THE SLUM TOPONYMY OF NAIROBI: A CULTURAL ARENA FOR SOCIO-POLITICAL JUSTICE AND SYMBOLIC RESISTANCE

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There are an estimated 134 informal settlements (slums) which occupy about 1% of the city area and house half the population in Nairobi, Kenya. Although much scholarship has focused on living conditions in slums, very little has been on the socio-political challenges faced in the slums and their impact on the cultural landscape. The overall aim of this study is to provide a toponymic (place naming) interpretive base for slums. Place naming is seen as an arena whereby the cultural, political and legal rights of marginalised groups are debated. These debates serve to reshape the identity of urban places and the corporate identity of cities. Typically, slums in Nairobi are named after theirpioneer settlers, geographical conditions, socio-economic activities, political leaders, other places or past or present local and global events. This study takes a case of Kibera, the largest slum in Kenya. Data was obtained through archival research, field surveys, interviews with residents of Soweto Village and two focused group discussions (FGD) with the Nubian Council of Elders and community leaders of Kibera. This study ultimately indicates that an understanding of the meaning of slum toponyms, and the processes that led to their inscription provides a ground for interpreting the socio-economic, political and cultural processes embedded in their histories.

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INTRODUCTION

Nairobi informal settlements also known as slums are cosmopolitan settlements whereby, most if not all of the more than 40 linguistic communities of Kenya are represented. The slums which are mainly organised in villages, have an eclectic variety of names that provide an interesting area for investigation. This study of the names within informal settlementsprovides a unique perspective on their history and that of Nairobi at large. Slum toponymy in Nairobi showcases how naming, rather than being merely a symbolic act, takes place within and perhaps contributes to the larger geographies of social opportunity and disparity, concealing of justice, cry for justice and other forms of symbolic resistance.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: CRITICAL TOPONYMY AND SPATIAL MARGINALISATION

Traditionally, toponymyfocused on the collection and description of place names without paying much attention to theoretically guided interpretations of the meanings and processes behind those names.[1] In the 1990's, this approach was challenged by a new school of thought referred to as critical toponymy. This approach stresses that place names have a greater semantic depth that goes beyond making reference to a physical location. It therefore focused on the political and social interests that are behind the construction of cultural identities.[2]Scholars in critical toponymy,[3] also highlight the need to look at the process that led to the specific names being selected to fit into their specific contexts and to do a critical exploration of the social struggles that underlie place naming. There is also an emphasis onthe need to move beyond the focus on the social struggles associated with place naming, to the communicative meanings of the names themselves. This is because the meanings behind the names provide a means for interpretation of the urban landscape. The two i.e. social struggles and communicative meanings are not contradictory but complementary. The urban landscape of Nairobi can be well understood by analysis of the socio-cultural and political processes that led to the inscriptions of names and further by interpreting the communicative meanings behind them.[4]

The metaphor 'cultural arena' implies the capacity of place names to serve as sites of contest, debate and negotiation as social groups compete for the right to name and even define the meaning that should be read from those names on the urban landscape.In their argument, Rose-Redwood and colleagues pose that naming can be used as a conduit to challenge dominant ideologies.[5]Toponymic warfare is another concept which suggests that marginalised communities appropriate place names within their territories which do not tally with the official nomenclature.[6] The place naming process may act as an arena whereby the cultural, political and legal rights of minority groups are debated. These debates serve to reshape the identity of urban places and the corporate identity of cities.[7]In Nairobi, this is typical in the informal settlements whereby the names originate from the residents themselves rather than the government. They name their settlements after the original settlers, geographical conditions, or significant local events that occurred there. They also name their settlements after global events and places with which they can relate their local conditions. Such settlements include: Soweto -named after the Soweto Uprising in South Africa (1976), Kosovo - referring to the war in Kosovo (1998-1999), Vietnam named after the war in Vietnam (1955-1975), Beirut, and Gaza among others.

Place names also provide a rich source of discussion on space and power.[8] This is because the way in which they are used as identifiers is embedded with various contestations. To illustrate this, Myers who studied the case of Ng'ambo in Zanzibar, noted that the place nameswere often used to demarcate neighbourhoods, leading to an association of certain places with social groups or classes. In addition, as cultural arenas, names were spheres of performance which were used as vehicles of empowerment or ridicule. The performance role of names in informal settlements also indicate an 'us versus them' consciousness, like in Zanzibar, where Ng'ambo estate emerged as a colonial construction of the city's "other side."
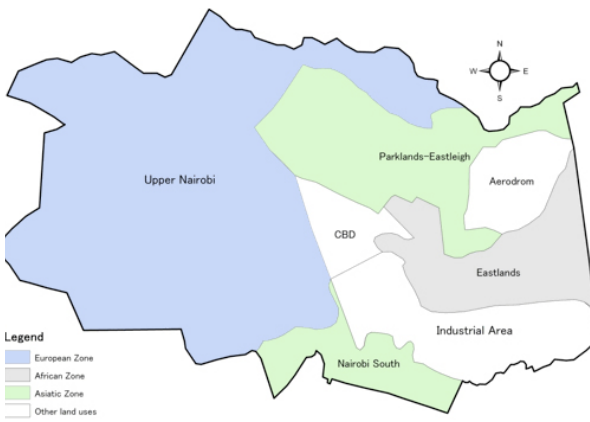
FIGURE 1 Racial Segregation in Nairobi Kenya, the 1926 plan for Nairobi. Adapted from Morgan W. and Halliman D, 1967

FIGURE 2 Old Map of Kibera. The first villages around 1920's.De Smedt, 2011

In Nairobi, a distinctive indication of marginalisation is the fact that many of these settlements,despite having been in existence since the city's inception, were left out of official maps and hence not fully recognised as legitimate settlements in the city. Therefore, in such cases the 'informaltoponymy'is the only known toponymy, because the government has not appropriated any names for these settlements.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: ORIGIN, GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF SLUMS IN NAIROBI

During the colonial period in Nairobi (1899-1963), the African native population was quickly rising in the city. The supply of housing could not meet the demand and the natives resorted to constructing shanties on empty land. These shanty towns (slums) were from time to time destroyed and the occupants forced back to their rural homes. These evictionshad been legitimized by the enactment of the 1922 Vagrancy Act which made provisions to segregate, evict, arrest, expel and limit the movement of the natives and indentured workers.[9]

Nairobi's current socio-spatial structure is a legacy of that colonial past.[10]Spatial planning was based on racial segregation. The first three spatial plans for the city were: The 1898 *Plan for a Railway Town,* the1926 *Plan for a settler capital* and the 1948 *Nairobi Master Plan for a Colonial Capital.*[11]The 1898 and 1926 plans were explicitly racially segregated confining whites on raised grounds to the West and North areas, the natives to the environmentally inapt East (because of poorly drained black cotton soils and a hotter climate)and the Asian community to the North and South parts of the city.[12]

A decade after independence, the first post-colonial plan for Nairobi was developed. Similar to previous colonial plans, the 1973 Nairobi Metropolitan Growth Strategywas formulated under heavy western influence through the foreign firm British Colin Buchanan and partner.[13]As a result, it did not succeed in dismantling racial, spatial and social segregation but continued to reinforce the status quo.[14] The legacies of the colonial and immediate post-colonial plans is still manifested in the city's socio-spatial structure to date.

Various studies, including the global report on human settlements have shown that currently, more than half of Nairobi's population live in informal settlements. These settlements occupy less than 1% of the city's area and less than 5% of the residential area.[15]Currently, it is estimated that there are about 134 slums in the city of Nairobi, some which are loosely scattered and others which are consolidated. The major slums in Nairobi from the oldestare: Kibera (1904), MukurukwaNjenga (1958), Mathare (1963), and Korogocho (1980's).[16]

After independence native Africans were given the right to live anywhere in the country. As a result, many people moved to the city to look for opportunities such as higher education, and employment. Nairobi was ill-prepared to handle such an influx of population both infrastructurally and institutionally. Inadequate provision of housing led to the expansion of informal settlements and efforts to curb them through demolitions did not succeed.[17] The residents of slums rebuilt their demolished houses and with time, the settlement area and density increased. This excerpt from MejaMwangi'snovel, *Going Down River Road,* which was written during the post-colonial period illustrates how slums were usually destroyed by the City Council of Nairobi and re-built quite as fast by the residents.

The whole of Nairobi valley is awake in chaos. Up and down the stinking murky river fire, huge tongues of red hot fire, lick up contraptions of paper and wood and extend impotent black smoke to the dark heavens above. Shanty dwellers mill around saving whatever is possible

There is something malignant about shanty huts. They go up in the smoke at dawn, spring to life again at twilight. One just cannot keep them down. The council knows this. Char them as many times as you like, and they mushroom back just as many times. Sticks, wires, paper and iron sheets is all it takes.[18]

METHODOLOGY

The method applied is a case study analysis of Kibera informal settlement, the oldest and biggest slum in Nairobi. The first settlements in Kibera can be traced back to the early 1900's. The settlements' intricate socio-political history has shaped the toponymy, which in turn provides a basis for the interpretation of the cultural landscape. Since the initial settlers were of Sudanese (Nubian) origin, and ethnically not native to Kenya, there has been numerous legal battles regarding land ownership rights. In order to understand some of these socio-political issues, two focused group discussions were carried out. One with the Nubian Council of Elders, [19] and another with a representative group of leaders and village elders from other communities in Kibera.[20]A map showing the village toponymyof Kibera was obtained from mapkibera.org, the webpage of an NGO which focuses on collecting spatial information of Kibera and other informal settlements. Field surveys were also carried out in September 2015. A critical toponymic analysis was done taking into account the information collected on geographical conditions, political changes, and social and ethnic characteristics of the settlement and relating this to the place-names along a historical timeline.

A CASE STUDY OF KIBERA: SLUM TOPONYMY AS AN ARENA FOR SOCIO-POLITICAL JUSTICE AND SYMBOLIC RESISTANCE

SETTLEMENTS DISPUTES IN KIBERA DURING THE COLONIAL PERIOD

Kenya's Sudanese (Nubians), the first settlers in Kiberaare originally from South Sudan. In Kenya, they served as soldiers for the British Kenya African Rifles (KAR) during World War 1. In 1911, Nubians were settled informally in the (KAR) training ground a few kilometers South West of Nairobi city center. The settlers were mainly survivors and widows of Sudanese soldiers fighting for the British KAR. By 1912, the area was officially sanctioned for the residency of 291 Sudanese soldiers in what was now known as the 'KAR shambas'. Soldiers who had served for more than 12 years were givenshamba passes, meaning they could live in Kiberarent free. Later on in 1918, the colonial government officially gazetted the 4,198-acre plot of land as a Military Reserve.[21]By the 1920's, Kibera was known for social ills and this led to an antagonizing relationship between the Nubians and the government. By 1932, Kibera's social ills had escalated to an extent that in 1935, the commissioner for local government called for the eviction of anyone involved in criminal activity.[22]Half of the households in Kibera belonged to women

who were also described as prostitutes and two thirds of the population were Kenyan born Africans.[23]In 1939, after many plans to evict the Nubians failed, and as their petitions became more sophisticated, the government conceded to let the Sudanese remain in Kibera, but they did not develop it or provide necessary amenities like water, sanitation, electricity, schools and hospitals. This was a silent policy to make life unbearable and drive the Sudanese away, but the settlement continued to grow especially due to the influx of Kenyan natives. By the end of World War 1, Kibera was under direct European administration. The colonial government could no longer ignore the fact that Kibera was a permanent settlement.

By 1947, only 1700-acres of the original land of Kibera remained. 550 more was required for the military expansion, and 52 more for the realignment of the railway line. Further attempts to relocateKibera residents did not succeed. By 1948, Kibera had grown into a heterogenous settlement of most of Nairobi's poor people. In the mid 1950's, when Kenya was on the verge of independence, Kibera was a political hotbed, and the rising African political elite also became more interested in Kibera. Hence, evicting Kibera residents became increasingly difficult. However, the Nubian community faced a new challenge because the other Kenyan natives viewed them as allies to the British Colonial Government and hence they were socially alienated. They also could no longer expect any special privileges from the rising African political class as they had from the British. They therefore continued to live a secluded life among the other communities in Kibera.

NUBIAN TOPONYMY IN KIBERA (1912-1963)

The original name of Kibera was the Nubian word Kibrawhich means: a bushy place, a forest; empty. Figure 2 shows Kibera in the 1920's as a settlement comprising of a few scattered villages. The village names were all of Nubian origin, an indication of how the Nubians made their cultural imprint and exercised power over space. The names were of significance as well, because their meanings were related to the geographical conditions and the cultural practices of the Nubians. The meanings of the names in the old Kiberaare as follows: Sarang'ombe was initially called Sarabagara-Bagarameaning cows in the Nubian language. This was then changed to Ng'ombe (Swahili name for cows) after other communities moved to Kibera. These communities could not easily pronounce Bagara. So the word Sarang'ombe is a blend of Nubian and Swahili words to mean a place of grazing cows. Galalima on the other hand, was initially Gala Halima which means 'Hill of Halima'. Halima being a person's name. According to the Nubian Council of elders, Halima was probably of the clan leaders. Toi was used to refer to the large field. Gumberedu literally means 'wake up and shower'. It was referred to as such because there was a stream flowing through the settlement and the people used to shower there. Makina, was originally known as Makan, which in Nubian language means home. Lindi was used to refer to a big hole, this is because of the area where it is located was a kind of valley. Lain Saba, which originally was known as Lain Shabaan, meant a rifle range area. It was used as a place for military training. The settlement also had three villages referred to as Kambis (Swahili version of the word camp). These were Lendu, Alur and Muru. The Nubians who were originally a military group, organised their settlements this way as it was normal for them to do in the barracks.[24] The name camp also implies the temporary nature of the settlements.

POST-COLONIAL POLITICS, ETHNICITY AND LAND ALLOCATION IN KIBERA (1963-1992)

The toponymy of Kibera can be understood within a framework of the history of the settlements, the ethnic distribution within the settlements, the geographical conditions and the political processes that have occurred within the settlements. The political processes mainly reflect the contestations that ensued especially in the post-colonial period with regard to land allocation to various communities and to other developments in the settlement.
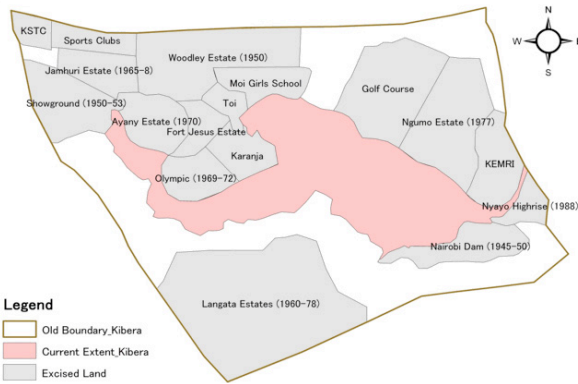
FIGURE 3 The current extent of Kibera Settlement. The previous land was taken up by other developments such as formal residential estates and government institutions. De Smedt, 2011

FIGURE 4 Spatial distribution of ethnic tribes in Kibera. Mapkibera.org and Nubian Council of Elders (NCE) 2015

In the 1960's the area of Kibera was further excised to cater for housing developments. Between 1961 and 1967, plans were made and implemented to build model homes in Kibera. The Nubians were given priority to lease those homes, but they no longer had special rights in Kibera. In the same period, more land was taken from Kibera, to build more housing estates. However, in 1969, the area where Kibera is located was declared government land and further developments were prohibited. By then Kibera had been reduced from 4,198 acres to 700 acres. Politics is highly interlinked with the ethnic composition of Kibera. For instance: In 1969 after the assassination of Tom Mboya (an iconic Luo leader, minister, and trade unionist in the post-colonial government), there arose ethnic tensions in Nairobi and Kenya at large especially between the Luo and Kikuyu community. The Luos who lived in Dagoretti area were evicted because the area is predominantly Kikuyu. The Luos moved to Kibera and settled among the Nubians.

A decade later in 1979, after the death of the first president of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta, there was what is called the 'Kibra invasion' whereby other Kenyan communities came to live in Kibera. The first group were those people who were forced out of Langata area due to the housing initiative by the National Housing Corporation were moved to Kibera. Most of these people were moved to Kibera area. It is at this time that one of the settlements created by the incoming squatters was called Soweto. Based on interviews carried out in Kibera, the settlements name was borrowed from the Soweto Informal settlements as well as the Soweto Uprising in South Africa.

The people who came to settle in Soweto were very poor as compared to other villages in Kibera. A majority of them were single mothers. They did not have an alternative and they squatted on government land. They built houses using cartons and polythene papers. The people built the houses closely packed for security purposes because the area was deserted. At the time, some members of the Kings African Rifles were from South Africa. It is said that while doing their military practise, one of them pointed out that the settlement looked like Soweto in South Africa, and that was how the name begun(Harrison Githuku, Soweto Village, Kibera).[25]

When the Soweto Uprising begun in South Africa, the first settlement called Soweto East in Kibera was just starting. This was when the people currently residing in Soweto were forced out of Langata area. Because of this eviction struggle, the people identified with the Soweto uprising in South Africa and hence named their settlement after it (Paul Owino, Kianda Village, Kibera). [26]

The second phase of the invasion was when Chief Kamau (the locational administrator of Kibera), liased with Mr. Mwangi Mathai (the then member of parliament), Mr. Waitukia (the district officer) and Mr. Mburu (the provincial commissioner of Nairobi) to allocate land to people of Kikuyu ethnic descent. All the leaders belonged to this ethnic community. Therefore, much of the land was sold to the Kikuyu community even land that was covered by Ngong

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forest. As a result, 75% of the houses in Kibra currently belong to Kikuyu's. The Nubians in an attempt to counter this invasion, invited other communities into Kibera, in a move which was termed 'Jengayangu, Jengayako' which means 'build mine, build yours'. This meant that the Nubians would give them land to build their house and in return they were supposed to build a house for the Nubian family as well. As a result, many other communities moved into Kibera.

In 1982 and 1983, eviction letters were issued to residents of KambiLendu Village. One was reference number KIB/CH/PLOT/1/27 dated 31st December,1982 and another one reference number KIB/CH/PLOT/1/28 dated 26th February, 1983 from the office of the district officer, Kibera Division and signed by the then Chief M.A Okeka of the then Woodley Location. [27]

In 1992, when RailaOdinga (former Prime Minister of Kenya) entered into politics, he vied for the Langata constituency parliamentary seat as a Member of Parliament. At the time, his main competitor was Hassan Ali Amedo, who was of Nubian origin. In order to ensure that he won, Raila needed more people to move into the area so that he could get more votes. It is during this time that morepeople of Luo ethnicity moved into Kibera, and are currently the majority. Currently, one of the villages in Kibera is named after RailaOdinga. Raila Village though named after a Luo leader, is occupied by members of the Kisii community and it is the newest settlement in Kibera. It is also known as Kisii Village.[28]

In the post-colonial period, immigration of various tribes into Kibera was due to various reasons. For instance: the eviction of Luos from Dagoretti due to ethnic tensions; forceful eviction by government in order to give way for development (Nubians living in Langata areas had to move to Kibera); and as a strategy by some politicians to have their ethnic communities move into Kibera to increase their voter base. This had a double effect on Kibera, ethnic diversity coupled with political tensions. The village toponymy of Kibera is a reflection of these. There are names includeRaila (after a politician), Soweto (political struggle against apartheid in South Africa), Kisumu Ndogo (small Kisumu-origin of the Luo community) among others.

Figure 3 shows that the land extent of Kibera native settlement has shrunk from its initial 4198 acres to a meagre 788 acres. Similarly, the toponymy has changed especially for those areas which are now owned by government and other agencies. Toi informal market, which borders Kibera managed to carry on that Nubian name. Lomle on the other hand which was the name of a Nubian village, disappeared after the area was renamed to Ayany (Ayany Estate). The old names are mainly of Nubian origin, but the new village toponymy of Kibera shows a more diverse ethnic composition of the settlers.

CURRENT VILLAGE TOPONYMY OF KIBERA SLUM (1963-2016)

Kibera is currently divided into 13 villages. Kianda, Soweto West, Raila, Gatwekera, Kisumu Ndogo, Makina, Kambi Muru, Kichinjio, Mashimoni, Lindi, Silanga, Laini Saba and Soweto East. Some of the former and current names resemble each other for instance Makina which was previously Makan, Lindi was previously Lindi and Laini Saba was previously Lain Shabaa. The Nubian slum toponymy has therefore been resilient on the landscape of Kibera.

The village toponymy of post-colonial Kibera is now reflective of a more ethnically diverse settlement. It also reflects the socio-political, economic struggles the residents have encountered over time. Taking the case of the 13 villages, Kianda (valley in Kikuyu language), Mashimoni (quarry holes in Swahili Language), Silanga (water pond) and Lindi (meaning hole in Nubian language) are reflective of the geographical conditions. Gatwekera, Makina, Laini Saba and Kambi Muru were originally Nubian names. Gatwekera was the name of a bird katulteer which was found in the forest area before the settlement began. Makina referred to Makan meaning home and Kambi Muru was one of the Nubian camps. These names speak of the Nubian heritage of Kibera. As other communities came in they had difficulty in pronouncing the original Nubian names and they evolved into their current form. According to one of the community elders in Kibera, Kisumu Ndogo was named as such because there were many people of Luo ethnic origin who resided there. Kisumu is the main town from which the Luos come from.

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FIGURE 5 Current village toponymy of Kibera. mapkibera.org

Kichinjio means slaughter house in Swahili language.In the area where the village is, there was a slaughter house. Therefore, the economic activities in a place also influence the toponymy. Soweto East and West make reference to the 1976 Soweto Uprising and Soweto informal settlement in South Africa. The Soweto Student Uprising which occured on June 16, 1976 when thousands of students from the African Township of Soweto. This was in opposition to a decree issued that Afrikaans would be used as a medium of instruction in half the subjects in middle and high schools. The opposition came about because Afrikaans was viewed as 'the language of the oppressor.'[29]The naming of one of the villages after Soweto was indication of the effect of globalization on the toponymy of Kibera and that the people identified with global struggles because they were also going through struggles such as forceful evictions by the government, poverty, and poor living conditions.

ANALYSIS:IMPACT OF SOCIO-POLITICAL, ETHNIC AND GEOGRAPHICAL FACTORS ON THE SPATIAL TOPONYMY OF KIBERA

The slum toponymy of Kibera is reflective of the processes that have shaped the settlement over time. It is indicative of the geographical setting, the ethnic composition and evolution and the social and political struggles faced by the residents. The original name of Kibera, Kibra was changed because different ethnic communities moved into Kibera but could not pronounce the name correctly. At the village level some names disappeared and while others were changed because of language pronunciations.Language therefore contributes to a great extent to the evolution of the toponymic landscape.
Symbolic resistance through toponymy is also seen when the Nubians on the other hand, refused to pronounce Kibra as Kibera like the other ethnic communites. This eventually led to the reinstatement of the name by the creation of a constituency called Kibra. This toponymic resistance led to the toponymic restoration and formalization of the name Kibra.

TOPONYMIC INFLUENCE	VILLAGE	
	Old Kibera	New Kibera
Topography	Galalima	Kianda
	Toi	Silanga
	Shilanga	Lindi
	Lindi	
Ethnicity		Kisumu Ndogo
Spatial Politics		Raila
		Soweto East
		Soweto West
Socio-economic activities/organization	Makina	Makina
	Gumberendu	Kichinjio
	Sarang'ombe	Mashimoni (Quarries)
	LainiShabaa	LainiSaba
	KambiAluru	KambiMuru
	KambiLendu	
	Lomle	

TABLE 1 Factors that influence the toponymy of villages in Kibera
Source: Nubian Council of Elders (NCE), 2015

There were also demarcations and groupings according to ethnic tribes. These spatial territories (villages) would be named as to indicate that. For example:Kisumu Ndogo village, meaning small Kisumu is named as such because initially many residents were of Luo ethnic descent and hence thought to have come from Kisumu. Figure 5 shows the spatial distribution of the dominant ethnic communities in Kibera. This is according to the Nubian Council of Elders. The dominant tribes were the Kikuyu, Kisii, Luhya, Luo and Nubians. However in addition to them, all the other communities of Kenya can also be found in Kibera.

The concept of toponymic warfare is seen in this case of Kibera whereby, names are used as a cry for social justice against the challenges faced by the residents such as: denial of rights to land ownership, poor living conditions, forceful evictions among others. Residents, by identifying with global struggles are essentially saying that they are going through the same struggles within their local contexts as well. The use of foreign names which identify with global struggles e.g Soweto named after the Soweto Uprising in South Africa also reflected the effect of globalisation on toponymy of informal settlements.

Kibera, because of its long and complex history, provides a rich base for toponymyto be used in interpreting the cultural landscape of informal settlements. Toponymy in relation to ethnicity, politics, geography and language can also be utilized in other informal settlements to understand their complex histories and interpret their current identities.Table 1 below shows how the toponymy of villages in old and new Kibera has been influenced by those factors.

As shown in Table 1, the names in old Kibera mainly reflected the socio-economic activities of the society. The other names reflected topographic features of the settlement. Ethnicity and spatial politics played a less significant role in Kibera at the time because there was one ethnic tribe - the Nubians. Although there was contestation over land ownership rights between the Nubians and the colonial administration, it did not reflect in the Nubian toponymy of Kibera.
In the new Kibera, some settlements' names reflected the spatial politics that were occurring. For instance, the village named Raila was named after RailaOdinga in 1992. He was then a prominent politician, and he later became the Member of Parliament for Langata constituency under which Kibera fell. Soweto East and West are a reflection of global struggles and the name Soweto was used after some of the initial evictions in the late 70's soon after the Soweto Uprising. Other village names in new Kibera reflect on socio-economic activities such as Kichinjio which means slaughter house or Mashimoni meaning the holes left open after quarrying activities. Most of the names which reflect the topography were retained even in the new toponymy of Kibera.

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CONCLUSION:

The toponymy of Kibera has been discussed in this paper based on the socio-political processes behind the names, their communicative meaningsand how they have evolved over time. On the one hand, the Nubian heritage of Kibera is has become indelible and this is reflected in the original and current toponymy of the settlement. The meanings of the names show how the community understood its topographical surroundings and it also reflected the socio-economic organization of the Nubians. On the other hand, in the post-colonial period, with the influx of other communities into Kibera, the toponymy started to reflect a more ethnically diverse community. Issues of social opportunity and disparity among the communities, and between the community and the government became more rampant and this also reflected on the toponymy. Hence spatial politics of constant evictions and economic marginalisation politically instigated ethnic migrations and groupings also influenced the toponymy of Kibera during this time. Therefore, we conclude that, the toponymy of Kibera is a mirror into the history and socio-economic and political factors that have made the settlement what it is today.

Disclosure Statement
No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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