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THE ROLE OF PLACE NAMES AS INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE IN THE ARCHEOLOGY OF THE MAKGABENG-BLOUBERG AREA, SOUTH AFRICA

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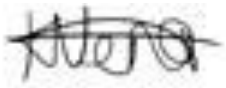
School of Geography, Archaeology and Environmental Studies

This dissertation is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Archaeology, Faculty of Science, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

February 2024

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work. I also declare that any quotation or paraphrase from the published or unpublished work of another person has been duly acknowledged. This dissertation is being submitted for the degree of Master of Science in Archaeology at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.

Signature: _____  _____

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Date: _____14/02/2024_____

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my mother, Nena Vena, your strength, and prayers do not go unnoticed.

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ABSTRACT

The act of naming places has a twofold process of significance, firstly, it acts a locator of a particular geographical place and secondly reveals the ideology of the place that gives it its legitimacy. As such, place names represent one of the oldest forms of human cultural heritage. Place names are tailored for encrypting heritage and indigenous knowledge. However, in areas that have had significant interaction with external naming regimes, the indigenous naming processes have been suppressed. The Makgabeng-Blouberg area cultural landscape has an exceedingly long and interactive process with colonial naming processes. This research analyses the socio-political processes that shaped the prevalence of colonial place names in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area and significance of indigenous toponyms to the community. The study suggests that colonial power had far reaching effects in the region. The prevalence of colonial names is a result of subsequent naming regimes continuing the hegemonic ideological dominance over places to reflect their control. However, these indigenous communities, navigate this subjugation through engaging in alternative naming systems. Indigenous place names are used by these communities to preserve their culture and heritage. As such, these place names became part of the community's sense of identity and their historical value, thus creating generational ties and anthropological places for the community.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Toponymy, the systematic study of the origin and history of geographical names (Monmonier 2006: 9; Woodman 2012: 5) traditionally focused on etymology and taxonomy within Critical Place Name Studies that drew on topographical features (Rose-Redwood *et al.* 2010). However, this focus has expanded to include place names within larger socio-cultural-political contexts to naming and their semiotic relationships (Górny & Górna 2020). Such relationships and place naming processes, enable the dissection of place names from different dimensions in toponymic studies (Giraut & Houssay-Holzschuch 2016; Giraut 2020). In this study, the phrases 'place name' and 'toponym' are used interchangeably, drawing on the Ancient Greek origin of the word '*topos*' place and '*onoma*' name (Oxford Reference from Hunt 2009).

The historical–culturalist perspective to naming places emphasizes the significance of people in the naming process expanding on Pierre Nora's concept of "Lieu de mémoire" that considers physical places and/or objects as containers of memory that become symbolic elements of heritage within a given community (Nora 1989). As such, toponyms represent one of the oldest aspects of human cultural heritage that has been passed down through oral memory from generation to generation usually at the place where it originated (Helleland 2012). Toponyms are intricately linked to places and the identity of their inhabitants (Sampson & Goodrich 2009). The interrelationship between naming, identity and geopolitics is established in place naming studies (Rose-Redwood *et al.* 2010, 2017a; Rose-Redwood *et al.* 2018). However, investigating place names in everyday use remains an overlooked area. This study interrogates the interplay of precolonial and official place names in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area to establish how these toponyms act as indigenous knowledge. The term "indigenous" is contentious as it invites a multitude of issues that stem from it. The International Labour Organization defines Indigenous people as "people whose social, cultural, and economic practices differentiate them from others by being descendants of populations which occupied the geographical locations prior to colonization and who retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural, and political institutions" (ILO 1989 as cited by Sarivaara *et al.* 2013). The research uses the term indigenous to refer to communities in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area who have generational ties to the area and retain socio-cultural traditions.

Indigenous place naming carries complex associations that extend beyond the traditional power/resistance framework often used to analyse hegemonic naming practices (Wu & Young 2022). The literature reveals that naming places serves as a pronouncement of control over place and is an integral building spatial identity (Zuvalinyenga 2020). Consequently, place naming acts as a locator of a geographical location at the same time producing a socio-cultural landscape that openly memorializes places and traditions (Alderman 2016; Rose-Redwood *et al.* 2022). In the same analysis, toponymy is associated with corridors of power and dialogue around identity, and place making thus, making it a debated geographical system that brings about competing or co-existing toponyms (Yeoh 1996; Light & Young 2017; Bigon & Njoh 2018; Górny & Górna 2020) resulting in a "layering (of) the toponymic tapestry" (Tucci *et al.* 2011: 370). This study investigates the intersection of hegemonic naming and the power dynamics with indigenous naming practices by analysing the prevalence of colonial toponyms and the mundane use of toponyms in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area.

Circumstances of multiple place names reflect both the co-existence of toponyms and its use. These processes can be amicable, fluctuating or tense. Bigon and Njoh (2018: 212) argue that place names generate and sustain the emotional attachment to places, consequently, former toponyms remain in use (Light & Young 2014). As these place names are a mirroring of and place's social and political history. As such, toponymic inscription is a tool used for echoing power (Njoh 2017). The presence of multiple geographical names is also a reflection of the political interaction between diverse groups through different time periods. Consequently, place names operate as either a textual or oral representation of the historic landscape (Helleland 2012). The oral representation function as a social agreement reached over many generations used in a dialectal form, reflecting a social consensus. On a textual or official level, these toponyms reflect political power from a top-down perspective (Rose-Redwood *et al.* 2017b). The processes of naming are rooted in the struggle for power and legitimacy. Therefore, toponymic inscriptions convey and accompany power struggles for legitimacy. This study thus, investigates the nuanced perception of power and (re)naming in the multiple toponymy context looking at the Makgabeng-Blouberg area as a case study.

Although researchers in critical place naming have investigated dual toponymies within the political context (Yeoh 1996, 2017; Light & Young 2014, 2017; Yom & Cavallaro 2020; Mácha & Obrusnik 2021; Bigon *et al.* 2022). There is a research lacuna that fails to investigate the use of place names as indigenous knowledge. The Makgabeng-Blouberg area was selected as a case study as the area illuminates Azaryahu's (2011) argument that analysis of toponymic inquiry is inclined to focus on cities, omitting rural areas. Therefore, a need arises to investigate place naming practices in different contexts, as these processes encompass multiple factors that intersect and contribute to a broader system.

1.1 Background of Study Area

1.1.1 Precolonial

Archaeological evidence indicates that the Makgabeng-Blouberg area has been occupied from about 5000 BP by hunter-gatherers followed by Khoe herders and Early Iron Age (EIA) herding communities around 700 AD (Eastwood *et al.* 2002; Van Schalkwyk 2000; Smith & Ouzman 2004; Eastwood & Eastwood 2006). The San and farming communities co-existed in a mutually beneficial relationship as evidenced by close to 1000 rock art sites that aid in creating a timeline of the area's occupation (Eastwood *et al.* 2002; van Schalkwyk & Smith 2004; Bradfield *et al.* 2009). Material culture in the form of ceramics that is linked to Sotho-Tswana Later Iron Age (LIA) communities further provides evidence of their occupation in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area from around 1530 to 1725AD (Eastwood *et al.* 2002; Bradfield *et al.* 2009). Moreover, oral history and archaeological material indicates that current Sotho, Tswana, Ndebele, and Venda speaking communities inhabited the Makgabeng-Blouberg area between 1650 and 1850 AD, with the Hananwa under the leadership of Kgôsi Malebôhô, appearing at the tail-end of LIA occupation (Namono 2018). The Hanawa are a well-researched group because of Malebôhô War against the ZAR government and resisting colonial oppression.

1.1.2 Colonial Occupation

The nineteenth century ushered in conflict and hostility in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area. The period concurred with the arrival of Western colonialist and missionaries. Initial appearances of Europeans in the region were traders and hunters (Namono & van Schalkwyk 2020).

However, they were soon accompanied by a rush of colonial administrators, including native commissioners, land surveyors, and missionaries who employed strong political authority over the Hananwa from their station in Kalkbank (Eastwood *et al*. 2002: 43). Rock art depictions of protest art relating to the Malebôhô War of 1894 against the ZAR government represents the major events of the Hananwa people (Eastwood *et al.* 2002). The rock art is associated with nineteenth and early twentieth century colonial migrant labour system (Eastwood & Eastwood 2006). These illustrations of colonialists, guns, trains, railroads, wagons, and horses superimpose San and Khoekhoe paintings forming new depictions and adding to protest arts symbolism (Eastwood *et al.* 2002; Louw 2016).

The first written record of Makgabeng is from German missionaries dating back to 1868 who recorded spelling the name as 'Makchabeng' indicating that the name had been in use prior to missionary influence (Ngoepe & Setumu 2016: 151). The name Blouberg derives from the Dutch name 'Blaauwberg' meaning 'Blue Mountain' in Dutch, referring to a range of mountains in Limpopo Province near Makgabeng. Sustained Western influence, however, was mainly through missionary activity by the mid-19th century the Berlin Missionary Society (BMS). The Kranspoort farm was situated at the base of the Soutpansberg (Magirwa 2016). This farm was occupied mainly by the Ba-Sotho, Ba-Tsonga, and Ba-Venda prior to the arrival of the Voortrekkers (Magirwa 2016).

Missionary contact in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area had a significant impact on naming in the region. BMS had set up the Leipzig and Makgabeng stations in 1868 and 1870 respectively and requested permission from the respective chiefs for land (Makhura 1997; Namono & Van Schalkwyk 2020: 52). These mission stations became satellites of the main mission in Germany. The respective chiefs permitted the BMS to establish mission stations, but no land transactions were entered (Makhura 1997). However, the privatization of land in 1868 as petitioned by the then government to recuperate government funds led to increased pressure to secure land titles. This resulted in an arbitrary mapping and naming of places in the region resulting in missions acquiring land (Delius & Delius 1984: 148; Setumu 2010: 216).

The official topographical surveying of South Africa, however, was done by the British War Office between 1905 and 1911 (Liebenberg 1997). The motivation for such accuracy stemmed

from two sources, the first being Britain's colonial interference in South Africa which led to the South African War (1899-1902) against the Boer Republics that heightened the need for accurate maps for war and protection of the new colonies. The second motive was the need for reliable maps for colonial administration and land tenure (Liebenberg 1997: 129). Sustained Western influence, however, was through missionary activity (Makhura 1997). These mission stations became the point of contact for government officials and surveyors (Joubert 1999) and later influenced apartheid segregationist policies (Rana 2011).

The South African settler-colonial experience functioned as a type of banal segregation characterised by exclusion (Mamdani 1996; Beliso-De Jesus & Pierre 2020). The suppression of indigenous identities by missionaries could not be separated from the hard laws of the segregationist government (Magwira 2016: 104). The victory of the Nationalist Party in 1948 brought about a list of laws and policies that reinforced separate development and racial dominance (Desmond & Emirbayer 2009; Kgatla & Magwira 2015). Missionaries adopted strategies aligned with the government's stance on racial segregation, employing methods of forced removals of indigenous communities from white farms similar to those utilized by the churches. This demonstrated their firm commitment to their socio-political position (Kgatla & Magwira 2015). The growing resistance against the nationalist party paralleled by the growing support for the communist party (African National Congress) led the white government to publicize laws that ensured complete control of indigenous affairs (Manzo & McGowan 1992).

The apartheid government ushered in government policies of forced removals that displaced black communities from areas designated as “white” areas (Magwira 2016). The displacement of communities from Kranspoort represents a significant part of the community’s oppression. The forced removals were carried out by the Group Areas Act of 1950 and Native Resettlement Act of 1954 (Magwira 2016). Leynseele (2013) unpacks the missionary forced removals in Kranspoort exemplifies the impact of forced removals on the community and how these removals severed the community’s cultural and social times to the land. Leynseele (2013) and Hay (2014) further explore the intricacies of the deracialization post -apartheid process and its impact on power dynamics and place-making practices intersect in the region, often perpetuating existing power dynamics.

The use of legislation ensured that the systemic violence was sustained at large and small scales through hegemonic power (Bonds & Inglewood 2016: 721; Beliso-De Jesus & Pierre 2020). The National Party set up the National Place Names Committee (NPNC) which was the body in charge of naming places in 1939 (Guyot & Seethal 2007). This committee consisted of white people of the ruling National Party. Worden (2011: 108), argues that the 1950s saw a rise in the implementation and enforcement of these laws to guarantee white dominance.

1.2 Current Occupation

The democratic government established the South African Geographical Names Council Act 118 of 1998. This act set up the advisory body of the South African Geographic Names Council (SAGNC) which was established to ensure the standardisation of place names in the country. The post-apartheid government intentionally focused on involving different stakeholders in the naming committees (Freund 2010; Ndletyana 2012). However, in rural areas, the prevalence of colonial toponymy is still rampant. The Makgabeng-Blouberg area consists of 118 villages (Census 2011). Most villages have retained colonial names, and their occupants speak Sepedi/ Northern Sotho (89.5%), isiNdebele (5.1%), Xitsonga (2.6%) and Tshivenda is bundled with other official languages at 2.9% (Bradfield *et al.* 2009; Census 2011). The area is among poorest with 27% of the population having an annual income in the range of R9601-R19600 (IDP (Integrated Development Plan) 2016-2021: 102-104) and 56.3% of them being women led households (Census 2011). The focus of the democratic government in the area was on infrastructure development and providing basic needs such as access to water and electricity and basic housing under the Infrastructure Development Program 2016-2021. Despite these provisions, a vast majority of residents still use traditional means as they cannot afford the inflated cost of that comes with using the amenities.

The Blouberg Local municipality currently has twenty-one wards. The largest of these encompasses farmland and a small number of villages. Wards eighteen and nineteen cover Senwabarwana and Alldays townships and are the growth points of the municipality. As identified by the IDP, majority of the wards are rural and impoverished. Senwabarwana (formerly Bochum) and Alldays, are first order communities. They are heavily populated and provide the widest range of services to communities within the Blouberg Municipality

compared to second order communities like Witten, Puraspan, Avon, Indermark, Taaibosch and Makgato; or third order settlements such listed as Eldorado, My Darling, Buffelshoek and De Vrede (IDP 2016-2021: 57). Some of these villages are included in this study and are referred to in Chapter 4 and 5.

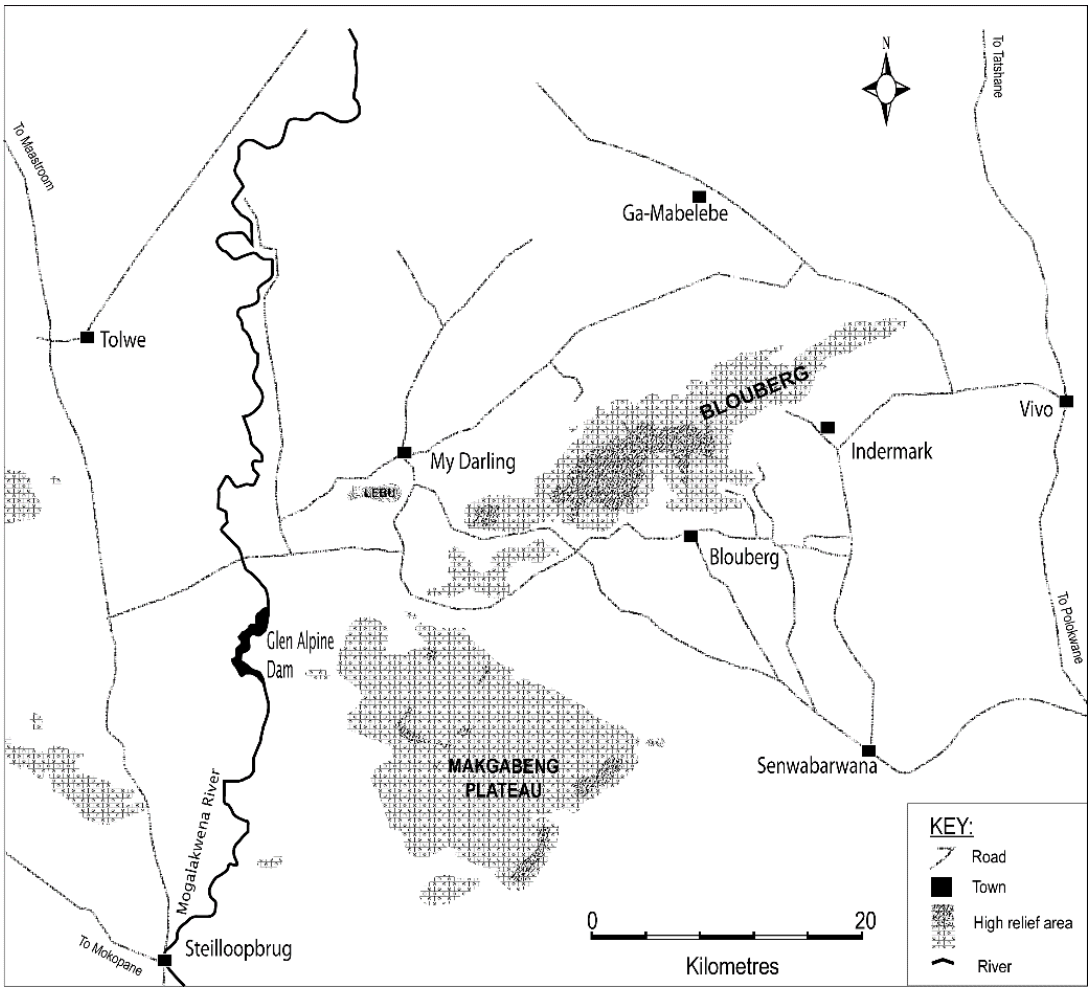


Figure 1: Map showing the Makgabeng-Blouberg area (Image adopted from Namono & van Schalkwyk 2020)

1.3 Significance of Research

Names in African societies carry immense importance. They have sentimental and cultural significance (Mamvura *et al.* 2017; Giraut 2020; Zuvalinyenga 2020; Wu & Young 2022).

Consequently, toponyms can provide a record of the place's history. These local place names serve as the earliest form of evidence of the communication between people, therefore, aids in preservation of language and culture of indigenous communities. However, given the country's political history, the Makgabeng-Blouberg area possesses multiple toponymies (Fig. 2). These systems of naming capture and portray varying perspectives of the region.



Figure 2: Examples of Place Names in the Makgabeng-Blouberg Area.

By highlighting the complex relationship between indigenous place names and official place names, we can establish a more intricate and nuanced perspective of the ways power and naming intersect in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area. Moreover, we gain a greater understanding of the use of toponyms in everyday life. The literature shows that naming places acts as a pronouncement of political power over place (Zuvalinyenga 2020). However, analysis of everyday use of place names and how these toponyms function as indigenous knowledge remains an overlooked area. The study fills a research lacuna by examining how place names serve as indigenous knowledge and explores the local community responses to colonial/administrative (re)naming. Given the prevalence of colonial toponyms in the region, understanding the consequences of this naming practice on indigenous place names is critical for the preservation of indigenous knowledge.

This study contributes to understanding the prevalence of colonial names in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area, the context in which place names capture indigenous knowledge of the local community and the significance of place names of the area in its archaeological context, and how indigenous toponyms contribute to identity and place making in the region. Moreover, much of the research on multiple toponymies is focused on metropolitan cities and overlooks rural areas (Zuvalinyenga 2020; Wu & Young 2022). The Makgabeng-Blouberg area is located in rural Limpopo province. Although heritage discourse of the area has mainly focused on the archaeology, especially rock art and community heritage tourism there is a lacuna on critical toponymy. The region remains mainly untouched regarding post-apartheid renaming and offers rich insight into community perceptive of toponymy in the region.

1.4 Aim & Objectives

This project aimed to investigate the prevalence of colonial place names in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area, comparing them with indigenous names. It sought to understand the context in which indigenous place names retain indigenous knowledge and the significance of place names in contributing to the understanding of the area's archaeology. In so doing the study will unpack how indigenous toponyms contribute to identity and place making in the region.

The specific objectives of this study are to:
1) analyse the colonial naming to obtain indigenous names prior to colonial naming.
2) obtain indigenous interpretation of pre-colonial and present indigenous place names
3) establish community perspectives on place making, identity and preservation of indigenous knowledge.

1.5 Structure of Study

This introductory chapter sets the tone for a literature review (Chapter 2), it outlines the study area background and unpacks occupation the occupation sequence in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area from precolonial to the postcolonial. It further looks at some of the literature on Indigenous Knowledge and place naming within the African context. The literature engages with toponyms at varying degrees from critical toponomy to naming as politics and naming in everyday life. This literature informs how chapter 5 and 6 are analysed and discussed. Chapter 2 further details the impact of colonial administrative instruments on place, culture, and

identity. The procedure of how data was collected for this study (Chapters 3 and 4) highlights the sensitivities of place naming, taking cognisance of eligibility, respect, and ethical research. Chapter 3 further unpacks the theoretical framework that shapes this paper. Participant responses are captured in Chapter 5 and 6 contextualise place naming where there is multiple, overlapping and competing systems. Chapter 5 outlines participants' responses in an attempt to achieve the research objectives. The chapter shares the participants' experiences of (re)naming in the region and unpacks the social and cultural effects of identity and indigenous knowledge preservation. The chapter further unpacks the aspect of naming that aid in the formation of place making. Chapter 6 looks at the ways in which place names within the Makgabeng-Blouberg area act as indigenous knowledge and how these toponyms inform the way the knowledge is related through place making and identity formation.

CHAPTER 2: THE SOCIO-POLITICS OF PLACE NAMING

This chapter reviews topical discourse on critical toponomy, place making through place naming, place names as indigenous knowledge, place naming within the power and/resistance framework, multiple naming systems in everyday life and place names as indigenous knowledge. The literature provides critical accounts of how power is nestled into politics of place and how it is experienced by marginalised and indigenous groups – the impetus for critical place naming literature.

2.1 Critical Toponymy

Current discourse on critical place naming examines the wider socio-political context of names as "symbols of memory or sociopolitical ideology" (Wanjiru & Matsubara 2017-: 3), and the semiotic relationships communities have with (re)naming. Scholars have focused on the interplay between politics, power, and place naming (Azaryahu 1996,2012; Berg & Vuolteenaho 2009; Njoh 2007, 2009, 2017; Rose-Redwood 2011; Alderman & Inwood 2013; Giraut & Houssay-Holzschuch 2016; Puzey & Kostanski 2016; Wanjiru Matsubara 2017; Rose-Redwood *et al.* 2018; Vuolteenaho & Puzey 2018; Giraut 2020; Zuvalinyenga 2020; Bigon *et al.* 2021), and toponyms as contested structural practice evidenced through street and memorial naming (Azaryahu 1996, 2012; Adebanwi 2012, 2017; Light & Young 2014; Creţan & Matthews 2016). In critical toponymy discourse, toponyms are crucial to place making and shaping (Rose-Redwood 2008). As such, places are not just textual text, but emphasize the role of naming in place making (Madden 2018).

These place names are tools of inscription and resistance between diverse groups within social and political structures and only have power when they are assigned value or exploited. In South Africa for example, toponyms produce and exemplify political power and legitimise political agenda, especially since naming, and naming process are a socio-cultural understanding of historical experiences (Guma 2001: 255). For Scott *et al.* (2002: 4) understanding the progress of state-making involves "tracing the application of novel systems which name and classify places, roads, people and property." This is what Pierre Bourdieu (1985: 732) terms "official nomination," wherein place names gain value by virtue of being instituted by the state authority resulting in their legitimisation and sometimes dispossession

of indigenous groups. Berg (2011: 14) argues that if unchallenged, these irregular naming structures conceal socio-spatial processes of dispossession. Sometimes, these relations are overt. Renaming can gain political loyalty (Karimi 2016), and hence, (re)inscription is a common process after regime changes. Toponyms have an ability to bring hegemonic ideologies into everyday life by unveiling the power-embeddedness of toponymic inscription in naming regimes (Berg & Vuolteenaho 2009; Vuolteenaho & Ainiala 2009).

Communities participate in toponymic reinscription by using and changing toponyms (Madden 2014, 2018). These reinscription distinguish between micro toponyms and official place names. Madden (2014) argues that toponyms, as symbolic capital when affiliated to power, valorises them. At the same time, the names which local communities use and reproduce, through routine mundane interaction, shapes their experiences of the place (Madden 2018). Thus, communities like those in the Makgabeng –Blouberg area reconstruct history as a shared cultural experience rooted in everyday life and political process (Rose-Redwood *et al.* 2010). Although toponymic encryption and contestation are part of Modernity, how place names change reveals political processes of community building as a form of resistance to colonialism (Erikha 2021). Thus, skirmishes over toponyms be viewed as symbolic elements of identity crises and sense of place attachment (Madden 2018). In the context of the Makgabeng-Blouberg area, toponyms become integral to identities of the communities and individuals through linguistic expression and as landscape markers, (Ndletyana 2012; Ndimande-Hlongwa 2015), encrypting and materializing intangible heritage (Helleland 2009, 2012; Hakala *et al.* 2015; Ndimande-Hlongwa 2015).

2.1.1 Naming as Resistance

Toponyms are symbols reflecting power relations of the place they materialize (Kearns & Berg 2002; Bigon 2008, 2016; Berg & Vuolteenaho, 2009; Rose-Redwood *et al.* 2010, 2017b; Azaryahu 2011; Tucci *et al.* 2011; Sihlongonyane 2015; Puzey & Kostanski 2016; Njoh 2017; Wanjiru & Matsubara 2017). In this context and through a post-colonial lens naming censorship and renaming of places by colonial administrative powers were used to claim land (Bigon 2016; Brocket 2021). For example, in Kenya under British colonial rule, officials reinscribed toponymy to display “power and ideological dominance over space with the

purpose of reflecting British control" (Wanjiru & Matsubara 2017: 1). This "toponymic politicking" (Hui 2019: 924) was replicated by other hegemonic naming regimes in Taiwan and South Africa (Du Plessis 2009; Hui 2019), although, some communities retained their toponyms and resisted colonial naming (Berg & Kearns 1996; Ndlovu 2021). Toponyms may thus be considered as pieces of various naming regimes, thereby creating a complex tapestry with different co-existing ideologies (Tucci *et al.* 2011: 370).

Toponymic reinscription is central aspect of changing ideologies within a country (Jenkins 1996: 12; Du Plessis 2009; Chauke 2015). In the case of the South Africa naming struggle, colonial place names mirrored cultural/racial prejudices of colonizers and asserting their hegemonic position (Ndletyana 2012: 91). In a historical context, colonisers saw themselves as superior to the colonised communities, thus, the process of naming was a political strategy that shifted into cultural oppression, exemplified by the apartheid state (Du Plessis 2009; Wanjiru-Mwita & Giraut 2020). In South Africa, this displacement of local names through colonial christening tendencies (Njoh 2016) saw place names assume an appearance that phonetically resemble English or Afrikaans (Du Plessis 2009: 233). According to Ndlovu (2017), this transphonologisation was an expression of assimilation and dissimilation, an attempt at pronouncing the autonym by colonisers. Thus, decolonisation of names was at the forefront of independent states (Kamwangamalu 2009; Uluocha 2015; Wanjiru & Matsubara 2017; Hui 2019; Ndlovu 2021).

The interplay between micro toponyms used by indigenous communities versus official place names creates a dichotomy in the toponymic landscape (Helleland 2009; Uluocha 2015; Karki & Wenner 2020). Critical toponymic studies looked at Palestine/Israel to investigate how toponyms and the toponymic process are associated with the creation and contention of geo-power (Benvenisti 2000; Tuathail & Dalby 2002). Benvenisti (2000) offers an analytical explanation of the systems that early Jewish settlers used to change the geographical naming landscape of historic Palestine. The Israeli state had worked methodically to erase any memory and material culture of Palestinian life through place naming (Pappé 2007, 2011). These processes included changing Arabic names for places, material culture and the environment to Hebrew through naming committees (Benvenisti 2000). Scholars argue that these practices were fundamental strategies settlers used to deny any sort of historical

connections between Palestinians and the country which they were displaced from (Pappé 2007; Masalha 2015). These contributions have outlined how toponyms are significant inscriptions that power is structural in the literal act of "geographing" (Tuathail & Dalby 2002). The naming of places spatially encrypts societal communications related to identity and ideology (Tuathail & Dalby 2002). The claim that a particular cultural group historically existed in a region is used to boost a claim to political power that area and a long history of the cultural group is used to demonstrate the stability of that group (Sommer 2017). Peteet (2013) further argues that the politics of naming in the Palestine/Israel conflict is explanatory as either side attempts to superimpose their names over places, and understandings of historical events. This process of naming is what Said (2000: 183) describes as a passionate conflict of two memories in Palestine or Israel. As such, it becomes an arena of conflict over naming, identity, and memory (Basik 2022; Bishi *et al.* 2022: 58).

Tucci *et al.* (2011: 370) further argue that the shift from the traditional focus in place name studies is the result of the recognition of naming as customs rooted in socio-political struggles. The critical turn explores the politics of naming by attaching stable identities to certain spaces and giving the places their legitimacy. Places are therefore, redefined as spaces that communities can superimpose their experiences and interpretations over thus, displaying that naming authorities are arbitrary and habitually dependant on the context (Kearns & Berg 2002; Rose-Redwood 2008; Light & Young 2014; Jordan 2020). These toponymic messages further detail the power shifts in places (Peteet 2013; Zuvalinyenga 2020). This literature compellingly shows the relevance of critically analysing toponyms as both a product and as a process (Giraut & Houssay-Holzschuch 2016; Ndlovu 2021).

The literature on critical place naming has explored how naming is associated with politics, power, and place (Azaryahu 1996; Alderman 2003; Rose-Redwood 2008; Yeoh 2017, 1996; Hui 2019). Berg and Kearns (1996) have asserted that toponomy is inherent in the cultural construction and social contestation of place and aids in the production of symbolic meaning. This is a manner of valorising authoritative power. For Rose-Redwood *et al.* (2018) naming is a representation of complete authority over place. As such, regime changes use naming as a tool to impose power over people (Yeoh 1996; Erikha 2021). In post-colonial contexts, changing the toponymic landscape is a widespread practice to support its hegemony (Wu &

Young 2022). Place naming literature has primarily been concentrated on resistance to renaming (Kearns & Berg 2002; Alderman 2003; Alderman & Inwood 2013; Alderman & Rose-Redwood 2020). By expanding the contrasting settings, researchers could expand their understanding of how power intervenes in naming processes. Studies have produced significant insights into the convergence of power, place and renaming (Wu & Young 2022). As such, this study seeks to unpack how indigenous place names act as indigenous knowledge over the power/resistance polarity.

Rose-Redwood *et al.* (2010: 466) contend that toponymic studies have become predictable in its reference to naming, power, and resistance. Giraut & Houssay-Holzschuch (2016) argued for a theoretical approach that broadens the power/resistance framework in toponymic studies. By using the Foucauldian notion, of the *dispositif*, they draw attention to various additional elements that they argue form part of the process of place naming that work together "to manage, control, and orient the behaviours and thoughts of human beings" (Giraut & Houssay-Holzschuch 2016: 6). These elements, which are hegemonic in nature include "discourses, institutions, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical and moral propositions..." (Foucault as cited in Giudice & Giubilaro 2015: 81). These elements subtly reinforce hegemonic values in the naming of places. Brocket (2021) suggests overcoming the limitations of the power/resistance framework by adapting the toponymic methodology. This involves incorporating interviews for a deeper understanding of the role of place naming in everyday life, as perceived by community members (Rose-Redwood *et al.* 2010: 467). The use of this mixed method approach unpacks how toponyms are welcomed, agreed on, or rejected in everyday lives of residents (Light & Young 2014: 683). For example, in Brocket's (2021) Ramallah case study in-depth interviews and analysis of documents were used as part of in-depth approach which helped illuminate the fundamental workings of naming committees.

Wu and Young (2022) also state that the literature is condensed on power and overlooks a range of other contributors such as generational changes and heritage among others that intersect with power at varying degrees in certain times and places. As such, their analysis views place naming as part of a context where multiple place names are used at intersecting and parallel, official, and mundane activities, that are working in all spaces of political structure, and intersecting with social changes (Jenkins 2014). This literature, therefore,

highlights the uncertainty of parallel naming systems, like indigenous and official naming processes and their use in everyday life can include resistance but can illuminate other elements of place naming (Wu & Young 2022).

2.1.2 Dual toponymies in everyday life

Changing toponyms to align with prevailing socio-political contexts is a frequent practice in the global South (Mphande 2006: 108). This was even more prevalent during colonialism and the spread of Christianity,16 16where indigenous naming processes and heritage were deformed, and naming became Eurocentric to fit the colonial agenda of othering and suppression of the indigenes. Indigenous names were Anglicized, or a contracted form of indigenous place names or nicknames used for easier or shorter pronunciation (Uluocha 2015). These toponym aggressions negatively impacted indigenous cartography (Guyot & Seethal 2007; Uluocha 2015). However, despite these place name atrocities, multiple naming systems still exist persistently and permeate everyday life experiences and in ways determined by various influences.

The decision to either use colonial or indigenous toponyms is linked to one's experiences with varying attachment(s) to a particular naming process (Jordan 2020; Wu & Young 2022). Place names embody and reinforce cultural practises given that where multiple naming systems are used, there are variations in their use and recognition in everyday practice. For example, in the South China Sea Islands modern fishermen felt positive emotions towards renaming (Wu & Young 2022). The indigenous place names are not discarded, but they are also not used as a tool of resistance This duality is observed in places that have different experiences of colonial naming and is attributed to particular to experiences and habits (Light & Young 2014). Thus, retaining official and unofficial place names leads to a hybridity of dual place names in everyday life. This duality illustrates a prevalent role of place names in everyday geopolitics (Azaryahu 1996; Monmonier 1996; Kadmon 2004) as inscriptions where identities are communicated and resisted (Hui 2019). Place names are identity markers and serve to attach shared values and customs of communities, while simultaneously inclusion and/or exclusion (Puzey & Kostanski 2016).

Generationally, older generations tend to use indigenous toponyms as these present their experiences better, and rooted in their memories, while younger generations prefer official place names either out of habit or use both naming systems simultaneously. Thus, the basis of either official or unofficial naming use is based on the convenience of relaying information. Language also contributes to the types of place name people use (Herman 1999). Places names detail the past and are homogenous with daily routine through language (Azaryahu 1990; Rose-Redwood *et al.* 2010). Some place names only have meaning in their indigenous context (Kearns & Berg 2002; Light & Young 2014). Micro toponyms represented through local dialects or languages in everyday practice also determine whether communities use official place names. The habitual use of toponyms is an unconscious act and a way to understand the emotional influence of the naming systems. (Light & Young 2014). Therefore, the type of toponym used can be related to daily practice rather than enforcement or opposition to power.

Toponyms create and foster emotional attachment to places, and this is why suppressed place names are retained in everyday usage (Light & Young 2014; Bigon & Njoh 2018). Brenda Yeoh (2017) notes that colonial street names and indigenous toponyms are used together in everyday life in Singapore. This toponymic ambiguity results in official and micro toponyms (Kearns & Berg 2002; Bigon & Njoh 2018). Political-power change associated with renaming is not comprehensive (Light & Young 2017). For example, colonial naming in Singapore was challenged by immigrant Asian's use of indigenous toponyms, suggesting that hegemony was not enforced (Yeoh 2017: 50). According to Yeoh (2017: 51) "power in the naming process is not the same as power in everyday life." This is further supported by Rose-Redwood *et al.* (2017a) and Vuolteenaho and Puzey (2018) who argue that official and micro toponyms used in everyday life may be due to habit rather than resistance to politcal hegemony; power shifts depending on who possesses it in terms of renaming. Therefore, people's emotional connections to place and the function of toponyms in daily life are important to understanding toponyms (Rose-Redwood 2008).

Toponyms reflect a place's contested history. Snippets of hegemonic governments that occupied the land over time have their naming practices inscribed in the landscape resulting into a complex tapestry where differing ideals co-exist (Tucci *et al.* 2011: 370). Accordingly,

Kamwangamalu (2009: 140) argues that bringing indigenous African languages to the same level as European languages is a representative of changing the power dynamics. Therefore, uplifting indigenous languages, includes highlighting them in the toponymic landscape through (re)naming. Unfortunately, critical place name studies focus on street names, commonly in metropolitan areas (Azaryahu 1996; Creţan & Matthews 2016; Giraut 2020), negating rural contexts. Even so, the toponymic plurality in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area for example, offer a rich collection of data that can be used to answer the questions around autonyms and colonial toponyms.

2.2 Place making through place naming

Society embeds values, understandings, memories, and traditions on environment and give meaning to spaces through place making (Rose-Redwood 2011; Othman *et al.* 2013; Qazimi 2014; Lew 2017; Ellery *et al.* 2021). Places are shaped through mundane social practices (Lems 2016) and the symbolic relationships that occur through socio-cultural experiences (Jenkins 2016). Place making encompasses the collective attachment where individuals share social and cultural values that are established in place and community traditions (Jenkins 2014; Aquilino *et al.* 2021). Scholars have argued that physical spatial interactions contribute to the understanding of place (Manzo & Devine-Wright 2013; Cresswell 2014). By interacting and experiencing a tangible environment, communities form values and social constructs that define their identity (Sampson & Goodrich 2009; Ujang 2012; Helleland 2012; Qazimi 2014) and develop symbolic connections to place (Ellery *et al.* 2021). Similar sentiments were unpacked by Perkins and Long (2002) who identified these social relationships in place as feelings of belongingness to a community, and an emotional connection because of a shared history. Place attachment highlights the role of the community in establishing emotional attachments to place (Montgomery 1998; Raymond *et al.* 2010; Jack 2016) and has been engaged with in diverse ways, including community attachment, belongingness, rootedness (Hay 1998; Milligan 1998; Raymond *et al.* 2010; Karki & Wenner 2020). Communities can challenge political naming (Hui 2019) by establishing grass root toponymic struggles (Berg & Vuolteenaho 2009: 11). Owen Dwyer and Derek Alderman (2008) use the cultural arena metaphor to argue that naming is symbolic defiance by oppressed societies. Use of indigenous place names may directly or implicitly destabilize and challenge hegemonic naming regimes

(Bishi *et al.* 2022: 58), as a form of symbolic resistance while memorializing collective identity (Basik 2022: 4).

As previously mentioned, place names make places and encrypt narratives and memories in places and spaces (Qazimi 2014). Use of unofficial or social place names are an alternative narrative in place making. These unofficial toponyms are a cultural marker of resistance encompassing community identity and desires, cultural politics of place (Kearns & Berg 2002: 284; Basik 2022). A sense of belonging emerges from the interconnections of all spatial and reciprocal components that foster a connection within community (Joiris 2015; Aquilino *et al.* 2021). These anthropological places reveal the socio-political relationships at play (Joiris 2015). As such, place making is inherently a political process along with toponymic encryption (Peirce *et al.* 2011; Hultman & Hall 2012; Buser *et al.* 2013; Hall-Lew & Lew 2014). These place names act as memorial arenas which preserve recollections, cultural values, and reveal a particular political identity (Azaryahu 1996; Alderman 2003; Wanjiru et al. 2017; Hui 2019).

Indigenous Knowledge (IK), defined as knowledge gained by indigenes through lived experiences and an understanding of socio-cultural environments (Rajasakeran *et al.* 1992 as cited in Dube & Musi 2002; Kaniki & Mphahlele 2002: 4). According to Msuya (2007) IK holders carry knowledge on behalf of a community because IK is communally shared. IK is preserved orally and thus is undocumented in a Western sense. Indigenous knowledge encapsulates social, economic, and political systems of any society and transferred through language and socio-cultural practises and is inherently tied to physical places and spaces (Nuryanti 1996; Carr *et al.* 2016; Benyei *et al.* 2020).

Indigenous place names are intimately linked to the daily life of a community where they are located (Du Plessis 2009; Kotze & Du Plessis 2010; Basik 2022; Wu & Young 2022). Official and indigenous toponyms are often used interchangeably in everyday life naming systems (Giraut 2020; Zuvalinyenga 2020; Bigon & Arrous 2021; Brocket 2021; Bigon & Arrous 2022; Wu & Young 2022). These informal place names illustrate the value and political power of indigenous place names (Giraut 2020: 5). IK use in toponyms is flexible and adaptable (Valdivia *et al.* 2010) and communities produce, discard and disregard knowledge to suit prevailing needs (Msuya 2007; Balogun & Kalusopa 2021).

2.3 Indigenous knowledge preservation

Knowledge management, the recognition and active management of knowledge as artefact or tacit knowledge held by communities, is acquired through the lived and shared experiences of communities who allow it to flourish, based on trust (Snowden 1999: 8-9; Kaniki & Mphahlele 2002). Toponyms are repositories of values and knowledge (Ndimande-Hlongwa 2015), rich in symbolism associated with names and naming process. Those participating in the naming process exert influence, particularly in deciding what or who is remembered and what is overlooked (Giraut 2020; Yom & Cavallaro 2020). IK management in Africa includes the need to preserve it (Msuya 2007), due to the fact that many IK practises are not in written form, coupled with the generational knowledge gap within communities. The younger generation spend a substantial portion of their time exposed to Western Knowledge systems through formal education resulting in a decline in use and appreciation of IK (Msuya 2007: 349; Tong 2017).

Reliance on oral memory as the sole preservation method of IK results in change -some information is lost other remembered and current ideas introduced resulting in loss of authenticity through differing narratives and interpretations (Ngoepe 2020). Even transcribing oral knowledge to written format changes the authenticity of the data that has been changed from oral memory (Katuu 2009). As such oral memory is a feedback loop that preserves itself and does not need external interference (Masuku & Pasipamire 2014). The traditional toponyms are one way of knowledge management as they capture IK through their usage in everyday life.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the literature that frames this study. The consensus in the literature that there are multiple factors at play when it comes toponyms. These factors make it challenging to single out one aspect as the cause and effect for the use of indigenous toponyms or colonial toponyms. The literature unpacks critical toponymy and lays out the politics of naming and the interplay between different naming systems by critically engaging

with naming as resistance and the use of multiple place names in everyday life. Furthermore, the literature unpacks how naming forms part of IK, and this knowledge is preserved.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The chapter draws on a decolonial framework within critical discourse analysis that moves away from Eurocentric perspectives towards, indigenous ones. In this regard, I critically discuss coloniality and decolonial methodologies that framed my methodology and theoretically inform this research.

3.1 Decolonial Theoretical Framework

Mainstream Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) reveals the concealed power structures and unpacks the contextual meaning of language (Wodak 1999; Fairclough 2013). CDA researchers advocate for interdisciplinary approaches to analysing discourse. However, in these approaches lies a lacuna where coloniality of power is overlooked. In Africa and much of the global south, structures of colonial power did continue to be present on a macropolitical level (Escobar 2007; Silva *et al*. 2022). These political structures sustain poverty under the guise of capitalism. A decolonial framework challenges coloniality of power and attempts to de-link from a Eurocentric view towards salvaging and restoring indigenous perspectives and communicating socio-cultural memories (Escobar 2007; Mignolo 2011, 2017; Wodak 2015). Such a framework encompasses approaches within indigenous knowledge epistemologies as a holistic process of knowledge production and preservation (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2015; Ndlovu 2018). Decolonial processes of knowledge production need to be situated within wider geographical and historic processes (Mignolo 2011; Zavala 2016). Thus, the framework I draw on here enables decolonial processes to be defined relationally particularly for the self-determination of previously colonised groups (Huckin 1997; Silva *et al.* 2022). Decolonial inquiry expands the range of critical discourse by integrating coloniality of power into the analysis as central theme in all postcolonial countries (Ahmed 2021). Decolonial processes materialises in either spaces of recovery or survival but emerge in relation to coloniality and aim to reclaim IKS (Indigenous Knowledge Systems) (Zavala 2016).

3.1.1 Coloniality

Coloniality refers to the sustenance of colonial ideology long after the process of colonialism. According to Quijano (2007: 168-187) and Grosfoguel (2007: 214), within the colonial matrix of power, there are four types of subjectivation. Control of the economy manifests through

dispossessions and land appropriations. Authority is sustained through the exertion of violence and hegemonic influence, while the regulation of gender and sexuality is achieved by reshaping the notion of family to conform to Western norms. Additionally, control over knowledge involves portraying Africans as inferior and introducing Euro-centric education to displace indigenous knowledge (Mignolo 2008: 15).

According to Patrick Wolfe (2006) colonial social organisation involved the categorisation and reorganisation of populations and the places they were assigned, racially. Apartheid, in South Africa later drew on this matrix of power to assert the worst form of segregationist policies against non-white citizens (Mamdani 1996). For Lester and Dussart (2014) colonial authorities developed processes of administration over indigenous groups across the British Empire during the early 19th century, controlling them through dress and language. The establishment of politicized indigenous groups required dialogue across language, location, gender, and education. Thus, researchers are interested in the multiple institutional networks that indigenous political requests are conceived and mobilized (Radcliffe 2017). While indigeneity is associated with the attachment to a particular place, and spatial practices that take place within it.

Settler colonialism is a continuing system of power that perpetuates the marginalisation of indigenous communities and their cultures, normalizing the exploitation of their land to which indigenous people have ancestral relationships (Wolfe 2006; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013). As such it cannot be removed from narratives around racism and classism. It is inherently rooted in white supremacy and removes indigenous narratives to perpetuate their own notions of Eurocentric assumptions (Wolfe 2016). Removing and renaming place names is a central tool of removing the identity of indigenous groups. The effects of it are evident in the continuation of settler-colonial structures in indigenous communities even in modern times (Wolfe 2006,2016).

Radcliffe (2017) argues that in current Anglophone place naming literature, indigenous groups as a focus area emerge in two forms. They either personify non-western culture or serve as subjects whose experience and place in the modern world and interrogate coloniality. Western notions of geography and place names are imposed on indigenous societies, and the

dilution of indigenous heritage as result has an impact on how indigenous communities' practice. Through the colonial power of matrix that Quijano (2007) outlines, control of the self is a form of subjugation that coloniality produces. Using Western place names thus, intentionally marginalizes local and indigenous experiences and perpetuates Western systemic power structures (Maddison 2013).

3.1.2 Decoloniality

According to Smith (2012: 100) decolonisation is a movement that entails the long-term processing of political and cultural divesting from political power. These sentiments are shared by Mignolo (2011) who argues that the decolonial approach detaches from the connections between coloniality and modernity. This school of thought emerged from the work of Anibal Quijano, Walter D. Mignolo and Linda Smith. The project is notable for disturbing and reconstructing the standard processes of knowledge production and aims to understand the world from colonized perspectives. This framework advocates for a shift to knowledge-making practices that do not underpin colonial epistemologies (Ahmed 2021).

The decolonial approach encompasses three main aims: first, to reimagine our understanding of Western/Modernity (Ahmed 2021; Bhambra 2014: 117). This school of thought unveils the cultural logic of colonialism and critiques modernity and its ordering of the world (Maldonado-Torres 2011; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2015; Ndlovu 2018). The othering of people is what led to the justification for colonial rule and marginalization in settler-colonial societies thus, leading to the deculturalization of indigenous people and the centring of Western culture (Snelgrove *et al.* 2014; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2015). Therefore, justifying colonial expansion. Secondly, the decolonial school of thought is characterised by a redefining from the periphery (Zavala 2016). This kind of border thinking emerges from a disengagement from coloniality and brings awareness to the colonial matrix of power that is heavily immersed in mundane life and embodied practices (Escobar 2007; Mignolo 2011). Thirdly, the approaches deconstructive significance is dialectically connected to practices that re-conceive knowledge systems that have been suppressed and marginalised. As such, the framework aids in reclaiming suppressed and inactive knowledges while generating new ways of observing world (Zavala 2016). The use of the decolonial approach in this research is predicated on the

Makgabeng-Blouberg area's experience with colonialism and how these experiences had affected the way communities' see and do things. This perspective is captured by Maldonado-Torres (2017) and Fanon (2008) who argue that the system of colonialism is destructive on the psyche.

3.1.3 Decolonial Methodologies

The decolonial approach is an integrated analysis that attempts to link three levels of analysis; counter/storytelling, healing, and reclaiming. Zavala (2016) describes these methods as interlocking processes that connect with each other in a cyclical manner creating dynamic networks (See figure 2 below).

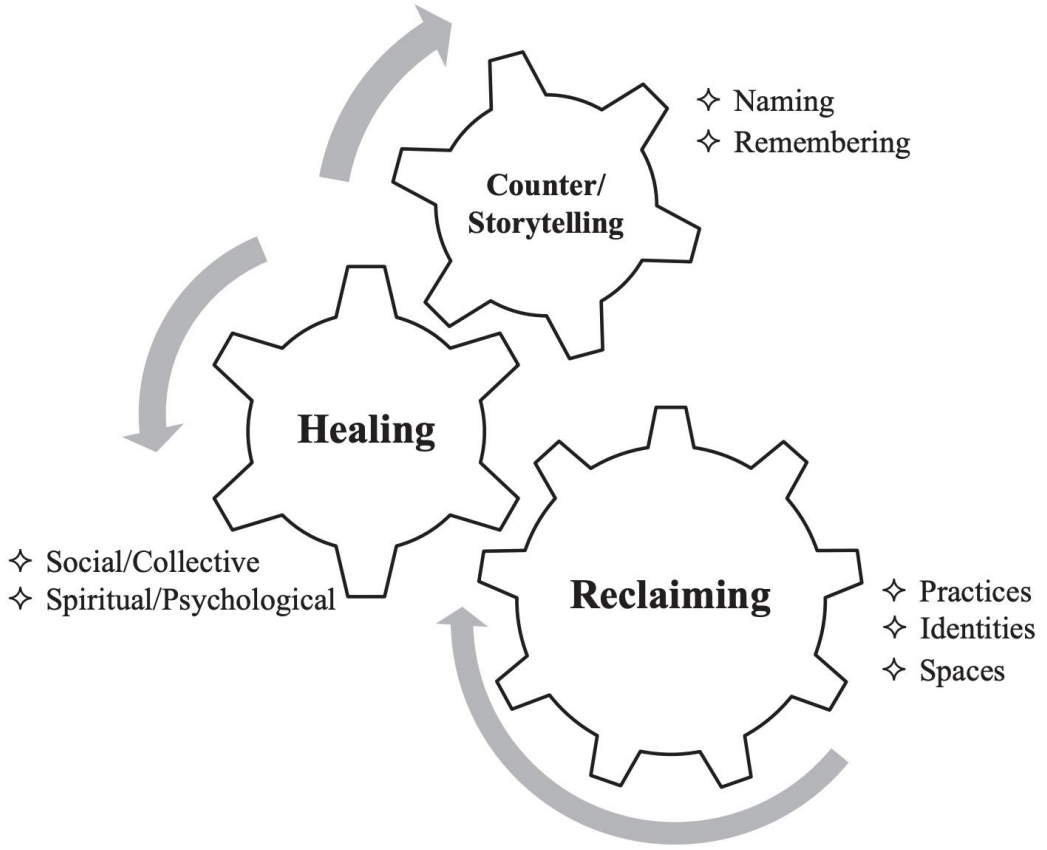


Figure 2: Decolonial strategies (Adapted from Zavala 2016).

The process of counter/storytelling which considers naming practices and recollection that is connected to the act of healing collectively and spiritually which is also linked to the process of recovering which includes customary traditions, identities, and spaces (Iseke 2013). These

strategies are necessary in the analysis of place naming discourse in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area.

3.1.3.1 Counter/Storytelling

Decolonial thought arises as people take part in discourse and contemplation. As coloniality is present in mundane life, naming requires an intentional effort in establish ways to critique them on level that allows under-represented people to understand that their perceptions of their experiences are confined by colonial structural frameworks. Therefore, naming is framed as story (re)telling that challenges the coloniality and modernity and repositions these accounts in the context of coloniality. Naming is negotiated through dialogue and is facilitated by considering the lived experiences. Colonialism resulted in an enforcement of knowledge systems that resulted in the destruction of precolonial indigenous knowledge. As such, pulling from indigenous heritage, “restorying” is a method of collective recollection that takes place in anthropological spaces and communities (Corntassel 2009). This recollection is essential in recovering places and identities. This decolonizing approach is a means for indigenous communities to engage in place rootedness.

3.1.3.2 Healing

The exercise of remembering involves attributes of healing for local people. Healing entails reciprocated healing and spiritual healing. Colonialism deculturizes individuals and separates them from their language, traditions, and land. As such, healing as a praxis challenges Western notions of knowledge because this reflection is rooted in indigenous knowledge systems were the psychological cannot be isolated from the physical experience. Iseke (2013) argues that in indigenous communities, spiritual practices have played a primary role in knowledge production. Therefore, healing in decolonial projects warrants recovering from the historical trauma experienced by marginalised groups and allows for a (re)connection with the community.

3.1.3.4 Reclaiming Identities and Places

Claiming back is an approach in the decolonial framework that involves people reclaiming their identities, practices, and their relationship to places (Castells 2011; Helleland 2012; Setumu 2015). Drawing from African-centred epistemologies, reclaiming is associated the communities' identities. The process of reclaiming indigenous knowledge systems allows previously marginalised groups to reclaim who they are and becomes a generational practice that connects these communities with their local and innate knowledges (Cameron *et al*. 2014 ; Snelgrove *et al*. 2014). This strategy intersects with the other methods like (re)storytelling and allows for the reclamation of traditions, identities, and spaces (Zavala 2016).

3.2 Conclusion

This framework coherently outlines the research inquiry of place naming. It accounts for external influences on discourse and internal factors (Huckin 1997: 95-101). Decolonial CDA operates best at the convergence between language and social-political structure (Blommaert & Bulcaen 2000: 451). The nature if toponymic inquiry is sensitive as it involves individuals at their most vulnerable. As noted by Hodge (2012) everyone will make choices when referring to a place. These choices inform on the individual's intentions and the attachment they have to the place. As such, decolonial CDA allows one to unpack the convergence of language and social-political structures using the above-mentioned strategies of counter/storytelling, healing, and reclaiming. In conclusion, the main activity of decolonial critical discourse analysis is the intimate scrutiny of written or oral data that are politically or culturally significant to a particular group while considering the broader context to which the data is situated is always considered.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

The research design in terms of data collection and analysis sought to address the three objectives of this study: to investigate the prevalence of colonial names in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area, the context in which place names capture indigenous knowledge of the local community and the influence of toponyms in the area to understanding its archaeology. A core component of data collection was the researcher's positionality that could impact the quality of data collected and thus influence the results. Thus, flexible strategies were adopted and during participant and place sampling strategy especially protecting anonymity of participants. The research was also conducted ethically as per guidelines of the Wits Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical) Protocol number H21/08/37.

4.1Researcher's Positionality

Positionality refers to how an individual's paradigms vary based on their social status and access to power (Misawa 2010). It also encompasses the perspectives and position a researcher takes in relation to the subject of inquiry (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller 2014; Manohar *et al.* 2017). The disposition of a researcher is influenced by multiple characteristics including but not limited to; race, sexuality, race, geographical location, and culture (Qin 2016). These factors, as Misawa (2010: 26) emphasizes, are shaped by socially constructed positions people belong to. Taking cognisance of researcher positionality, acknowledges the intersections of social identities and power dynamics (Carstensen-Egwuom 2014; Jenkins 2014.) that may come to bear during data collection, such as with interviews.

According to Kimberlé Crenshaw (2017), intersectionality, a metaphor appreciating the numerous ways disadvantages accumulate, gradually creates barriers that can be overlooked from an exclusively Eurocentric perspective. For Duarte (2017), positionality allows researchers to recognize their differing degrees of privilege such as race, level of education or gender to analyse data. Objective results and analyses are integral to valid knowledge production. Researchers acknowledge their subjectivities, in qualitative research albeit there is reflexivity in collecting and analysing qualitative data (Bourke 2014). In this research, my positionality is shaped by being a 24-year-old African woman raised in Rustenburg and later Johannesburg, attending predominantly White schools with a linguistic detachment from my

home language Setswana thus, fostering reliance on Western knowledge systems. Thus, my understanding of indigenous knowledge is based on my experiences in my adult years. These factors influenced my question framing, response interpretation, and perception of research participants.

I, therefore, acknowledge my position as an outsider in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area, who desires to conduct research around Indigeneity. I acknowledge that I needed to start with self-reflection. I had to personally confront and decode characteristics of my culture, and fundamental values; to re-examine my personal ontology, and beliefs that have been shaped mainly by Western and marginally by Indigenous knowledge systems. As an African female researcher, my personal ontology is influenced by a Eurocentric colonialist hegemony that favours empirical research and Indigenous Knowledge Systems through lived experiences. Thus, undertaking this research enabled me, for the first time, intentionally integrate both knowledge systems in equilibrium to produce informed results. Thus, CDA enabled me to unpack my own bias and critically analyse the data through Fairclough's model of analysis (1992).

4.1.2 Gaining Access to Knowledge

My cultural background enabled intellectual access to the study area since I was able to communicate in both English and Setswana which is a language that other Northern Sotho communities can understand. As such, less time was required to build a relationship to communicate with the participants. I was conscious of my power as a researcher and hyper-vigilant about my position as an outsider in the community, and mindful of my status as a postgraduate student, considering the presumed opinions participants had towards me.
In addition, I was conscious of the areas culture and was cognisant of respectful language around participants, particularly with those of royal standing which otherwise may have limited my ability to extrapolate as much information as possible on the research topic. My aim was to remain within the guidelines of the community and Wits University ethics guidelines in place to protect the community. While culturally I was be able to identify with community members on their perspective on IK in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area, my age and gender slightly limited the amount of information I was able to extract from some royal

families and traditional leadership. It was important for me to understand this aspect prior to and throughout data collection and analysis given that many royal families are IK custodians. This understanding is reflected in the results that show participants' genuine views that are not skewed by my own beliefs about the naming, processes, and preservation. In addition, this awareness led me to expand my questions about details assumed to be 'general' knowledge within the community. by so doing, I did not disregard valuable IK assuming it was irrelevant and that participants perceived it in the same manner. It was also crucial that I was aware of my pre-conceived opinions to make sure that my biases do not guide the data analysis but illuminate a detailed understanding of data and aid in data collection and analysis (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz 2017).

4.1.3 Power Dynamics at Work

Racially, culturally, and linguistically, I consider myself an ally of the Makgabeng-Blouberg area communities. However, the age gap between me, a university student, and many participants positions me as an outsider (Milligan 2016). Being cognizant of my assumed position as a researcher and outsider, I was able to engage royal members and elders who otherwise would not have granted the opportunity to community members due to cultural norms where knowledge is only shared with those who are trusted. Recognizing my researcher's position of power as a researcher, I emphasized the significance of participants' contributions to knowledge production to balance power dynamics.

4.2 Research Design

Qualitative research seeks a deep understanding of a particular case and enables finding quality responses throughout the research (Easterby *et al.* 2008; Alharahsheh & Pius 2020). Multidisciplinary approaches are employed in qualitative research methods. Thus, this research used semi-structured interviews with community members in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area to collect primary data. Participants were selected as having potential to provide understanding for the toponymic landscape in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area in line with the aims of the project.

A mixed method approach offered the opportunity to establish correlations within community members' beliefs about the prevalence of colonial place names and how this impacts their identity (Moffat 2016). It encouraged obtaining information from participants in a comfortable environment. Semi-structured interviews enabled participants to communicate their views on colonial place names and how place names capture indigenous knowledge without restriction(s) (Elkatawneh 2016). Interviews were conducted in a home setting away from potential judgement by other community members. Participants were selected using snowball sampling.

4.2.1 Sampling and Eligibility Criteria

Homogeneous sampling was used in selecting participants knowledgeable about IK and place names in the area. Similarities between participant responses would maximise the value of the data collected (Etikan *et al.* 2016). Participants with the following attributes qualified to be part of the study:

i. long-term residents of villages in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area Municipality.
ii. be over 50 years old.

This criterion sought to engage experience of place name changes in the area, which were at the heart of most post-colonial government initiatives (Giraut & Houssay-Holzschuch 2016; Adebanwi 2017; Górny & Górna 2020). Hence, long term residents of villages in the research area would most probably be aware of the changes in place names over time, with knowledge of indigenous names or micro toponyms. In terms of IK research, it is important to determine the number of years a participant has lived in a community (Goduka 2012). Their response often indicates circumstances that left indelible marks on their place experience(s). Moreover, participants over 50 years old are considered IK custodians, and are probably more likely to have experienced place name changes during their lifetime. Participants, drawn from the villages of Avon, Indermark, De Vrede, Eldorado, Makgato and Senwabarwana (Fig. 4), were purposively selected to obtain in-depth information about the context in which place names capture indigenous knowledge of the local community and the significance of place names of the study area.

The distribution of respondents (fifty-two - 52) and villages (six - 6) who participated in the study is reflected in Figure 5. Of the six villages, four (Avon, Indermark, De Vrede, Eldorado) had colonial place names legislated and two (Makgato and Senwabarwana) did not. Avon was recently changed to its indigenous name Marobjane a Ga Seakamela in 2015, while Senwabarwana was recently changed from its colonial name, Bochum in 2009. Most of the participants (59%) were from Avon, Indermark and De Vrede. The least respondents were from Senwabarwana (10%), compared to Makgato (17%) and Eldorado (14%). Interviews were constrained by time as reflected in the percentage respondents where those closer to town were less willing to participate than those further from the town.

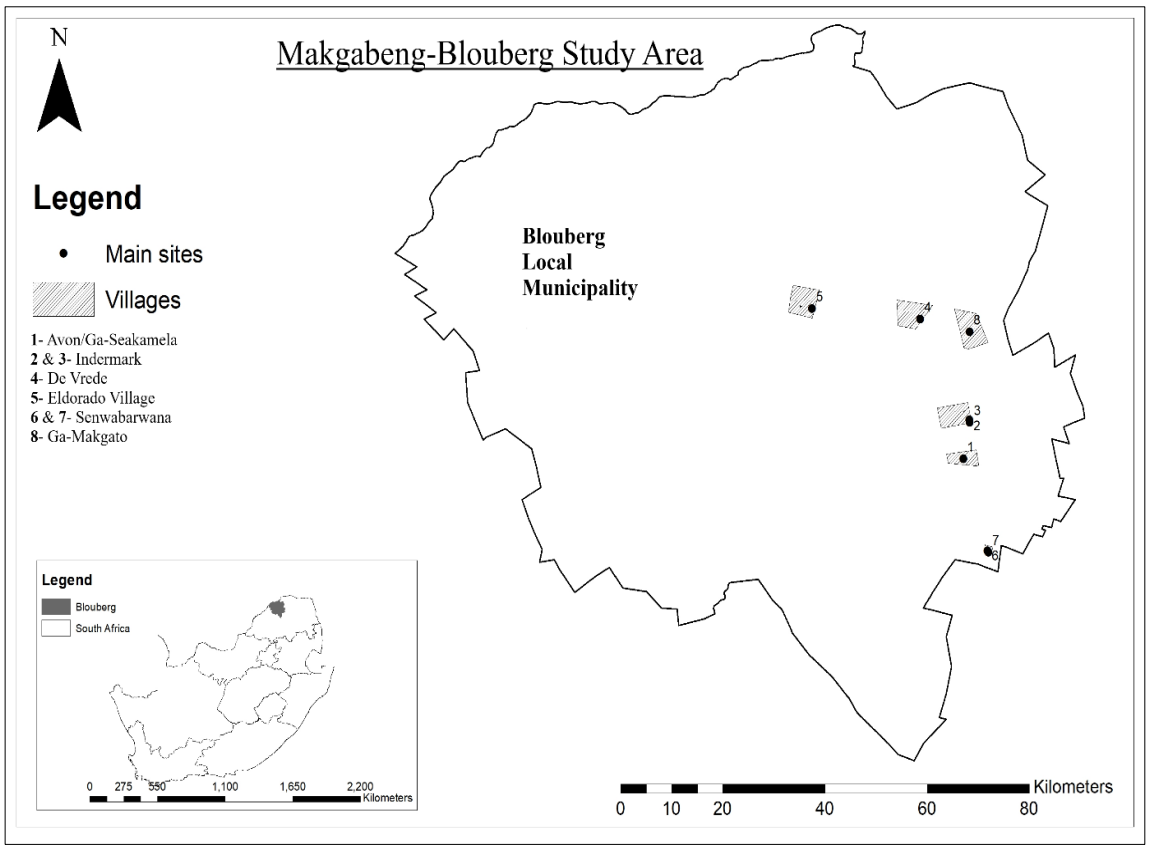


Figure 3: Map of study area showing names of villages.

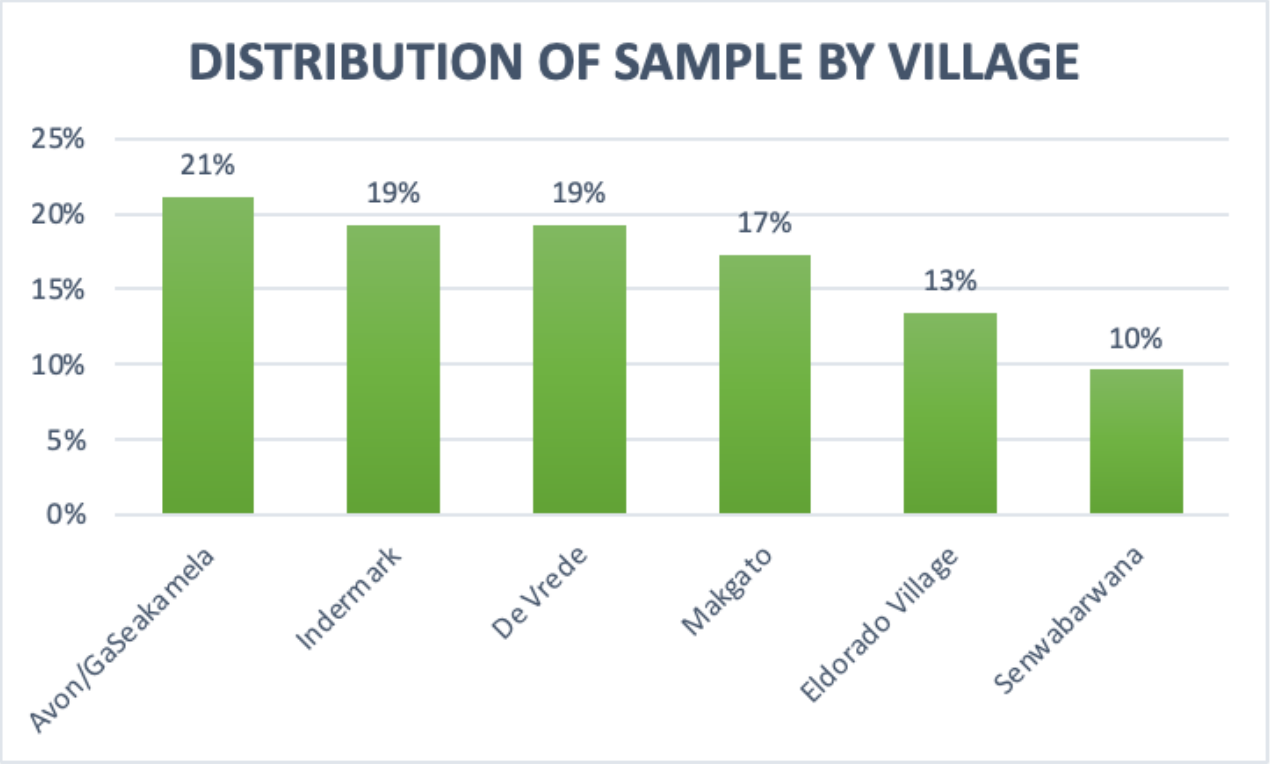


Figure 4: Distribution of participants by village in the study area.

Rather than draw broad generalisations about place naming, I sought to assess the significance of toponyms in the area to better understand its archaeology. The study sample size was influenced by saturation data relevant to achieve my research objectives (Etikan *et al.* 2016). Many of the participants had ancestral roots in the villages, therefore, their experiences recorded multigenerational perspectives (Ndletyana 2012). Moreover, purposive sampling ensured that only relevant data was collected within the allocated study period and financial constraints of the researcher.

4.2.3 Data collection

Qualitative data that was collected through semi-structured free-flowing interviews with community members, conducted between July 2022 and August 2022 for one week.

The use of semi-structured interviews allowed for a flexible approach to the data collection. This approach enabled me to adapt the questioning based on the responses I was receiving. This flexibility ensured that the research objectives were being met while allowing for the nuances being brought forward to be recorded (Flick 2018). Furthermore, these semi-

structured interviews aided in facilitating rapport with the participants (Boyce & Neale 2006; Denzin & Lincoln 2011). The semi-structured interviews allowed participants to express themselves and provides a deeper contextual understanding of naming in the Makgabeng-Blouberg. This contextualization captures the intricacies and nuances of the social interactions (Denzin & Lincoln 2011). Interviews were held in the courtyards of the participants, outside the *moshate* (Traditional Authority offices), or community centres and in accordance with Covid-19 regulations. The duration of the interviews ranged between 15 to 45 minutes, depending on the nature of the responses and willingness of participants to engage in the interview. All the interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed. Participants included members of royal houses, government officials, area councilors and ordinary citizens. Research permissions to use information from interviews conducted within the Ga Seakamela Royal house and to further interview their subjects was obtained, as well as from the Blouberg Local Municipality to conduct interviews in the study area.

4.2.4 Interviews

Effort was made to conduct interviews in the language participants were most comfortable with - Tswana/Sepedi and English as to ensure that they shared their knowledge in a conversational style, so as not to be restricted by lack of comprehension or misunderstanding. However, the home environment, outdoor arrangement and speaking the respondent's indigenous language eased any potential interview tensions. Prompting questions were asked relevant to the research objectives. Follow up questions were then asked in relation to responses, where necessary. Some prompt questions included: what is the significance of the indigenous name? how does a name contribute to place making? what is the origin and or meaning of the place name? and how are indigenous place name being preserved? These questions allowed participants freely narrate stories they were told in their youth by older generations, which in turn were an analytical framework that aided in answering the research aims (Palinkas *et al.* 2015). Participants' responses to place naming and the changes that occur were recorded and their underlying beliefs were discussed. I explored the role place names played in identity-formation by asking follow-up questions such as: do you think place names play(ed) a part in place making and identity? Do you have any connection/association with the indigenous name? and do colonial place names capture the indigeneity of the

community? However, not all of these questions were asked during data collection but formed part of all interviews conducted in all the study villages. These questions laid the foundation to explore observed changes in place naming and place making. Data collection was, therefore, successful as it adequately captured respondents' views and thoughts on toponyms. In addition, since I understood the local indigenous language, I gained nuanced insights that could have been lost if a translator were used. Although a participants social standing was not the focus of the study, some interviews yielded fruitful information regarding cultural naming practices among the royal houses. Gender was not considered a variable while analyzing the data as it was not considered to affect the research objectives. Even so, it was noted that most the participants were male (73%), and a third were female (27%).

4.2.4 Data Analysis

The audio recordings from the interview were transcribed verbatim. This was followed by thematically coding the data to what was recurring information and what was relevant to the study aims and objectives. Data analysis was divided into four distinct steps from (Bengtsson 2016).

1. Identify meaning from the participants' responses.
2. Identify contextual relevant meanings and responses.
3. Homogenous groups
4. Draw conclusions that inform results.

The data collected was deductively and inductively coded, into themes that were informed by the literature. This aided the relevance of the data (Bengtsson 2016). Data analysis involved identifying trends, constructing themes, and connecting the findings to the literature.

4.2.5 Ethics

An ethical clearance was acquired from the University of the Witwatersrand. The Non-medical Human Research Ethics board issued an ethics clearance certificate, protocol No: H21/08/37 prior to conducting any interviews. Prior to the interviews, the intention of the interview and

an overview of the research was explained to the participants. Individuals were informed that they can ask questions, and the ability to not engage in any questions and topics they were not comfortable discussing. Respondents were further informed of their ability to stop the interview at any given point. Participants were also provided with consent forms in both English and Sepedi that specify the right to remain anonymous and ensured confidentiality and for the researcher to record the interview. To protect the identities of the participants of in this study, the village name and interview number in that village were used as pseudonyms used throughout the data analysis. In addition to the ethical clearance the researcher observed cultural norms and a respectful conversation style.

CHAPTER 5: MAKGABENG-BLOUBERG AREA TOPONYMS

Data analysis on Makgabeng –Blouberg toponyms was thematic and textual using critical discourse analysis through coding to identify recurring themes in the responses. The analysis indicates where the origin and meaning of some the indigenous place names used by the communities, derive. Emerging themes include naming as politics, place making, identity and heritage preservation. I use direct quotes and graphs to illustrate the results of the study. The direct quotes and village names are indicted as per participant consent and official toponyms, respectively.

5.1 Demographics

As mentioned in chapter 4, of the 52 participants interviewed 73% were male and 27% women. Figure 6 shows these distributions by gender and village. The sample group was selected using a snowballing effect which supports male community members being more readily available to answer questions than the women were occupied with household chores. This result highlights some of the social factors likely to emerge from the sample group. In addition, I noted that males remained in their home villages after marriage whereas women moved to the villages of their spouse. So, the lack of female participants was partially because many perceived themselves to be 'outsiders' of the area. Individuals who moved to the study area due to marriage or work did not consider themselves 'belonging' to that village regardless of long-term residence. For example, a participant from Marobjane stated:

> *"I was born on the farms far away at a place called Buysdorp. I came here as a result of marriage; I do not consider myself from here."* (Avon 1.4).

Another indigenous knowledge holder from Indermark stated:

> *"I came because of work a long time ago, so I made it home. There used to be a mine that is why I came here."* (Indermark 1.8).

Similarly, one from De Vrede stated:

> *"I actually moved here many years ago because of marriage."* (De Vrede 3.4).

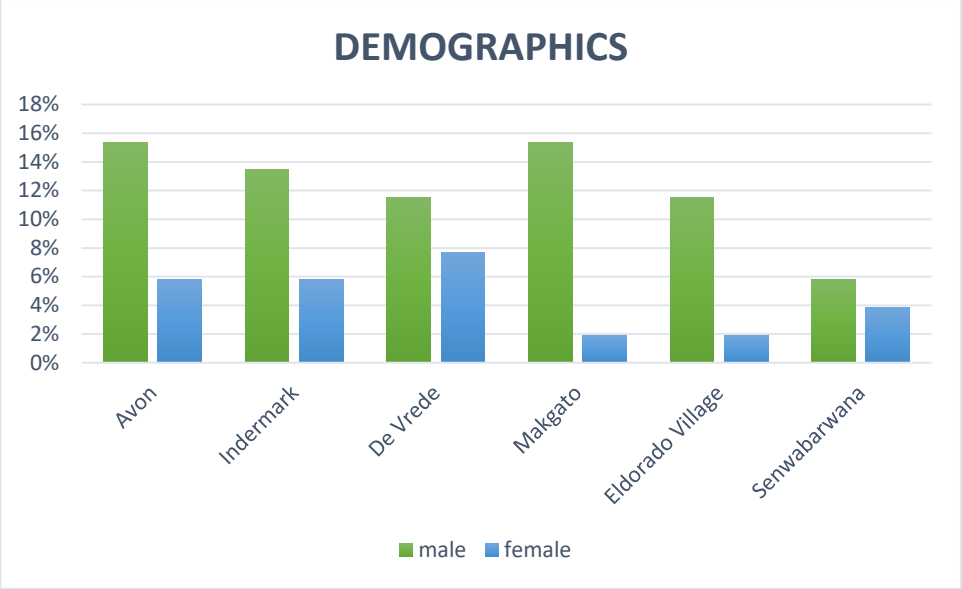


Figure 5: Demographic distribution by village in the study area.

These residents still possess knowledge of the place names as they are long term residents of these villages. They offer a unique perspective on toponyms as repositories of the changes from an incomer through time. All the participants in the study are elders in the community.

5.2 Toponyms in the Makgabeng-Blouberg Area

The study sites are at the tail-end of the Makgabeng-Blouberg area. The region has a high number of exonyms that are still in use formally. Figure 7 shows the distribution of the naming practices in the study area. From the sampled group, 48% used colonial toponyms, 29% exclusively used indigenous place names while, 23% used both naming systems simultaneously.

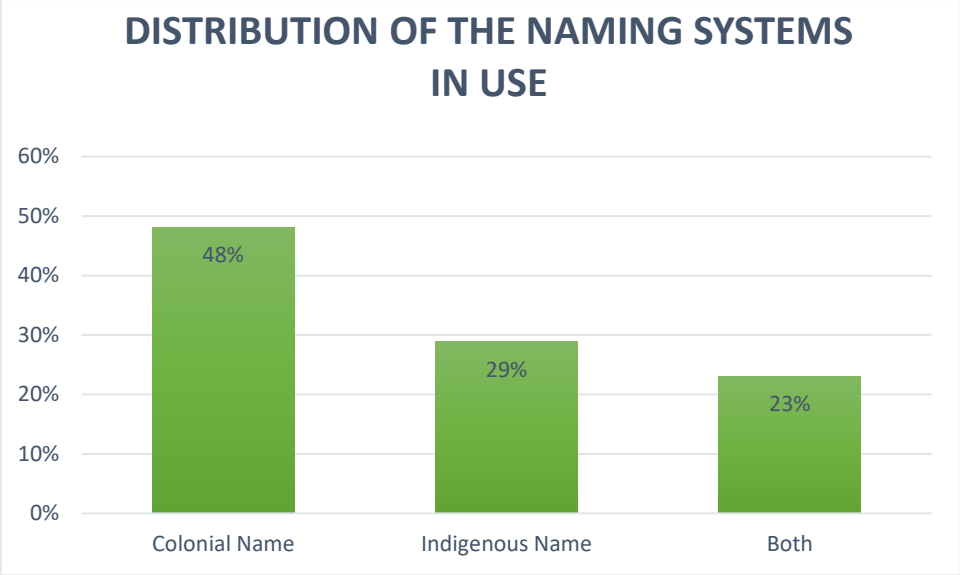


Figure 6: Distribution of naming systems in use.

Avon/Ga-Seakamela village is formally recognised as having dual place names, however, 73% of the respondent only used the indigenous one while 27% used both colonial and indigenous. This indicates that the micro toponym is preferred in this village (Fig. 8). In the other five villages, the colonial toponyms were still predominant with them being used by 80% of the sampled group in Indermark, 71% in Eldorado, 70% in De Vrede and 60% in Senwabarwana. Although Senwabarwana changed its name to an indigenous toponym in 2009, the exonym, Bochum, is still predominately used by knowledge holders and communities in general. In addition, villages with a Ward Councillor overwhelmingly used the colonial place names while those with a Chief exclusively used variations of the micro toponym or indigenous name, as comparatively indicated in Figure 8.

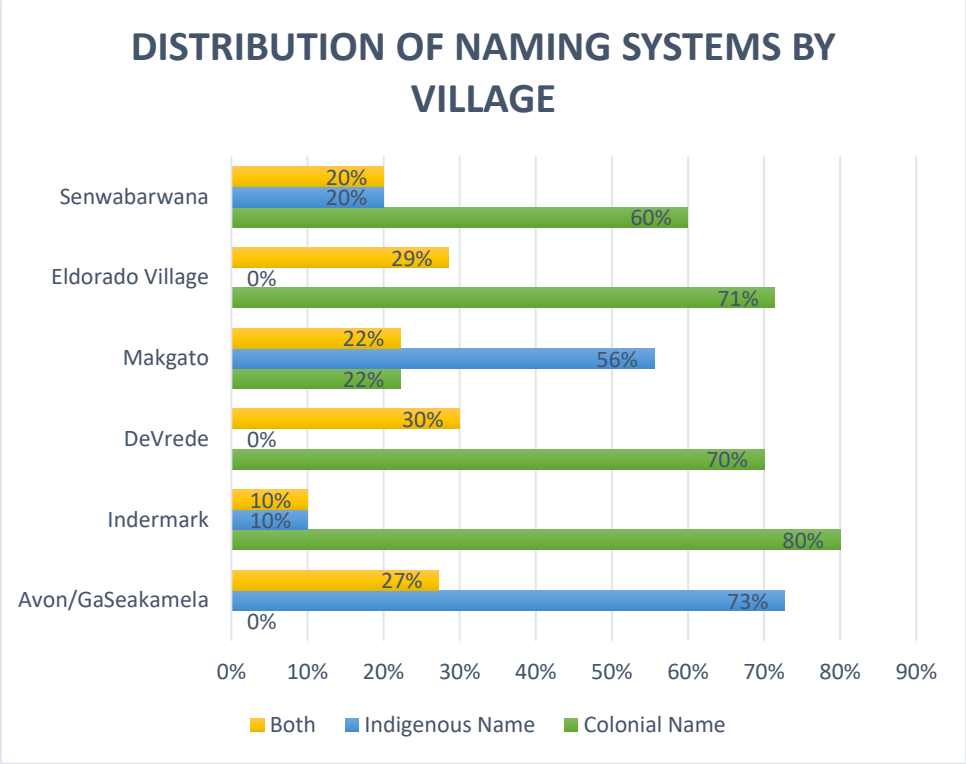


Figure 7: Distribution of the types of place names used.

In this study, when respondents were asked about the origin of the indigenous place names, those in Avon/Ga-Seakamela had varied awareness but all corroborated that its meaning related to the chief and an ode to the previous village they lived. In Figure 9, 55% stated the name meant that the land belongs to the chief, while 36% indicated that the name meant the place of rest for Kgôsi Seakamela while 9% stated the name meant the city in a bush. These varied understandings reflect how ions on the origin and meaning of indigenous name is how the actual meaning and narrative around indigenous names become misconstrued overtime. IK holders argue that the name 'Ga-Seakamela' carries the history of the royal family as illustrated when explaining the origin of Marobjane:

> "*Marobjane, a Mangkaya loosely translates to the city in the bush. It was the name of the previous land we occupied under Kgôsi Seakamela before we were moved"* (Avon 1.2)

Another member of the royal house explained:

> *"You must also remember before we moved to Avon, we were on a farm called Mangkaya. When we sing praises, we say "Marobjane a Mangkaya" that name*

of that previous farm is still being remembered. So, when we talk about this place, we say "Avon- Marobjane the place of rest for Kgôsi Seakamela" (Avon 1.9)

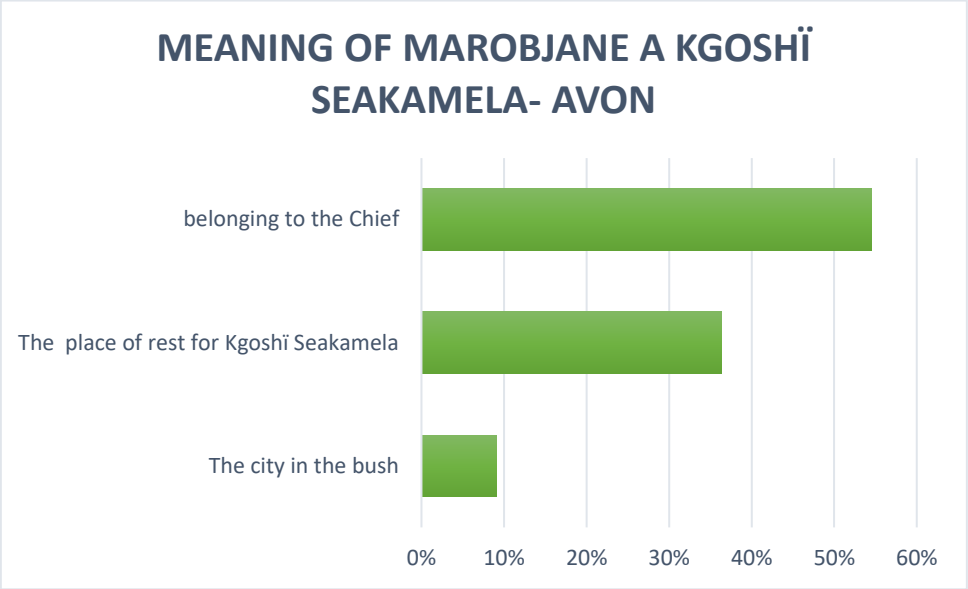


Figure 8: Meaning of Marobjane according to community.

In Indermark, the origin of the name *Hamokoko* is centred around the previous farm owner. Figure 10 shows that 50 % of the knowledge holders stated that the origin of the name was about how stubborn the farm owner was, while 30% believed the name implied the farmer owner had a chicken farm that had plenty of roosters. 20% of the sample did not know the origin of the micro toponym.

"Where when we call this place Mokoko, the Afrikaner who lived here and owned this land was called Mokoko, that is why we say Ga-Mokoko. I think he used to be a chicken farmer; because Mokoko is a rooster." (Indermark 1.3).

"*...This place was called Hamokoko. It was an Afrikaner's plaas. If I remember clearly, he was called Mokoko because he was stubborn and strict man. That is where that name comes from."* (Indermark 1.7)

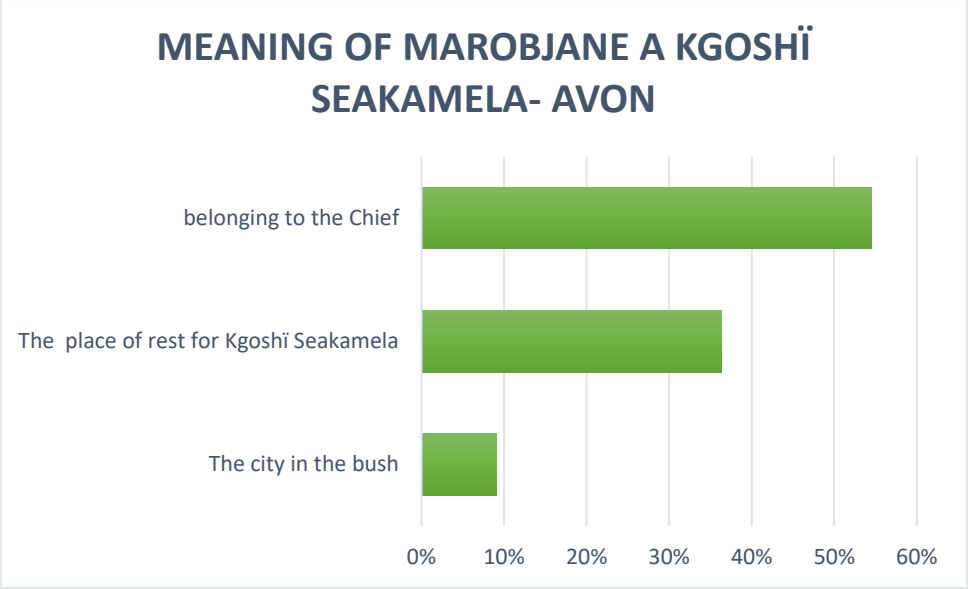


Figure 9: Meaning of Hamokoko according to community.

At De Vrede, 70% of the sampled group corroborated the meaning and origin of the indigenous *Mabelebele* to mean plenty of grain (Fig. 11). The place name was derived from the word '*mabele,'* sorghum. 30% of the knowledge holders, who were newcomers to the area, did not know the meaning of the toponym. Some who explained the meaning stated:

> *"Yes, De Vrede has an indigenous name. It is called Mabelebele. Mabele is a type of wheat, the type that we make brown porridge with. It is dried and then beaten with a pestle and mortar to make fine wheat. As you know this village was a farm, but before then, mabele would naturally grow in this area, hence the elders had named it mabelebele. Implying that the wheat was in abundance. I feel like this particular place was also referred to as Thusanang and Matsela. This is because the people would come together and help each other out and the abundance of the yield would be shared."* (De Vrede 1.2)
>
> *"It is Mabelebele. Mabele is a type of grain, it used to grow a lot in this area, that is why they called it mabelebele, meaning many grains (a lot of grain). Mabelebele is the name of this place."* (De Vrede 1.7)

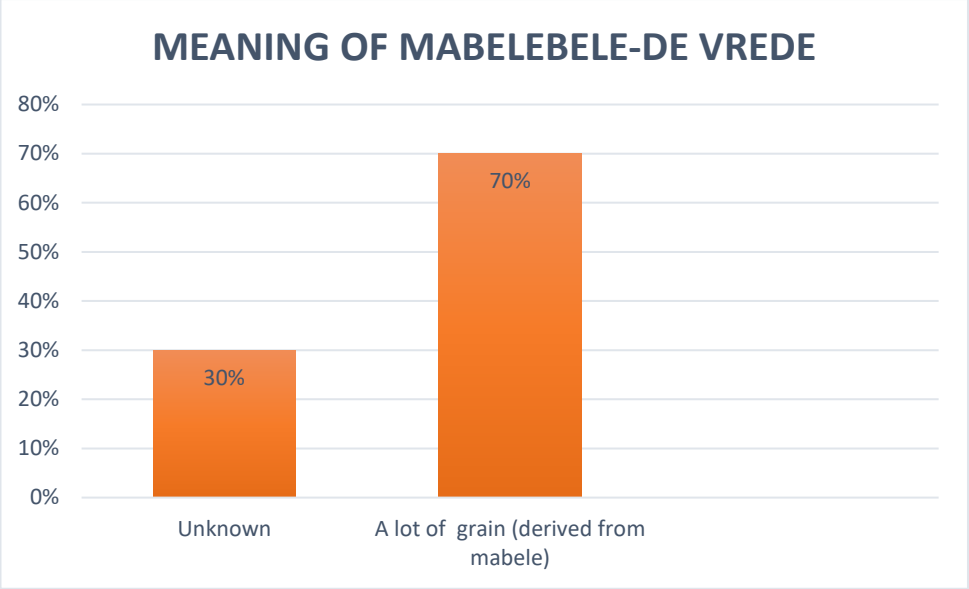


Figure 10: Communities interpretation of the meaning of the place name

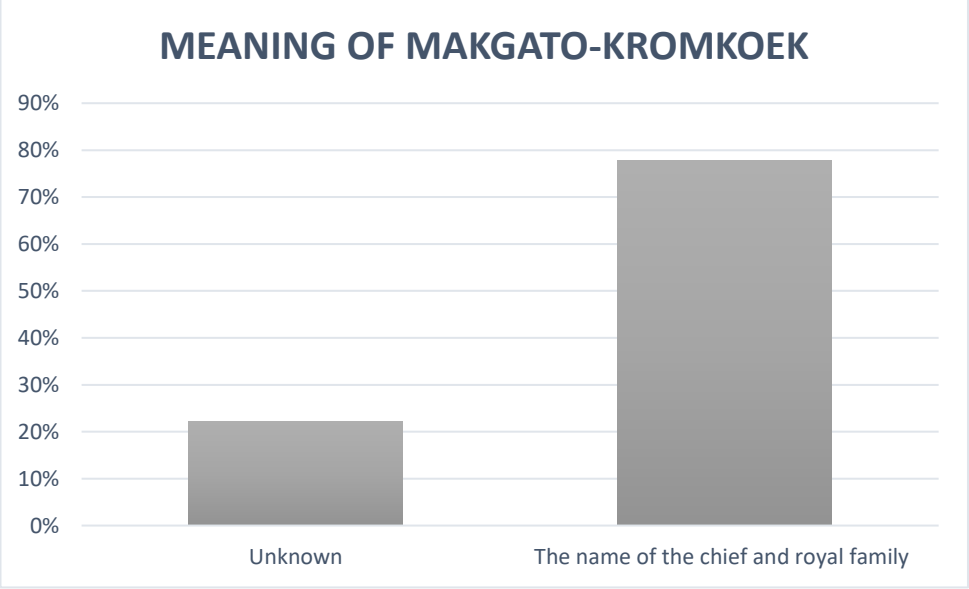


Figure 11: Origin of the place name Makgato

Makgato was changed from the colonial name of Kromhoek to Makgato in recent years. 78% of the knowledge holders noted that the name related to Chief Makgato, while 22% did not know the origin of the name. Respondents explained the meaning of the toponym as follows:

> "*It is of the late chief Makgato, this name represents the royal family. It is named after the Kgôsi, Matipa Makgato."* (Makgato 1.2)

"It is the one I told you, Ga -Makgato. That is the name of the royal family. The name is an indicator that they control this land and the people who live here. We honour the legacy of the chief by naming the village after him." (Makgato 1.6)

In Eldorado Village (Fig. 13), 71% of the knowledge holders agreed that the indigenous name *Loke* referred to a river which once flowed through the village before it was divided into stands for housing. 29% of respondents did not know the meaning of the indigenous place name. These custodian holders had varying reasons for ignorance about the meaning of the name, but the recurring explanation was that they did not ask and therefore, were not taught. Respondents in Eldorado explained the meaning of the indigenous toponym as follows:

"Yes, Loke is the indigenous name. Down there (pointing in the direction) there used to be a deep river that ran through the village, and this area was named after that river." (Eldorado Village 1.3)

"Yes, of course, the indigenous name is Loke. Before we moved, this land belonged to a Boer. We used to come fetch water from a river here and they called this place Loke. So, I think they named the area after that river. It is now dry you cannot see it, but it was down there." (Eldorado Village 1.5)

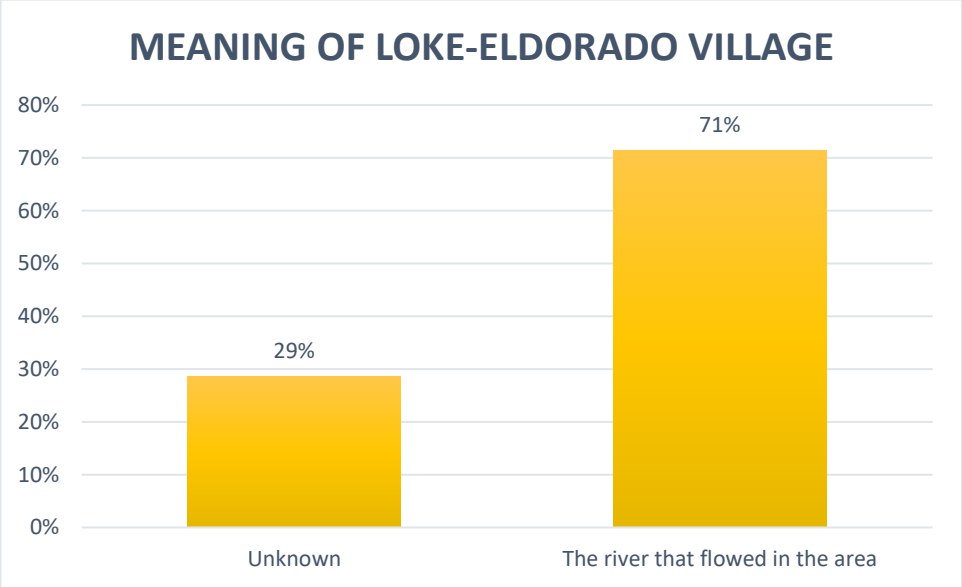


Figure 12: Meaning of Loke

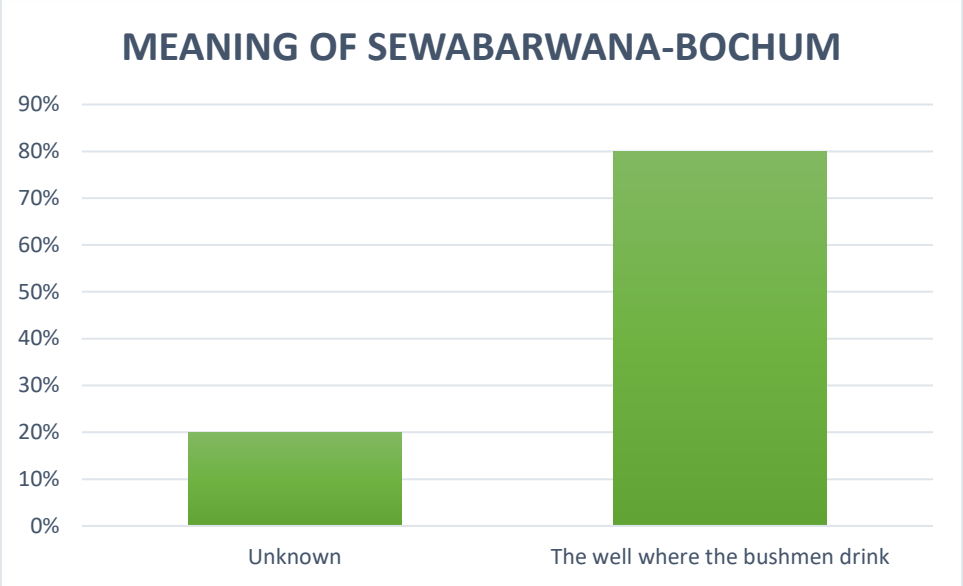


Figure 13: Community understanding of the name Senwabarwana.

In Senwabarwana 80% of the sampled group knew the meaning and origin of the place name (Fig. 14), compared to 20% who did not. Senwabarwana is the major town and receives the highest number of incomers, some seeking employment and end up staying in the area for long time and become knowledge holders. However, they are more culturally removed from the meaning and association of indigenous name.

> *"It is barwana. the first people, who used to occupy the land. There was a well and from that well the bushmen would drink so they called it Senwabarawana."* (Senwabarwana 1.1)
>
> *"It is Senwabarawana, Senwabarawana, is a river, there close to where the shops are, long ago, there were San Bushmen who used to drink from that well."* (Senwabarwana 1.3)

A synthesis of the 52 knowledge holder respondents in this study indicates the majority are aware of the time when place names gradually changed in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area. They stated that during Apartheid, place name changes where most prevalent in the region. Apartheid's hegemonic control instituted laws and policies that resulted in forced removals and placement of Africans into homelands. African communities were moved around depending on whether they occupied land thought to be within white jurisdiction. These

forced removals were intended to strip Africans of their identities and instill hegemonic control, hence a 46%the prevalence of colonial place names in the area. According to a participant in De Vrede, forced removals during Apartheid stifled generational transmission of indigenous knowledge in the traditional way because of fear of the strong political power of the brutal, ruthless Apartheid regime. Similar sentiments were shared as follows:

> *"Many of our parents are dead now and could not tell us what was happening at the time, all we saw were large green trucks that they used for cattle; the white man had a list with stand numbers. Each family was assigned a stand and that was your new home*. *They stripped so many cultural practices from us because we were now in a state of survival."* (Indermark 1.7)

This narrative concurs with information from other knowledge custodians in Indermark referring to toponym change from Hamokoko:

> "*In 1979 we were moved from Venda, and when we arrived here, we knew it as Hamokoko but the white man told us this place is Indermark."* (Indermark 1.3)

Participant responses indicate that prevalence of exonyms in the region also resulted from the destabilization of closed precolonial societies, by colonial pressures. Knowledge holders suggested that they were excluded from decisions relating to name change processes or decisions. Forced relocations sought to destabilise and disintegrate chiefdoms to assert political and administrative control over populations. A knowledge holder from De Vrede explained that it was normal to see surveyors in the area mapping the farms:

> *"These white people used to carry around a diary and map and would move whole communities if the land that they occupied was fertile. I think it would be better to remove colonial names and use indigenous names, because those are the names, De Vrede should be Mabelebele."* (De Vrede 1.9)

Knowledge holders in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area recall the transfer of land to white control and the gradual change in place names, many of which remain with the imposed toponyms today:

> *"I was born here. When I was young, they used to call this place Mabelebele, it derives from the Kgôsi in Kibi. My people were separated during wars and this land was given to the Boer farmer but later we were later told it is De Vrede by the Apartheid government"* (De Vrede 1.1)
>
> *"This community you see here used to live in a place near Venda, but during apartheid, that government moved them to this place called Avon."* (Avon 1.1)
>
> *"The apartheid government moved us from Delmaine, to here. This place was a farm owned by an Afrikaner farmer called Ramatala and the farm was registered and recorded by the government as Avon. So that name became known as the white political name, but us as Africans needed a name for ourselves so the chief's council called this place Marobjane a Kgôsi Seakamela."* (Avon 1.5)
>
> *"We were coming from Sentomolegotama close to Venda. We were moved by the Apartheid government because they said our land was in white jurisdiction."* (De Vrede 1.3)

> *"In 1961, because of the apartheid government, there was an introduction of trusts. The government allocated stands for everyone, so that was then it was enforced that this village's name was Eldorado ...During the apartheid time, many things changed. That government came and changed the names of these villages and put stand numbers everywhere. So, the African names basically fell away"* (Eldorado Village 1.3).
>
> *"Many of the families you see here, we were moved here during Apartheid. It was in trucks; the white man had a list with stand numbers. Each family was assigned a stand. When you see villages that do not have stand numbers, you know that those were there before apartheid"* (Indermark 1.8).

During an interview with a high-ranking royal member of the Ga-Seakamela, I was informed that outlining name changes in African culture is challenging, as names primarily serve as

markers. The royal member noted that the Seakamela's royal lineage is lengthy and further complicated by interactions with colonizers.

They stated in the interview:

> *"You know when the white men came and saw that you had a functioning system with members who loyally followed a chief, they would create skirmishes amongst our people. I can tell you from where I clearly know from… We are from Kranspoort we used to call it MaSediba. It is close to Venda. The ZAR government then moved us to a place called Mangkaya. We were then moved by the apartheid government to Delmaine then again to Avon. You see we were travelling a lot, but as a community under Kgôsi Seakamela. So, the colonial name does not mean anything to us as it is always changing depending which white was in control. The one that stays constant is Ga-Seakamela."* (Avon 1.11)

Participant responses therefore show that significant changes to place names in the landscape occurred during apartheid rule when communities were forced to disregard their native names that represented their understanding of their environments and adopt colonial ones that influenced an imposed foreign authority and identity. Contrastingly, villages with traditional authorities were more proactive in preserving the autonym through praise poems. This has resulted in some villages having dual names that are often used interchangeably. Overall, colonial place names underpinned bogus claims to ownership over land. Understanding place names and migration/movement of people across the landscape's augments understanding the archaeology and heritage of a landscape and tracing descendant communities of the early settlers.

5.2.1 Prevalence of Colonial Place Names

When knowledge holders were asked about the prevalence of colonial place names in their communities and why these were prevalent, three reoccurring reasons were given: colonial place names are a part of the area's history; they are a display of hegemonic power; and they are convenient. Figure 15 shows that in Makgato 78% and 73% in Avon/Ga-Seakamela of knowledge holders thought the colonial names displayed the colonial/apartheid power. In Senwabarwana and Indermark only 40% and 10% respectively thought the toponyms showed

colonial power. In Indermark, De Vrede and Senwabarwana 40% thought prevalence was due to convenience while 50% in Indermark and 43% in Eldorado Village argued that the colonial toponym was a part of the community's history.

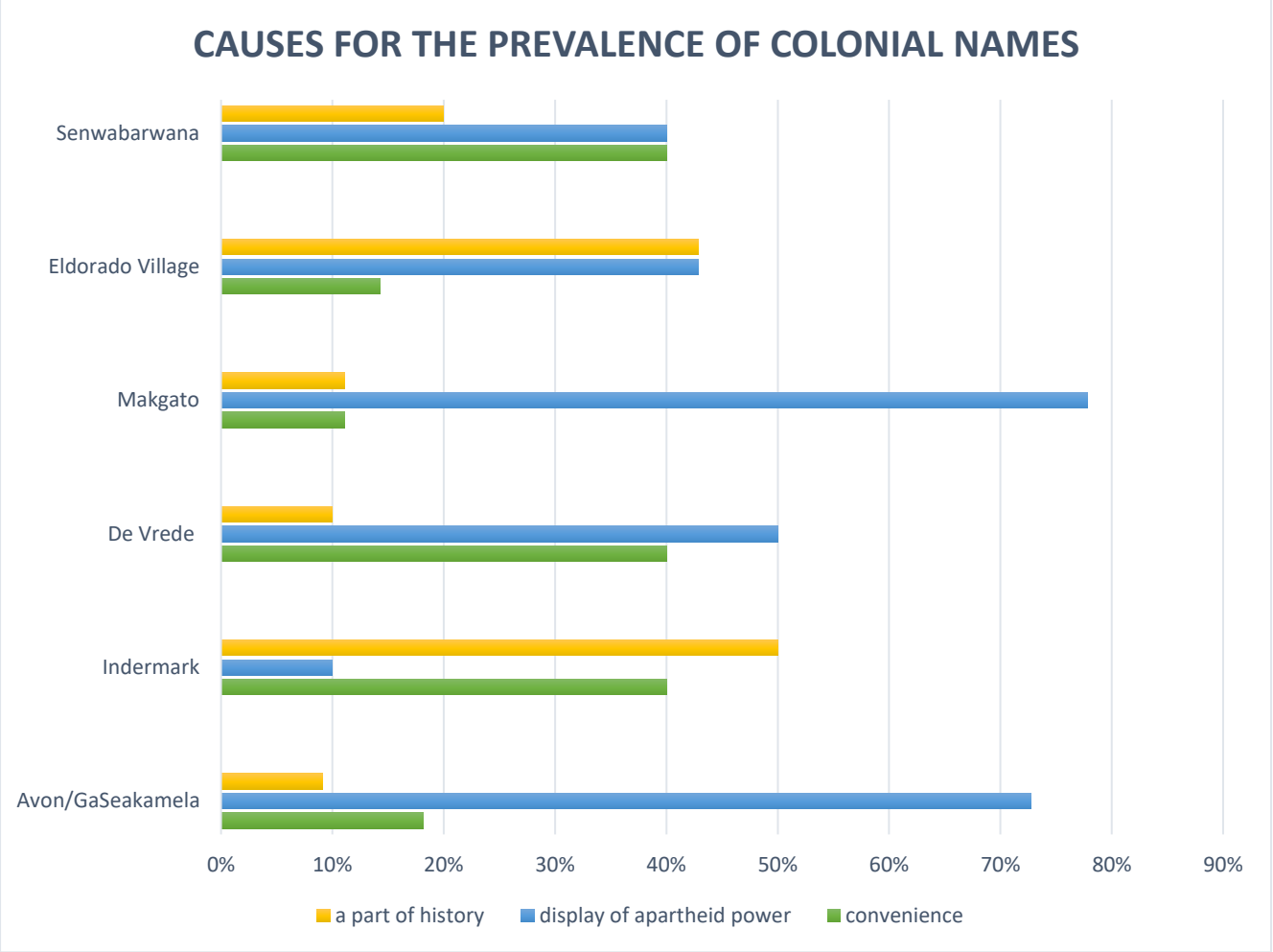


Figure 14*: Reasons for the prevalence of colonial toponyms.*

Knowledge holders had varying perspectives and emotions attached to colonial place names. This attachment or lack thereof was associated with the experience knowledge holders had with Apartheid South Africa. Those who had a negative emotional association with the overall apartheid system had negative associations with colonial naming as evidenced in these excerpts:

> *"No. you know those names were used to control us. The white man still has a lot of power because they have the money. To us, those names do not have a place."* (Avon 1.3)

"Not even in the slightest. These people came from their own land and came to tell us what these places should be named, even though these places already had names. The white government was very violent, promoting their names is not a good thing, we should be condemning them, but so many of these villages still have those names." (De Vrede 1.2)

"No, there is no place for them, because these white people came from their lands, and wrote down history. We know there are no Afrikaners in our societies, but they came and immediately took power over us." (De Vrede 1.5)

"I don't think so as those names represent the old government" (Makgato 1.7)

While knowledge holders with a neutral experience saw the name as part of the communities' experience of the place:

"Well, it is the name that we use. On the government boards and at the offices they use it. It is the name that most of use grew up using." (Indermark 1.4)

"Yes, I mean it is the official name of this village. It is a part of the heritage of this place. I think Indermark is fine because people get to know where you are talking about easily. A lot of people do not get these historically names." (Indermark 1.6)

"*Yes, the village has a colonial name. De Vrede. The name is not offensive and actually describes living here very well. It is peaceful living here."* (De Vrede 1.3)

"They are here, and have been here for so long, people we used to them, they do not even see them as colonial names, they just see them as names. So, the names have a place, they also tell people that the white men passed through here and made his mark." (Eldorado Village 1.3)

Lingering coloniality is evident in some of the responses, although there is no doubt that the names are part of the history of a place. Some respondents internalised the imposed power of colonialism and are unable to separate their true thoughts and emotions from those that have been imposed on them. As evidenced in villages such as Indermark, De Vrede and Eldorado, the impact of colonial naming has resulted in communities forming identities around these place names and using these names out of the convenience as recognizable toponyms.

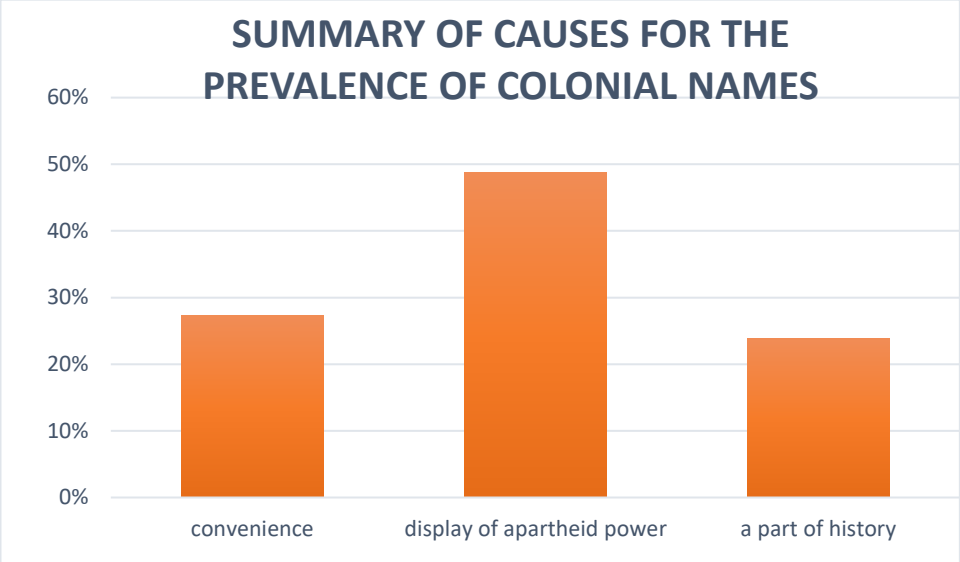


Figure 15: Summary of prevalence of colonial place names (Fig.15)

5.3 Identity and associated toponyms

Respondents acknowledged the importance of place names in identity formation within the Makgabeng-Blouberg area. As a result of their long-term residence in an area, they noted a collective knowledge of the effects places names on community. A definitive distinction was made in this regard, between colonial and indigenous place names. Cultural identity was inherently associated with the indigenous place names and thus serve as indigenous knowledge reservoirs. Knowledge holders further highlighted the importance of knowing the indigenous micro toponym as it carried with it a lot of cultural heritage and history, based on an individuals' experiences as well as collective ones.

In Avon/Ga-Seakamela (Fig. 17) 36% of knowledge holders stated that culture was the main reason they felt the micro toponym contributed to their identity; 36% felt a connection to heritage and history while only 27% noted that their place rootedness and belonging was the reason the micro toponym formed part of their identity.

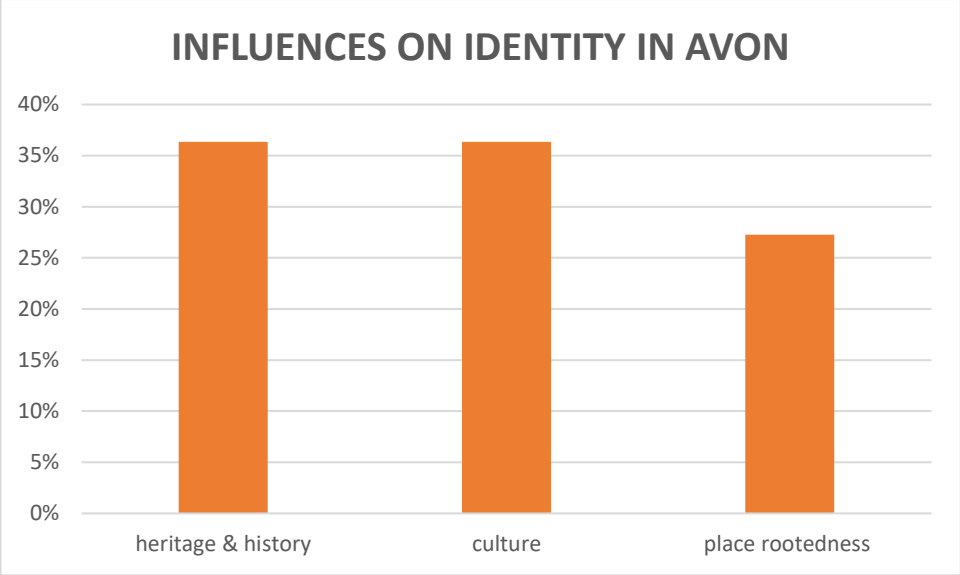


Figure 16: Influences on identity in Avon/Ga-Seakamela

Senior royal members explained:

> *"The indigenous name is one that represents us. Ga-Seakamela forms part of the people's identity. The second is the tongue, you know when I am speaking, here with my own language that is the biggest form of identity. It explains where you come from. The name becomes an extension of language. The name is an identifier. It places us amongst others."* (Avon 1.10)
>
> *"The significance of the indigenous name is being held together by the community through continuous use. You must also remember before we moved to Avon, we were on a farm called Mangkaya. When we sing praises, we say "Marobjane a Mangkaya" that name of that previous farm is still being remembered."* (Avon 1.11)

As custodians of tradition and group identity, the Ga-Seakamela royal family give value to the indigenous toponyms. Hence, they argue that indigenous knowledge of oneself is intertwined with an individual's origin. This is all encompassed within a name. these custodians of knowledge all emphasized the importance of using the micro toponym within the community to safeguard its preservation and ensure its context is also preserved.

On the other hand, Figure 18 shows that in Indermark 50% of the respondents noted that the colonial place name *Indermark* formed part of their identity and contributed to place rootedness they experienced. Participants shared their reasons as follows:

> *"Indermark as a name forms part the communities experience of this place*." (Indermark 1.1)
>
> *"Well, Indermark is part of my identity as it the main name I grew up using. It is the first name I think of when I think of home. This village was started by us."* (Indermark 1.4)
>
> *"…It is definitely a part of my identity. I have grown up here, and this place has shaped me into the women I am…so yes, Indermark is part of my identity*." (Indermark 1.9)

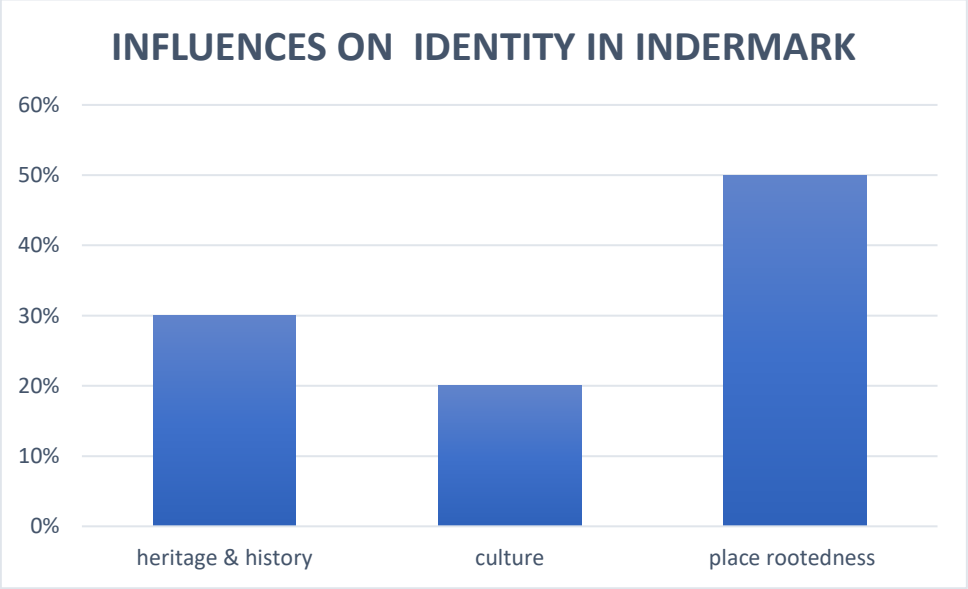


Figure 17: Influences on identity in Indermark

Only 30% of the respondents, stated that the micro toponym *Hamokoko* carried heritage with it or shaped their identity, while 20% stated that culture is what shaped their identity. Similarly, in De Vrede (Fig. 19), 40 % of respondents stated the colonial toponym and culture shaped or contributed to their identity while for 20%, heritage had the greatest influence on their identity. The village of De Vrede is the only community that has traditional leadership structures such as a *moshate* but recognises the Ward Councillor as the point of authority. This is different from other villages where if tribal authority of the chief is the point of authority, like Avon/Ga Seakamela.

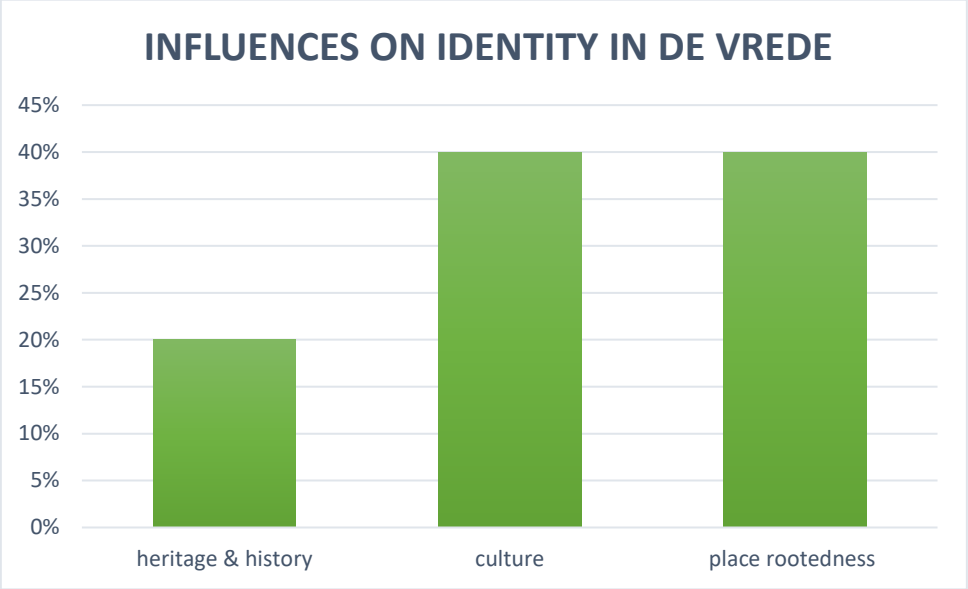


Figure 18*: Influences on identity in De Vrede*

In Makgato, one of the villages with an indigenous official place, 44% of knowledge holders stated that heritage and history were the greatest contributors to their identity (Fig. 20) compared to 33% who saw culture as a marker of their identity and for 22% for whom place rootedness was a big identity framing point. Respondents in this village considered place names as part of indigenous knowledge that contributed to identity creation. They were aware of the importance name plays in shaping individuals on a personal and community level:

> *"As I have said these indigenous names represent you as a black person. They carry your heritage which is really what makes you the person you are. The history behind where you come from carry a lot of significance for the person you become."* (Makgato 1.2)
>
> *"It encompasses my heritage and identity. We know this name because of heritage."* (Makgato 1.3)
>
> *"If you call this village Kromhoek, they community is disconnected, but if you use GA-MAKGATO, the village comes together, as it is the name in our mother tongue, we represent the legacy of Makgato living on.*" (Makgato 1.8)

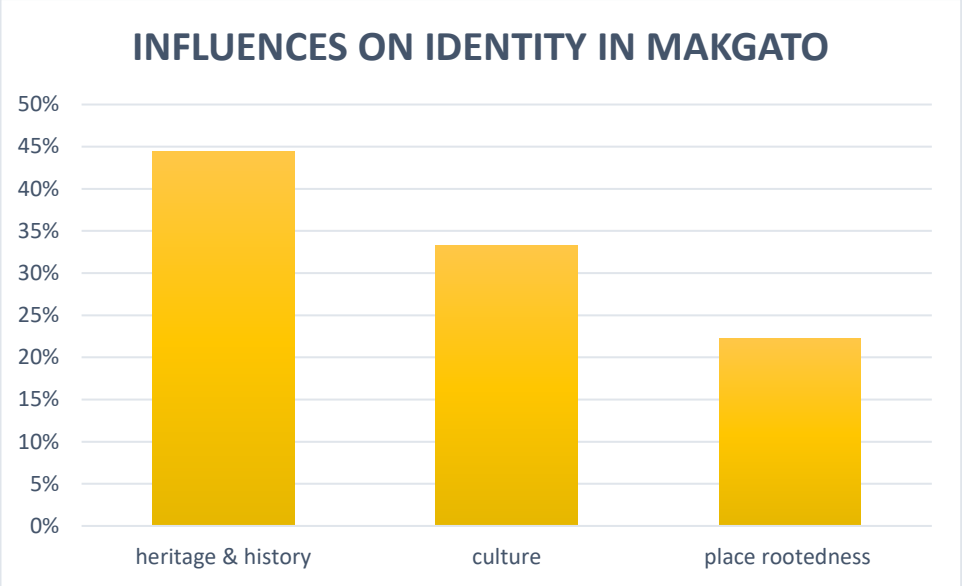


Figure 19: Influences on identity in Makgato

In Eldorado Village, respondents (33%) noted that place names were a part of culture, as such they had the greatest influence on identity while heritage and history were stated by 29% as contributing factors to the identity place names and a similar percentage stated place rootedness as a marker of their identity (Fig. 21). A participant reiterated:

> *"Here is Eldorado, in other words, the indigenous name is not being used, we use Eldorado. Because it is the name, we grew to get used to… so many years now; it is part of me."* (Eldorado Village 1.4)

In Senwabarwana, Figure 22, illustrates that that place rootedness had the greatness influence on identity within the community at 60%. It was noted that residents in Senwabarwana were not native to the village but came to settle their long term because of employment opportunities. The community is home to one of the areas only towns and sees the greatness amount of interaction with outsiders. As such, 20% noted that the toponym does not influence their identity as they were already outsiders and used whatever place name was convenient. 20% also noted the culture encrypting within the place name as a marker of their identity.

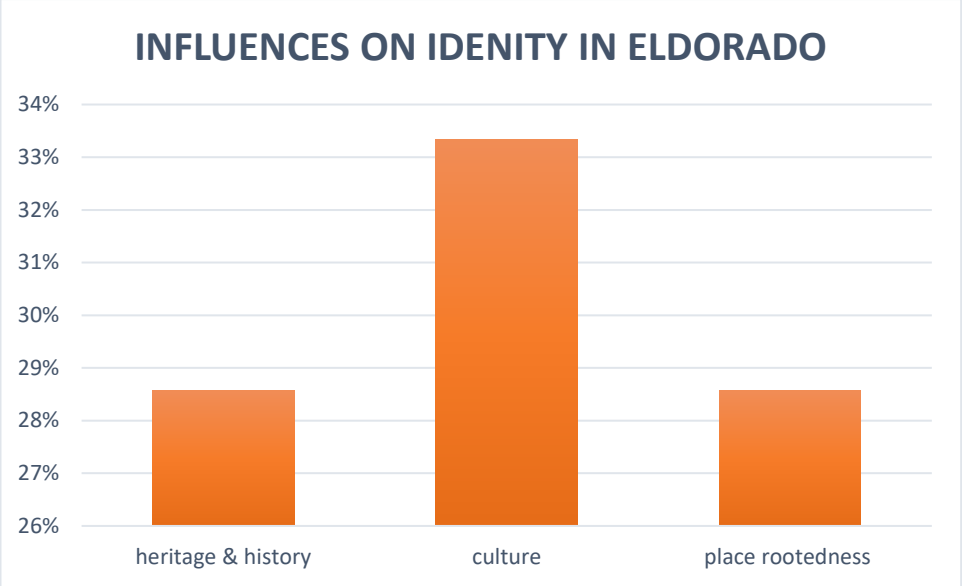


Figure 20: Influences on identity in Eldorado village

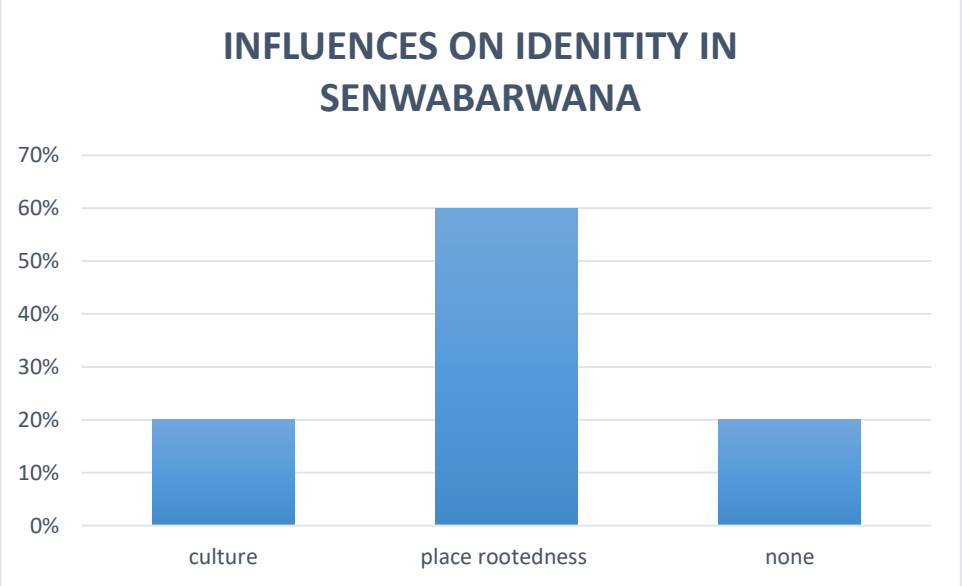


Figure 21: On identity in Senwabarwana.

Figure 23 illustrates the distribution of heritage and history being a contributing factor to the formation of identity in each village. In Makgato 44% noted heritage and history being a part of identity. 36% in Avon/Ga-Seakamela,30% in Indermark, 29% in Eldorado village while in De Vrede, only 20% saw heritage as a contributing part of their identity and 0% in Senwabarwana. It is worth noting however, despite long-term residence in the village, residents in Senwabarwana are an amalgamation of multiple incoming residents from various parts of

Southern Africa because of migrant labour. As such, many of these residents are more emotionally removed from the heritage and knowledge indigenous place names encrypt.

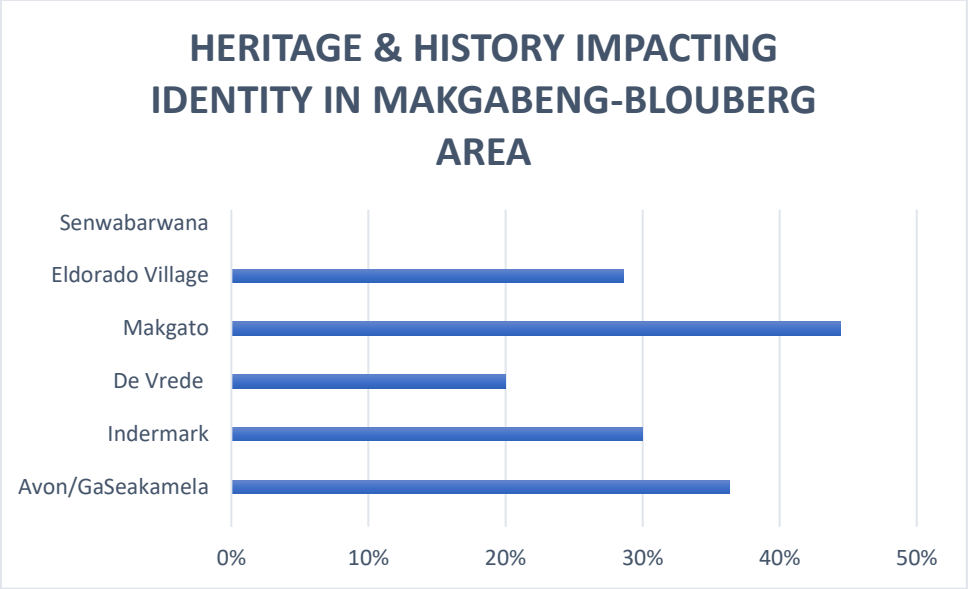


Figure 22: Heritage & History as contributing factor to identity formation.

Culture was also acknowledged as having a profound influence in the formation of an individual's identity. Culture was defined as social behaviours, customs, and traditions that the community took part in. In De Vrede culture had the major influence on identity at 40%, 36% in Avon/Ga-Seakamela and 33% in Makgato and Eldorado respectively while in Senwabarwana and Indermark, it made up 20% respectively.

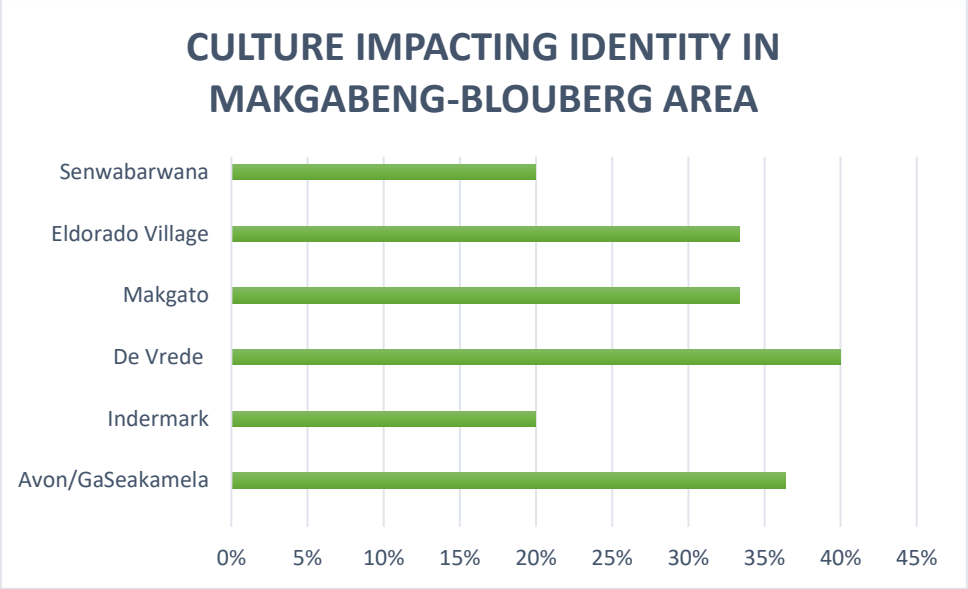


Figure 23: Culture as a contributing factor to identity formation.

The emotional experience of the communities played varying influence on the individual's sense of identity. Place rootedness in Senwabarwana made up 60%, 50% in Indermark. In De Vrede, 40% of participants noted that the emotional experience they experienced in the village contributed to their identity. In Eldorado 29% stated that place rootedness contributed to identity. While in Avon/Ga-Seakamela only 27% felt the that place rootedness contributed to identity and 22% in Makgato. This distribution is indicative the emotional experience communities have within them is the large contributing factor to the overall attachment they have to the current place name. In villages that predominately use the colonial place name, these villages scored higher in place rootedness being a large contributing factor to their identity. (See figure 24; Senwabarwana, Indermark, De Vrede).

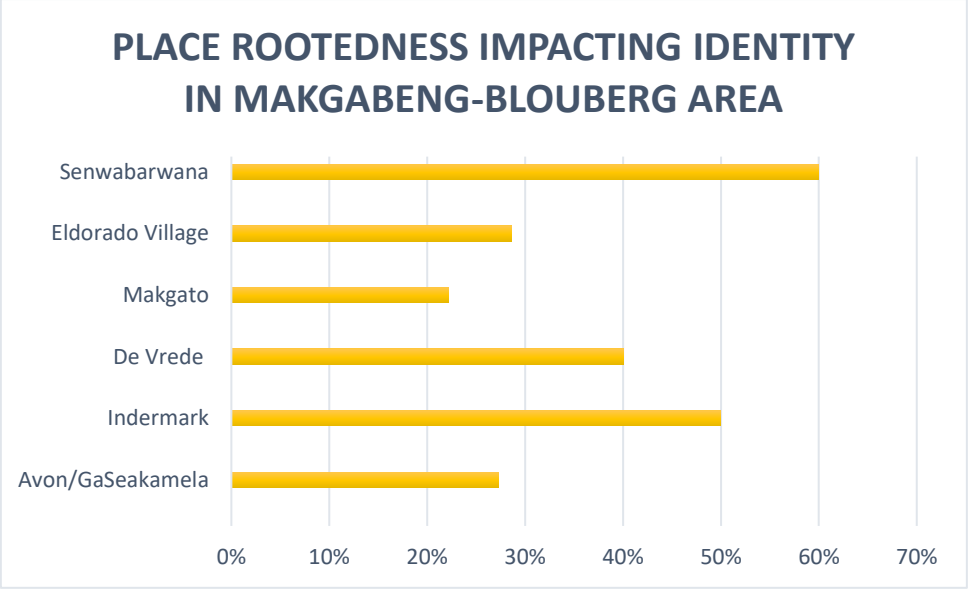


Figure 24: Place rootedness as a contributing factor to identity formation.

Community members further explained that the colonial names were a symbol of an area's past, as a marker of intrusion of colonial rule within the country. Participants in all villages also showed outright distaste for the effects of apartheid and colonialism although in some villages with official exonyms, identities had formed around those names and displayed there was no interest in using the autonym. These participants were indifferent to the use of indigenous place names when asked about their opinion whether the current name represented them, their response was as follows:

> *"Indermark is part of my identity. This village started with us. It is a place the roots us. As a as a name, it forms part the communities experience of this place."* Indermark 1.2)
>
> *"It is part of my experience as a member of this community, you know I have lived in Indermark all my life, I came here as a child, so it is a part of me."* (Indermark 1.10)
>
> *"Yes of course, in the experience of living here for so many years is part of me. I watched this village get electricity; I watched them put all these roads here. So of course, this village is part of me."* (De Vrede 1.1)
>
> *"Yes, I mean I was raised here, and this is home."* (Eldorado 1.1)

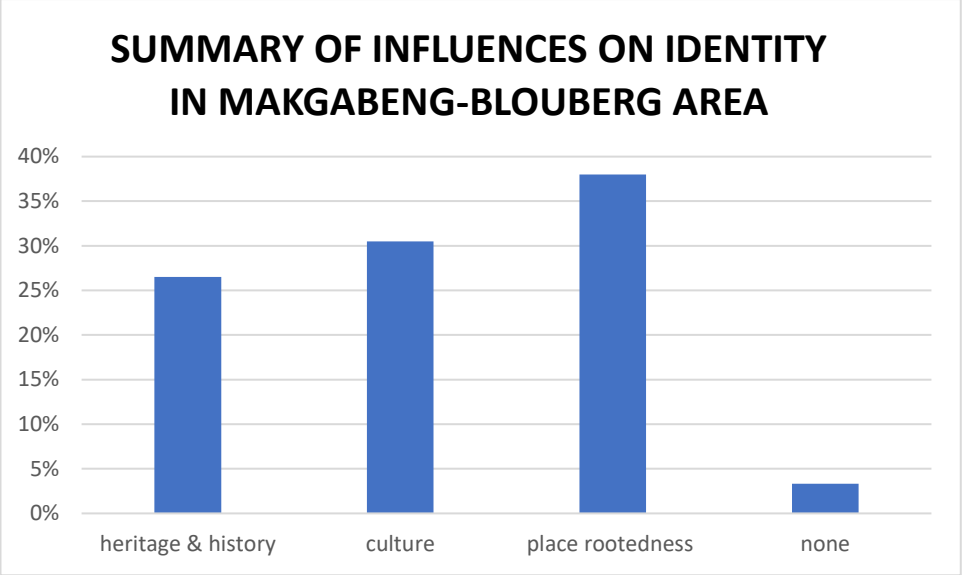


Figure 25: Summary of influences to identity in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area.

5.3 Place Making in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area Through Place Names

Custodians of knowledge in the research area all highlighted how the communities they were a part of were characterized by interconnectedness, culture, and tradition. The participants' responses on the role place names play in the formation of identity were also echoed into place making. These community members are aware of the importance of place names in place making and place rootedness to form anthropological places. Participants also noted that the level of involvement of indigenous toponyms in place making determined the level of rootedness individuals had in the area. The rootedness experienced by individuals is interpreted by the intensified connections they have to the place.

Figure 27 below shows the recurring reasons participants gave on their thoughts on how place names contribute to place making. Place making was defined as the coexistence of different outlooks and practices based on the phenomenon of place, involving all aspects of human interaction, from agency to non-human influences (Huang & Roberts 2019: 1). Connections formed because of toponyms were recorded as a constant in each village. In Indermark, 80% of participants felt that place names help in forming connections that form an anthropological

oasis in these communities this sentiment was heard in De Vrede (50%) 44%, 43% and 40% in Makgato,

Eldorado and Senwabarwana, respectively. Only 36% in Avon/Ga-Seakamela saw connectedness as contributing to place making in the village. This is probably because the community is centred around the close connections due to their collective experience.

Perceptions to place making in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area are also based on the preservation of indigenous knowledge. 64% of knowledge holders in Avon/Ga-Seakamela state that preservation of IK in through toponyms contributed to place making in the village. A further 60% in Senwabarwana also noted the same in Makgato, only 33% thought toponyms contribute to place making my preserving IK. And 29% in Eldorado and only 20% in De Vrede. The degree of belonging varied across different locations, with De Vrede comprising 30% of the sense of belonging, Eldorado at 29%, Makgato at 22%, and Indermark at a lower 20% (Fig 27).

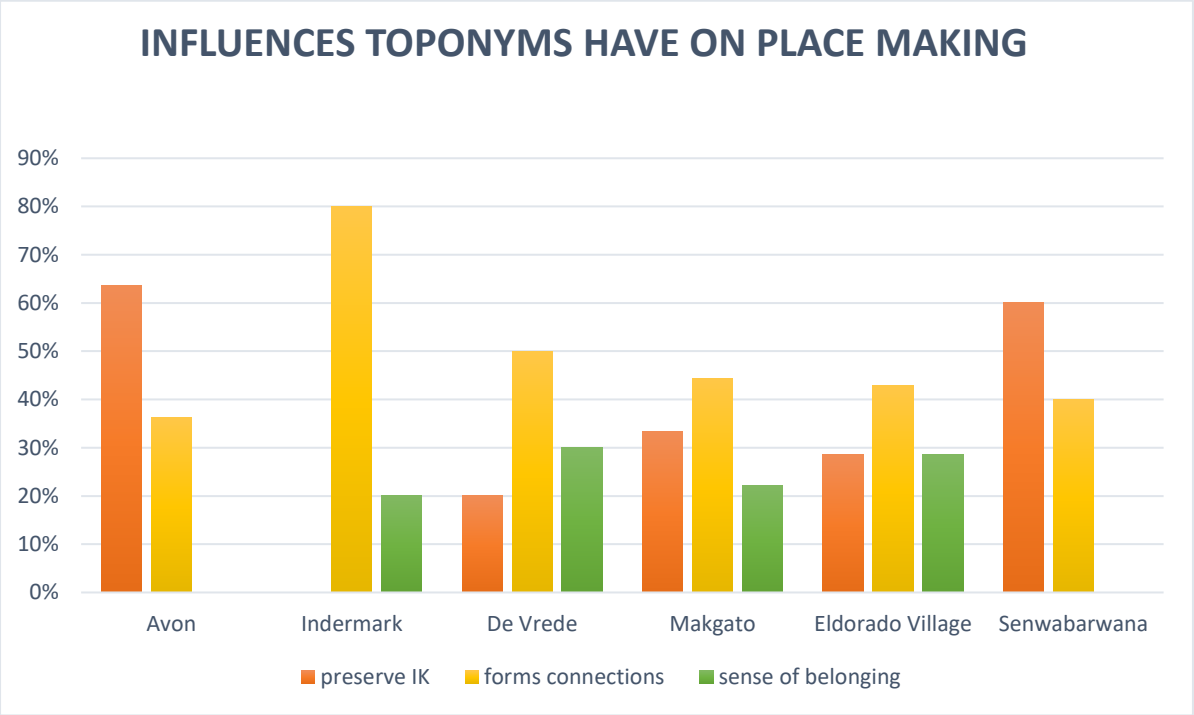


Figure 26: Perceptions on place making.

Participants' perceptions of how toponyms contributed to place making varied. These perceptions are influenced by multiple factors include having a sense of community, traditional authority, experiences, among others.

"*Places only begin to have meaning only when they are used. So, when you name something or someone, you give that thing life. The name of Marobjane or Ga Seakamela are an instant reminder of how tradition and culture bring people together"* (Avon 1.4)

A royal member shared these sentiments.

"*Your mother tongue always has a sense of grounding; you are never lost if a name is in your mother tongue."* (Avon 1.9)

Such sentiments were also echoed by other participants who stated:

"*Names are just names if they are not in your mother tongue*" (Eldorado 1.6)

"*You know that you belong somewhere, and that people have the same interests as you. "(*De Vrede 1.6)

"*The community here has done a very good job at maintaining the same connections we used to have closer to Venda. I do think the name contributes to that because the name is khutsong when the community embodies that name. we know the importance of showing up for each other and building something that our kids can always come back to."* (De Vrede 1.5)

Place making focuses on the social and cultural importance of communities and their spaces. Therefore, the colonial had now become a function of place making within the community. Individuals have now formed identities dependent on the places they are from. These experiences were associated with the attachment one had to their village. The sense of connectedness participants had with the village influenced the connection they had with name. The rigid planning processes of colonialism and apartheid are so entrenched in within the system that community participants rarely express their honest views about the places they inhabit. But rather, internalise colonial perceptions of places. As such, place making can disrupt these silos by displaying the value of transcending the narrow focus of political agendas. This is because a space is not measured by its physical attributes alone; but rather by its ability to serve its community. Providing the ability for all individuals of all ages, access to a place, and the ability to partake in its identity creation, and preservation, *thus affording the process of genuine* place making take place. The process of place making focusses on the infinite ways in which the socio-cultural qualities of a place are intricately connected.

Preserving this connection is crucial to keep the meaning and authenticity intact. Cultural significance is vital in heritage preservation because it measures how connected a community feels towards its heritage resources. This includes the meaning that is attached to heritage resources by past and current communities. The significance is influential in the protection, maintenance, and preservation of heritage.

Community members further explained that the colonial names were a symbol of the area's past. They stated that the names were a marker of the penetration of colonial rule within the country. Participants in all study areas also displayed a clear distaste for the effects of apartheid and colonialism however, some villages that still had official exonyms had formed an identity around those names and displayed no interest in using the autonym. These participants were indifferent to the use of indigenous place names when asked about their opinion whether the current name represented them, their response was as follows:

> *"Indermark (the toponym) is part of my identity. This village started with us. It is a place the roots us. As a as a name, it forms part the communities experience of this place"* (Indermark 1.2)

However, when asked about the prevalence of colonial names within the region, respondents swiftly responded by emphasizing that although the exonym was the official name, they were indifferent to it.

5.3.1 Place attachment through toponyms

The concept of place attachment refers to the positive emotional connection and understanding between persons and a particular place that evolve through emotional experiences and interactions with that place over time. The attachment is formed from various aspects. Individuals feel content in the environments they grew up in. As such individuals experience more positive emotions in settings, they feel most comfortable with. In the research focus area, individuals tend to remain in the village. The term that best describes this

attachment style is topophilia. The term is defined as the emotive connection between people and place. This is evident in the villages in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area.

Figure 28 below shows the breakdown of the recurring influences to place attachment in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area. The rich history of the Makgabeng-Blouberg area has the highest contributing factor to individuals being attached to their village. This is followed by place rootedness and the connection formed in the villages. Identity followed with the meaning associated with the indigenous name. Attachment to the place because of traditional authority was only present in Makgato and Avon/Ga-Seakamela as they were the only villages that had active traditional authorities with it making 36% in Avon and 22% in Makgato.

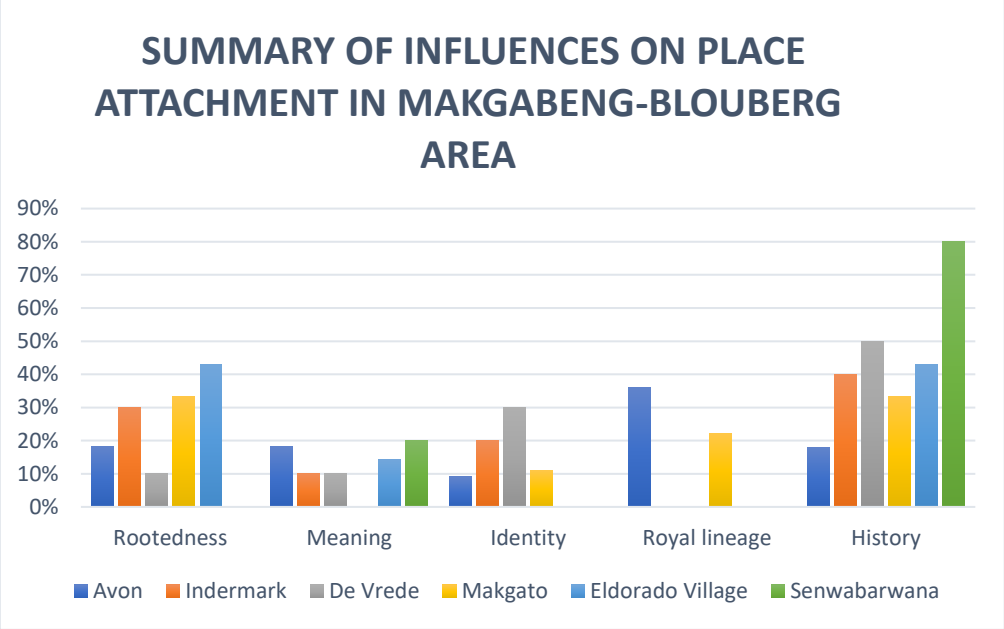


Figure 27: Graph showing summary distribution of influences to place attachment in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area.

In Avon/Ga-Seakamela, the royal family had the greatest influence on place attachment at 36% followed by place rootedness at 19% and the meaning associated with the toponym and its history at 18% respectively, while identity associated with the toponym only made up 9% (Fig. 29).

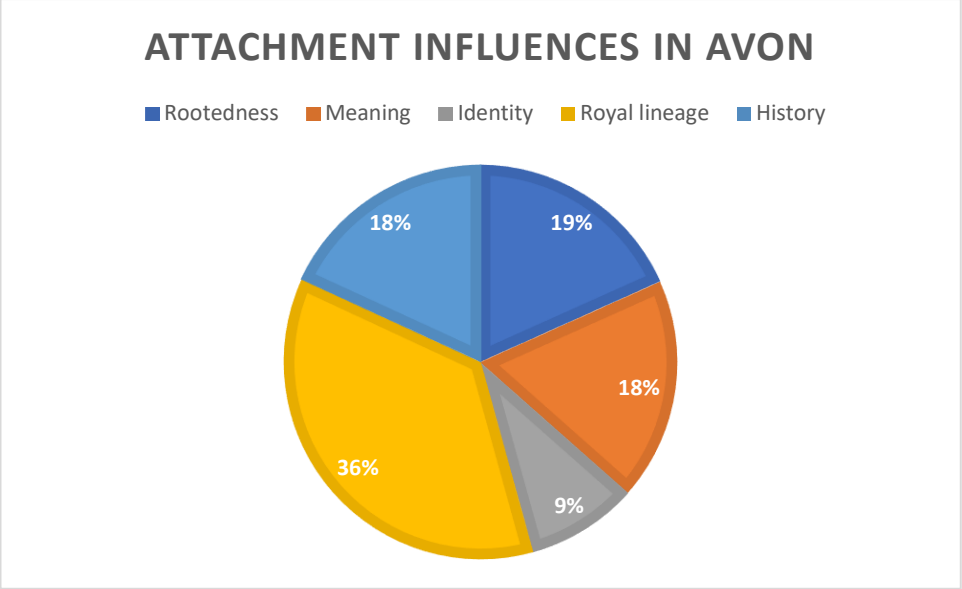


Figure 28: Distribution of attachment type in Avon.

In Indermark, the history associated with the place names made up the greatest influence on place attachment at 40%, followed by place rootedness at 30%, identity at 20% while the meaning of the toponym only made up 10% (Fig. 30). In De Vrede however, the history of the toponym made up 50% of the reason knowledge holders were attached to the place, rather than identity formed in the village at 30% while the meaning associated with the toponyms and place rootedness made 10% respectively (Fig. 31).

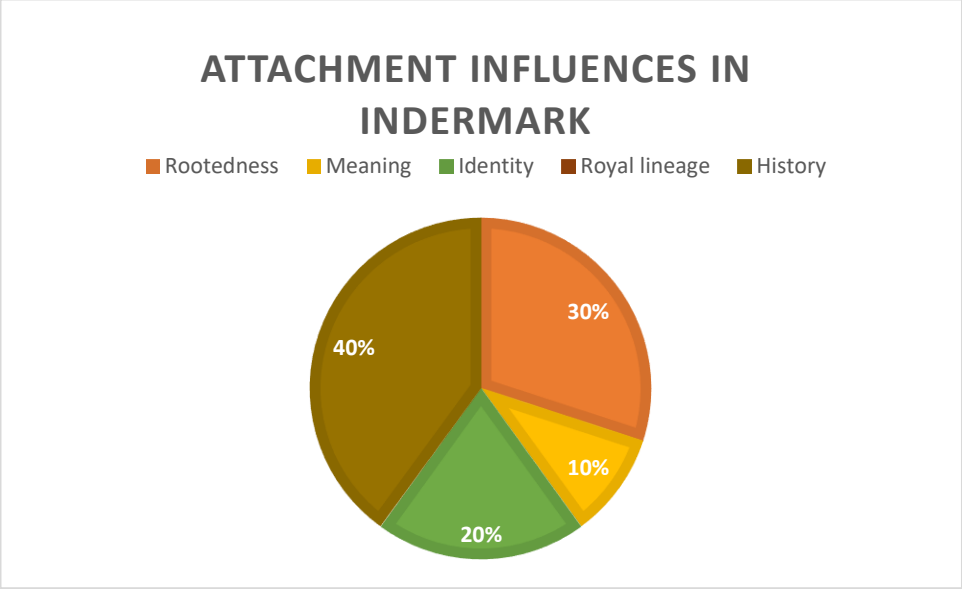


Figure 29: Distribution of attachment type in Indermark.

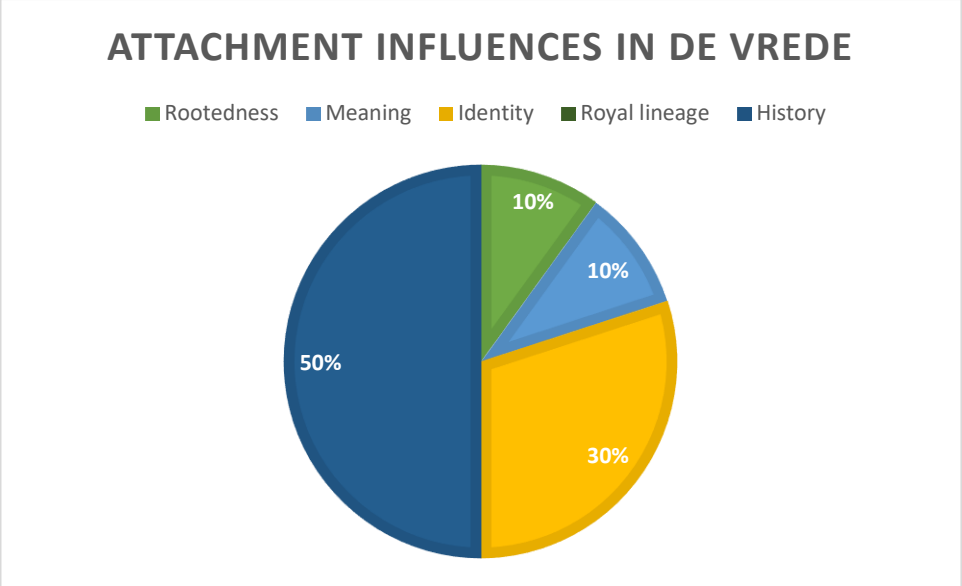


Figure 30: Distribution of attachment type in De Vrede

In Makgato place rootedness made up the greatest influence on place attachment at 34% then the history of the toponym at 33%, the royal lineage at 22% and identity made up 11% (Fig. 32). Comparatively, in Eldorado village, place rootedness and history made up 43% respectively while the meaning of the indigenous toponym made up 14 % (Fig 33).

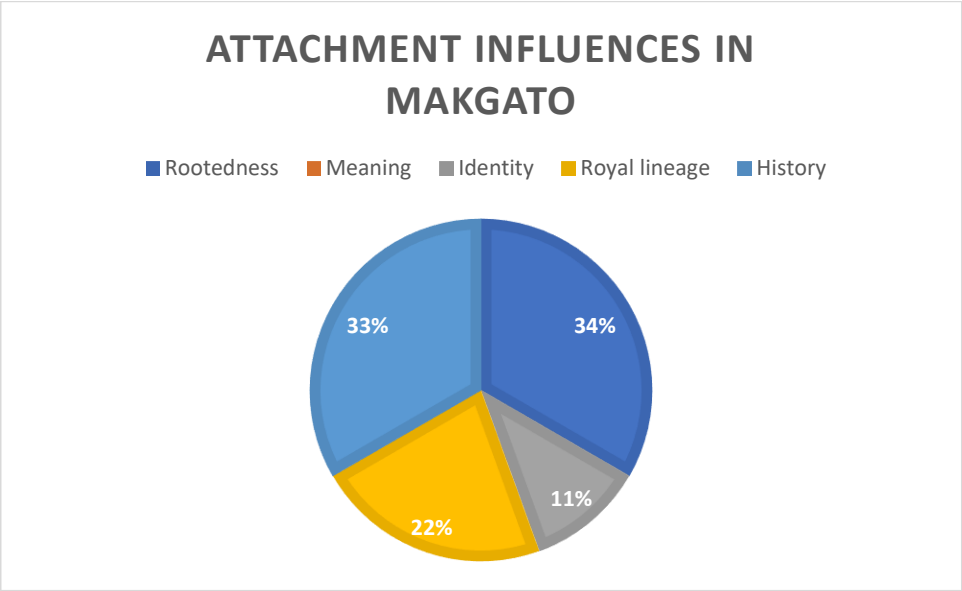


Figure 31: Distribution of attachment type in Makgato.

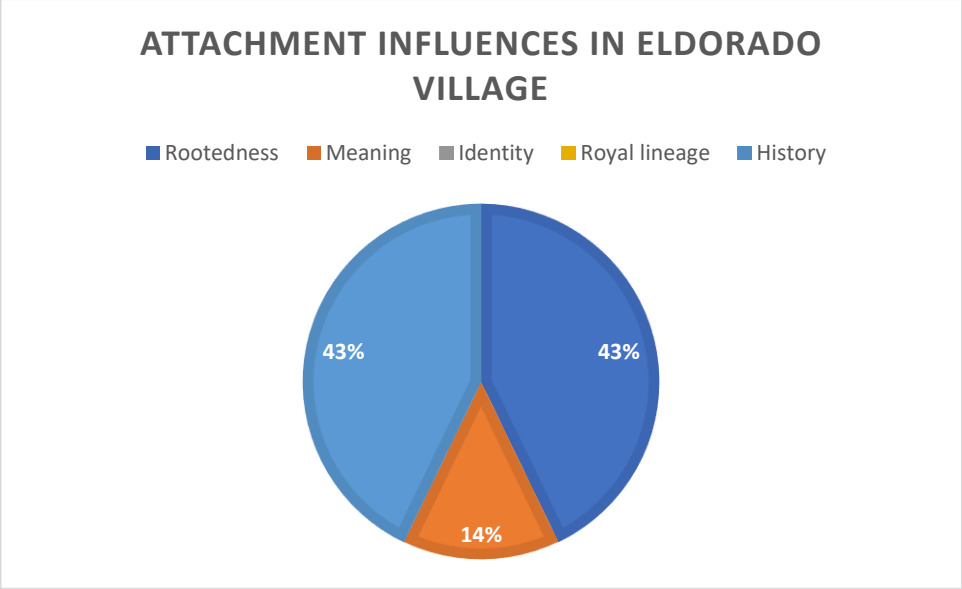


Figure 32: Distribution of attachment type in Eldorado Village

In Senwabarwana, the area's biggest town with the most recent toponym change, the history associated with the place name contributed 80% and attributed to their attachment, while what the name meant contributed to 20% of the reasons why they felt attached to the village (Fig. 34).

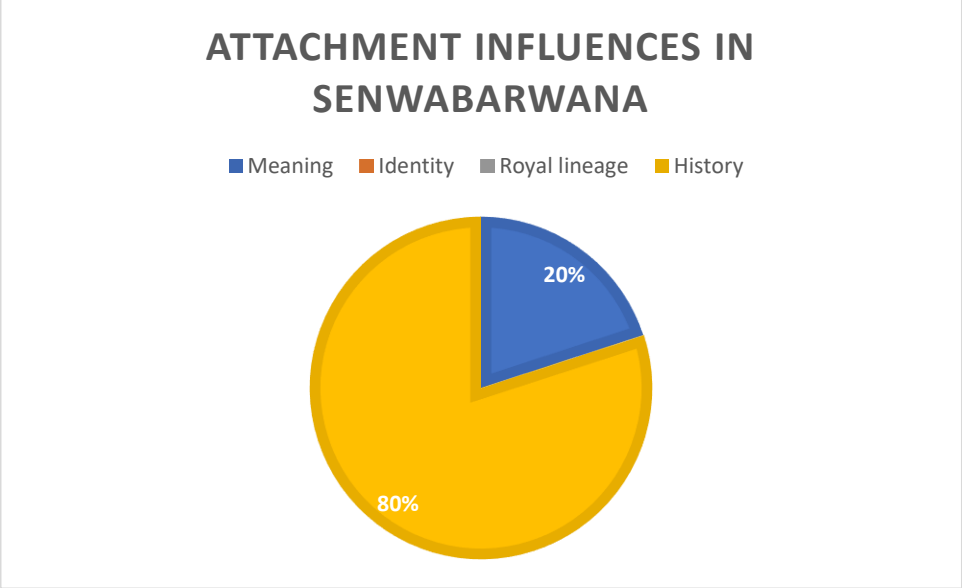


Figure 33: Distribution of attachment type in Senwabarwana.

During an interview while alluding to the way indigenous place names contributes to his attachment to the place, a respondent from Eldorado village said:

> *"…you will be knowing who you are, where you are coming from and, who do you belong to and where your homeland is. We are talking about Eldorado right, there is another one in Johannesburg. But here is Loke. So, if you use an indigenous you can never get lost."* (Eldorado Village 1.1)

In addition, people tend to be more attached to places with autonyms because this is probably where interpersonal relationships are strengthened. Place attachment, therefore, can be conveyed as an intense sense of place, intertwined with other aspects of identity and heritage. For example, a member of the royal family from *Marobjane* stated:

> *"It is important for indigenous names to be used because it grounds you. And preserves the community. You know when we say Avon, the identity of the community is disconnected. But when you say Marobjane, it includes everyone, the old and the new generation and the chief and traditional leadership as a whole."* (Avon 1.8)

Therefore, space is altered into an identifiable "place" when communities intricately connected with it believe it has value. As such, when the place name changes, the space is constantly being constructed and reconstructed over time by different communities. The construction of place therefore fluctuates depending on self-concept and socio-cultural dynamics including naming. Perceptions of place are constantly changing depending on social interactions and context. The type of attachment that forms in these villages is an intangible sense of happiness that has an emotional association.

In Indermark, the use of the autonym has faded over time. When questioned about their attachment to indigenous names, knowledge holders expressed varying perspectives on which place names held significance to them. During an interview, one participant shared the following sentiment:

> *"The indigenous name is the one, it is an original name. The English one come after it. The ancestors gave it a Sotho name. Then the whites came and changed it. When we were growing up, we called this place Hamokoko, and we liked that name because it is in*

our mother tongue of Sesotho, but Indermark is not, we do not know what it means but we use the name." (Indermark 1.2)

Another participant from the same village stated:

"No, the indigenous name is not used. I cannot say exactly why, it is one of those things. In Marobjane, they know it, because they have a Kgôsi. Here we do not have a chief." (Indermark 1.4)

A respondent from De Vrede explained:

"When I can to come live here, there were no villages here. I was coming all the way from Venda. So, I think that name is a part of me." (De Vrede 1.6)

Similar sentiments were shared among other communities reiterating the fact that the precolonial name is integral to place attachment. In villages that made use of the colonial name, these villages inferred the importance of the endonym from the neighbouring villages that had dual names probably because places do not have a traditional government in place, subsequently more removed from the network of indigenous customs and traditions. A participant from Marobjane stated:

"The name Marobjane might not be there on maps but, it is the recognized and well-known name. We can go to town and ask them "where is Avon" they might not tell you...Because this farm was registered under Avon, not Marobjane that why it is not on the map. Therefore, the indigenous names are especially important. It is our names. It defines this place and its history and tells others this place belongs to us." (Avon 1.9)

Feelings like these are at the core of place attachment, and they make the bond between people and their surroundings even stronger. The passionate and emotional reactions from these knowledge custodians show a deep connection to the place suggesting it invoked a plethora of memories and emotional connection to pre-apartheid experiences.

5.3.2 Significance of Indigenous Place Names

The Makgabeng-Blouberg area places much indignance on their culture. These custodians of knowledge held their heritage in high regard. The significance component of any heritage resource is important because it gives an understanding of why heritage resources need to be preserved. These resources inform them about the past and create a sense of belonging

in the present community. As the survival of any culture is dependent on the ability to reassert its significance from generation to generation through the continued use of cultural practices and knowledge. 85% of the Participants indicated that they thought indigenous names were of significance. Figure 35 below illustrates the distribution of individuals who attached significance to the indigenous names.

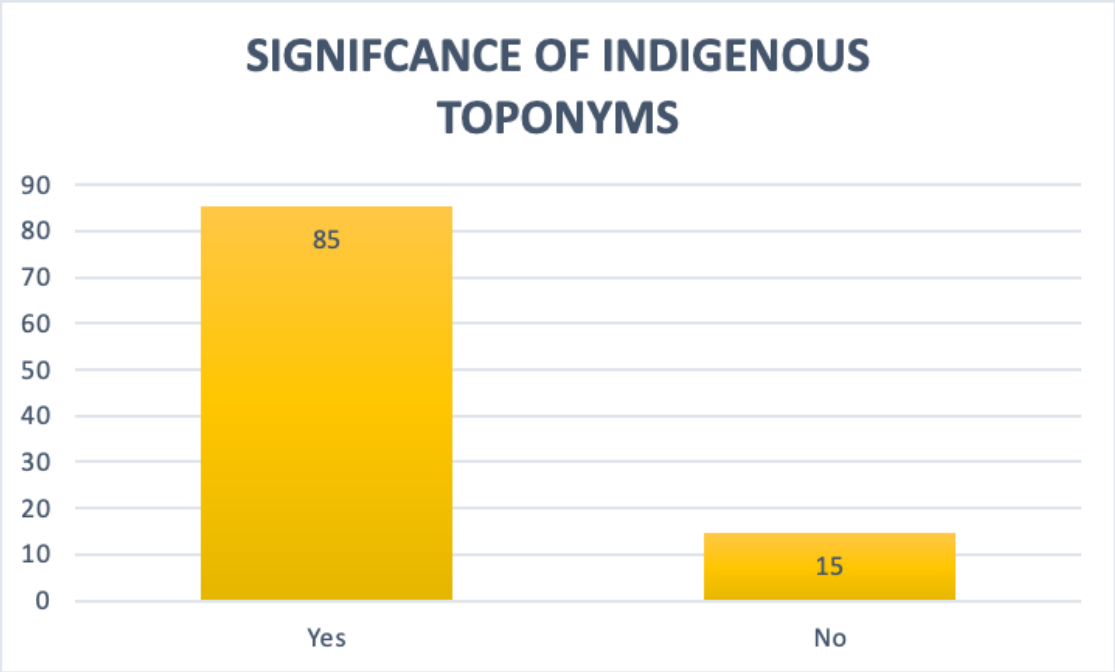


Figure 34: Distribution of significance attached to indigenous names.

85% of participants stated that they attached significance to the indigenous name. These participants were cognizant of the importance of native names to community development and preservation. The high figure compares the earlier reported observations of place rootedness and history being large influences on place attachment and identity (See figure 26). The percentage of participants who stated that indigenous names had no significance as mirrors that of those who stated toponyms did not contribute to their sense of belonging (Figure 22). Conversely, figure 38 displays the communities' perceptions on the preservation of indigenous knowledge. One participant from De Vrede reiterated these sentiments by explaining:

"*…yes, they (younger generation) need to know that the process of naming is a culturally important one. The name itself encompasses many prophesies. So African names as a whole carry indigenous knowledge. These names show us how cultural processes operate. They need to know how things were in the past, so they can understand themselves."* (De Vrede 1.3)

The 15% of participants that did not attach any significant to the indigenous name were indifferent to its use. These community members were from the villages that used colonial toponyms and half of these participants had come into the villages because of marriage or employment. These participants were indifferent to the use and preservation of the indigenous name as they viewed themselves as outsiders to their respective communities.

5.4 The Role of Indigenous Place Names in Cultural Preservation

Culture is associated with many aspects of an individual. Participants were asked what role they though indigenous toponyms play in culture. Knowledge custodians mentioned that the process of naming was a culturally important one. The process captured traditions that are lost in some villages. A participant in De Vrede stated the following:

"*You need to know that the process of naming is a culturally important one, the name itself encompasses many prophesies. So, the African names carry indigenous knowledge. These names show us how cultural processes operated. They need to be known so they can understand themselves."* (De Vrede 1.3)

"*Culture is very big for the people who live here, many of us struggle so it is important to hang onto the important things in life, like community and family, these things make us who we are."* (Indermark 1.10)

"Names are huge part of culture they carry so much connection to the community and give us a sense of connectedness" (Indermark 1.6)

"*It is entrenched in culture, because traditions are recorded in the praise songs that we sing and that records history, so the indigenous name is a huge part of that."* (Avon 1.9)

"Well, the African names are able to transfer so much information and knowledge, about many different things. Take for example, the name Marobjane a Mangkaya, in that signal name, it records, the Seakamela royal family, this previous village in Delmaine and tells us that this village is the final resting place for the Seakamelas. So much history is recorded in African names. The knowledge the name carries is a lot." (Avon 1.5)

These responses capture the communities' perceptions of the role indigenous toponyms play in culture even in communities that use the colonial place name. As such, the use of colonial toponyms in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area is not a measure of whether knowledge holders see the importance of indigenous toponyms in indigenous knowledge preservation. Community members separate cultural preservation from the political aspect of naming.

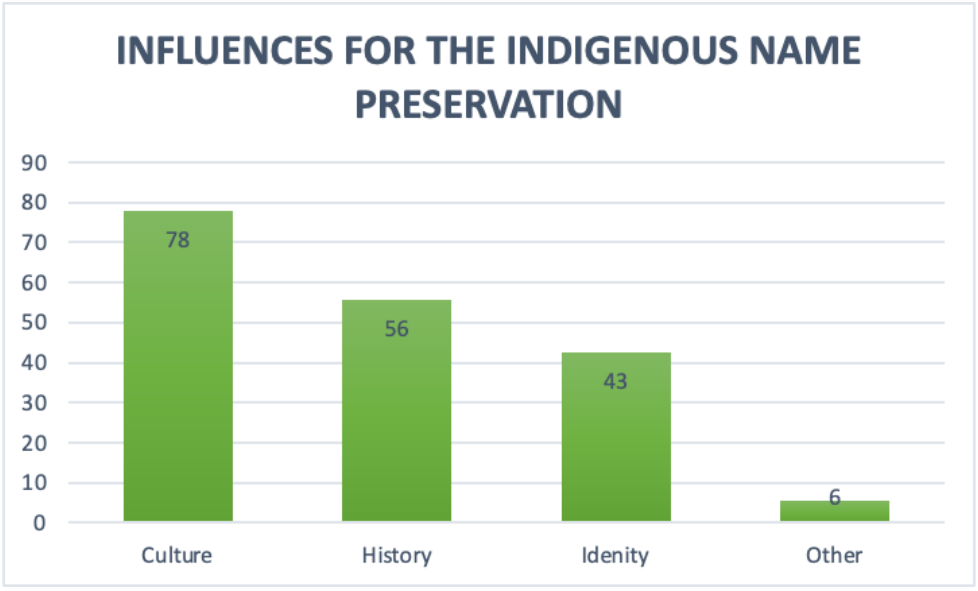


Figure 35. Influences for the preservation of indigenous names

Figure 36 illustrates what influences the community regarding preservation of indigenous names. Culture was largest contributing factor for the preservation of indigenous names in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area at 78%. The cultural significance reiterated during interviews varied from traditions, language preservation, social and values that originate within these communities. This was followed closely by history at 56% history encompassed the heritage that the indigenous toponyms encrypted within them. These two aspects are inclusive a complex network of repositories that community members mentioned. Identity also scored

decently high at 43% and included multiple factors. Other factor influences contributed 6% and encompassed issues of transformation and migration.

Participants were asked in each village why the indigenous place name was not being used. In villages that had an official indigenous place name, knowledge holders stated that the toponym was being used in everyday conversations even if they did not use it themselves. In Senwabarwana, 100% of the sampled group stated the autonym was being used. In Avon 91% noted that it was in use followed by 78% in Makgato who also stated the toponym was recognised by government through it being used in official signage at 22%. 'Out of habit' was the second largest reason for the non-use of the indigenous place name. 60% in De Vrede stated it was out of habit followed by 57% in Eldorado, 40 % in Indermark and only 9% in Avon/Ga-Seakamela. These figures illustrate the entrenched political power those colonial officials had in the region. The innate reaction for these participants is to refer to their cultural landscapes with colonial toponyms as that is what comes as second nature. In De Vrede, 20% of respondents mentioned that the reason for not using indigenous names was simply because they didn't feel strongly about it. While another 20% stated they were not certain of the history of it. 20% in Indermark and 14% in Eldorado stated that it was political to use the autonym, respectively.

Figure 37 below informs of the culmination of different reason for the lack use of indigenous names in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area. Knowledge holders are aware of the importance of using and preserving autonyms (Figure 31), however, subjective experiences along with political influences cloud their better judgement to intentionally use the indigenous place name.
In total, 'out of habit' made up 28%, 'indifferent to the toponym made up 8%, 6% noted it was for political reasons, another 6% noted the history is not known, while 4% noted the name is present of government signage and 49% stated the indigenous toponym was being used even if they did not use it themselves.

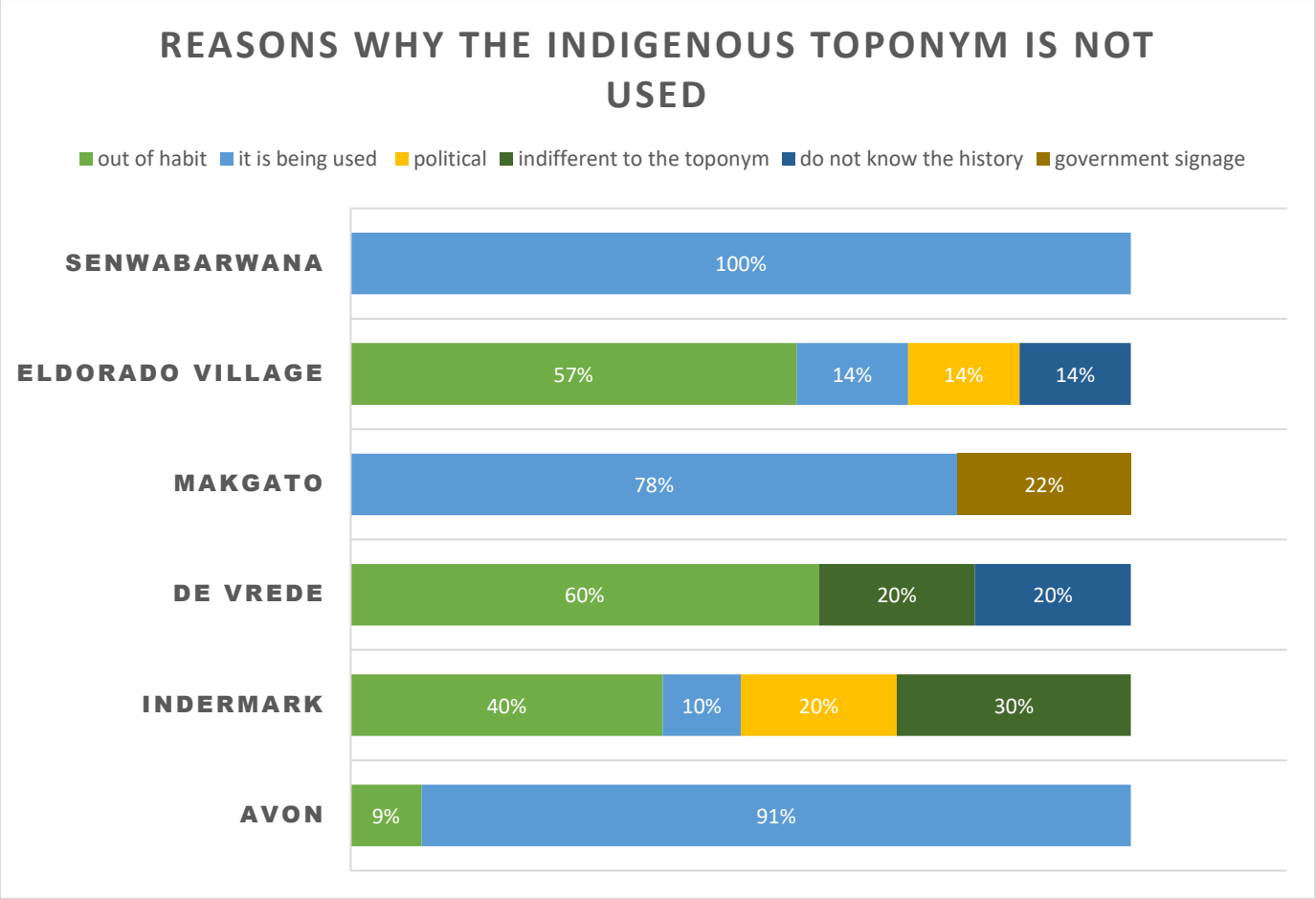


Figure 36*: Reasons for lack of indigenous name usage.*

5.4.1 Preservation of Indigenous Knowledge through Place Names

Cultural heritage is an integral part of the preservation of indigenous knowledge. The communities in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area are hyper aware of the importance of indigenous knowledge. For majority of the participants in the villages culture and language were key components for the preservation of indigenous knowledge. Respondents in all villages emphasized that the use of names allowed for the continuation of the autonym and implemented an implicit measure for the preservation of the indigenous name regardless of it not being used in some communities.

Figure 38 reflects how indigenous toponyms are preserved in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area. In Eldorado village 86% participants stated that the autonym was not being intentionally preserved. Followed by 40% in Indermark and De Vrede respectively. These communities

acknowledge the lack of initiative in the preservation of heritage encrypted in toponyms. In Makgato 67% and 60% Senwabarwana of participants noted that the official government signage preserved the place name. In Avon/Ga-Seakamela, 45% stated that it was through cultural traditions that the place name was being preserved. 30 % in De Vrede and 20% in Indermark stated the similar. Oral memory was also mentioned as a way tradition autonym preservation. 30% in Indermark, 20% in De Vrede, 14% and 11 % in Eldorado and Makgato respectively stated that oral memory preserved the toponym.

However, participants that noted that the indigenous place names were not being preserved argued that traditional knowledge generationally transmitted:

> *"I cannot answer that because African culture looks after itself. No one teaches you how to be a man, you observe and learn from those that are older than you and you just learn that way. Perhaps these youngsters are the ones that need to be taught everything, but back in my day, you just watched, and you learnt as the elders were doing."* (Indermark 1.8).
>
> *"The thing about African names is that they are not necessarily taught how to be preserved. You learn from watching and observing. And then you pass on what you learnt to your kids and hopefully they will pass it on to their kids."* (De Vrede 1.6).

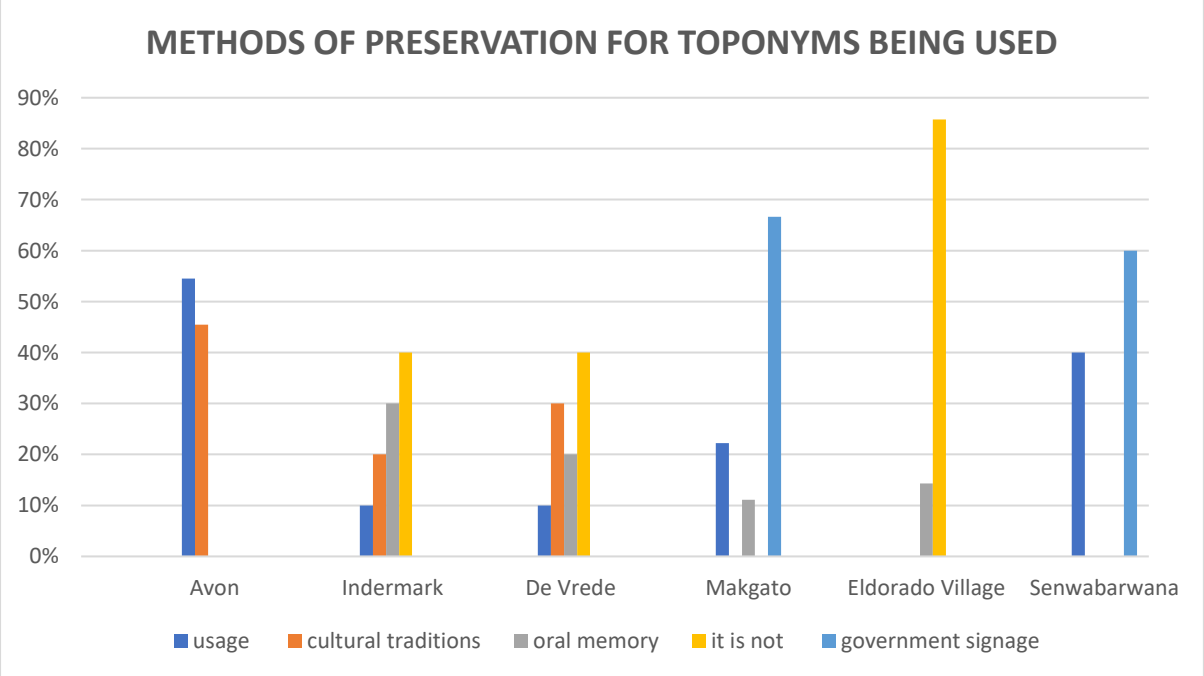


Figure 37: Indigenous toponyms preservation.

Preservation of culture is a big contributing factor for the preservation indigenous toponyms in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area (See figure 36). Colonialism and the attitude towards indigenous knowledge by converted Christians has had in impact on the reliance communities have on indigenous knowledge. However, communities in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area realise the importance of indigenous names. Participants were asked if they think the indigenous name should be used. A participant from Indermark explained:

> *"When it comes to conserving history and culture, I think Hamokoko, is good. These kids need to have someone emphasizing where Hamokoko is, otherwise they will not know it."* (Indermark 1.6)

Another respondent from De Vrede echoed the same sentiments:

> *"Yes, it is especially important, because as the years go by, they might only start knowing the place as De Vrede and not Mabelebele. So, they might not know what the original name is."* (De Vrede 1.6)

These participants are aware that the active use of toponyms is a way of ensuring the continuation of the name. As oral memory is one of the oldest forms of knowledge preservation. Language as a tool facilitates the interactions that people have with the environment. As such, knowledge can be passed on to anyone in any observable space. Participants in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area acknowledge that if the toponym is not used, we risk it getting lost:

> *"If we do not use these names my great grandchildren will never know their roots, and where they come from. But if they are used, he asks what the name means. I can then explain to him who they these people are and so forth."* (Avon 1.4)

Another elder in Avon explained:

> *"You know when you call this place Marobjane, you cannot get lost. Because that name can never change. The Sepedi name is fine because, even if you are lost, that name will always be used by its people."* (Avon 1.6)

Another participant in Indermark stated:

> *"Hamokoko, that is the important name. Let us not throw away our culture and heritage. Our grandchildren need to know it. That is the original name."* (Indermark 1.3)

Heritage awareness in any community highlights how conscious they are culturally. From observation and the interviews, the communities are proud of their culture. However, they appear to feel disconnected from indigenous names. From observation, many are indifferent to the exonyms when it relates to place identification, however, when any element of heritage is raised, respondents made decisive responses. One participant made mention of renaming:

> *"I think maps and other legislation should use indigenous names. Those names carry so much history and knowledge with them, it is a shame that places still go by colonial names*. (De Vrede 1.10)

Another argued:

> *"Yes, absolutely, it is part of who you are as an African. White names are those of those of the previous government, changing names back to the ones that were found creates community building and strengthens identity."* (Indermark 1.7)

The community members are aware the indigenous name is not being used. However, I still acknowledge the importance of it. Therefore, rely on other aspects of culture and heritage for the preservation of indigenous knowledge. Participants from all the villages highlighted the importance of the indigenous name regardless of the name in use. And explained the importance of the name in storytelling and referral to old traditions and practices. Participants also pointed out that the preservation of indigenous knowledge can be done through other practices. Therefore, argue that although the place name is important, it is important to consider other characteristics. The respondents emphasized that the indigenous place name, in particular uplifts the community, as a participant from De Vrede explained:

> *"It is particularly important so that they know their culture, and history from the bottom to the top. They need their culture, because that is what makes you a person…But you forget where you come from, you stop doing cultural practises because you are so removed. That is bad. So, everyone needs to use their indigenous names to uplift themselves."* (De Vrede 1.8).

Respondents also believe that the place names are a form of attachment and therefore encourages its members to work towards its preservation as the name carries so many

memories and the history of the community. However, the continued use of colonial and apartheid place names a reminder of the slow pace of transformation in the region. It further highlights the persistence of unequal power relations in society as the rhetoric of nation building post-apartheid was misunderstood as not holding the minority accountable. And in turn continued the subjugation of indigenous people and their cultures. As such, changing place names back to autonyms for their preservation is a signal of visible change in society. When asked whether the indigenous name should be the legal name respondents overwhelmingly favoured that thought. A participant from Avon gave this response:

> *"Definitely, that is what we want. We must also follow our own heritage, our own customs, and traditions through naming. It is especially important that we must have our own names on maps so that the place can be changed from being called Avon. Because we do not know what Avon means then we call it Marobjane."* (Avon 1.8).

Another knowledge holder in De Vrede clearly explained his frustrations with the prevalence of colonial names in the area while arguing for the use of native toponyms. His sentiments were echoed by many other participants, thus:

> *"There is no place for them [colonial names], because these white people came from their lands, and wrote down history. We know there are no Afrikaners in our societies, but they came and immediately took power over us. Right now, we are trying to fix that issue. But is extremely hard, we are still in the hardship. Afrikaans people should not have had so much power over us. These places already had names."* (De Vrede 1.10*).*

Another respondent said the following in the interview:

> *"Indeed. It [the indigenous name] uplifts the heritage of the Chiefdom of the Seakamelas. Those that are no longer with us, further generations will remember them. As you can see all the schools in this area are all named after a significant elder in the past. That future children will know what happened in the past and what those names stood for."* (Avon 1.4)

Participants also mentioned the importance of knowing the naming history as it carried with it a lot of cultural heritage and identity. These two variables are based on the individuals'

experiences but also contribute to the collective experience. A participant from Eldorado stated:

> *"Culture and heritage are so important. They are needed. If you know your culture and heritage, you will also understand yourself, where you are from, who you belong to..."* (Eldorado Village 1.2).

These responses reiterated the fact the communities saw value in the autonyms. Their passion while answering the above question was a directive to the level of importance they placed on the name. These participants further noted the importance of preserving the native names for future generations. The village of Avon/Ga-Seakamela is one of the three where the community overwhelmingly actively used the indigenous name of *Marobjane*. Many noted that they grew up using that name even during apartheid when they were told otherwise. This village's active traditional authority encourages the community's enthusiasm for preserving the indigenous name through its use. This village also has an active traditional authority which aids in the community's enthusiasm in preserving the indigenous name though use. During an interview, a respondent mentioned that the royal family hosts an event to inform its community members of their history. He mentioned the following:

> *"It is important as, you see every September, there is an event in the community that speaks and encourages knowing your heritage. The Chiefs granny comes and speaks about this community's heritage and the importance. She explains exactly where the Seakamelas come from and their elders. It is especially important. They are proud of it as it forms part of their identity."* (Avon 1.3)

5.4.2 Communicating and Persevering Indigenous Knowledge

There are multiple factors hindering the transmission of indigenous knowledge in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area. The community is aware that in many areas the uptake of indigenous place names has decreased significantly. This is primarily a result of the forced removals and apartheid laws and the generation gap currently present because of the rural-urban migration that prevents the traditional pattern of oral preservation. Custodians of the knowledge are also aware that there is a disconnect between the generations as the youth have taken little interest in knowing these names, therefore disconnecting from the

indigenous names. Furthermore, they note that the prevalence and focus of Western education limits the transmission of native knowledge. A respondent from De Vrede explained:

> *"It is nice that these kids go to school, but it is also not nice. Because they get lost, they become unable to think for others. You go to school, go to university, and go work. But you forget where you come from, you stop doing cultural practises because you are so removed. That is bad."* (De Vrede 1.2)

Similar sentiments were shared by a resident in Makgato;

> *"When you look at our children, they sometimes do not know Sepedi culture, because the focus is on English things. If you look around, children are no longer involved in cultural activities. These names need to be used so they can at least have that constant reminder of their heritage."* (Makgato 1.6)

In line with the challenge of education on indigenous place name value is the intergenerational gap between the indigenous knowledge custodians and the youth which further contributes to the resistance of acquiring IK for preservation. Community members in the villages are aware that traditional tools for IK transference are becoming unsuccessful because of spatial differences between the youth and custodians. This therefore impedes fluency in the native language and knowledge transmission. Many custodians also mourned the fact that even the youth that remained in the villages had little interest in learning about the indigenous toponyms. Stating that the youth are distant from their culture and are consumed by other factors. A priest in Avon stated:

> *"If you look, we have a serious problem of substance abuse amongst the youth. We visit nearby schools and to build them morally and notice the danger in not knowing oneself. It helps them, and it shows them the importance of growing up and understanding their heritage but most just do not care*." (Avon 1.2)

Due to disinterest, indigenous knowledge custodians have expressed that they have neglected instilling indigenous names and knowledge to their grandchildren to some degree. Some of these custodians acknowledge that they too use the colonial name because they have become uncustomed to the autonym as it is rarely used even by officials. The participants acknowledge how detrimental this can be for socio-cultural values and heritage preservation. Moreover, arguing that the youth are engulfed with Western activities that they

are not prepared to learn and participate in cultural activities. A participant from Eldorado explained:

> *"These children are always on their phones, when you ask them to come help in the garden or go to the moshate and listen, they tell you they will get the news on their phones. How you know you want to the see the procedure, because that is how you learn but, they do not listen."* (Eldorado 1.5)

Preservation of these indigenous place names is also threatened by extinction, custodians of this knowledge are dying. Therefore, with no written records of all the knowledge they possess, the preservation of indigenous names in the area is threatened, as well as the sustainability of traditional heritage that can inform archaeological timelines. This concern was recognized by respondents in all the study areas. A respondent in Makgato stated:

> *"Oh, how I wish there were older people than me to explain to you the history of this place. Our parents are dead, my generation is also dying and these ones that will be left do not know these things like I do. These kids will wake up late, that they should have listened."* (Makgato 1.6)

Although the youth have taken a disinterest in adopting IK of place names from these custodians, the dependence on IKS is facilitated by the rootedness in cultural practises. As such, IK adoption is still regarded as a sign of respect by the custodians. Although gender was not a contributing factor the research objectives and aims, it was noted that young women bore the brunt and strict criticism from custodians on their lack interest in IK. An elderly participant from Senwabarwana who is the main caregiver for her grandchildren stated:

> "These *girls you see in my yard do not listen. When we were growing up, we would never bring boys to the yard. But they do not care, they bring their boyfriends here. It is a sign of respect to your elders. You see, she cannot even cool on that three foot (three-legged caste iron pot), but they argue with you when you try teaching them."* (Senwabarwana 1.4)

Another respondent from Eldorado Village shared similar sentiments saying:

> *"Let me tell you, I have five grandchildren, two girls. But they do not behave the way girls are supposed to. They are lazy and tell you what the other ones are doing. When I was young, we knew that girls look after the firewood, they cook, they clean. When a guest*

*like you comes, they make you tea or something. But now these ones are on their phones, they come and go as they please. It is difficult to reprimand them as we are told not to hit them. These children are lost, they disregard culture" (*Eldorado 1.1)

These sentiments are an indication that gender influence the role of IK preservation along with culture, Cultural norms and perceptions that have been in place contribute to this factor. However, these perceptions provide a barrier to communicating IK as the custodians do not trust the youth. The patriarchal system in place creates barriers to preserving the knowledge. While many participants echoed similar sentiments about the importance of IK and its preservation for future generations, A member of the traditional authority in Marobjane noted that even with the measures in place within traditional leadership, the promotion of IK takes a back seat as issues around economic safety take presiding focus. In an interview, the high-ranking member of the traditional authority mentioned that providing employment was key factor on the leadership's agenda. He mentioned the following:

"It is my responsibility as a traditional leader to communicate with our government and private sector to capacitate the youth who are unemployed. Because you know if you have a community, which is not educated, it is the more crime starts and it is only a traditional leader who can keep it under control. Now I am in communication with SETA to ensure agriculture, beauty therapy skills programme so they can fund us. We also have business and corporate to improve their small businesses. So, you see these issues are what the community cares about. They need jobs. They can worry about IKS when they have that security." (Avon 1.10)

Poverty in the area often means people prioritize survival over preserving knowledge for future generations. Additionally, custodians are not readily sharing the knowledge freely creating a generation gap where young people are disconnected from the Indigenous Knowledge. Some respondents, however, note that the extreme poverty rates and low income in the communities should be an encouraging reason to share IK and its methods. However, recognizing the value of IK in cultural and heritage preservation these custodians note that it is an effective way to communicate knowledge otherwise not present in Western education systems. These custodians stated that it was easier to inform children who already showed an interest and saw the value of IK and displayed maturity. The elders stated that

those that valued their cultural identities were more likely to absorb the IK. As such, documenting and preserving this knowledge is not explicit within the communities as its these knowledge custodians think that IK is rooted in culture and identity. The transference of knowledge is therefore, associated with a respect for custodians and thus culture. Therefore, IK preservation is challenged as the youth are isolated from cultural heritage, as summarised here:

> "*The role of this chieftaincy is to ensure its people are taken care of. we bring a sense of belonging to the community. We ensure that children are in school, that culture and heritage remain grounding factors. Another thing is we ensure people get services. Because now we live under circumstances, we need to make sure the youth get jobs to improve farming. To unite people and improve their experience. These offices interact with people to ensure everyone's needs are met.*" (Avon 1.10)

5.5 Summary

Knowledge custodians in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area are aware of the declining use of indigenous place names in the region, and the prevalence of colonial due to the colonial / Apartheid era. Community members in the study area displayed an awareness of the importance of autonym preservation for future generations. However, they also noted that the lack interest in the youth perpetuates the observed decline in the use of African toponyms in the area. Knowledge custodians also displayed willingness to inform about the area's historical timeline. Villages that had an active traditional authority displayed greater resistance to the influence of colonial naming with the continued use of the indigenous name along with the exonym. However, in all villages heritage and culture held a significant place within the community. The deep-rooted sense of cultural pride displayed a willingness to contribute to its preservation. All participants in the study noted the importance of indigenous names in the preservation of culture and noted that a name encompasses multiple factors that shape and inform about an area's history. As such, toponyms carry social and political importance. They encompass the ability to express one's own identity for generations to come. And as observed, many names of villages in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area are expressions the communities' identities.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND OUTCOMES

This study combined the interaction of historical, colonial, and indigenous place names in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area to address the research aims and objectives. The data collected indicates an intricate relationship between the naming systems resulting into nuanced positions of identity, place making and the preservation of indigenous knowledge in the region. This chapter discusses these findings relating to naming systems in the study area and the power relations that fomented it.

6.1 Unpacking the naming systems in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area

A change in political regimes is often accompanied by changing place names. The Makgabeng-Blouberg like much of the rest of post-colonial contexts been subject to multiple naming regimes from colonialism, apartheid to post-apartheid renaming (Yeoh 1996; Ndletyana 2012; Bigon & Njoh 2018). As such, the area has multiple naming practices present simultaneously. The region has been subject to different incoming groups with the impact of colonial occupation being the greatest as evidenced by the prevalence of their names as the legal toponym of the villages. From the data collected, colonial place names were used by 48% of the sampled group in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area, while 29% used indigenous toponyms and 23% use both naming systems (see fig. 7). The ways that these place names interact play out in intricate ways which are further influenced by a multitude of other factors (Wu & Young 2022). Patrick Wolfe (2006) argues that the structures and institutional violence of colonialism continue in the lived experiences of Indigenous societies. This was further highlighted by Grosfoguel (2007) and Quijano (2007) who outlined the how the matrix of power continues the subjectivation of these communities long past the initial subjugation. Therefore, continuing the displacement of indigenous knowledge and the legacy of the structural violence against them (Bigon 2016). The implicit continuation of colonialism through coloniality and its systems of power perpetuates the marginalisation of indigenous communities and their toponyms, thus normalizing the prevalence of the exonym (Moyo 2012; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2015; Walsh & Mignolo 2018). Coloniality therefore, allows for successive regimes to capitalize on this subjectivation (Moyo 2012; Hui 2019). In the Makgabeng-Blouberg area, it is recorded that initial surveying was done on horseback and at random by the ZAR government (Delius & Delius 1984). However, full topographical surveying

was then done by the British War Office between 1905 and 1911 following the South African war where the British lost to the Voortrekkers (Liebenberg 1997). Anglophone geography needed maps for colonial administration and land tenure (Ibid.: 129). The successive hegemonic regime of apartheid capitalized on these already established demarcations by enforcing strict segregationist policies that enabled for the continued subjection of these communities.

Where the literature has looked at the 'bottom-up' responses to naming, the focus has been on resistance to renaming (Alderman 2003; Alderman & Inwood 2013; Alderman & Rose-Redwood 2020). However, Brenda Yeoh (2017) argues that the presence of multiple naming systems can exist beyond the framework of power/resistance. She demonstrates how indigenous place names and colonial toponyms worked side-by-side in everyday life. This is further supported by Wu and Young (2022) who argue that official and unofficial toponyms operate outside of formal power structures and intersect with social changes. These toponyms, therefore, form what Tucci *et al.* (2011) refer as a 'complex tapestry' as such, studying naming regimes in various contexts helps researchers better understand how power influences toponymic processes. Therefore, what is observed in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area is a result of the latter.

However, looking at figure 6 in the data analysis chapter, the breakdown of the naming practices used in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area suggests that colonial toponyms are underpinned by hegemonic power. Participants were asked why they thought there was prevalence of colonial toponyms and the reason it is a 'display of apartheid power 'was the recurring reason for the occurrence of colonial place names at 49%, convenience was the second highest at 27% while 'a part of history' came in at 24%. Maldonado-Torres (2007) argues that coloniality is an entrenched power and defines culture and knowledge production beyond colonial administrations. This is further supported by Ndlovu (2018) who describes coloniality in terms of a structure of colonialisms. Arguing that it is both oppressive and performative. In its prescriptive stage, coloniality does not allow for change that is desired by an agency. However, in its performative stage, the power structure of coloniality is open to transformation and re-categorization but not total dismantlement to avoid movements like

decolonization (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013; Ndlovu 2018). Therefore, what is observed in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area is a result of the latter.

The process of naming has long been used as a tool for displaying power in many places across the across the continent (see Njoh 2016; Zuvalinyenga 2020). The process of naming therefore, functions as a tool to overtly record historical places and their values while acting as an implicit political power over places and people. As such, the impact of colonial naming in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area has had other implications to socio-cultural factors. The use of indigenous place has decreased. Indigenous place names function mainly in oral use, with changing political ideologies, communities become disconnected from language and culture. The data shows that indigenous place names are only being using by 29% of the sample group. As such, the dialogue around plural toponymies should therefore, factor in how official naming practices by proximity to hegemonic power plays a part in the marginalisation of indigenous place names and indigenous knowledge.

6.2 Use and preservation of indigenous place names in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area

The overall use of indigenous place names in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area was 29%. Knowledge holders were asked if they thought indigenous place names had significance, 85% said yes while 15% said no (See figure 35). These figures varied compared to the number of those that use of indigenous toponyms. This is because knowledge holders acknowledged the significance of indigenous place names even if they did not personally use them. Taking a closer look at the villages individually, it was noted that Avon/Ga-Seakamela and Makgato had 73% and 56% usage of indigenous place names, respectively. These communities had the highest preservation of the indigenous knowledge as they had an active traditional authority which enables the community to engage in indigenous place naming that actively preserves heritage. A traditional authority significantly influences the use of native names. In Marobjane (Avon) the village had three place names that were interchangeably used. The village has a colonial name - Avon which is the official toponym. This name is accompanied by Ga-Seakamela which represents the chieftaincy and represented on formal government signage. The autonym however is Marobjane. Community members use the indigenous place name of Marobjane as the name encompasses both the royal family and the history of the community (See figure 8 above). Similarly in Ga-Makgato which was recently changed from the colonial toponym of

Kromhoek. The traditional authorities instil a sense of pride in traditional methods of preservation, as such it is common for these villages to use the autonym and actively preserve indigenous knowledge. These micro toponyms encrypt narratives and traditions that exonyms do not possess and actively contribute to place making in those areas. This is because indigenous knowledge systems are rooted in community culture and develop through lived and shared experiences (Guyot & Seethal 2007; Ndletyana 2012; Puzey & Kostanski 2016; Hui 2019; Benyei *et al.* 2020).

Indigenous knowledge systems change depending on the community's experiences (Zuvalinyenga 2020; Ndlovu 2021; Ndlovu *et al.* 2022; Mamvura 2023). Therefore, there are varying degrees to that level of preservation of indigenous knowledge that each society partakes in. Light and Young (2014) suggested to consider the role of habitual practice when using place names. Participants were asked why the use of indigenous toponyms in the region was low, figure 33 shows the main reasons given. Wu and Young (2022) argue that habit is an unconscious way in which influence can be reflected on. In the Makgabeng-Blouberg area, it was noted that 'out of habit' made up 28% of the reasons why the indigenous toponym was not being used. This shows that entrenched colonial place names have become the unconscious toponym when knowledge holders think of the village toponym. Therefore, for many knowledge holders, particularly the older generation, there are no other intentional reasons behind the use of colonial place names, it is the result of habit (Light & Young 2014). As a participant from Indermark noted:

> *"…no, they do not use it. We use Indermark. I cannot say exactly why, it is one of those things, when we moved here, we did not know anything. When we arrived here, we found that they call this place Indermark. We just accepted the name as it is."* (Indermark 1.1).

As such, habit is a contributing to the prevalence of colonial toponyms in the region that aids in the continued suppression of indigenous place names (Duff 2010; Light & Young 2014; Vuolteenaho & Puzey 2018). In villages where the use of indigenous toponyms is 20% or less (Senwabarwana, Indermark, De Vrede and Eldorado), preservation of IK is varied. Knowledge custodians know the indigenous names, but they are not in use. These communities are also governed under a municipal ward councillor, and therefore, do not have a traditional authority

that maintains customs and the indigenous toponyms. This has consequently affected socio-cultural ideologies which are traditionally embedded within these communities.

As such, each community has varying degrees of significance they attach to native toponyms. The differences in the preservation of indigenous knowledge within the villages highlight the different spatial contexts that are emphasized in the literature (Ndletyana 2012; Moyo 2012; Ndimande-Hlongwa 2015; Uluocha 2015; Adebanwi 2017; Hui 2019; Mamvura 2020; Zuvalinyenga 2020; Ndlovu 2021; Ndlovu 2022; Wu & Young 2022). Therefore, the predominance of colonial language in place names promotes the coloniality of language in the liberated anglophone world (Ndetleyana 2012; Ndlovu 2021).

Culture was noted as the biggest influence for the preservation of indigenous place names at 78% while History came in at 56%, identity at 43% while other influence came in at 6%. Cultural heritage is an integral part of the preservation of indigenous knowledge. Participants were asked how they thought indigenous toponyms were being preserved, 23% noted that indigenous place name was being preserved through usage, and 13% stated that oral memory (need tp revise). These processes are organic to preserving IK as language acts as a tool that facilitates the transfer of knowledge (Helleland 2012). However, 28% noted that the indigenous place name was not being preserved. the population in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area consists of an aging population of 7.3% along with minors making up 39% of the population (Census 2011; STATSSA 2011). Working age adults are away from the villages as migrant workers, this contributes to the generational gap of knowledge. The methods of communicating indigenous knowledge in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area are therefore, jeopardized by the knowledge gap between knowledge holders and the youth. These deteriorating social networks between the custodians and the youth is partly a result of the generational gap as the working age adult is not present to ensure the linear progression of indigenous knowledge that would traditionally take place. The elderly participants acknowledge a decline in passing on this knowledge but note that the youth show little interest in learning it.

However, among these generational differences there is also the complex intergenerational use of the two naming systems. Colonial official naming is what the youth are accustomed to.

But to pass on valuable knowledge, knowledge holders require the shared use of indigenous naming system across the generations (Wu & Young 2022). Even so, the youth are increasingly more removed from the traditional way of life, their interest and awareness for indigenous place names declines and a lack of formal records of these names makes this process of preservation challenging. As such, traditional ways of communicating IK are not enough. This is further catapulted by the digitalisation of the current world that appeals to the youth as they are immersed within that aspect of Western Knowledge systems. This observation of the lack interest in IK was noted by Msuya (2007) as a threat for extinction of IK. The disinterest further breaks down the potential relationship between custodians of the knowledge, as they only share it with those whom they trust (Snowden 1999; Kaniki & Mphahlele 2002).

For toponyms to function as an IKS the community needs to believe and understand their function, and this can only be possible through social learning (Ndlovu *et al.* 2022). Social learning is an innate part of IK. As Folke *et al.* (2005) argue, social learning is important for receiving the experience communities need to sustain social systems in a world of continuous change. Therefore, social learning increases adaptive capacity and leads to sustained processes of attitudinal change by individuals in social environments through interaction and deliberation (Ndlovu *et al.* 2022). This displays the need for intergenerational engagement in these communities to enable the transmission of indigenous knowledge through oral memory or use (Bryan 2009; Du Plessis 2009; Kotze & Du Plessis 2010; Ngoepe 2022). This will ensure there is a closing of the generational gap between custodians and the youth which will facilitate the distribution and use of indigenous toponyms and further promote the preservation of these toponym (Kaniki & Mphahlele 2002; Ndlovu *et al.* 2022; Wu & Young 2022). This is of importance as these elderly are dying as mentioned by the participants and die with the knowledge.

And to a lesser degree, socio-economic factors reduce the involvement of communities in the preservation of archaeological evidence (Lang 2001). Poverty and financial challenges contribute to the attitude and social obstacle the communities have towards the preservation of IK. Custodians noted that the high unemployment contributed to the detachment the youth had to indigenous knowledges in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area. These challenges produced by social barriers highlight how the pattern of biased agenda can be perpetuated.

Therefore, separating IK from its spatial context has consequences from the level of preservation of the indigenous toponyms that can take place. The integration of conservation and transference into the fabric of mundane life could be a different approach to ensure community involvement (Grima 2017). This approach is arguing for the integration and use indigenous place names in everyday life to ensure its preservation. The challenge for the future is to explore how this model may be applied in places where the integration of archaeology with the contemporary is not imposed by necessity but becomes an end in itself. Community encounters with archaeology are not immune to the effects of politics. Community-based approaches have been utilised for encouraging indigenous communities to have an active involvement in the preservation of their cultural heritage (Bryan 2009; Greer 2010; Joiris 2015). This engagement recognizes the need to protect IK and indigenous communities (Greer *et al.* 2002: 266). As our understanding of the past that is useful because tangible cultural heritage is an important part of identity.

Traditional toponyms have been considered as an integral component of indigenous communities (Kadmon 2004; Helleland 2012; Mamvura *et al.* 2017). The results of this research demonstrate that indigenous place names are a key component of cultural heritage in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area. The community members in the focus areas differentiate between the colonial/apartheid place names and traditional toponyms when it suits the preservation of the indigenous practises and heritage. These communities state that indigenous place names encourage place rootedness and place attachment in the study areas. Community members note that language is a key influence on anthropological places, as these spaces allow for like-minded individuals to connect. As illustrated in literature and by traditional leaders and other knowledge custodians in the study area language serves as an intentional tool for communication and expression used to establish place rootedness and place making to implicitly complete for a space in the active memory of the community (Bigon & Dahamshe 2014; Hall-Lew & Lew 2014; Basik 2022; Bishi *et al.* 2022).

Cultural heritage is an expression of culture that tells the story of the past and shapes the communities' identity (Eversole 2006: 304; Helleland 2012). These place names can provide additional information about the history of these villages as there are rich narratives accompanied with each toponym when extracted from knowledge custodians therefore

forming an intangible part of cultural heritage (Nuryanti 1996; Helleland 2012; Basik 2022). Through linguistic expressions, narratives are encrypted onto the meaning of place names (Hakala *et al.* 2015; Ndimande-Hlongwa 2015; Mamvura *et al.* 2017). Thus, making toponyms a part of intangible cultural heritage (Tuathail & Dalby 2002; Helleland 2012). The naming of places spatially encrypts cultural discourses related to identity and ideology (Tuathail & Dalby 2002; Basik 2022). Therefore, these micro toponyms can tell an alternative narrative. They, therefore, take on the purpose of being a cultural arena and a marker of resistance encompassing the communities' identity and memorializing the IKS (Azaryahu 2020).

Therefore, place names, which are part of Indigenous Knowledge, are transferred through language and socio-cultural practices linked to specific anthropological places. The toponyms provide a unique source of information about a society's, beliefs, and values (Balcar & Pearce 1996; Nuryanti 1996; Weaver 2001). This social inheritance is what scholars have argued to encompass oral memory which is a closed ecosystem that is capable of self-preservation (Masuku & Pasipamire 2014; Katuu 2020). These authors along with others argue that the preservation of traditional knowledge into western archival systems changes the authenticity of the data. Custodians of this knowledge in the study area, however, worry about its preservation due to the breakdown of traditional preservation systems. This is supported by researchers who argue that this IK is suspectable to distortion if it is not recorded. (Setumu 2015; Ngoepe & Setumu 2016; Ngoepe 2022).

There are slight differences and some similarities to the ways communities preserve indigenous knowledge. Communities with an active traditional authority demonstrate a strong sense of community. They have access to the *moshate*, where inquiries and complaints are addressed promptly at the next meeting. In an interview, the chief emphasized his crucial role in preserving cultural practices within the community. As such, the *moshate* is a display of active socio-cultural practices daily. To enter, modest clothing including a covering of the hair, shoulders, and a modest length skirt or dress for ladies. While for men it includes wearing a jacket and taking off any head covering. These practises are the cultural norm in the area and emphasize the significance of a *moshate* as places of importance that contribute to preserving indigenous knowledge in the region.

Conversely, it can be noted that the concept of modesty was introduced by missionaries in the area (Comaroff & Comaroff 1986; Makhura 1997; Namono & van Schalkwyk 2020; Ncube 2020). From the archaeological record, it is deduced that previous groups of the San, Khoe Khoe and Later Iron Age farmers had a similar standard dress which consisted of loin cloths and head pieces as evidenced in the rock art paintings and apron motifs that are associated with initiation rituals (Eastwood *et al.* 2002; Namono & Eastwood 2005; Namono & van Schalkwyk 2020). This form of clothing consisted of minimal coverage. However, with the introduction of missionaries, there was a rise in more modest clothing as more converts joined the missionary movement. As such colonial clothing culture was adopted into these communities (Makhura 1997). Therefore, the modest approach to clothing represents the communities' views on their indigenous culture while simultaneously being influenced by colonial missionary worldviews. The prominent approach to modesty displays the regions cultural beliefs and influenced of indigenous knowledge on their worldview. This approach also highlights the locally adapted notions to modesty that are passed down generationally (Lowenthal 2005; Grosfoguel 2007; Quijano 2007; Ngoepe & Ngulube 2014). The sampled areas had adopted different methods of adaptation to colonial influences for the preservation of heritage and indigenous knowledge (Magirwa 2016; Benyei *et al.* 2020; Zuvalinyenga 2020; Brocket 2021). The differences in the adaptation strategies in Marobjane or Makgato and Indermark or Loke are due to the diverse cultural practices that determine the social capital for cultural preservation.

6.3 Toponymic Identity Formation

The concept of identity defines the way individuals characterise themselves and evolves through language and other symbolic means (Zuvalinyenga 2020). It is tangible as humans adopt identities depending on the context (Vuolteenaho et al. 2019) and is performed through time and space. Individuals perform acts of identity such as choosing to use indigenous toponyms over colonial to inform others about the sort of attachment they have with the place based on the toponym they use (Hodge 2012; Vuolteenaho et al. 2019). However, Zuvalinyenga (2020) argues that people do not perform acts of identities simultaneously because of differing inter-individual experiences and varying access to linguistic and cultural resources (Helleland 2012; Hodge 2012). In the Makgabeng-Blouberg area, identities are shaped by socio-political factors.

As such, identity creation is charged with power relations and beliefs (Helleland 2012; Zuvalinyenga 2020). Place names serve not only to identify a location but also to reflect the identities of its inhabitants, while simultaneously revealing the political dynamics and power structures at play. Different identities of the Makgabeng-Blouberg area can be followed throughout the pre-colonial, colonial, and present periods from the names that places are given. Place names such as *Marobjane a Mangkaya* (Associated with the fertile place of rest), to Avon (which is the exonym of English origin, named during colonial time and is used alongside Ga-Seakamela (belonging to the chief) all capture the political change taking place in the area. As noted by other researchers, indigenous toponyms played the dual role encrypting knowledges and orienting it users (Hakala *et al.* 2015; Ndimande-Hlongwa 2015; Mamvura *et al.* 2017). While colonial place names in the area were symbols of political power (Helleland 2012; Zuvalinyenga 2020).

Consequently, toponyms are a gateway into to the process of how naming was used to legitimise certain political ideologies through the marginalisation and suppression of indigenous place names (Castells 2010; Olivier 2019). However, these marginalised communities through alternative and unofficial place names underhandedly and sometimes overtly challenged their marginalisation by using unofficial names (Vuolteenaho *et al.* 2019). As a result of the fluidity of identities and lived experiences, it is also altered and engraved into the naming process, making the lived experiences a relational and context specific activity that is determined by multiple factors (Giraut 2020). As noted by Zuvalinyenga (2020), hegemonic naming regimes utilize legislative tools to encrypt place names with political ideologies and marginalise indigenous identities through formally naming places —effectively utilizing legislation to strategically disempower entire communities. It was observed with communities in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area that some members use cultural heritage and language as tools to navigate such imposition by covertly using unofficial toponyms that coexist with official place names. The societies' use of these names becomes a practical way they communicate their identity (Vuolteenaho *et al.* 2019).

Place names are regarded as a principal factor in the development of an identity, and its perseveration. Custodians of knowledge stated that they ignored the official place names, and

carried on using their own pre-colonial toponyms or produced new place names that reflected their own experiences of their surroundings as it helped them adjust quickly to the unfamiliar environment. This resulted in a parallel set of toponymies: one systematized by the official colonial government and another underpinned by indigenous traditions. The continuance of indigenous place names, within the colonial context, was a form of defiance against cultural imperialism. While other times, communities seemed to dissociate from the endonym to assimilate the colonial name into their identity. This is particularly clear in De Vrede, Indermark, and Eldorado Village. These communities have assimilated colonial names and formed identities around them. The continued use of colonial toponyms is a reminder of the slow pace of transformation. It highlights the persistence of unequal power relations and that the nation building rhetoric of post-apartheid was (mis)interpreted as not interfering with colonial history. In turn this continues the subjugation of indigenous cultures and knowledge. Responses from participants in these villages are an indication of the assumption of a colonial identity and a perpetuation of its power control. These communities, however, have the duality of acknowledging the significance and importance of the endonym.

Communities within the Makgabeng-Blouberg area adopt alternative naming systems to better establish their identity. The region's intertwined history is detailed within its place names. The areas precolonial toponyms are encrypted within the IK while colonial memory is etched into the official place names. While the current place names consist of an entanglement of both colonial naming practices and indigenous toponyms, the current communities shape and reshape their identities to encapsulate the place names they choose to memorialize. These unofficial naming practices become a way of managing the social relations as people express themselves on their own terms. These toponyms, therefore, allow to one to understand how the communities attach or detach themselves from some identities and encourage social bonds (Vuolteenaho *et al.* 2019; Zuvalinyenga 2020). The unofficial place names therefore preserve information that is otherwise lost and form part of the communities' identity. The indigenous toponyms give value to the inhabitants (Kostanski 2009; Helleland 2012).

A cultural identity was inherently associated with the indigenous place names. Therefore, the perceptions of place names in the formation of an identity in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area

are essential in establishing community perspectives on IK. 27% of knowledge holders stated they were attached to the indigenous place name because of the history and heritage it encapsulated. Perkins and Long (2002) unpacked how communities develop emotional connections because of a shared history. As such, place attachment is influenced by culture and experiences and further influences the people's identity (Ujang 2012). In the Makgabeng-Blouberg area, place rootedness made up 38% of influencers to identity. These social attachments to places have been described using different concepts that occasionally have intersecting meanings (Raymond *et al.* 2010). The connection people have with the spaces they occupy is an unavoidable and universal part of human experience (Grima 2017). Some communities have developed identities around the colonial place name.

> *"Well, Indermark is part of my identity as it the main name I grew up using. It is the first name I think of when I think of home. This village was started by us." (*Indermark 1.4).

The significance of toponyms in identity creation in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area is therefore, captured in place rootedness, culture, and heritage and history.

6.4 Place Making Through Place Names

In the Makgabeng-Blouberg area participants indicated that these with indigenous place names places encourage formation of identity and grounded the community, viz:
"*Your mother tongue always has a sense of grounding; you are never lost if a name is in your mother tongue"* (Avon 1.10)

Use of indigenous toponyms makes places and enables inhabitants form identities around it, which in turn become part of local cultural politics of place (Azaryahu 2020; Kearns & Berg 2002: 284; Greer 2010; Joiris 2015; Pierce *et al.* 2011; Hultman & Hall 2012; Buser *et al.* 2013). The process of toponymic encryption through place making in areas like the Makgabeng - Blouberg, reflects contested politics, (post)colonialism, identity politics and collective memory, and thus sits at the intersection of naming, place making and power (Rose-Redwood & Alderman 2011; Hall-Lew & Lew 2014; Uluocha 2015; Basik 2022; Berg & Vuolteenaho 2009: 7; Medway & Warnaby 2014). Prevalence of colonial place names in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area indicates how colonial influences sought to impose Western ideologies, negatively impacting indigenous place names in the area. While these exonyms

may have provided a sense of identity and continuity for the European settlers and their descendants, they also reflect the larger political powers that shaped the area during the colonial period, and the ongoing challenges of reconciling diverse cultural perspectives and histories. Custodians of knowledge noted that the exonyms that are still in use in some villages carried no heritage for them, although the micro toponyms did.

Therefore, the role of place names in place making is marked by the ability for the place name to encrypt narratives and memories within it (Basik 2022). These indigenous toponyms as illustrated by Hamokoko and Marobjane become a cultural arena and a marker of resistance that encompasses a communities' identity (Berg & Vuolteenaho 2009; Tilly 2010; Azaryahu 2020; Bigon & Arrous 2021; Basik 2022, 2020). Micro toponyms thus become symbolic arenas of protests against the political regime (Basik 2020; Kearns & Berg 2002). It is thus, through place making that the power of indigenous place names is realised, and only through collective memory (Rose-Redwood & Alderman 2011) that the value of place making through toponyms is revealed. A respondent from Avon succinctly captures this:

> *"… We are from Kranspoort we used to call it MaSediba. It is close to Venda. The ZAR government then moved us to a place called Mangkaya. We were then moved by the Apartheid government to Delmaine then again to Avon. You see we were travelling a lot, but as a community under Kgôsi Seakamela. So, the colonial name does not mean anything to us as it is always changing depending on which white was in control. The one that stays constant is Ga-Seakamela"* (Avon 1.11)

The history of these anthropological places is realised when the community is actively engaged in its safeguarding. Therefore, utilizing micro toponyms is one approach in ensuring the preservation of indigenous place names. However, the challenge is that these names are primarily used by the elderly and are not being passed on through oral traditions as customary. This shift is influenced by various factors, such as rural-urban migration and the emphasis on western education systems. In Daou Joiris's (2015) evaluation of Baka symbolic perspectives, she unpacks how anthropological places are necessary for place making to foster intimate relationships. However, what is witnessed in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area, is a disconnect with custodians of knowledge and the younger generations. This detachment

does not foster trust amongst both groups and reduces the chances of this knowledge being passed down due to the lack of trust (Snowden1999; Kaniki & Mphahlele 2002). The integration of new factors leaves these connections vulnerable to being erased (Joiris 2015).

However, participants have noted other factors that contribute to place making including churches and cattle herding, among others. The relationship between Black evangelism and place making marks a significant role in the identity and belongingness of the communities in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area. Missionary work had far reached cultural and political influence in naming processes (Castells 2000; Freund 2010; Wanjiru-Mwita & Giraut 2020) this was the result of having the ability to partake in the sphere of institutionalized power relations and the established relationships with communities in remote areas (Comaroff & Comaroff 1986). Missionaries were consequently the main agents of intrusive 'cultural imperialism'. As such, in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area today, we see a dominant presence of Christianity through the landscape. The prominent church is the ZCC, however, there is a large following of the Dutch Reform Church, which it was noted as being a place of significance in the two of the five villages in the research area. It was noted that places of communal gathering played a significant role in place making as these places signified the collective shared experiences of the community. Additionally, places such as the *moshate,* and communal centres served the same purpose for establishing the symbolic significance (Berg & Vuolteenaho 2009; Basik 2022). The sense of belonging that emerges from these relationships aids in the continuous making of place making.

The significance of toponyms in political control has been noted by many scholars (Duncan 2019; Giraut 2020; Zuvalinyenga 2020). Missionaries hand in colonial power is evidenced in its undeniable involvement in colonial naming (Makhura 1997). Their support of segregation laws ensured missionaries remained in control of land and accelerated the cultural imperialism. Furthermore, they were the first point of contact with land surveyors and other government authorities in rural areas (Joubert 1999). Even with the changing political climate indigenous communities were able to hang on to some aspects of their traditions. The continued use of precolonial autonyms illustrates the value and political power of indigenous language (Duncan 2019; Giraut 2020; Bigon & Arrous 2021). And further represents the attachment these individuals have to the place (Shepherd 1998; Kostanski 2009, 2016; Olivier 2019).

Community perspectives on the value of precolonial toponyms are steeped in place attachment and place making (Kostanski 2016). Augé (1996) argues that these anthropological places offer individuals a space that empowers their identity and connect with others over shared social references. The sense of connectedness participants experience is tied to other cultural aspects of their identity such as cattle herding and social identity. These places therefore become an arena of struggle over identity and memory (Dwyer & Alderman 2008; Bigon & Arrous 2021; Basik 2022; Bishi *et al.* 2022). The micro toponyms encode the political, social, and traditional narratives of its inhabitants over time, forming part of the indigenous knowledge of the area. The significance of these names is evident in the wealth of knowledge they encapsulate. The archaeology has important nuggets of knowledge about the human experience across time (Dhanjal & Moshenska 2011) therefore, the preservation of this knowledge is of importance.

6.5 Synopsis

The research findings presented here resonate strongly with the current literature on toponyms and indigenous knowledge. Scholars across various disciplines have extensively discussed the role of toponyms as repositories of knowledge, highlighting their significance in encoding cultural, social, and traditional narratives. This alignment between the research results and current literature underscores the validity and relevance of the findings, further contributing to our understanding of the intricate relationship between toponyms, indigenous knowledge, and cultural preservation. These communities serve as a vital link between the untold and undocumented rich archaeological and historical record and display resistance and agency to changing political influences and capture the essence of traditional knowledge.

6.6 Wrapping up

Critical place naming occurs at all levels of human governance. The political process of naming entails that desired political motives are achieved and thus is a structural process. The socio-cultural aspect of naming ensure that IK and traditions are encrypted throughout the process, given that they occur concurrently. Naming is a contentious political process (Helleland 2012; Sommer 2017; Beliso-De Jesus & Pierre 2020). Western naming practices are robust sector and backed by institutional and structural authority that ensure continuation and subjection

of indigenous naming processes. However, as demonstrated by the communities in the study area, indigenous communities can exercise their autonomy by using micro toponyms to name and locate spaces they occupy. The use of these autonyms allows for anthropological places to be established and offers spaces to individuals to establish their identities (Augé 1992; Joiris 2015). The use of indigenous names also allows the communities to encrypt narratives about histories, traditions into these place names (Kearns & Berg 2002; Fitzpatrick 2012; Basik 2020). The richness of IK is captured in these autonyms and contributes to place making and identity formation (Mamvura *et al.* 2017; Vuolteenaho *et al.* 2019; Zuvalinyenga 2020). The knowledge system that is passed down from generation to generation is localised to capture the IK that is associated with cultural values in the region (Masuku & Pasipamire 2014; Ngoepe 2020). Masuku & Pasipamire (2014) argue that oral memory should not be recorded using western systems because they believe that doing so can alter the indigeneity and authenticity of the record, making it susceptible to change and distortion. This perspective is further supported by Kaniki & Mphahlele (2002) and Joiris (2015), who also highlight the potential for Western recording methods to impact the integrity of oral traditions.

However, some scholars have noted the importance of recording this knowledge due to ever changing socio-cultural factors (Setumu 2015; Ngoepe & Setumu 2016; Ngoepe 2020, 2022). The main aim of this project was to investigate the prevalence of colonial names in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area- Blouberg area, the context in which place names capture indigenous knowledge of the local community and the significance of place names in the area to understanding its archaeology and the research objectives aimed to break down the main aim into digestible sections by analysing colonial places names, interpreting precolonial toponyms and establishing community perspectives on place making, identity formation and the preservation of indigenous knowledge

Data collected to address the research objectives was done through semi-structured individual interviews with knowledge custodians in six different villages in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area in Limpopo. The research limitations included not having a wider demographic range to capture a more inclusive perspective of the challenge.

6.6.1 Research outcomes

The main objectives of this study were threefold. Firstly, to establish indigenous place names before colonial naming practices were introduced in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area. Thus, I analysed colonial naming practises, a vehicle of European expansion and domination. It served to marginalise and other indigenous people, their cultural practises, and stripping them of their identity whilst imposing Western ideologies. This structural political power ensured naming regimes perpetuated injustices on African indigenous naming practices in which a place name was not only a locator, but it encompassed values, histories, and traditions. Thankfully, even throughout marginalisation, many indigenous communities retained their naming practises that shed light on the past. It is through these communities that precolonial place names can we established. The differences in Western naming practices and indigenous naming processes are evidenced in the result of the toponym. In the study area, many colonial macro toponyms are random and not indicative of the location in their context but may have bearing in their respective Western countries. Community members in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area are aware of prevalence of colonial place names and are aware of the diminishing use of autonyms. The majority consider the association of indigenous toponyms with cultural heritage, values and traditions ensures preservation of indigenous place names.

Secondly, I sought to obtain indigenous interpretation of pre-colonial and present indigenous place names in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area. Through generational indigenous traditions and practices, I was able to identify some precolonial toponyms encrypted into the cultural tapestry of the community. Community members in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area record their IK through oral memory in the form of praise songs. In this way one can extrapolate the archaeology of the area, forming a large part of identity creation. Custodians of knowledge such as those in the royal households, lamented the changing and disinterested attitudes towards the organic preservation of IK. Thus, the prevalence of a particular name might be to fulfil certain socio-political needs. The current prevalence of colonial place names as noted in dialogue with community leaders, traditional authorities, and knowledge custodians in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area emanates from structural powers. As such, community members maintain an adaptive stance.

Thirdly, I sought to establish community perspectives on place making, identity and preservation of indigenous knowledge. Place naming in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area provided an outlet for community members to establish a sense of connectedness with place making. The attachment formed around the name encompassed all aspects of an individual. A sense of cultural heritage and identity was encrypted in the micro toponyms in the study area. Community members are immensely proud of the power of autonyms in asserting group identity and place making. Use of indigenous place names correlated with the level of involvement in preserving IK. In villages within the study area that made use of micro toponyms to name a place, it was noted that these communities had the largest support for recording oral memory through other preservation techniques. These communities were, however, also warry of the distortion of IK and its waning interest among the youth. They noted a decline in involvement of the younger generation in cultural activities that organically preserve the ecosystem of IK. This observation encouraged IK custodians to support my recording of indigenous narratives about place names since this captures the history of place and its inhabitants. This study has thus shown that community members stressed the importance of indigenous place names in capturing the essence of place and the role they play in identity formation and place making. They further demonstrate that despite changing political control, indigenous communities are still able to successfully preserve their indigenous naming practices by using micro toponyms that implicitly compete with the official place names to remain in active memory. These results contribute to place name discourse indicating that whilst indigenous communities may be vulnerable to colonial naming regimes, they are not passive actors.

6.6.2 Limitations

I encountered various limitations in this study. Time was limited. The study would have benefitted from spending more time in each village to draw on a larger sample size that could potentially lead to more definitive outcomes and a more variable demographic range to obtain a balanced contribution to the data I sought. Initially, I had anticipated documenting visual display of toponyms in the study area. However, due to time constraints, it was not possible to obtain all place name visuals given that these changes through time could not be illustrated as current signage did not record it.

A significant limitation of the study was that this research cannot be extended to other communities with the same level of guarantee (Grima 2017). Hence, whilst research outcomes contribute discourse on IK, its validity is restricted to the Makgabeng-Blouberg area. IK and its practices are developed through shared subjective experiences of individuals in a particular environment, and so it is difficult to document these changes as names and the naming processes develop and change depending on changing socio-political influences (Tucci *et al.* 2011; Kgatla & Magwira 2015; Giraut 2020). In this regard, there was varied (dis)interest in the use and prevalence of colonial toponyms by community members. Given that traditional knowledge is constantly changing on a continuum, the data collected here represents a small and aging part of the area's population, omitting the views of the younger generation.

This study used individual interviews and whilst this was effective, it might have benefited from focus groups as a data collection tool as well. Focus groups could ensure that participants agree with the impact of key issues in the naming process. For example, I observed that IK holders' recollections of events varied, some suffered from unconscious bias, resulting in a probable skewed reflection of the community. This study outlined use of multiple place names in the Makgabeng-Blouberg area where I noted how their use shows a concurrence, an ongoing negotiation and conflict of multiple identities. The toponyms detail the history, culture, and power dynamics at play within the communities, highlighting instances of place naming within conflicting socio-political hegemonic regimes promoting naming processes (see Giraut 2020). Thus, prevalence of colonial place names in the landscape has led to the unfortunate burial of indigenous toponyms. Through understanding place names and place making, it is possible to obtain a glimpse into past events and the inhabitants of the place. This enables a deeper understanding of the archaeological record, offering a nuanced perspective on the region's history.

6.7 Further research

Finally, rather than conclude this study, I observe that there are multiple factors that are brought to bear on use of place names by communities. In the study area, prevalence of colonial toponyms is a result of the slow renaming process by the democratic government. Therefore, whilst I considered only six villages, further research on how communities navigate

the toponymic landscape could be explored with a focus on the smaller chiefs and their villages. The study could investigate how the lesser area chiefs and associated villages, navigate the space, and ensure their place names remain used. These micro chiefs offer a unique perspective to navigating colonial oppression.

Other area for further research includes replicating this study amongst other communities to reconnect them to their indigenous knowledge, especially in the context of global influences and modernity. Such study could benefit from a different approach to data collection, or a mixed methods approach involving focus group discussions to increase the participant numbers and enable community perspectives to be recorded on a wider scale.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Semi-structured Interview Questions

University
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Johannesburg

School of Geography, Archaeology and Environmental Studies

Private Bag 3. Wits 2050, South Africa Enquiries: GEOGRAPHY: TEL: +27 11 717-6503 • Fax: +27 11 403-7281
ARCHAEOLOGY: TEL: +27 11 717-6045 • Fax: +27 11 339-1620

PARTICIPANT SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

NAME:

AGE:

GENDER:

VILLAGE NAME:

1. WHAT IS THE NAME OF THIS PLACE?
2. WHAT NAME DO YOU USE?
3. IS THERE AN INDIGENOUS NAMES, WHAT IS ITS ORIGIN AND MEANING?
4. WHY DO YOU THINK THE INDIGENOUS NAME IS NOT BEING USE?
5. DO YOU HAVE AN ASSOCIATION WITH THE INDIGENOUS NAME?
6. DO INDIGENOUS PLACE NAMES HAVE SIGNIFICANCE? YES/NO
6. WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF USING THE INDIGENOUS NAME?
7. HOW IS THE INDIGENOUS NAME BEING PRESERVED?
8. WHAT ARE INFLUENCES THE PRESERVATION OF INDIGENOUS PLACE NAMES?
9. DO YOU THINK COLONIAL NAMES HAVE A PLACE?
10. HOW DOES THE NAME CONTRIBUTE TO PLACE MAKING?
11. WHAT ATTACHMENT DO YOU HAVE TO THE INDIGENOUS NAME?
12. WHAT ATTACHMENT DO YOU HAVE TO THE COLONIAL NAME?
13. DO COLONIAL NAMES CAPTURE THE INDIGENEITY OF THE COMMUNITY?
14. HOW DOES THE NAME FORM PART OF YOUR IDENTITY?
15. WHAT ROLE DO INDIGENOUS NAMES PLAY IN CULTURE?
16. WHAR ROLE DO COLONIAL NAMES PLAY IN CULTURE?
17. HOW IS THE INDIGENOUS NAME BEING PRESERVED?

Appendix B: Information Letter

University
of the Witwatersrand,
Johannesburg

School of Geography, Archaeology and Environmental Studies

Private Bag 3. Wits 2050, South Africa Enquiries: GEOGRAPHY: TEL: +27 11 717-6503 • Fax: +27 11 403-7281
ARCHAEOLOGY: TEL: +27 11 717-6045 • Fax: +27 11 339-1620

INFORMATION LETTER

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Kgolagano Vena, and I am a Masters student in archaeology at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. As part of my studies, I have to undertake a research project, and I am investigating the role of place names as indigenous knowledge in the archaeology of the Makgabeng-Blouberg area under the supervision of Dr Catherine Namono. The aim of this research project is to analyse colonial naming in an attempt to obtain indigenous names prior to colonial rule and establish the community's perspective on place naming, place making, identity and preservations indigenous knowledge.

A part of this project, I would like to invite you to take part in an interview. This will be a once-off interview that involves answering questions regarding placemaking, identity and place naming and will take around 30 minutes. With your permission, I would also like to audio record the interview using a digital device (phone). This recording will be stored in a password protected laptop and only I (researcher) will have access to this recording. It will be deleted after the final submission of the dissertation (two years).

There will be no personal costs to you if you participate in this project, you will not receive any direct benefits from participation but there are no disadvantages or penalties if you do not choose to participate or if you withdraw from the study. You may withdraw at any time or not answer any question if you do not want to. The interview will be completely confidential as I will not be asking for your name or any identifying information and the information you give to me will be held securely and not disclosed to anyone else. I will be using a pseudonym (false name) to represent your participation in my final research report. If you experience any distress or discomfort at any point in this process, we will stop the interview.

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research, feel free to contact me on the details listed below. This study will be written up as a research report which will be available online through the university library website. The data collected from this research project will be stored in password protected laptop and will be kept for two years. With your permission the data collected from this research project may be used by other researchers in an anonymized format. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za

If you have any concerns, you are welcome to contact myself **Kgolagano Vena on 063 000 9893 or my supervisor Dr Catherine Namono on (011) 717 6055 or catherine.namono@wits.ac.za**

Appendix C: Participant Consent Form

University
of the Witwatersrand,
Johannesburg

School of Geography, Archaeology and Environmental Studies

Private Bag 3. Wits 2050, South Africa Enquiries: GEOGRAPHY: TEL: +27 11 717-6503 • Fax: +27 11 403-7281
ARCHAEOLOGY: TEL: +27 11 717-6045 • Fax: +27 11 339-1620

Consent Form

THE ROLE OF PLACE NAMES AS INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE IN THE ARCHEOLOGY OF THE MAKGABENG-BLOUBERG AREA, SOUTH AFRICA

Name of researcher: Kgolagano Vena

I, ……..., agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve. I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below).

I agree that my participation will remain confidential	YES	NO
I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in her research report	YES	NO
I agree that the interview may be audio recorded.	YES	NO
I agree that the information I provide may be used in an anonymized format after this project has ended, for academic purposes by other researchers, subject to their own ethics clearance being obtained.	YES	NO

…… (signature)
…… (name of participant)
…… (date)

…… (signature)
…… (name of person seeking consent)
…… (date)