

Aspects of Violence Reflected in South African Geographical Names

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Abstract. The toponymic landscape of any country is a window that reflects the historical, cultural, political and most social variables of society. This article is based on one aspect of society, namely violence, that is detectable in the place names of South Africa. While the country is in the process of building a nation with a diverse collection of building blocks due to the different languages and cultures present in the country, there exists a vast number of place names that directly or indirectly by association not only reflect this diversity, but have the potential to divide and obstruct efforts to obtain the social cohesion necessary to form a South African nation. However, history cannot be erased by the mere changing of a place name to another name which is more acceptable to a certain community. Aspects of violence in names reflect the ordeals and suffering of people who were exposed to wars and other forms of violence like natural disasters and environmental dangers. In this article a few examples are shown to illustrate that toponyms are not meaningless, but are rich in historical data that is often overlooked when the names of these villages, settlements, towns, historical sites, post-offices, etc. are used in everyday communication. The discussion on aspects of violence will finally be contrasted by a short discussion on aspects of peace and well-being also reflected in other South African place names.

Keywords: South African toponymic landscape; linguistic and cultural diversity; descriptive and associative meaning; categories of violence; historical conflict; natural disasters; names with positive association

1. Introduction

The study of geographical names in any country involves the exposition of many factors that gave rise to the choice of these names. Naming is a basic human activity and reflects how people see the world around them, how they exper-

ience life and what they value and remember. This is particularly important for citizens, being subjects of a particular government of a country, to express what is important to them and what they associate with the place to be named, taking into consideration the social and political circumstances of the day. The toponymical landscape of South Africa is complex in its representation of a diversity of languages and cultures¹. This diversity is represented in the examples of place names to be used in this article. The basic framework for discussion rests on what Heidegger describes as “a pointing- out which gives something a definite character and which communicates” (Heidegger 1962: 199). To do this, the retrieval of facts surrounding the entity and its name is necessary before an interpretation of all the information can lead to the explanation of aspects of meaning present in the name. Research for this article is guided by a practical interest in what names mean to people, what names reflect with regard to the history of the South African people and why the names were given to a specific entity. Hurst explains this kind of research in terms of a practical interest where the task of the researcher is not essentially to observe or to measure or to explain, but rather to interpret and understand (Hurst 2008: 19).²

2. Methodology and data

With the focus on aspects of violence, the discussion touches on the socio-historical part of South African geographical names and the approach could therefore be regarded as socio-onomastic which emphasises the influence that historical and social events have on the motivation towards the naming of geographical entities. The researcher aims at a conclusion that reflects an overlapping, intertwined and interdependent socio-historical experience of the South African community. The toponyms to be used as examples were selected from the following sources: *The New Dictionary of South African Place Names* by Peter E. Raper (2004), the data base of the Department of Arts and Culture, examples from Eve (2003), Coetser (2006), Erasmus (1996) and Jenkins (2007), names from various magazines and brochures mentioned in the Bibliography and names picked up in personal observations and informal discussions with colleagues and members of the

¹ After the democratic elections in 1994 South Africa’s language policy changed from two official languages (English and Afrikaans) to eleven official languages, namely English, Afrikaans, isiZulu, isiXhosa, Northern Sotho, Southern Sotho, Setswana, isiNdebele, Xitsonga, Tshivenda and Siswati.

² Hurst quotes Habermas in this regard: “Access to the facts is provided by the understanding of meaning, not observation. The verification of lawlike hypotheses in the empirical sciences has its counterpart here in the interpretation of texts” (Habermas 1971: 309 in Hurst 2008: 19). In this article the geographical names and their explanation are part of the texts open for interpretation.

South African Geographical Names Council of which the author is a member. The fact that names are listed in the above mentioned sources does not mean that they are all official. Usually many names are unofficially in use for a length of time before they become official names for specific geographical features. These features include towns, cities, settlements, historical sites, rivers, mountains, plains, roads, highways and any other topographical feature visited by man. In onomastic terms we are then dealing with toponyms (place names like *Valley of Desolation* which is a description of a natural feature experienced by man), hydronyms (water features like *Crocodile River* which has a threatening supposition) and odonyms (roads, mountain passes and streets, like *Helshoogte* [Afrikaans for 'hells heights'] which is a difficult pass to climb), as well as the names of man-made structures like buildings of whatever kind can be found. For the purpose of this article the focus will be on examples of the names of places which include residential areas, mountains, sites of historical importance, rivers, streams and other topographical features that directly involve human experience, in this case experience associated with violence. Most of the names are unknown and limited to local general knowledge of its existence, yet the names are part of the data that represent South African rural areas.

3. Meaning in geographical names

Of onomastic interest is what the names reflect. In onomastic theory we distinguish between lexical (or descriptive) and connotative meaning. The lexical meaning of a name is also its conceptual meaning and often this meaning corresponds with common nouns. When a lexical meaning is referentially opaque, that is its etymological meaning or descriptive meaning cannot be detected synchronically, the diachronic meaning can be enlightening after research is conducted on the history behind the name over a certain period of time. The motivational force behind the bestowal of the name is often locked up in the descriptive backing of the name, a term used by Searle and Strawson (Meiring 1980, 1993).³ This implies that anything that is associated with the particular name is also part of its meaning. Every name has inherent semantic, socio-cultural, socio-historical or socio-political aspects as indicators or references to human involvement. Often the meaning of the name itself is opaque with regard to why the name was given to a feature but closer scrutiny and research exposes historical facts that

³ The semantic content of the descriptive backing of a name can be described as "the collective content of all conventional beliefs and connotations attached to a name. It stands to reason that this descriptive backing also has a subjective content as it is based on individual experience and knowledge about a place, person or object bearing this name" (Meiring 1993: 274).

broaden the semantic scope of the background description of the name. From a semantic point of view the meaning of the name is, therefore, more than just its etymological meaning because in onomastic theory meaning also involves associations with the name which can be either positive or negative. Although associative meaning can be regarded as subjective, there are many names with a shared associative meaning. These associations can include historical, cultural, environmental, natural, personal and political incidents that took place and led to the naming of a feature. The relevance of these associative meanings in geographical names and the effect it has on the toponymical landscape of a country is particularly evident when names are changed due to what the political party in power find abusive. This links, amongst other things, with events in history that are associated with violence.

4. Categories of violence

What do we mean by violence? Dictionary definitions generally describe it in terms of physical force, massacre, blood, fierceness, assault, attack, power, severity, terror, dread, abuse, harshness, turbulence, desecration, disturbance, infringement etc. We talk of a violent temper, a violent act, violent conduct, a violent collision, violent sickness etc. What is also important in place names is what we associate with violence and what the results of violence in communities are. Here we find expressions of hurt, pain, shock, feelings of shame, disgrace, disgust and the like. These experiences are coined in many South African place names, either descriptively or in association.

To accommodate the different aspects of violence the geographical names will be discussed under different categories because there are many forms and degrees of violence that strike a country and its people. Probably the most violent and the hardest to heal, is war and the aftermath of war. South Africa with its multicultural population is prone to conflict amongst its peoples and the history of the country is littered with internal strife and confrontation between tribes and groups. Colonisation by the British and Dutch which led to wars against the indigenous tribes as well as the power struggle amongst the different tribes led to the loss of many lives. How this is reflected in the toponymical landscape of the country will be the main focus of this discussion. Other forms of violence are caused by the forces of nature, contact with wild animals, the ruggedness of the landscape, etc. and many names have their origin in challenges the people had in order to survive these ordeals. There are also names of Khoe origin which have been corrupted by adaptation to other indigenous languages like isiXhosa, isi-

Zulu, Setswana, Sesotho, etc. and languages like Dutch and English used during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For a more detailed account of the phonological processes involved in these adaptations the sources mentioned in the Bibliography under Raper can be consulted. We are especially indebted to Raper and Nienaber for their knowledge of the Khoe language that they share with us by way of the articles and sources mentioned in the Bibliography.⁴ Other names to be mentioned are Afrikaans names some of which were originally Dutch and names that have changed due to a new political dispensation since 1994. The names from African languages that reflect aspects of violence are particularly meaningful, as African names are syntactically formed by descriptive phrases, preceded or followed by a locative prefix or suffix.⁵ Examples used in this discussion are either historical, official, unofficial, local or folk names for geographical features, as mentioned in the first paragraph of this article. Most of the eleven official languages of South Africa are represented. The language of the Khoe and Bushman (San) are not official yet a great number of South African place names are Khoe in origin as will be seen in the discussion. The different suction consonants or clicks are determining factors in the meaning of some words and are used in some examples to clarify meaning.⁶ The geographical location of each feature will not be given as it is not relevant to the topic, but can be found in Raper (2004) where most of the examples come from.

The names will be discussed according to the following categories: the toponyms with a direct reference to violence, i.e. descriptive toponyms, will be discussed by way of groups divided into (A) descriptive names referring to wars, battles, suffering etc. and its aftermath; (B) descriptive names referring to challenges with forces of nature; and (C) toponyms that indirectly refer to violence, war or suffering like names referring to weaponry or items instrumental to acts of violence or conflict. Category (D) consists of anthroponymic toponyms (place names with a personal name) which have a descriptive backing referring to ac-

⁴ Peter Raper has been a member of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names since 1984, serving as chairman between 1991 and 2002. His well-researched dictionary on South African place names with more than 6000 entries is the most comprehensive collection of place names ever published in South Africa. It serves as a valuable source for comparative studies and etymological research on South African place names. His extensive knowledge of the Khoe and Bushman (San) languages is indispensable for the explanation of the many South African place names that are adapted forms of names given by the Khoe and/or Bushman long before any other group entered this southern part of the continent. Many articles by Raper in this regard are at the disposal of researchers. Some are listed in the Bibliography.

⁵ Place names in African languages are generally transparent, i.e. descriptive and usually consist of a descriptive phrase with prefixes like *Kwa-*, *Ku-*, *Ga-*, *e-*, *u-*, *i-*, *Ha-*, etc. or suffixes like *-eng*, *-ong*, *-eni*, etc. meaning 'place of' or 'place where.' The African place names are valuable linguistic indicators to cultural history.

⁶ "In 1856 the written form of four clicks was standardised, namely the dental click, /; the palatal click, #; the lateral click, // and the cerebral click, !. Prior to that date, various letters, combinations of letters, diacritic signs, and the like, were used to indicate the click sounds, eg *c*, *k*, *t*, 'k', 't', *tk*, *t'1*, *t'2*, *tq*, etc." (Raper 2004: xiii).

tivities of war or conflict that the person was involved with. This category refers to the toponyms that reflect violence by association, that is, they have a descriptive backing that refers to some form of violence like the name of a particularly cruel leader or commander of an army where many soldiers lost their lives. The wars in South Africa will not be discussed but reference will be made where applicable. Knowledge of the history of the country will, of course, help to understand the motivation behind some of the names.⁷ The following conflicts are represented in the names:

1. Tribal conflicts between indigenous people
2. The first and second Anglo-Boer War
3. The war between the British and the Zulus
4. The conflict between the Voortrekkers and indigenous people
5. Battles involving the Khoe and the Bushman (San)
6. The Frontier Wars in the Eastern Cape between British forces and the Xhosa people

However, South Africa is also a land of hope, peace and great beauty and it would only be fair, by way of contrast, to refer to a few of the toponyms that reflect these aspects which will be category (E). The discussion will end on this positive note.

5. Descriptive toponyms

A. Most of the toponyms discussed below refer to war or battles or conflict. The South African population consists of many cultural groups. The historical background of the migration of the different tribes, the often bloody results of their contact with each other and the battle for land and grazing are reflected in the names. The socio-political reasons behind the battles will, however, not be discussed. The following place names are a few that illustrate the kind of violence resulting from conflict:

Bloedrivier/Blood River: < the battle between 12000 Zulus and 460 Voortrekkers⁸ in 1838 where the blood of the Zulus was said to turn the river red. This river has a Zulu name *Ncome* (ironically meaning 'the pleasant one'). This victory over the Zulus was attributed by the Voortrekkers to their dedication to

⁷ A comprehensive source on the history of South Africa is Gilliomee and Mbenga (2007), *New History of South Africa* which gives an account of the earliest history from the first inhabitants, the mariners and adventurers on their way to the East, the colonial and settler era, the wars and internal conflicts, the apartheid regime, the liberation struggle and the new democracy.

⁸ The Voortrekkers were a group of people mostly of Dutch origin who left the Western Cape to get away from the imperialistic British rule. They moved to the eastern and northern part of the Cape and became known as the Voortrekkers ('people who are moving ahead/ to the front').

the Lord that if they could ward off the overpowering thousands of Zulu the day would be commemorated. The new government under President Nelson Mandela changed this Day of the Vow to the Day of Reconciliation.

Aggeneys: < Khoe for 'place of slaughter/blood/water/mountain/reeds,' of which only the first two meanings are relevant for this article. Khoe names are usually represented in a phonologically adapted form and differ from the original Khoe pronunciation. Some names of Khoe origin are translated and due to valuable research by scholars such as Raper mentioned above we have access to the origin of many South African names that seem opaque and foreign.

Emfabantu (mountain): < isiXhosa for 'the death of the people' referring to the battle in 1826 when the Thembu tribe of the Xhosas was beaten by the Mfecane⁹ of the Zulus. Also known as *Hangklip Mountain*.

Gqaqala River: < isiXhosa referring to people crawling away to escape during the Mfecane invasion in 1825.

Fugitives Drift: < where the British soldiers fled from the Zulus in the Battle of Isandlwana in 1879. See group (C) for *Isandlwana*.

Galgkop: < Afrikaans for 'gallow hill' referring to a place of hanging in earlier times.

Hauhoobis/Hauhobis: < Khoe for 'death, struggle, bitter bloody battle.' It is also the Khoe name for *Stryrivier* ('quarrel river').

Enyati: < Khoe for '/noa' ('shoot'), Dutch 'schiet.' *Enyati* is the Xhosa name for *Schietfontein* ('shoot fountain'). This is an example of a translation from Khoe and a Xhosa phonologisation of the Khoe word.

Battle Cave: < a cave in the Giant's Castle Nature Reserve with Bushman paintings depicting a conflict between two tribes.

Oorlogskloof River: < Afrikaans for 'war ravine river' and translated from Khoe meaning 'to win a battle.'

KwaBambangamandla: < isiZulu for 'place of the one who takes violently/forcefully.'

⁹ "The magnitude of human suffering during the Mfecane is unquantifiable. Hundreds of thousands of people were killed, vast numbers of refugees criss-crossed the face of the country. There was widespread starvation and even cannibalism and the very face of society was destroyed [. . .]. The Mfecane was more than just inter-tribe and inter-tribal warfare; it was a full-blown social and military revolution [. . .]" (Crampton 2004: 143).

KwaMathambo: < isiZulu for 'place of the bones.' An historic site of a battle between the Zulus and Voortrekkers in 1838 at *Blood River* where more than 3000 Zulus perished.

Ingogo (site)/*Ngogo* (river): < isiZulu for 'river/place of corpses/carcases/desolation' referring to an Anglo-Boer battle in 1881 with 76 British and 8 Boer casualties. Other meanings exist that have non-violent connotations. See Raper (2004: 271).

Moordenaarsbosch: < Afrikaans for 'murderer's bush,' where Voortrekkers were killed by the Xhosa.

Moordenaarspoort : < Afrikaans for 'murderers' gate,' an historical name for a place where many Khoe from the Griqua tribe and Bushman were murdered by the Basotho. It later became a mission station, then a town, now *Bethulie*, ironically meaning 'maiden of the Lord' or 'chosen by God' in Hebrew, given by the French Missionary Society. The place is also associated with the graves of women and children who died in the concentration camp during the Anglo-Boer war. This background description makes the name both descriptive and connotative.

Nahoon River: < Khoe for 'river of fighting/war.'

- B. Descriptive toponyms illustrating violence through forces of nature have their origin in the natural climatic conditions of the country. South Africa is a country with extremes in temperature and rain. The climate ranges from nearly tropical as in KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and Limpopo Provinces to the arid desert as in the Kalahari Desert, the Karoo and the Northern Cape. There are also extremely cold areas going below freezing point in the winter season with loss of cattle and human lives. The southern coastline and some mountain areas are known for raging winds and the annual outbreak of fires. Many shipwrecks are littered along the coastline after encounters with the rough and tempestuous sea.¹⁰ The drought makes the ignition of fires through neglect a problem in areas where cattle farmers depend on winter grass for grazing of their cattle to deliver milk and meat to metropolitan areas. The country is also prone to floods when the rivers break their banks, with devastating results for the inhabitants nearby. Other natural dangers are the wild life in the sparsely populated areas and the crocodiles in some rivers. The tropical northern part of the country also has problems with the malaria mosquito, a cause of many deaths if not diagnosed in time.

¹⁰ Meiring (2005).

The following names reflect aspects of violence caused by forces of nature:

Banghoek: < Afrikaans for 'corner/glen of fear,' a glen where the danger of lions and leopards were experienced when crossing the hill called *Helshoogte* ('hell's heights').

Ongeluksrivier: < Afrikaans for 'river of unhappiness/accident' where a man was killed by a lion.

Kwaaihoek: < Afrikaans for 'angry corner,' a promontory on the east coast where Bartholomeus Dias planted a cross believing it to be an island. The turbulence of the sea and wind is reflected in the name.

Cabo Tormentoso: < Portuguese for 'cape of storms' referring to stormy seas and winds around the Cape of Good Hope (*Cabo da Boa Esperance* in Portuguese). This is an example of an historical name included in the dictionary. See Raper (2004: 45).

Kamkusi: < a railway siding of which one explanation refers to Tshivenda 'infested with lions.' See Raper (2004: 165) for other explanations.

Kommessiekloof: < an Afrikaans translation from Khoe meaning 'cold wind ravine.' The semantically opaque relation between 'kommessie' and 'cold wind' could be due to folk etymological pronunciation of the Khoe word. Raper does not explain it either (Raper 2004: 184).

KuNkwanca (mountain): < isiXhosa meaning 'ice cold' < Khoe 'ice, frost, cold.'

Mabopane (an urban area): < Northern Sotho meaning 'coldness of the veld, despair, slow death,' but also 'make bricks by hand.' See Raper (2004: 215).

Madlabantuli (river): < Siswati for 'the one that eats people' referring to the danger when a river is in flood. This kind of metaphorical expression is common in African languages.

Moetlamogale (river): < Sotho for 'river is violent when in flood.'

Tatana (river): < isiZulu for 'take/take away/remove' referring to a river taking away everything when in flood.

Moordenaars-Karoo: < Afrikaans for 'murderer's Karoo,' referring to the harsh dry climate of the Karoo where drought and extremes in temperatures prevail.

Mount Misery: < This name has two explanations that both have violent undertones, i.e. referring either to cold and windy climatic conditions where

British troops fought, or to a part of Lotheni Pass where a punitive party was held up in pursuit of San marauders.

Kwa-Ndlutshile: < isiXhosa for 'the place where the huts have been burnt' referring to a raging fire destroying villages in 1869.

6. Associative toponyms: violence through association and by implication

Many names do not have any lexical reference to violence but their descriptive backing is associated with war or other forms of violence. Because associative meaning is an important part of the descriptive backing in any name, it can be discussed here. Social injustice leads to protest actions in townships and many of these names are associated with violence due to the presence of police action or riots leading to conflict with municipal officials or authorities who do not provide the services that are paid for by the residents. Clashes between political factions also lead to hostile actions that a place becomes associated with. Very often the lexical meanings of these names express the opposite of the associative meanings, for instance a place like *Boipatong*, meaning 'place of shelter,' is associated with an attack by the Inkatha Freedom Party with fatal results and trauma for young children which would shape their lives, both negatively and positively.¹¹ Similarly places like *Sharpeville*, *Sebokeng* ('place of gathering' in Sotho) and *Langa* ('sun' in isiXhosa) are associated with protests resulting in violent clashes with the police with fatalities and many hurt. Raper describes the connotation to *Sharpeville* as follows: "It gained notoriety when, on 21 March 1960, 67 Africans were killed and 186 wounded by police fire when a mob of 10,000 attacked the police station, a judicial enquiry subsequently reporting that there was no evidence of intentional violence on the part of the organisers or most of the crowd" (Raper 2004: 340).

In the context of violence by association, the following names are examples of places that have the connotation of a negative descriptive backing in the sense of suffering due to illness, conflict or war:

Amajuba: < Historic hill and battleground during the first Anglo-Boer war. (With reference to the dove as a symbol of peace it is ironic that the name means 'hill of many doves' in isiZulu).

¹¹ The resilience and courage of Bafana Bafana soccer captain Aaron Mokoena is expressed in his own words: "It was a terrible time, but getting through it gave me a lot of strength and character. After what happened in Boipatong, there aren't really any challenges that scare me" (De Villiers 2010: 59). Like this name there are other names (*Sebokeng*, *Amajuba*, *Hobhouse*, *Mitchell's Plain* and other non-South African names like *Hiroshima*, *Dunkirk*, *Lockerbie*, *Gettysburg*, etc.) used in a song called "Hot Gates" that are remembered for suffering as discussed in Neethling (1995: 56).

AmaLinde: < Historic site of the Battle of Amalinde between the Xhosa chiefs Ngqika and Ndlambe in 1818. The name means 'holes' in isiXhosa referring to the hollows in the area.¹²

Isandlwana: < Mountain and historic site of the Battle of Isandlwana where an entire British army was wiped out by the Zulu in 1879.¹³ The name means either 'third stomach' referring to the topography of the hill, or 'house-like' in isiZulu, which is the meaning that Raper finds more probable (Raper 2004: 154).

Kraaipan: < A small village in the vicinity where the Battle of Kraaipan took place in 1899 when the Boer forces took possession of an armoured train during the Anglo-Boer war. The name is Afrikaans for 'crow depression' or 'crow hollow.'

Kinderlê: < Afrikaans translation of Khoe *Goangoes* ('place where the children lay') where children's bodies were found after a marauding attack by the San on the village during the absence of the men of the village.

Lydenburg: < Dutch for 'town of suffering' referring to hardships due to disease, mostly malaria in the area. The new name is *Mashishing*: < Northern Sotho for a type of grass used for thatching.

Mensvretersberg: < Afrikaans for 'mountain of cannibals' from the time that various tribes were forced to resort to cannibalism while fleeing from the Zulus under Shaka.

Gowokobbie: < Khoe *t'koakhoib* for 'dead man.' Also known as *Deadman's Drift*. Other explanations also exist, according to Raper (2004: 119).

Hlambigazi: < isiZulu for 'place of washing off blood' referring to skirmishes between the Zulu and the British in 1879.

Clocolan: < corruption of the Sotho name *Hlohlowane* ('bump and fight') referring to the fight between the Bakwena and Batlhaping after a basket filled with wheat was bumped over (Raper 2004: 56).

¹² "Amalinde, or Debe Nek as it is sometimes known, is a most extraordinary place, a sea of undulating, shifting green mounds caused by giant earthworms [. . .] capable of reaching nearly two metres in length [. . .]. The confrontation took place in October 1818, and was one of the most critical and desperate battles in Xhosa history [. . .] the amaNdlambe out-numbered and out-manoeuvred Ngqika's men [. . .] all but one of Ngqika's counsellors were killed and some families lost every single one of their menfolk in the battle. Ngqika himself survived, however" (Crampton 2004:187).

¹³ "On that fateful day, 858 British troopers and 471 of their African allies died here. It was the worst defeat ever suffered by Britain in her history of colonial warfare. Some two to three thousand Zulus perished, but the Zulus were the victors [. . .]" (Garner 2010: 64).

Dutywa/Idutywa: < isiXhosa for 'be disturbed, confused' referring to the confused state of the Fingo and Thembu tribes after the invasions by the Zulu and Mfecane in 1820.

Marico: < Setswana presumably meaning 'place of blood/cornering/killing' or 'the meandering one,' or an adaptation of the name of Chief Madikwe of the Hurutshe tribe.

Guanhop (the Khoe name of *Douglas*): < Khoe for 'sad ford' referring to the heavy losses suffered in fights between the San (Bushmen) and Koranna (Khoe tribe).

Modimolle: < Northern Sotho *Modimo-o-le* ('God has eaten') referring to a shepherd who never came back from the mountain which has a steep cliff. The old name of the town was *Nylstroom* ('Nile stream,' referring to the Nile in Egypt named thus by a religious sect).

Makhomane (river): < Sotho for 'first contact' indicating the first battles between the Sotho and Tsonga.

Noodsberg: < Afrikaans for 'mountain of anxiety' referring to settlers fleeing from the Zulus.

Ntontela: < isiXhosa for 'village that causes tears.' This used to be a military post.

Sello (town): < Northern Sotho 'place of weeping.'

Toeslaan: < Afrikaans for 'to attack,' a Khoe translation of *Cnydas* ('to hurl an assegai').

Troe-Troe River: < Khoe meaning 'battle river.' A phonological adaptation.

Violence by implication through the presence of warfare or instruments of violence and its after math are detected in the following names:

Assegaibos: < where an assegai, traditional weapon of the Zulu warrior, was found in a bush.

Cannon Rocks: < where a rusty cannon, presumably from a shipwreck, was seen on the rocks and ultimately restored. The place is now a holiday resort.

Gun's Drift: < where a gun from the wrecked Grosvenor (1903) was found.

Benekraal: < Afrikaans for 'bone village' referring to bones of stolen cattle slaughtered on site by marauding tribes.

Geraamtespruit: < Afrikaans for 'skeleton stream.'

Maqandeka Hill/The Skeleton/Intaba ka Molokazi ('mountain of the skeleton'): < Khoe meaning 'skeleton,' translated and derived.

Keboes: < Khoe name of *Kanoneiland* ('canon island'). The Khoe name is an onomatopoeic rendering of the sound of a canon heard during punitive expeditions of 1878 against freebooters.

Jozini: < isiZulu for 'stabbing spear.' The word is also found in the tribal area *Emajozina*.

Long Tom Pass: < a pass named after a Cruesot artillery piece called "Long Tom" by the Boers in the second Anglo-Boer war from 1899-1902.

Mpekweni (a river and resort): < Khoe word meaning 'arrow' or 'dart' > isi-Xhosa *impequin* 'dart.'

Naval Gun Hill: < referring to British naval guns used against the Boers during the Anglo-Boer war.

7. Anthroponymic toponyms (place names with personal names)

Names of people have what is termed a descriptive backing that consist of the collective associations with the name. To some people a name may have pleasant memories, to others unhappy associations with the name are part of their memories. Historical sources are often selective about what a certain figure stood for, depending on the ideological point of view. However, certain historical facts remain coined in the names of places and these names are clues to the past. Amongst these places there are many forts named after historical figures.

KwaMagwaza: < isiZulu for 'place of the stabber' referring to the Magwaza clan.

KwaMatiwane: < isiXhosa for 'place of Matiwane' referring to a Xhosa Chief whose warriors were destroyed by British troops in 1828, was pursued by King Shaka of the Zulus and executed.

Ben Hope (mountain): < Magistrate Hamilton Hope murdered by the Mpondos in 1880.

Chelmsford Dam (dam): < Lord Chelmsford, Commander of the British forces against the Zulu in 1879. Renamed in 2001 to *Ntsongwayo Dam*, after the Zulu commander.

Danster's Kloof (ravine): < Xhosa leader Nzwane (Danster), son of Rharhabe, who in the 1790's fled from Chief Ndlambe.

Delareyville: < General De La Rey of the Boer forces during the Anglo-Boer War, shot by the police for failing to stop at a road block.

Fetcani Pass: < Mfecane and Fetcane driven from Natal by King Shaka in 1823 and settled in the Transkei.

Grahamstown: < Colonel John Graham who fought against the Xhosa who suffered devastating losses. This was the military headquarters and centre of the 1820 British settlers. The association with the cruelty suffered during this battle is so negative that the name of this town has been proposed by the Eastern Cape Provincial Names Committee as one that should be listed as a geographical name which is abusive and should be changed. No official proposal has been made to the South African Geographical Names Council.

Hobhouse: < Emily Hobhouse, a British philanthropist who focussed the attention on atrocities in the concentration camps where Boer women and children were kept during the Anglo-Boer war.

Intaba kaNdoda: < Xhosa for 'mountain of Ndoda' referring to the home of a Khoe chief killed by warriors of Chief Rharhabe.

Klaas Voogds River: < Claas Voogd, an official of the Dutch East India Company who chased Khoe attackers away in 1717.

Langalibalele Pass: < the leader of the Hlubi tribe who refused to surrender their rifles in 1873. His name means 'the scorching sun' in isiZulu.

Makgobas Kloof: < Afrikaans for 'Makgoba's ravine' referring to a Batlou chief who was beheaded by the Swazis.

Makhado (settlement and district): < a powerful but controversial Venda Chief, Makhado, who ruled in 1864. He refused to co-operate with Voortrekker leader Louis Trichardt and missionaries in the area of the Soutpansberg. The measure of negative associative meaning that the two names *Makhado* and *Louis Trichardt* have amongst different communities is clear with the proposal that the town *Louis Trichardt's* name be changed to *Makhado* and the number of objections against this proposal with an eventual court case to rule whether sufficient consultation had been done in the community.

Mokopane (the new name since 2002 for *Potgietersrus*): < Ndebele Chief Mokopane/Magombane who brutally murdered Boer men, women and children. He and his men then fled to a cave where after 25 days a punitive expedition overpowered them.

Other names have been changed on the grounds of being unacceptable to one group in the South African community due to the descriptive backing of the name as experienced by this community, for instance, *Pietersburg* (town of Pieter, named after Commandant-General Piet Joubert of the Boer forces), that was changed to *Polokwane*, Northern Sotho for 'place of safety.' The dynamics behind the changing of a country's names is, however, a topic for another discussion. See Jenkins (2007), Coetser (2006) and Meiring (1996).

Makapaansgrot (the cave mention under *Mokopane* above).

Makapaanstad (a township): < Afrikaans for 'town of Makapaan,' an adapted form for Mokopane/Magombane. See *Mokopane* above.

Lembe Hills (mountain): < a notorious cattle thief and woman abductor, Lembe, who was eventually killed by Shaka.

Makanaskop (hill and township): < Afrikaans for 'Makana's hill,' named after the Xhosa chief and prophet who organised the Battle of Grahamstown from the hill in 1819. The Xhosa name for the mountain is *Intaba ye Zono* ('mountain of sins'). The District Municipality is called *Makana*.

Maleoskop: < Afrikaans for 'Maleo's hill,' where the Bakopa chief Maleo attacked the Boers in 1864 after joining another chief, Mapoch in the attack.

Mapoch (settlement): < Ndebele chief Mahlangu known by the Boers as Mapoch/Mabogho/Mapok/Mapog, notorious as cattle thief, ultimately sentenced to death in 1883, later commuted to life imprisonment.

Manyatseng: < Southern Sotho for 'at the despicable or Lenyatse's house' / < *ho nyatsa* 'to despise' referring to feelings of disgust after an incident when a woman was raped.

Mohaleshoek (historical site): < Afrikaans for 'Mohales corner,' the site of a clash between Basotho and Boers who lost many lives, named after the Basotho chief Mohale.

Sekhukhune (town): < a Pedi chief, Sekhukhune, who was murdered by Chief Mampuru.

The number of forts, which are generally associated with war, bearing the names of leaders, commanders, chiefs, etc. amount to almost 60 while towns and settlements amount to about 8. Some forts have been declared national monuments while others do not have any status. Examples of forts are:

Fort Armstrong, Fort Beresford, Fort Brown, Fort Durnford, Ford Edward, Fort Grey, Fort Innes, Fort Mapoch, Fort Napier, Fort Nongqai, Fort Usher, etc.

Examples of settlements built on original sites where forts were erected are:

Fort Beaufort (built around a fort; the War of the Axe started here in 1846 referring to a dispute over an axe in a shop in this town), *Fort Cox* (settlement and agricultural college), *Fort Hare* (the well known University of Fort Hare was built on this site), *Fort Jackson* (industrial site built on this site), *Fort Nottingham* (village built on the site), etc.

8. Names with a positive message

The dreary South African toponymical scene of violence and cruelty pictured above can be balanced by place names that express peace, hope, well-being, safety, etc. The *ubuntu* concept¹⁴ implies these aspects but the fact that many of these names refer to feeling safe and protected implies that at some stage in the past there was danger or discomfort of some sort. A few examples where peace is a theme are:

Agisanang: < Setswana for 'live together in peace.' See Category (A); *Kagiso*: < Setswana for 'place of peace'; *Kgotsong*: < Southern Sotho for 'place of peace'; *Khanyiso*: < isiXhosa for 'peace'; *Vrede*: < Afrikaans for 'peace.' See also *Vrededorp*, *Vredefort*, *Vredehoek*, *Vredenburg*, etc. in Raper (2004: 396).

Well-being is reflected in names like *Ncome River*: < isiZulu for 'the pleasant one.' See *Blood River* in Category (A); *Blyde River*: < Dutch for 'happy' river referring to the safe return of the Voortrekkers. The previous name was *Treur River* (Afrikaans for 'river of mourning') because the rest of the party thought they were dead; *Giyani*: < Shangaan for 'place where people dance for joy'; *Guguletu*: < isiXhosa for 'our pride'; *Ikhutseeng/Khutseong*: < Setswana for 'place of rest'; *Pilgrims Rest*; *Rustenburg*: < Dutch for 'town of rest'; *Kathlehong*: < Northern Sotho for 'place of success/happiness/shelter'; *Bophelong*: < Sotho for 'place of good health.'

Safety is expressed in names like *Boipatong*: < Sotho for 'place of shelter' where the owner of a farm allowed unemployed families to build huts for themselves on the farm. Compare the notes for this town mentioned under Associative toponyms above; *Boitumelong*: < Setswana for 'place of happiness'; *Bothebolong*: < Sotho for 'place of protection'; *Botshabelo*: < Sotho for 'place of refuge'; *Duduza*: < isiZulu for 'place of comfort/consolation'; *Entsimkeni*: < isiXhosa for 'place of support.'

¹⁴ Humanity in African culture in South Africa rests on the saying "*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*" shortened to "*ubuntu*" and meaning 'a person is who he is as a result of the influence of others.'

9. Conclusion

This article focuses on the geographical names in South Africa that point towards different manifestations of violence as the motivational force behind the bestowal of the name. In spite of the many names referring to the history of wars and violent encounters between the people of South Africa, there are also many names that have not been mentioned that indicate that peace and hope are part of the South African scene. Therefore, different aspects of violence portrayed by the examples mentioned do not give the full picture and may give a distorted version of the history and social life in South Africa. The different cultures represented in the names reflect a national history that is intertwined and ultimately form the South African nation. Research based on the rich corpus of data in Raper's dictionary cannot easily be exhausted and opens up new horizons for toponymical studies on South African place names. Bearing this in mind more research on other aspects reflected by geographical names in South Africa would add to a more balanced view of the South African toponymical landscape. Studies on the renaming of geographical features after 1994 change the picture once again and give another perspective with a socio-political stance. Many of these articles are published amongst others in journals like *Nomina Africana* (*Journal of the Names Society of Southern Africa*, published by the Onomastic Studies Unit at the University of KwaZulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg) and *Language Matters* published by Unisa Press at the University of South Africa.

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