geluk Farms* all over South Africa making it possible that the name could be Afrikaans that is derived unchanged from Dutch. *Otterburn Farm* is English and it can be traced to the Battle of Otterburn that took place on 5 August 1388 between the Scots and English. The name comes from a river confluence of a small village in Northumberland, England (*The Douglas Archives* 2019). *Pimento Farm* comes from Portuguese that refers to a small red pepper that is generally mild and sweet. *Robara Farm* is from Spanish *robara*, which means steal or rob. *Rossetta Rust Farm* has an Italian word which means a rose. It can also be connected to the port city of the Nile Delta East of Alexandria in Egypt, which means 'splendid' in Persian. *Vergenoeg Farm* is Afrikaans for contented or satisfied (Cairncross et al. 2008).

The low-density suburb which is popularly known as *kuMayadhi* ('big yards') or the Hospital area was mainly European. It was established during the colonial period around 1912 to offer modern city living for the Europeans settling in the town. Most of its odonyms bear European names, with examples including *Anthony Avenue, Bath Road, Cambridge Avenue, Cardiff Road, Centenary Drive, Church Road, Claverhill Road, Coventry Road* and *Wray Avenue*. Out of 54 street and road names, other than those that are numerical, only a negligible 8 (*Hormani Plot, Marula Crescent, Mazowe Close, Mopani Close, Msasa Drive, Mututu Lane, Shashi View Road* and *Sambi Close*) are in Shona. Furthermore, *Bindura Primary School*, *Marula*, *Mazowe* and *Shashi* are anglicised Shona words emphasizing the European identity of the place. Also, the Anglicisation is evident in that these areas are now known as "closes," "drives" and "views" which is a western perspective of thoroughfares. Another observation was that the odonyms in this area did not change even when Zimbabwe attained independence and initiated renaming exercises. Although the residents are more diverse with people of African, Chinese, Indian descent and other nationalities, it has largely retained a European identity because it still bears European toponyms.

On another note, the African townships of *Chipadze* and *Chiwaridzo* predominantly bear an African identity. Many of their toponyms are in African languages and commemorate African people, events and cultures. The name *Chipadze* is of a local chief who had jurisdiction over the area before being

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displaced during colonial times. *Bimha Way, Chipadze Street, Chiundu Road, Damba Street, Dandazi Street* and *Mawere Drive* are some of the names celebrating local vegetation, wildlife, prominent personalities and histories, cementing the suburbs' African and local identity.

The War of Liberation and the subsequent independence of Zimbabwe from colonial rule hold central positions in its history and identity. Therefore, toponyms connected to the War of Liberation and nationalist movements are used to discursively construct a collective national identity of unity, resilience and triumph. The *Aerodrome suburb* in Bindura has all its streets named to memorialise the War of Liberation (Personal interview with a council official, 19 July 2018). For example, there is *Bidson Mangirazi Street, Willy Konje Street* and *Ncedis Ncube Street*, which are named after local people from Bindura who fought in the war. Other streets refer to the war itself, for instance, *Chinemaropa* ('bloody') *Street*, and there is also *Zvinotapira* ('it is sweet') *Street,* which celebrates the attainment of independence. In addition, most of the odonyms in the central business district of Bindura commemorate the War of Liberation and the people who participated in it. There is *Ndodahondo* ('I love the war') building that houses government offices, *Robert Mugabe Way, Border Gezi Avenue, Chenjerai Hunzvi Avenue, Herbert Chitepo Avenue, Jaison Moyo Avenue, Joshua Nkomo Avenue, Josiah Tongogara Avenue, Leopold Takawira Avenue* and *Simon Vengesayi Muzenda Street*, which remind people of a collective Zimbabwean identity that was born out of struggle against colonial settlers.

The patriarchal nature of both the colonial and post-colonial periods is also evident in the linguistic landscape of Bindura. In both periods, there are no toponyms that commemorate women. Zuvalinyenga (2018) noted that despite the Zimbabwean government realising the participation of women in the War of Liberation, championing gender equality and calling for democratic practices, women still remain sidelined and unrecognised when it comes to naming places, especially streets.

6. Conclusion

From the foregoing, toponyms, history and culture are used by people in building various identities. The discussion commenced from elaborating the way naming is an important exercise to various people all over the world. The article then proceeded to give a contextual history of Bindura and a historiography of Zimbabwe, as it argued that historical and cultural elements in place naming are important for the construction of various identities. Toponymy concretize a people's collective memory by recording the circumstances of their experiences and all three elements (toponyms, culture and history) are essential for a community's construction of identity and

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memory. Official toponyms in the study area serve as indicators of the official views and ideological perceptions of the political, social and historical events of the place. Major historical and cultural events and epochs such as the pre-colonial, the colonial period, the War of Liberation, the attainment of independence and the Fast Track Land Reform Programme, together with their attendant ideologies, are reflected in the area's toponymy. The toponyms and toponymic practices are a reflection of Bindura and by extension, Zimbabwe, since they are elements of cultural retention and are important for the construction of identity and memory. Although identity is polysemantic, there is a mutual interrelation of individual and collective identity. Overall, the analysis of toponymy has made it evident that they discursively embody a place's historical, cultural and social memories, and these are essential components in the development of individual and collective identity as well as the local, regional, national and international outlook of a place and its people.

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