Personal Name Trends in Independent Zambia: A Reflection on the Fluidity of Living Heritage

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ABSTRACT

Personal name usage in Zambia, as is common elsewhere, has undergone changes – reflecting the overall cultural and historical changes in the nation. This article identifies the changes which took place in personal naming patterns in Zambia since independence and discusses the wider socio-cultural and political factors which caused the changes in personal naming patterns in independent Zambia. The period after independence in 1964 represents a complex of various interacting histories of the nation, which have significantly impacted naming patterns. These include, transitions from mandatory requirement for adherents of the Roman Catholic Church and other Christian organisations to adopt baptismal names of European saints and enforcement, by school authorities, of usage of European first names by indigenous Northern Rhodesians during British colonial domination, to freedom to choose first names following political independence. Further developments include the closer mingling of local tribes/languages, the rise of charismatic churches, and Islam, among others. The methodology includes quantitative text analysis of the publicly available comprehensive University of Zambia (UNZA) graduate directory which contains names of all the institution's graduates for the fifty-year period from its foundation in 1966 to 2016. This work samples 2504 names extracted from the graduate directory between 1976 and 2016 in ten-year-intervals as follows: 1976, 1986, 1996, 2006 and 2016. The highest institution of learning in Zambia is located in the capital, Lusaka. UNZA students are drawn from multi-ethnic backgrounds, mostly featuring Zambian language groups. The period under consideration includes both people who were born/named before and after independence. Other methods used in the context of the wider thesis were ethnographic field interviews with 23 respondents in Chongwe, Kafue and Lusaka districts, and personal communication with seven others by electronic means. Among the field respondents, four were aged between their mid-60s and 73, while the rest were of varying ages between 20 and 52. The purposive selection criteria for the four elderly participants included age – those who had some experience of life under British colonial rule. The other group was randomly selected, observing balance in gender, socio-economic status and political views. The study confirms an increase in the usage of first names drawn from local languages. Over the study period, usage of indigenous Zambian personal names increased from 7.9 per cent to 31.6 per cent. The study also shows different generic patterns of first name usage among the different ethnic groups.

Introduction

This diachronic study of first name usage in Zambia, over the period between the last decade of the colonial experience and the early 1990s, identifies the changes which took place in personal naming patterns in Zambia since independence and discusses the wider social, cultural and political factors which caused the changes. There are seventy-three ethnic languages and dialects in Zambia(Kashoki, 1990). Figure 1 below presents the linguistic and cultural diversity of Zambia. It is important, however, to note that linguistic maps usually fail to capture the full complexities of the sociolinguistic situation as many people from different ethnicities now live together in the same localities. (Van Binsbergen, 2004; Makoni, Makoni and Mashiri, 2007; Hinfelaar, 2010). From colonial times, English has been the main language of broadcasting, educational instruction and administration.
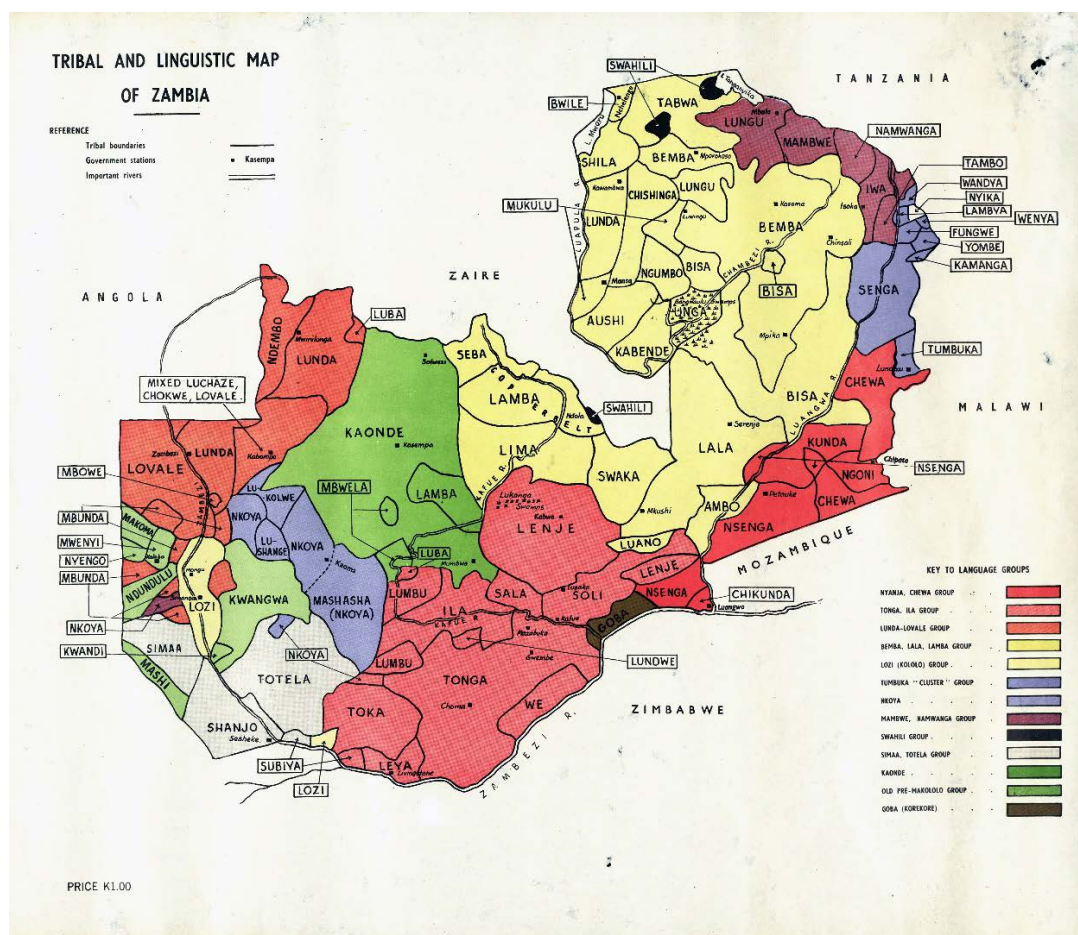
Figure 1: Linguistic Map of Zambia - Source: African Studies Centre Leiden(Leiden, 2019)

Independent Zambia, Beyond 1964

The First President of the new democratic and multiparty Republic of Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda promoted national cohesion through the "One Zambia, One Nation" campaign which was initiated by his government. However, deep ethnic divisions began to manifest within the newly founded nation (Phiri, 2006). This state of division along tribal lines discouraged Kaunda. In 1968, he resigned as President, claiming he could not lead a divided nation. However, he rescinded his decision after forty-eight hours due to public protests (Mwanakatwe, 1971). The President set precedence in making efforts toward national unity.

One of the means to this end was a concept called "tribal balancing" (Kapotwe, 1980). It deliberately promoted the welfare of Zambians from all ethnic groups, offering opportunities for all – not necessarily on the basis of merit – but based of equitable representation of all ethnicities (Kapotwe, 1980). The government hoped to create a more peaceful nation by recognising the importance of all ethnic groups. Resulting in intermarriages among people from different ethnic groups, a practice which was traditionally discouraged in some tribes, tribal balancing was one of the factors which led to parents assigning to a child names sourced from a mixture of local languages.

Naming Trends

Across the African continent, several eminent people changed their names after their countries attained independence. Some examples are Kenya's founding President Johnstone Kamau, who changed his name to *Jomo Kenyatta*, Malawian first President Hastings Kamuzu Banda to *H. Kamuzu Banda*; world renowned Nigerian novelist Albert Chinualumoga Achebe changed to *Chinua Achebe*, and Kenyan novelist James Ngũgĩ took on the name *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o*. Others are Malawian political activist John Lupenga Mpande, who changed to *Lupenga Mphande*, and South African political activist Bennett Alexander renamed himself as *Khoisan X* (Mphande, 2006).

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In addition to changing his name from Joseph Mobutu to *Mobutu Sese Seko* and that of his country from Congo to *Zaire*, the Zairean (now Congo DR) president led his government in 1972 to decide that their citizens would no longer use foreign names. Moreover, colonial place names were changed to local toponyms (Ndoma, 1977). This was an outrageous step for the Zairean government to take because, just like colonial governments, they did not respect the wishes of the governed.

Zambia was not spared by this wave of Pan-Africanism in naming practices. President Kaunda assigned indigenous Zambia names to all his children. Many of his colleagues did the same, some even changing their own names after independence.

> Post-independence era saw a gradual move towards legitimising indigenous Zambian names. It was not a rapid process, considering that there were generations who had accepted that names needed to be 'Christian/ Western' in order to be legitimate. Official documents bore these Christian names, but people started to identify with their "mukombo" names more and more. This is the "free" generation that then started to name their children indigenous names, unapologetically not appending any European name. This was made possible by the national effort to encourage Zambians to take pride in their own identity, which of course included names. National debates were encouraged to promote this process of being proud of who we are, accepting that there was nothing embarrassing about identifying as indigenous in many ways.[1]

Some Zambians also changed their names. For example, Professor Tembo, one of the graduates who was on the 1976 graduation list examined for this study as *Jacob Sani Tembo* now uses a new Tumbuka name which he gave himself in the 1980s – *Mwizenge Tembo*. A former politician in the Zambian government, *Derrick Chitala*, renamed himself with a Mambwe name as *Mbita Chitala*. Then, Peter Magande now uses his original Tonga name *Ng'andu Magande* or, at times including the Biblical name as, *Ng'andu Peter Magande*.

Objectives

o   To identify the changes which took place in personal naming patterns in Zambia since independence.
o   To discuss the wider socio-cultural and political factors which caused the changes in personal naming patterns in independent Zambia.

Literature Review

While much of the literature available on African anthroponyms and toponyms, as observed by Makoni et al., is drawn from linguistics, (Makoni, Makoni and Mashiri, 2007, p. 445) my endeavour and wish is to make a contribution to the field of cultural heritage studies through Zambian anthroponyms. Being among the most portable cultural elements,(Fraser and Matthews, 1987; Alhaug and Saarelma, 2017) names individually and collectively constitute a "museum" of intangible cultural heritage (ICH).

Around the world, names as key cultural elements or gestures of bestowing names have been regarded by some as symbols of acceptance of an individual into the human family (Ainiala, Saarelma and Sjöblom, 2018). They have played the important function of linking one to the wider society and culture (Ki-Zerbo, 1981; Kimenyi, 1989; Bangeni and Coetser, 2000; Vom Bruck and Bodenhorn, 2006; Alhaug and Saarelma, 2017). While it is argued in some societies that names have no meaning but merely serve the purpose of identity (Searle, 1967; Mill, 1974). Mbiti (1970, p. 154) establishes that "[n]early all African names have meaning." Broadly, Zambian traditional names firmly situate individuals into the nation's cultural heritage. More specific, names are typically taken from the natural environment, circumstances of birth and social experiences prevailing prior to, or at, the time of birth (Tembo, 1988, 1989, 2006, 2012; Sumbwa, 1997; Lisimba, 2000; Penda, 2013). According to Sumbwa (1997, p. 51), among the Lozi "names are not only meaningful but purposeful. The purpose of a name dictates its choice for a particular individual."

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1 Nora Mumba. Personal communication, 17 January 2020.

Names and naming dynamics indicate broader social change (Alia, 1985; Makoni, Makoni and Mashiri, 2007). They also explain and classify patterns of domination and submission (Alia, 1985; Makoni, Makoni and Mashiri, 2007; Mamvura, Muwati and Mutasa, 2018).

Moreover, names indicate what the name giver expects of the name bearer (Neethling, 2004). For instance, when Xhosa parents expect their children to exhibit positive human attributes in future, they express their wish in the kinds of name they assign to them (Neethling, 2004; Cekiso and Meyiwa, 2012).

Apart from sharing many similarities in the cultural practices related to naming, the Zambian multi-ethnic environment also offers many variations. For instance, whereas a Lamba or Luvale midwife assigns a (temporary) name to an infant immediately after birth, it is customary for many others to wait until the shedding of the umbilical cord stump before the infant receives a name from its father or grandfather (Lisimba, 2000; Kapwepwe, 2002; Tembo, 2006; Mutunda, 2011, 2017; Chishiba, 2017; Musonda, Ngalande and Simwinga, 2019). Therefore, as the national cultural policy states, Zambian society offers unity in diversity ('National Cultural Policy of the Republic of Zambia', 2003).

Several Zambians have previously conducted research focusing on various aspects of traditional names. In addition, I have also been active in researching Zambian names and their meanings. This work is important in filling the knowledge gap on the influence of greater cultural, political and social trends on naming patterns in Zambia.

Methodology

As part of an MA thesis in Cultural Heritage Studies submitted to CEU, this article benefits from a wider methodology which employed various methods. These include ethnographic field research conducted in Chongwe, Kafue and Lusaka districts in July 2019 and quantitative text analysis of names of graduates from the UNZA graduate directory.

Twenty-three respondents (nineteen interviews) were interviewed. Among these, four were aged between their mid-60s and 73, while the rest were of varying ages between 20 and 52. The purposive selection criteria for the four elderly participants included age – those who had some experience of life under British colonial rule. The other group was randomly selected, observing balance in gender, socio-economic status and political views. Seven other informants who were not available at the time of my field work – not included in the number of respondents (twenty-three) captured above – supplied useful information later on through personal communication by electronic means.

For the elderly participants, questions were centred on the treatment of indigenous Zambian names in colonial times and after independence and how the names relate to Zambian culture. The younger participants contributed on the current attitudes among Zambians and – most of them being parents – sharing their own naming practices.

I conducted one-on-one interviews, in addition to group interviews. A sound recorder was used to make audio recording of the interviews with prior consent of the participants; the recordings were later transcribed and analysed. These responses were then analysed together with existing literature.

The main source of data for this article was the publicly available UNZA graduates directory, which contains names of all the institution's graduates for the fifty-year-period from its foundation in 1966 to 2016.

Higher learning institutions in Zambia draw their students from all regions and from all ethnic groups. They are generally considered to represent all ethnicities which are found in the larger Zambian society. Furthermore, diversity can be observed in students recruited from all regions (rural and urban), from high, middle and low-income families, and from all religions and ethnicities. More so, the national university, has exhibited this balance in student enrolment from its inception to the present. Therefore, the lists of graduates from UNZA, in my judgement, provide good samples for analysis of Zambian names from multilingual/multicultural sources.

Traditionally, the university has had three main avenues of enrolment: the school of education, the school of humanities and social sciences and the school of natural sciences. The criteria I employed involved selection of sample lists of graduates from programs which have been offered by the respective schools from inception. The lists selected were in ten-year intervals, including 1976, 1986, 1996, 2006

and 2016. More specifically, the lists were those for the Bachelor of Arts with Education (B.A.Ed.), Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) and Bachelor of Science (BSc.) programmes. That these were, and still are, among the most highly populated programs in the university provided a sufficiently wide sample. However, there were some exceptional cases during sample selection. For instance, I noticed that there was no B.A. list for 1976 in the directory. Yet, 1975 had two different lists for B.A. graduates. I, therefore, used my discretion and treated the second list as if it were from 1976. Similarly, since there were two graduations for the 2016 academic year, the other one happening in January 2017, I only used the earlier lists for both B.A. and B.A.Ed. Conversely, I made an exception, combining the 2016 BSc. and Bachelor of Computer Science lists from the same school to increase the sample size.

A total of 2,504 names of UNZA graduates were analysed using excel. I examined each list and took note of the sources of the names. Once analysed, I interpreted the results, taking into account existing literature as well as the views expressed by respondents during my ethnographic field research of July 2019.

In addition to the above approaches, this work has been influenced by personal experience, which may be reflected in some anecdotal references meant to enhance the discussions.

Presentation of Naming Trends

In Table 1 below, the letters A and E refer to African and European/Biblical first names, respectively – where a candidate only has one first name and a surname; AA and EE represent African and European first and middle names, respectively. On the other hand, AE represents an African first name and a European/ Biblical middle name, and EA is the reverse. AI and EI stand for African and European/Biblical first names, respectively, followed by an initial. Then, N-SE represents non-standard European/Biblical names due to local distortions/adaptations. The letters MLL stand for names from a mixture of local languages. Further, MTON refers to candidates bearing more than one name before a surname; the row OFFN represents other foreign first names. These include names from other African languages, Islamic/ Arabic names and other names of Asian origin. Lastly, FSN refers to foreign surnames.

Table 1: UNZA Graduate Name Trends in Percentages, c.1976-2016

	1976	1986	1996	2006	2016
A	2.8	6.9	12.6	28.3	24.7
AA	1.4	3.1	0.7	2.5	0.9
AE	3.7	6.3	0.7	3.1	4
AI	0	0	1.1	5.1	2
EI	0.5	0	3.8	10	2.2
EA	42.2	31.7	22.7	5.9	10.9
EE	26.9	13.8	5.3	1.8	2.4
E	18.8	32.3	49.2	45	50.5
N-SE	19.6	19.7	16.6	15.7	17
MLL	1.4	1.9	3.3	6.6	7.3
MTON	67.3	54.9	34.2	28.4	22.5
OFFN	4.2	0.6	0.7	0.9	1.5
FSN	15.4	3.1	1.1	2.3	0.8

Table 1 shows continuous decrease in the use of middle names from 67.3% in 1976, to 54.9% in 1986, and 34.2% in 1996. Further, this figure drops to 28.4% in 2006 and 22.5% in 2016. The percentages for middle names also include initials, which have been used more by candidates in the last three decades of the study. The study thus shows increase in the use of one first name – whether African or European. The use of indigenous Zambian first names increased from 7.9% in 1976 to 39% in 2006, and dropped to 31.6% among the graduates of 2016. Then, the use of non-standard Enlgish/Biblical names slightly decreased. Moreover, there was also constant rise in the presence of names indicating a misture of local

languages; in some cases, this mixture was indicated by first, middle and/or last names coming from different languages. In the category of other foreign first names (OFFN), there was a genertic shift from names from Zulu (South Africa), Sotho (Lesotho) and Shona (Zimbabwe) names in the 1970s to include some Islamic/Arabic names in the last two decades. However, traces of Kikuyu (Kenya), Kinyarwanda (Rwanda), Igbo (Nigeria), Ghanaian and Hindi/Gujarati (India) names were also found in the lists. There was also decrease in foreign surnames from 15.4% in 1976 to 0.8% in 2016.

Names from all local Zambian ethnicities were represented in the lists considered for this study as was expected. There were different naming practices from one group to another. However, the underlying commonality for all groups was the increased use of local names over the given period.

In Figure 2 and Figure 3 below, the letters LOZ represent the Lozi of Western Province; BEM rerpesents not only the Bemba but also many other related ethnic groups, including as Ambo, Lala, Lamba, Ng'umbo, and Swaka, which share numerous common names. Further, NYA stands for Nyanja, representing ethnic groups from eastern Zambia such as the Chewa, Kunda, Ngoni, Nsenga, Senga and Tumbuka. TOI refers to the Tonga of southern Zambia; however, I considered related Lenje names in the same group. While the letters N/W refer to North-western Province, they represent the Chokwe, Kaonde, Luchazi, Lunda, Luvale and Mbunda languages, some of which are also found in the Western, and parts of Central, provinces. Then, the category OL refers to other local languages. It is important to note that these are not rigid tribal divisions, but moderately wider categorisations of names to gain insight into the general ethnic differences in name usage.
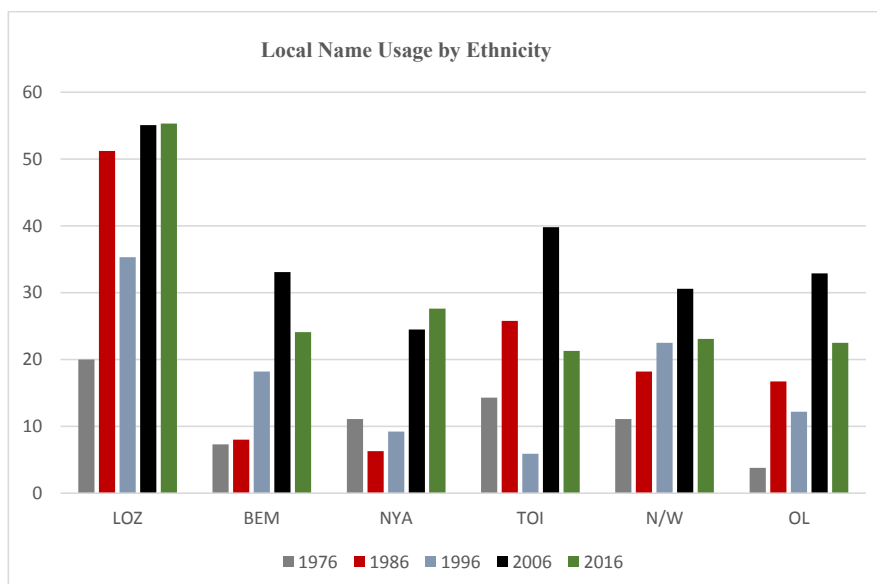

Figure 2: Percentage of UNZA Graduate Local Name Usage by Ethnicity

Figure 2 shows general increase in usage of indigenous first names among all ethnic groups. However, Lozi names not only maintained visibility as the most frequently used in terms of percentage, but their usage also leaped from 20% in 1976 to 55.3% in 2016. Usage of Tonga names experienced an all time high of 39.8% in 2006 before dropping to 21.3% in 2016. Additionally, use of Bemba names rose from 7.3% in 1976 to 33.1% in 2006 and fell to 24.1% in 2016. Names from other local languages, notably Mambwe/Namwanga names, increased in usage from 3.8% in 1976 to 32.9% in 2006 and decreased to 22.5% in 2016. The Frequency of North-western (N/W) names ascended from 11.1% in 1976 to 30.6% in 2006 and descended to 23.1% in 2016. Lastly, usage of names from languages from the Eastern Province improved from 11.1% in 1976 to 27.6% in 2016.

Mulenga stressed the importance of using or promoting local names as a way telling each other's ethnic origin. He also noted and commended the common practice among Lozis to give local names to their children. It is important for us to promote names. Despite the intermixing of tribes in provinces, we will be able to tell the ethnic origin of each other.

It is important for us to keep our [traditional] names. They are pointers. Because if I just hear a person's name, her/his two names, especially here in Zambia, I can know that this person comes from such and such a town, or from such and such a province.

> If s/he says "[I am] Mulenga", "Chanda", I can know that s/he is from Northern Province, Luapula, that's where such names are found.

Another reason is urbanisation. People are also found in other provinces [other than their traditional homes], but still maintain their traditional names. Thus, if we meet in Southern Province, I can meet a Musonda in Southern Province. Then I'll know that s/he is just an immigrant [it is not his/her traditional homeland] to this province. Her/his homeland is Northern or Luapula [province]. Even if we meet in the Copperbelt [province], I can know that s/he just went there. His/her origin is such and such a place – all through names.

> If I hear "Njovu", then I'll know that he/she is from Eastern Province; "Haantobolo", then I'll know that he/she is from Southern Province. So, it is important. It is like a number place, such that if they just hear your name, they even know where you're from. We can preserve our names through giving our children these same names. Many, especially from Western Province, they are fond of using their [traditional] names completely. White people's names are not common there. They just use their names. It is important for all of us, to just be using our names.[2]

Use of local names makes it possible to know an indivudual's ethnic origin despite her/him living in a different locality. Further, the presence of non-standard English/Biblical, as presented in Figure 3, names was fluctuating in the different decades studied. It appeared to be stronger in names from the Nyanga group as well as among the Tonga, followed by the Bemba and the OL catgeories. The North-western and Lozi names were the least affected.
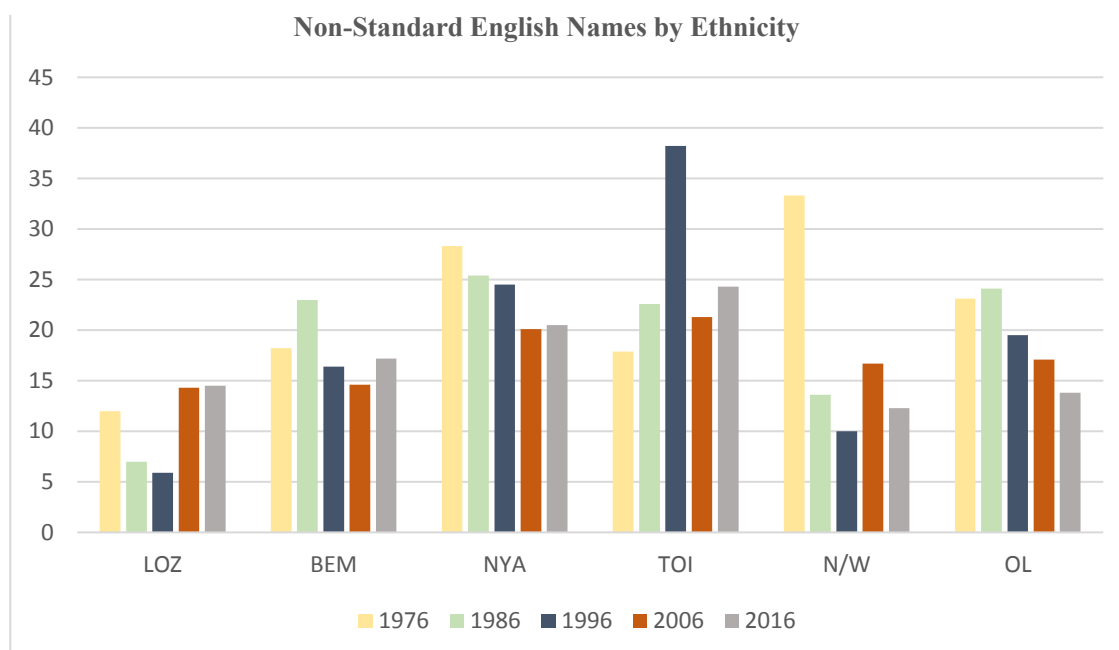

Figure 3: Percentage of UNZA Graduate Non-Standard English Names by Ethnicity

Examples of non-standard English names include: *Blessing*, *Brave*, *Charms*, *Fully Proud*, *Limited*, *Memory*, *Million*, *Pardon*, *Precious* and *Square*; and distorted names *Elijar* (*Elijah*), *Getrude* (*Gertrude*), *Jabesi* (*Jabez*) and *Osward* (*Oswald*). Concerning these kinds of names, Makoni et al (2007, p. 440) opined that "[m]ost of these names appear dialectal and sound humorous, idiosyncratic and sometimes nonsensical and weird to non-Zimbabweans and English native speakers, but are consistent with the social and linguistic formations of New Englishes."

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2   Xaviour Mulenga, Interview by Osward Chanda, Lusaka,10 July 2019.

In their study of similar dynamics in Zimbabwean names, Makoni et al suggest that distortion of, or creation of non-Standard, English names displays genuine effort by African populations to adapt the English language to the local context. They likened this to the distortions which Europeans made to African anthroponyms and toponyms during the colonial period. Zimbabwean examples included the place *Mutare* (which was renamed as *Umthali*), *Gweru* (*Gwelo*), and *Huange* (*Wankie*) (Makoni, Makoni and Mashiri, 2007). Similarly, in Zambia, the place *Inkelenge* (was renamed as *Nchelenge*), *Mufulila* (*Mufulira*), and *Mungu* (*Mongu*).[3] Concerning personal names during the colonial period, Moyo presents *Qabaniso*, *Gomezga* and *Hluphekile* as examples of the names which Europeans found difficult to pronounce in northern Malawi (Moyo, 2012, p. 12). As explained in Chapter 2, they resorted to changing the names of Africans. Similarly, due to postcolonial language policies promoting the use of English in Anglophone African countries – including Zambia – citizens have made efforts to adapt the language into their languages/cultures; and this is evident in the non-standard English/Biblical names and in distortions. Makoni et al (2007) also observed that despite realising that their names were distortions or non-standard, the name bearers continued to use these names regardless of their level of education (Makoni, Makoni and Mashiri, 2007). However, my uncle changed his name from *Fulubeleto* to its proper English form *Albert* when he learnt that the former was Bemba distortion.

Distortions also extend to local names. From the lists under study, distortions are also found in the earlier, 1976 group – in addition to the lists from later decades. With this practice, the students/graduates try to "anglicise" the sound of their names by adding the letter "h" at the end. Examples of distorted local names include: *Kalimah* (original form: *Kalima*), *Tizah* (*Tiza*), *Nkhuwah* (*Nkhuwa*), and *Gumboh* (*Gumbo*). Kashoki attributed the spread of some distortions in pronunciation of local anthroponyms and toponyms to deliberate distortions by media personnel. "Media personnel (electronic media); radio and television broadcasters and announcers cause indelible distortions of names and their sounds…. Broadcasters are pace setters and standard bearers,"(Kashoki, n.d.).[4]

Furthermore, there was presence of politically inclined names, especially from the 1996 cohort. These graduates were mostly born in the early 1970s when Zambia was fresh from independence, and afterwards. Examples of these names include *Freeman, Leopold, Census, Jubilee* and *Gaddafi.*

Also, the lists display a general decrease in the use of middle names, at least in the official register. It was not clear whether the initials represented indigenous or foreign names. Even so, whether taking the initials or the middle names which were written in full, the use of middle names has significantly reduced in terms of percentage when compared to the older registers. The shift from writing middle names in full to use of initials was also noted in Malawi after independence (Moyo, 2012, p. 15).

By this indication, it does seem that many Zambian parents have become less "generous" with assigning extra names to their children. It seems fashionable to give only one first name – whether foreign or indigenous – and a Zambian traditional surname. This may be because there are generally fewer people giving names to the same baby than before. "The child's emergence as an individual is a consequence of a new nuclear concept of family that replaces the clan unit," (Suzman, 1994, p. 264). In earlier registers, it was also common for graduates to bear two European personal names plus a surname.

Discussion of Naming Trends

African names provide information, albeit sometimes obtusely, about their bearers and sometimes their givers, or the socio-political circumstances at the time of naming. Meanings relate variously to linguistic, cultural, and religious conventions (Klerk, 2002, p. 202).

In his social cultural history study of Western European names from classical antiquity to modern times, Stephen Wilson suggests that since names are connotative, an adequate explanation concerning them requires social and historical analysis. Additionally, there should be description and analysis of naming systems (Wilson, 1998). In our discussion of Zambian naming practices in the postcolonial period, let us examine the context of the wider cultural environment.

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3 Nyambe Sumbwa, lecture notes, University of Zambia. 2010

4 The hardcopy manuscript is in the Institute of Economic and Social Research (INESOR) library in Lusaka. It has no information on the date.

Studies done by Neethling, De Klerk and Bosch in South Africa revealed that the majority of people in rural areas tended to give English names to their children while those in urban areas preferred indigenous African names (Neethling, 1988; De Klerk and Bosch, 1995).

Further, Suzman observed that family trends significantly affected name giving patterns. The rise of families with single parents caused mothers and other family members to replace fathers as name givers (Suzman, 1994). She further remarked that families with single parents – where mothers were name givers – tended to give English names to their children.

On a different note, ethnic integration (through marriage/parentage) at family level may account for the consistent rise in names indicating a mixture of local languages (in the MLL category in Table 2 above), in addition to other factors. Senior Chief Kanong'esha explains that "[b]efore tribes and countries unified to achieve independence, Lunda-Ndembu women could marry only Lunda-Ndembu men. This practice stemmed from the ethics of circumcision and demands of health," (Sweta, 2010, p. 25). Similarly, families in many matrilineal societies feared establishing links with bad [sic] families through marriage. Therefore, in the Eastern province, outsiders were not allowed to marry in some villages (Ngulube, 1989; Penda, 2013). However, through the tribal balancing programme introduced by the Kaunda government after independence, many young graduates were sent to work away from their tribal homelands, resulting in intermarriages. Therefore, intermarriages were partly responsible for the rise in individuals bearing names from different local ethnic groups over the study period.

Referring to Table 1 above, it is worth noting that the graduates of 1976 were mostly born at least a decade before Zambia's independence. As a result, the patterns inherent in their names give us an idea of the state of personal names during the colonial period. This is evident also in the low percentage of usage of local first names, which stood at a meagre 7.9%.

The reforms in naming during the colonial period, referred to earlier, relegated the indigenous first name to be used as a middle name, as an initial or to simply disappear. A middle name is locally referred to as *ishina lya pa mutoto* (Bemba) or *zina lya pa mukombo* (Nyanja) – "navel name" – in many Zambian traditions up to date. Traditionally, it is considered to be the person's "real name". It is also the name which family members typically use when referring to an individual.

In my case, my family members have always used my traditional name when referring to me. However, other people prefer to use English/Christian names even when they are with their families. Makoni et al argue that using different names in school and home environments widens the gap between home and school. As a result, students assume different identities at school and at home. This makes it difficult for children to implement what they learn at home and in school, or what they learn in school at home (Makoni, Makoni and Mashiri, 2007, p. 450).

Then, the majority of those who graduated in 1986 are likely to have been born during independence struggles in the early 1960s. In Zambian history, this period is marked with strong nationalist movements in the build up to independence (Macola, 2010). In general, the spirit of nationhood had been stirred not only among the elites, but also across the general citizenry.

Besides, the Second Vatican Council of 1963-1965 made it possible for colonised peoples to use their local names during baptism. Through the pontifical Vatican Council II and subsequent Bishopric Synods, the Roman Catholic became more tolerant to indigenous traditions, including use of local languages, songs and musical instruments during Mass, and indigenous baptismal names (Saarelma-Maunumaa, 2003; Sourou, 2014).

The more than 100% increase in the use of local personal names to 18.3% in this cohort, therefore, could not have occurred in isolation, but in relation to the overall national experiences.

Next, the 1996 cohort experienced a fall in the use of indigenous first names to 15.1%, while experiencing a further drop in the use of indigenous middle names. The majority of these were born in the early to 1970s. In this period, Zambia experienced rise in charismatic religious movements which continue to date(Cheyeka, 2008; Banja, 2009). Colson argues that this was because the movements were previously not favoured during the colonial period (Colson, 2006). Further, both Cheyeka and Banja state that this was the strongest rising religious wave sweeping across Southern Africa (Cheyeka, 2008; Banja, 2009). The position of charismatic and Pentecostal movements, in some ways similar to the position

of the Roman Catholic Church prior to the Second Vatican Council, tend to exhibit less tolerance for indigenous cultural values.[5]

[T]here's been a movement lately going back to Biblical names … Especially the new born again churches. They've labelled our names as demonic. They say such statements like "you don't know who was named that name before you were born. So, you can't use that name. You have to use a Biblical name, where you know that Mary was the mother of Jesus. Whereas if you name your child [as] Mulenga, you don't know who Mulenga was.[6]

The next list, 2006 shows yet another remarkable surge in usage of indigenous Zambian names to 39%, in the usage of local first names and a significant decline in local middle names. The list also showed a significant leap in the presence of students bearing names from mixed local languages. Many on this list of graduates were born in the early 1980s. During this period, the tribal balancing programme, referred to earlier, was still in operation.

The last category, 2016, experienced a decrease in the use of local names to 31.6%. Most graduates on this list were born in the early 1990s. All the factors presented above, including indigenous culture, the colonial and missionary experience, the Catholic Church, charismatic movement and media influence seem to weigh in on the name choices of Zambian parents for their children.

Phiri (2008) suggests that Islam has been on the rise in Zambia. Adherents of the faith have steadily gained influence by forming local associations which have proven relevant to solving community challenges. Though historical evidence shows the presence of Muslims in both precolonial and colonial times, the last four decades exhibit considerable growth. The growing numbers of Muslims are mainly drawn from former Christians (Phiri, 2008). In the foreign names categories of this research, Islamic/Arabic names became more visible than others in the last three decades. The presence of Islamic names among Zambians may be either a confirmation of the growing influence of the faith or simply indicative of the name choices/preferences of some Zambian parents.

The factors presented above, prevailing in each respective period, are not exhaustive and I do not claim that they are exclusively responsible for the variations in the naming patterns. However, they, are meant to orient the reader with the wider cultural environment in which the variations occurred.

The European (or other foreign) first name in this case is mostly used in official documents and at school, while some families and close friends address individuals by their navel name (or true identity). The navel name is usually listed as the traditional middle name – or not written at all – in official documents. Even if there is a perceived increase in the use of traditional first names in the current research from 7.9% in 1976 to 31.6% in 2016, this has been followed by a significant reduction in the use of indigenous/traditional middle names from 42% to 10%. In this case, the sum of percentages of traditional Zambian names used as first and middle names in 1976 is 49.9%; while the 2016 sum is 41.6%. Therefore, in as much as the use of traditional first names has been on the rise, their overall usage and the heritage value attached to navel names has substantially fallen.

Conclusion

As a fluid takes the shape of its container, naming practices in postcolonial Zambia have largely been shaped by the changing cultural environment. The changes in naming over the study period reflect the fluidity of living (or intangible cultural) heritage. The wider social, political and social changes in postcolonial Zambia have significantly impacted names and naming practices.

During the periods from 1976 to 1986 and 1996 to 2006 there were sharp increases in the usage of local first names; 1986 to 1996 remained considerably stable, while 2006 to 2016 had a slight decrease. Above all, use of local first names increased from 7.9% to 31.6%. Over the same period, there was also significant decrease in the use of local middle names, continued presence of Biblical and European names, distortions of European/Biblical names, creation of non-standard English/Biblical names and some presence of Islamic names. As Kimenyi points out, names usually remain in a society as "frozen" aspects of that society's cultural experience (Kimenyi, 1989). In other words, as intangible museums,

5 Maliya Mzyece-Sililo, Presentation at Writers' Circle Monthly Gathering (PEN Zambia), Lusaka, 2011.
6 Maliya Mzyece-Sililo, Interview by Osward Chanda, 12 July 2019

they are "tablets" on which culture is engraved. Moreover, I would add, that names are also as fluid as the cultural environment in which they exist.

In future, studies of name records in institutions (other than educational institutions) from other Zambian cities, coupled with interviews with wider samples of name givers and name bearers – may be important in understanding naming trends and family dynamics in greater detail. This may enhance understanding of many heritage aspects related to naming practices among diverse members of Zambian society.

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