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In 2016 the University of North Carolina at Greensboro removed the name of Governor Charles Aycock from a prominent building on its campus because of the governor's controversial history. Aycock was known widely as an education-oriented leader because of his generous donations towards schools and universities. Conjoined with this reputation were actions and opinions that also prevented African American people, particularly students, from accessing opportunities in the state. The name Aycock is also ubiquitous throughout the city of Greensboro, North Carolina because of his economic influence during his term as governor. Yet over the past two years city councils, boards of trustees, and voters have deemed his name unfit for public spaces. This thesis follows debates surrounding the legacies of Aycock's name and where his name is being preserved or removed in sections of Greensboro. It answers the following questions: Who determines whether or not Aycock's name is removed? How are representations of these places changed once his name is removed? In response to these questions patterns in discourse are summarized using media reports and public records reporting name changes in Greensboro. Conclusions of this study portray intertwined political, economic, and emotional appeals in how people in Greensboro are actively changing the names and thus identities of these places.

AMENDING COMMEMORATION: A TOPONYMIC CASE STUDY OF RACISM IN

GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Early in the morning on a spring day in 2016, large plated letters spelling

AYCOCK were slowly removed by a small team of maintenance workers (Appendix

B.1). A few students and news reporters watched the process as the sun rose over the

campus of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG). For these students

and many students before them the auditorium had always carried the name of North

Carolina's fiftieth governor. Despite the historic weight of this name it was removed after

the university's Board of Trustees appointed a subcommittee to investigate the history of

Charles Aycock, which ultimately led to having the name and the legacy of the man it

represented, removed from campus (Newsom, 2016). The subcommittee stated that while

they acknowledged the accomplishments of Governor Aycock, his support for racial

discrimination did not reflect the values of the university (Bolton and Wyatt, 2015).

The decision to remove this name from the UNCG campus occurred alongside

several similar changes at universities across North Carolina. Aycock's name was

removed from dormitories on the campuses of Duke University and Eastern Carolina

University, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill removed names

associated with Confederacy and white supremacist agendas from its campus

simultaneously (Bolton and Wyatt, 2015). In other parts of the country similar debates

occurred and are occurring at this time concerning how controversial history and historic figures are represented in public spaces. Princeton University's Board of Trustees debated over whether or not to remove the name of President Woodrow Wilson from its campus following student protests about Wilson's support for racial segregation during his time (Newman, 2015).

Discussions about controversial place names are occurring within larger debates about Confederacy and commemoration. A 2017 report by the Southern Poverty Law Center reviewed Confederate commemoration in the U.S. and listed monuments and place names as particular areas of concern (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2016). Place names, or toponyms, represent historic events, political agendas, and emotive associations with space as clearly as monuments do.

Disputes over place names occur at various scales. Current patterns in media reports and changing policies highlight concerns over controversial history and its representation in the present as being a key concern. Outside of university systems other discussions about place names are occurring. At the time of this research the most recent examples of such discussions are occurring at the scale of a street that runs through part of Greensboro, North Carolina, which also carries the name Aycock (Appendix A.1, Appendix A.2). Unlike protests that occurred on university campuses, the majority of reactions to the Aycock Street renaming are economic in nature. While the initial reasons for changing the street name match the reasons given by the UNCG Board of Trustees, reactions to decisions to change the street name are based on different premises. In response to potential street name changes several business owners have argued that

changing the street name would result in having to change business names and signage, which would be expensive (Moffett, 2018).

These examples will be examined later in this paper, but the primary focus of this paper will be on the event of the Aycock name removal on UNCG's campus. This case represents a particular aspect of naming, or inscribing meaning onto particular locations. Naming involves evoking a particular identity through the use of language. Associating a name with a specific location bonds that physical space with the identity represented through language. This is a shared theme across all place name studies. Each discussion about the names in question are about the identities represented by each act of naming. A desire to change the name of a space reflects the desire to alter the identity associated with this particular space.

Research Objectives

Many questions surfaced as I observed these naming debates in Greensboro and beyond. The need to study how and why places are named seemed to carry the most emphasis at first, but further consideration of the historical and commemorative aspects of these conversations brought forth other questions. The first question designed for this study addresses broader inquiries about the use of place names and what they represent: How does naming a place reflect or represent how individuals and groups identify with it? How do the individuals who name places express this relationship?

Following curiosity about what place names mean for individuals I was curious about how place names are created, which led to a second question: What are particular

uses for place names and how do these uses relate to the first research question? Lastly, I wanted to know why the name Aycock was removed from the auditorium on the UNCG campus. My intentions for this study were to understand current discussions about place names commemorating Governor Aycock and how these conversations reflect peoples' perceptions of places and their relationships to them. These particular events are not representative of the world as a whole and only represent a small portion of it. Studying these place name debates in Greensboro creates the opportunity to look at similar discussions around the U.S.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Toponymy, or the study of place names, serves as the linguistic component of maps and other demarcations of space. Its subjects, toponyms, serve as the labels of maps, which in turn stand as seemingly understated representations of historical patterns, family history, and conflicts. The importance of studying place names is addressed in all of the literature reviewed here. Most notably the authors Berg and Kearn address the importance of studying place names by stating that toponyms serve as (a), points of interest or reference on maps in otherwise empty spaces, and (b), forms of communication about place and space (1995, pp. 105). In order, however, to understand this aspect of geography and cartography it is necessary to investigate its foundations. Throughout the course of this study, toponyms appeared to disclose underlying patterns of conflict and emotional attachment to land and other spaces, both in terms of how people perceive space and exploit it for resources or other uses.

During the process of gathering and analyzing references for this study, three distinct patterns manifested across each article and book that applied to this area of study. The first was an economic pattern, or economic factors influencing and/or determining place names, including how place names reflect economic inequality. The second pattern intertwined with the first but diverged into its own category of power relations, or the political influences generating, regulating, and changing toponyms. Lastly, a more

abstract pattern occurred between the previous patterns listed in that it represented the emotional or personal aspects of toponyms associated with a sense of place, nostalgia, emotional bonds with other people, tradition, honor, and other expressions. For the purpose of this study, commemoration serves as the term for this last pattern based on its frequent use in the literature reviewed. While these are not the only patterns occurring within toponymy, these three patterns represent overarching and consistent themes in the literature reviewed.

Because toponyms are an essential component of maps, as expressed by all of the authors referenced, it is fitting to discuss the role of cartography and map design as it applied to the social, economic, and commemorative patterns of toponyms. Since the study of cartography is its own sub-discipline within the field of geography, it will not have a separate heading in this review in order to avoid diverging into separate areas of study. It will, however, be incorporated into the overall review and in further studies because it is intertwined with toponymy.

Toponymy and Economy

Several toponymic researchers address the economic patterns shaping toponyms with questions such as how place names reflect patterns of economic and social inequality in certain places and populations. One of the most frequent terms used throughout these articles was the "commodification of toponymy" or "toponymy as a commodity" (Rose-Redwood, 2010, 2011, Light & Young, 2014).

Light and Young address numerous aspects of the exchange of toponyms as they relate to the privatization of place names in urban spaces (2014). For example, naming rights change with the ownership of sports stadiums converted to privately owned spaces leased to the public for a price (Light & Young, 2014, pp. 439). The authors argue that this is problematic for various reasons, ranging from exclusion of potential stakeholders (such as the public) to the potential exclusion of the local, cultural bonds with sports teams and venues (2014, pp. 440). In addition to this the role of economic partnerships between public and private entities are also discussed, with consideration for different naming practices used to encourage investment in certain areas or create a mutually beneficial bond for a city, its funding, and its public services (2014, pp. 443). This provides numerous perspectives to consider when investigating the role of economic influences on place names and naming rights.

Rose-Redwood discusses this in detail with numerous examples of the names of public spaces sold and purchased as an extension of corporate marketing (2010, 2011, Rose-Redwood & Alderman, 2011). In his article proposing an agenda for the future of the field of toponymy he also emphasizes researching commercialized public spaces (2011, pp. 34). This is echoed by other researchers such as Derek Alderman and Maoz Azaryahu, who co-authored a similar article with Rose-Redwood about the shifts in research interests relating to the field of toponymy within the past decade (2011).

Political Toponymy: Lingusitic Borders

Not surprisingly, the politics and commerce of a place are often if not always intertwined. Therefore, it would be difficult to describe or analyze 'purely' political or economic patterns shaping changes in toponymy. As mentioned previously, the articles by Rose-Redwood address many of the current concerns of political toponymy and its shift from categorization to social inequality (2010, 2011). One area of interest identified by Rose-Redwood links to politically constructed scales and naming rights (2011, pp. 36). As Rose-Redwood notes, the rescaling in this instance was determined by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names (USBGN) and treated the feature as a mere object in space rather than a representation of culture or commercial livelihoods (2011, pp. 36).

Similarly, Rose-Redwood, Alderman, and Azaryahu express an interest in viewing place names as active social practices rather than objects in space (2010, pp. 455). Light & Young (2014), and Berg & Kearn, (1995), echo this interest. This overlaps with commemorative naming practices and, as noted by Light & Young, past and present economic influences (2014, pp. 441). Numerous authors present historical analyses as facts essential for understanding current trends in political naming practices. For example, Rose-Redwood, Alderman, and Azaryahu use historical naming patterns in Iraq to contrast with the naming practices used by the U.S. military when occupying towns and renaming streets for navigation (2010, pp. 454). This is echoed in Azaryahu's articles concerning the historical naming practices used in Berlin from 1945-1948 (2011), as well as street names reflecting the Arab-Palestinian identity in Israel before and after 1948 (2002). Both articles are also examples of commemoration, which is discussed in greater

detail below, but Azaryahu also researches how changes in street names are used as part of mechanisms for transitions in political leadership (2011, pp. 483).

An additional example is in Light's article about the changes in street names after the changes in political leadership and revolution (2004, pp. 156). Light notes that the alteration of street names in Bucharest was in part a statement of regime change and the rewriting of history and nationalism (2004, pp. 156-157). Azaryahu also notes this in his research of Berlin's transitions before, during, and after World War II, during which the history reflected by street names was similarly rewritten (2011).

From a cartographic perspective, Monmonier emphasizes the importance of the USBGN in determining the toponyms of national maps (2006, pp.). He outlines the exact structure of the organization by explaining that it consists of two main components, which are its Foreign and Domestic Names Committees (2006, pp. 10). The former consists of representatives from the CIA, and the departments of State and Defense, the latter has representatives from the Postal Service, Library of Congress, departments of Agriculture, Commerce, and Interior, and the Government Printing Office (2006, pp. 10). Monmonier also notes that unless the USBGN approves a new or changed toponym it is not included on national maps, even if a state board of geographic names approves the name (2006, pp. 4). Its jurisdiction, however, does not extend to human-made features such as roads, neighborhoods, or commercial centers (all three of which are determined by local governments, developers, and other stakeholders), but does include reservoirs and canals (2006, pp. 5). Monmonier's research illustrates the broadest expression of control over toponyms in the United States as well as its limitations, which also illustrates

the various scales of toponyms as they range from the U.S. Geological Survey's national maps to street names in a small town. Because the USBGN does not determine street names identifying those who do could be problematic due to idiosyncrasies of each region.

Lastly, Rose-Redwood notes the importance of identifying patterns of political and apolitical naming practices in order to consider both what has been selected for representation and what has been hidden from view (2011, pp. 40).

Commemoration: History, Tradition, Altruism

Commemoration carries its own complex role as it relates to the economic and political processes that create or change place names. It serves as an overlapping category of multiple expressions. A quick survey of gazetteers reveals numerous family names representing national pride, such as the frequent use of the name Virginia Dare in North Carolina in reference the state's history as one of the original colonies of the early United States (Powell, 2010). Other regions may carry frequent points of reference to a particular general from either the American Revolution or the U.S. Civil War. Depending on the scale of the space surveyed the distribution and nature of commemoration varies based on nationalism and local cultural and historical preferences.

Light & Young discuss present concerns with the sale of naming rights for public venues such as soccer stadiums, which influences the relationship between fans and the venues (2014, pp. 439). Beyond this the authors also discuss historical foundations for the renamed spaces and how these historical trends often reflect economic roles that urban

spaces once had (2014, pp. 441). Research conducted by Derek Alderman includes components of all three patterns, with a particular emphasis on commemorative naming practices. His research focuses on the spatial distribution of streets named after Martin Luther King, Jr. and the political and economic factors that influence this distribution (2000, 2003).

Alderman notes that streets named after Martin Luther King, Jr. are typically confined to small streets rather than major thoroughfares because of community conflicts over commemoration and associations with black communities (2003, pp. 164). He discusses the scale of commemoration, which is tied to debates over whether or not to name small streets after King or large thoroughfares (2003, pp. 165-166). Alderman also discusses the intersection of race and businesses, since most of those objecting to naming a major street after King are business owners concerned about how changing addresses to be named after King would impact commercial development (2000, pp. 673). Alderman's work addresses multiple trends in naming rights as they relate to economic concerns, political conflicts, social inequality, and honoring historical figures.

Azaryahu's research also analyzed commemoration and de-commemoration as an essential part of regime changes in Berlin from 1945 to 1948 (2011). In his research he found that commemorative street names were used as demarcations of power within the city (2011, 483). Light's research on the streets of Bucharest echoes this trend that combines commemorative practices with expressions of territoriality (2004).

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

After reviewing literature for this study, it became apparent that the majority of

studies in toponymy used qualitative research methods. As noted, earlier studies in

toponymy utilized quantitative methods such as calculating the frequency of a particular

place name in an area. Another approach used in several studies was to display

relationships between, for example, Census population or economic data and place name

locations. The accessibility of public records and media reports concerning the Aycock

name removal at UNCG meant relying on them as a source of data for this event.

Because of this, qualitative research methods seemed best for approaching this area of

study.

There was some indecision over the best approach to take for studying place

names. Considering the best approach turned into a lengthy research project in itself in

that there was not a single approach that ideally suited this area of study. This made it

apparent that multiple approaches would have to be taken and fused together in order to

study changes in place names in the specific study area. In this process the case study

approach seemed most suitable for these pursuits and became one of the main

mechanisms for approaching how these events occurred in real time for real people.

Outside of selecting the case study approach the actual data still elusive. It was apparent

that content or discourse analysis would be used since there was so much discussion

about place name changes. When considering this it also seemed relevant to identify individuals involved in name changes and potentially interview. The final result of this research into qualitative research methods led to this study becoming a mixed methods approach. The case study analysis is combined with discourse analysis.

Case Studies

Bent Flyvbjerg's work on case studies became a central source for the methods and methodology of this study. One of his books, *Making Social Science Matter,* addresses limitations in social science and qualitative research. Much of this particular publication focuses on problems with using quantitative approaches for social research. To summarize the central ideas of his writing, most literature concerning case studies has been influenced by a series of erroneous assumptions (Flyvbjerg, 2006, pp 221-223). These assumptions are based around the subjectivity of case study research, that researchers might report findings according to their perceptions or expectations, and that case studies are only useful for preliminary stages of research (2006, pp. 222-223).

Flyvbjerg refutes these assumptions and states that case studies are actually useful for all stages of research rather than only for developing research questions. He continues with arguments that findings from case studies are more likely to change researchers' minds or perceptions of the research subject (2006, pp. 236-240). Lastly, he argues that case studies are useful for challenging overarching assumptions about how society functions because even one case study different from a status quo will challenge notions that all cases are the same (2006, pp. 227-228).

Case studies, Flyvbjerg argues, are also essential for social science research because of their use and development of context dependent knowledge, or knowledge gained from experience and real examples (2006, pp. 223-225). The case study, he argues throughout his study, illustrates through real events and examples, broad societal patterns and differences in these patterns (2006). Selecting a case study for in-depth research, he argues, occurs in one of two ways. First is random selection or selecting a case or multiple cases without prior knowledge of their contents and extent of relevance (pp. 230).

Second is selection based on prior information. This entails selecting one or more cases based on their relevance to the research questions or topics with the intention of expanding small sets of information about the research topic in question (pp. 230). For this study the approach of information-oriented case selection was taken because this study's research questions were developed in response to a series of events. The goal of this research is to discover more about specific events, and rather than randomly selecting areas to study in order to learn more about these phenomena it seems more relevant to follow information that leads from these events.

From the manner in which cases are selected for research Flyvbjerg notes that case types also vary in how they contribute to theories about broader patterns of society (pp. 233). Various types of cases are discussed in his article under the category of non-random selection, and each represent a different potential for cases selected for investigation of a known line of reasoning or inquiry. His first, extreme cases, follow their name in that they represent events deviating from a perceived norm and may serve

as a means to challenge the normality of particular events (2006, pp. 229). Critical cases in contrast represent how a single case or sample represent problems found across all potential samples for a particular study (2006, pp. 230-231). A third type of case listed that was found to be applicable to this study was the example of the paradigmatic case, or a type of case that represents broader trends in society (2006, pp. 232-233). This was noted particularly because of numerous references throughout each document about the widespread nature of universities and other public spaces having Aycock's name removed from their locations.

Based on Flyvbjerg's findings, the case of the Aycock name removal appears to be both a paradigmatic case and a critical case. It is paradigmatic in that it serves as part of a larger pattern in which the name Aycock is removed from college campuses across North Carolina. This is a critical case because it also represents the conflicts each university experiences when faced with having to alter or remove a place name or other prominent component of their campuses.

Discourse Analysis

While Flyvbjerg's work is useful for considering the strengths and limitations of case study research, Fairclough's work illustrates methods, strengths, and limitations of discourse analysis for social science research. Fairclough notes that discourse is any type of communication and exists in the form of texts, images, the spoken word, and so on (2003, pp. 3-4). Discourse serves as a reflection of societal events and can, like the case

study, illustrate patterns in how people relate to each other and the world around them (Fairclough, 2003, pp. 3-4).

Fairclough features discussions about geographic elements of discourse in his text with references to the work of David Harvey. Both Fairclough and Harvey note the importance of noticing how space and time are represented in discourse, particularly because both space and time are socially constructed (Fairclough, 2003, pp. 151-154). His description of Harvey's work illustrates the importance of noting the interrelated nature of space and time, both created and maintained for numerous purposes in society (2003, pp. 151). For this reason, Fairclough argues that noting how both aspects of events are described portrays how events are controlled by both the author of the discourse and the participants of the events described (2003, pp. 151). This means noting the tense of statements as well as the scale of time portrayed in narratives of events. Noting the scale of the location represented in events, and how the location is referenced in discourse is also essential for this. These aspects of discourse were essential for understanding narratives surrounding toponymy and identities associated with place.

Following this investigation into what place names represent, how they lend themselves to study, how researchers have approached studying toponymy, and so on, the details of this study were arranged. First and foremost, data collection became a matter of finding recorded conversations about place name changes. This included finding media reports featuring interviews with people involved in place name changes, as well as public comment boards in response to these reports. Government reports were collected since they represented statements of government officials making changes to place

names. In some instances, city council meetings were recorded so that transcriptions could be made of meetings relevant to this study.

Statements made by Aycock during his time were also collected since his name and legacy are strongly featured in narratives about name removals. All of these forms of discourse were selected based on their relevance to the study, which meant if they represented naming events and communication about these events. This led to collecting a total of twenty documents comprised of ten media reports, eight government reports, and two sets of public comments in response to all of these changes.

Limitations in this research were linked primarily to the subjective nature of this discourse. Each document represents a particular perspective on each naming event. Considering the total population of each city or county featured in these reports this means that only a diminutive percent of the population is represented through the discourse considered. Government or public reports only portray the voices of those representing forms of government, i.e. city officials or council members, state legislatures, members of university boards, and so on. Media reports compensate for this by portraying a variety of individuals' perspectives about name changes but are subjective in that coverage of events is determined by the authors and editors of the publishing agency. Individual comments in response to these reports reveals reactions to events but these reactions are highly varied and not always related to the events represented.

Considering what is not represented in these reports is equally important to studying patterns in vocabulary and themes in the discourse selected for analysis. For instance, if a place name is changed but no explanation is provided as to why this occurred this is noted and analyzed in comparison with other reports. If a particular person is interviewed or mentioned the people not mentioned in discourse are noted and considered. Justifications for place name changes are analyzed to note if the person or people responsible for alterations are mentioned, and if they are not how this impacts the representation of the events. Emphasis is placed on how toponymic changes are represented through discourse and what this reveals about broader trends in place name changes both in Greensboro, North Carolina, and other areas of the United States.

Data Collection and Coding Procedures

Data collection procedures mirror how case studies were selected for this study in that they were selected based on how they related to the primary focus and research questions. News articles were selected first and foremost for their direct relationship with the research topic—place names. This meant filtering search results for periodicals based on search terms such as, "place name", and, "naming rights". Results of these searches were then saved and organized based on their location and scale. This meant sorting articles discussing place name changes into broad categories for locations, such as whether or not the name change occurred in North Carolina, or if it occurred within the United States at all.

For the initial collection all articles portraying place name changes were selected and studied. When collection occurred it was important to select as wide a range of media perspectives as possible on the subject in order to avoid bias towards specific news sources. Unfortunately, this topic, while present in news reports, is not as widely discussed as other topics, which limited the variety of news sources relied upon. Nevertheless, there was a significant number of search results for both large and local scale discussions of name changes. Large scale reports include articles about embassy street names being changed in various countries as an extension of political tensions between nation-states. Small scale reports relate to the central concerns of this study, or how the name Aycock is being changed across certain areas of Greensboro, North Carolina.

The next step in data collection was to search for government reports on the Aycock name changes in order to expand the range of perspectives used for discourse analysis. This meant collecting public data from the Greensboro City Council's website. Public records of minutes from meetings, and in some cases video recordings of the meetings themselves are archived and provided digitally through this website. Since discussions of changing the name of Aycock Street are new, this source of data was limited, but there were statements released about choices for new names and concerns made by business owners and members of the community.

All of these statements were considered viable sources of data for this study. In order to learn more about the removal of the Aycock name from the auditorium on the UNCG campus minutes and reports from meetings concerning this matter were

consulted. All of these documents were released to the public so accessibility was easier than collection of media reports. In all of these cases it was understood that each source would have its own particular form of bias towards the subject of changing a place name. This was included in the coding process and provided insight into how various individuals responded to these events.

Between these sources of data there were a total of thirty-two documents collected and sorted for analysis. Each document was sorted according to the location of events considered. For the documents concerning Aycock name changes these were also sorted in different categories concerning the locations and institutions responsible for changes. This meant sorting articles and reports into a category concerning Greensboro City Council decisions and UNCG Board of Trustees decisions. These two cases were compared to one another more closely because of their physical proximity to one another and because both naming cases were in response to conflicts over locations named after Governor Charles Aycock.

Following collection and organization coding became the next step in studying patterns in discourse in each document. There were no specific coding procedures recommended for this aspect of the study so key words were selected based on how often they were used or referred to. This meant at first physically counting how often a particular word appeared across all texts, and then considering how many references there were to the idea represented by this term. Other codes were selected in relation to the central themes identified in the literature review of this study.

Throughout the process of designing the methods for collecting and analyzing data for this study several limitations became apparent. Limitations in time prevented this from occurring since it would take time to schedule meetings with people such as university faculty members, elected officials, community members, and urban planners. This became one of the larger concerns of this thesis, namely if discourse analysis and a case study approach would be sufficient for investigating the phenomenon of place naming or if the study would be severely impaired by a lack of other data. It is recognized that should this study be expanded in the future or if other researchers would like to pursue this line of study it would be better to include interviews from relevant sources. Overall, the lack of interviews was judged to be limiting but not debilitating to this study, and so the two central methods were retained.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The central case selected for this study was the removal of the name Aycock from the auditorium on the campus of UNCG. This was due in part because of the researcher's proximity to the auditorium and location of the name change, and because of the ease of access to UNCG records. Concerns were expressed about the name following name changes at other universities and how the name conflicted with the perceived identity of UNCG as it related to its student body. This was also the earliest of the name changes concerning Aycock in Greensboro. Discussions concerning the name of the auditorium began on September 4, 2014, after the university's Board of Trustees appointed a sub-committee to determine whether or not to keep the name and what would replace it if it was removed (Bolton and Wyatt, 2015). Since the minutes from these meetings were not released it became necessary to analyze the released statements and documents concerning why the sub-committee recommended the actions that it did.

The auditorium was constructed in 1927, which was when the university was known as the Women's College because of its all-female student body (Bolton and Wyatt, 2015, pp. 1-2). The name Aycock was originally selected for this building because of his financial contributions to the school and the public education system in North

Carolina (Bolton and Wyatt, 2015, pp. 1). While there are references to voiced concerns

over the name and its history in the reports released after these meetings, the actual

individuals who expressed these concerns were not mentioned (Bolton and Wyatt, 2015,

pp. 1). The Board of Trustees established an Ad Hoc Committee to research and make

recommendations on how to approach the potential name change (2015, pp.1). The Ad

Hoc Committee then conducted a survey of over 1000 participants ranging from students

and faculty to school administrators, alumni, university partners, and parents (2015,

pp.1). In addition to this the faculty members on the committee contacted faculty and

administrators at Duke University and Eastern Carolina University because both of these

universities were at the time removing the name Aycock from their campuses (2015,

pp.1). The survey and interviews served as an extension of the agenda set by UNCG's

Chancellor Brady. The intentions of this committee were listed as follows:

- o Exploring the historical connection between Charles B. Aycock and UNCG
- o Monitoring the progress of other campuses considering renaming
- o Researching the process followed by institutions that have faced similar controversies
- o Providing opportunities for engaging the campus community on the issue
- o Making recommendations to the Board of Trustees regarding options (Bolton and Wyatt, 2015, pp. 1-2)

The Ad Hoc Committee was comprised of faculty from the history department,

and representatives from the Student Government Association, Office of the Chancellor,

Office of Alumni Engagement, and other organizations and departments on campus

(2015, pp. 1). Meetings were held over the next year and after the committee submitted

their recommendations and findings the Board of Trustees made the final renaming

decision on February 20, 2015 (2015, pp.2). A report from the Ad Hoc Committee was also released to the public through the university's website in order to provide information to the public about the research and decisions behind the renaming decision. This report was the first document selected for discourse analysis for this study, alongside the appendix released with references to documents and surveys used for the committee's investigation of the issue.

Through the initial reading of this report several words were noted because of their frequency throughout the fifteen-page document. The first of these words was history. The committee outlined responses submitted through the survey either for or against the name removal, and in each of these responses the term history appeared in high proportions than the rest of the vocabulary used, excluding articles and simple prepositions (2015, pp. 1-15). All discussions held over the naming were related to the topic of history and how it related to the auditorium and campus community. The following statement from Duke University's president, which was featured in this report, is an example of how this particular term manifested.

> The building was named early in the twentieth century on one view of history, and that view of history no longer prevails. Given the circumstances, it seems a good time to change the name…We've given this careful thought. One argument is that history is history, and we can't change it by erasing, but I don't regard this as an erasure.
> (Bolton and Wyatt, 2015, pp. 4).

A precise definition of history is elusive because of its abstract nature. Referring back to the agenda set by the Chancellor, the word history or historical was stated with the noun connection (2015, pp. 1). The connection between place and identity in this

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statement is historical in nature. What does this mean, precisely? A common association

with the concept of history is the past. This is one of the definitions referenced

throughout dictionaries such as Merriam Webster. History and time appear to be

conjoined, and throughout this report references of the impression of the past onto the

present are made frequently.

An obvious aspect of this in the committee's decisions was to establish a second

sub-committee through the university's history department (Bolton and Wyatt, 2015, pp.

2). The next reference made towards the historical aspects of this investigation surface in

the reported interview committee members had with the President of Duke University,

who expressed that the renaming was the transition from one view of history to another

(2015, pp. 4). Following this statement further explanations about Duke University's

Aycock name removal were provided, which included a description of a plaque left on

the dormitory subject to the name change, which describes the history of Aycock and

how this was conjoined with this particular building (2015, pp. 4).

Further references are made throughout this report concerning the history of place

and its relationship with the identity of place. Overall, each reference made to history in

this document represented an interpretation of history as being a remnant of the past

imprinted onto locations in the present. This is by no means a comprehensive definition

of history as a concept or academic discipline, but each use of the word history in this

document portrays a relationship between an event or person from the past and an object,

location, or people in the present. An example of this was one comment submitted and

published through the Ad Hoc Committee report:

> I believe UNCG should remove Governors Aycock name because of the history
> associated with him. Being that we are the most diverse campus in the UNC
> system this man beliefs and actions associated with the beliefs is harmful to our
> student population.
> (Bolton and Wyatt, 2015, pp. 7)

This is echoed in several of the comments submitted throughout the survey

process utilized for this report. History as a representation of the past is mentioned

through survey participants' concerns over how the university will be remembered by

those in the future (2015, pp. 7). While memory was rarely mentioned directly its

presence echoed throughout each statement concerning the history of Aycock's name and

how this is or was intertwined with the nature of the place known now as the UNCG

Auditorium. Remember and commemorate were two frequent verbs associated with

discussions of the name, as seen through submitted comments (2015, pp. 7-13).

A second term used frequently throughout this report and all other sources of

discourse selected for this study was legacy. This particular word was either used directly

or referenced indirectly throughout all of the reports. This was noted almost immediately

upon preliminary analysis because of its weight throughout each document. Legacy, as

defined by several dictionaries, represents something inherited. In most cases this

inheritance comes the form of property or physical items of monetary value. It is

something from the past given to the present.

Within the context of this study the names being discussed are the legacy, the items left behind, the things of value being debated over. The act of leaving a legacy also creates restricted agency for those who inherit. The person leaving the legacy determines the nature, amount, or value of what is gifted, and in return those who inherit are left to only either accept or reject this gift. Based on the discourse analyzed for this study, this seems to be the primary concern of all involved in discussions of place name changes.

Legacy also evokes the concept of memory, which leads back to the concept of history and representations of the past inscribed onto physical locations. The physical essence of letters inscribed onto a building or sign does give place names a concrete presence in locations. Throughout each document, the term legacy conveyed either a burden of an unwanted aspect of the past superimposed onto the present, or an essential memory that defined the identity of people as they related to a particular place. For this reason, it is difficult to express the full depth and meaning of the legacy within the limited frame of this study. Equally complex is the term honor, which was often used interchangeably with legacy and history throughout all documents analyzed.

History, legacy, and honor defined all of the conversations surrounding place name changes featured in this study. These three words were used consistently throughout media reports, government reports, university messages, and submitted comments for the development of the UNCG Aycock committee report. The prevalence of these concepts places weight on emotional connections with the places once conjoined with the Aycock name. History in the sense that memory defined much of the identity of

the space. Legacy in that there were essences valued alongside these memories that were to be accepted or rejected by those inheriting them. Honor in that a moral code aligned itself with the preservation or erasure of memory.

Local Case Connections to Broader Trends

The overarching topic throughout the majority of examples used in this study is related to the commemoration of controversial history. History is one of the most frequently used terms in all of the documents reviewed and features as an essential aspect of these naming debates. Conjoined with these concerns over history and commemoration were debates over honoring the memories of controversial people. Controversy in these cases arises from a conflict between past and present values. Present individuals responsible for naming rights do not want to honor the heroes of yesterday due to a shift in perceptions in who should be honored. In most of the cases featured these naming changes are for public spaces.

Even in the case of the Aycock neighborhood change, which is comprised of private residential homes, there were still conversations about the public image of the neighborhood and how it related to the city of Greensboro and its history. In every case there was a conversation between the immediate identity and needs of the local community and how these communities and their identities would be represented to the world beyond their local scale. Conversations about naming in this context represent spatial identities that move between measures of scale.

At a broader scale naming rights are debated across various cities and institutions in the United States at the time of this research. Princeton University experienced tension on its campus in 2014 when students protested having buildings commemorating President Wilson, in response to his support of segregation and racial inequality (Newman, 2015). A similar vocabulary was used throughout these discussions between students and the university Board of Trustees. Ultimately, Wilson's name was kept in place because of his close connections with the university and because of his standing as a president of the United States (Kennedy, 2016).

Closer to Greensboro, three other universities in North Carolina removed Aycock's name from their campuses as well as any other names that represented individuals representing Confederacy, white supremacy, or other representations of violence towards minorities, particularly people of color. The report released by UNCG included the need to track changes occurring at other universities in the North Carolina university school system because of a desire for unity across the state's colleges (Bolton and Wyatt, 2015, pp. 1-3).

These themes are also discussed outside of universities in cities and communities across the east coast states in the U.S. The New York Times recently published an article featuring conflicts over a prominent bridge in Savannah, Georgia, which is currently named after a Georgia governor who disfranchised black voters during his tenure as governor and also blocked funding for desegregating schools (Blinder, 2018). Several naming alternatives have been proposed, the most prominent of which being the Girl Scouts of America wanting to commemorate their founder, Juliette Lowe, who was from

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Savannah. This is turn appears to have evoked counter protests because of this organization's own troubled origins when it came to accepting minorities into scout troops (Blinder, 2018).

The most forward of naming rights related documents released belongs to the Southern Poverty Law Center, which published a report two years ago about the representation of Confederacy across the region known as the U.S. South. This report outlined representations of threats to minorities, which included monuments and place names. For the place names section of this report particular emphasis was placed on the number of schools named after Robert E. Lee in areas with predominantly African-American students in their systems (2016).

In all of these cases debates surrounding the names of particular locations are related back to broader discussions about a shift in public commemoration and history. There are no questions evoking a sense of, "Who are we?", rather there is a sense of urgency and conflict between the representation of one era and another. It is essential to remember that in each of these cases those who determine the names for places are also those who have control over them. Naming is as much an expression of power as it is a process of honoring the dead or creating a communal identity intended to transcend time for a specific place. Naming represents the identity of place, it is largely the difference between a space and a place. The former of which stands as a neutral expression of location whereas the latter represents an emotive attachment to location.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Investigating the events surrounding UNCG's Aycock name removal and other

events linked to this act revealed a complex topic that continues to appear in news

headlines today. Not only do place names convey a tie between different aspects of time,

they also represent emotional bonds to places, if not serving as an extension of the

creation of these places. As seen in all of the documents and reports, altering place names

can evoke conflicting reactions since this action is seen as an extension of changing a

place's identity and how people can relate to this collectively. The act of naming a place

also reflects power dynamics between individuals since naming rights are typically

divided between various parties rather than belonging exclusively to one person over

another.

Each aspect of the social dimension of toponymy reveals complex narratives

about relating emotively to places. Following the metaphor of naming as an act of

inscription or writing, the role of geography, or earth writing, in these narratives is fitting

in terms of its depiction of human interactions with environments. The UNCG Aycock

place name removal discussions were centered around topics such as history, legacy, and

how people identified with the building and campus of UNCG. These conversations

revealed concerns about present representations of the campus community as well as how

accessible the campus would be to future students. This case was unique in that it

revealed concerns about the identity of UNCG for present and future generations. Yet it also reflected broader conversations about the role of place names in how places and communities are represented in other areas, as seen through the discussions about other North Carolina Universities and Princeton University. Outside of university settings discussions about place names continue to develop, as evidenced by headlines across the country.

Future Research Directions

As mentioned in the methodology chapter, this study would benefit from an expansion of data sources. Interviews and ethnographic studies of how people perceive naming and the creation of place would potentially illuminate what is only implied between the lines of documents. Interviews or observations of political events, such as town hall meetings, city council meetings, public forums, and so on, would also reveal discussions relating to how naming is an expression of power and control over places. The case study approach following Flyvbjerg's recommendations proved effective at identifying small and large-scale trends in naming, both across Guilford County and the state of North Carolina.

For future research the methods and recommendations used in this study could be applied to other areas experiencing debates over place names or name changes. This would contribute to overarching debates occurring across the nation about the role of history and its relationship with locations, or how imprints of the past influence perceptions of landscapes in the present. The narratives of UNCG's reports revealed this

to be an area of concern in terms of not only representing present students but also considering future generations. Regardless of whether people were for or against removing the name Aycock from the UNCG Auditorium, a concern for representations of the past was brought forward again and again.

The influence of the past also manifested as discussions concerning legacies and memory as they are inscribed onto landscapes and physical locations. Many of the people who voiced concerns about removing the name Aycock did so out of concern for the identity of particular locations and the memories infused into these places. While these conversations never presented the auditorium as a living organism, these concerns about representation and identity were reminiscent of discussions about the welfare of friends or acquaintances. In each of these discussions about legacy and commemoration the identity of this particular building was evoked in consciousness and language. These discussions, like many others about the inscription of meaning onto places, revealed the communal identity of this building and college campus even as the focus was around the actions and legacy of one man.

Controversies over place names are not confined to the U.S. alone. In Russia, for instance, there are debates about renaming the street in front of the U.S. Embassy, "North American Dead End" in retaliation for the U.S. naming the street in front of the Russian Embassy after Boris Nemptsov, who was an activist and critic of Vladimir Putin (Erickson, 2018). Place names are used as political tools to make statements concerning conflicted relations between nation states. Furthermore, toponymy is a factor in how political leaders display their power and legacy over countries and nation states. For

example, recently King Mswati III of Swaziland changed the name of the country to eSwatini to remove legacies of colonialism (Dwyer, 2018).

Like the Aycock name removal on UNCG's campus, concerns over contentious legacies and historical representation drive conversations about changing place names. These trends occur regardless of the size of the place concerned. For future research it would be beneficial to study who drives these place names changes and why. In the case of the embassy street name changes, future research could focus on political tensions expressed through the alteration of embassy street names. In the case of King Mswati III, changing the name of his country may reflect not only his desire to remove a tainted legacy but also to establish himself as a figure of authority and representative of this country for future generations. These examples illustrate that there is much to still be uncovered in terms of what toponymy represents about power, authority, legacies, historical narratives, and how people identify with places.

In conclusion, toponymy has much to offer geographic research. Toponymy reveals concerns about how places are represented and controlled. It serves as a basis for discussions about history as it connects to locations. As illustrated through this study of the UNCG Aycock name removal, place names represent all of these things and cast light onto human perceptions of space and the creation and identification of place.
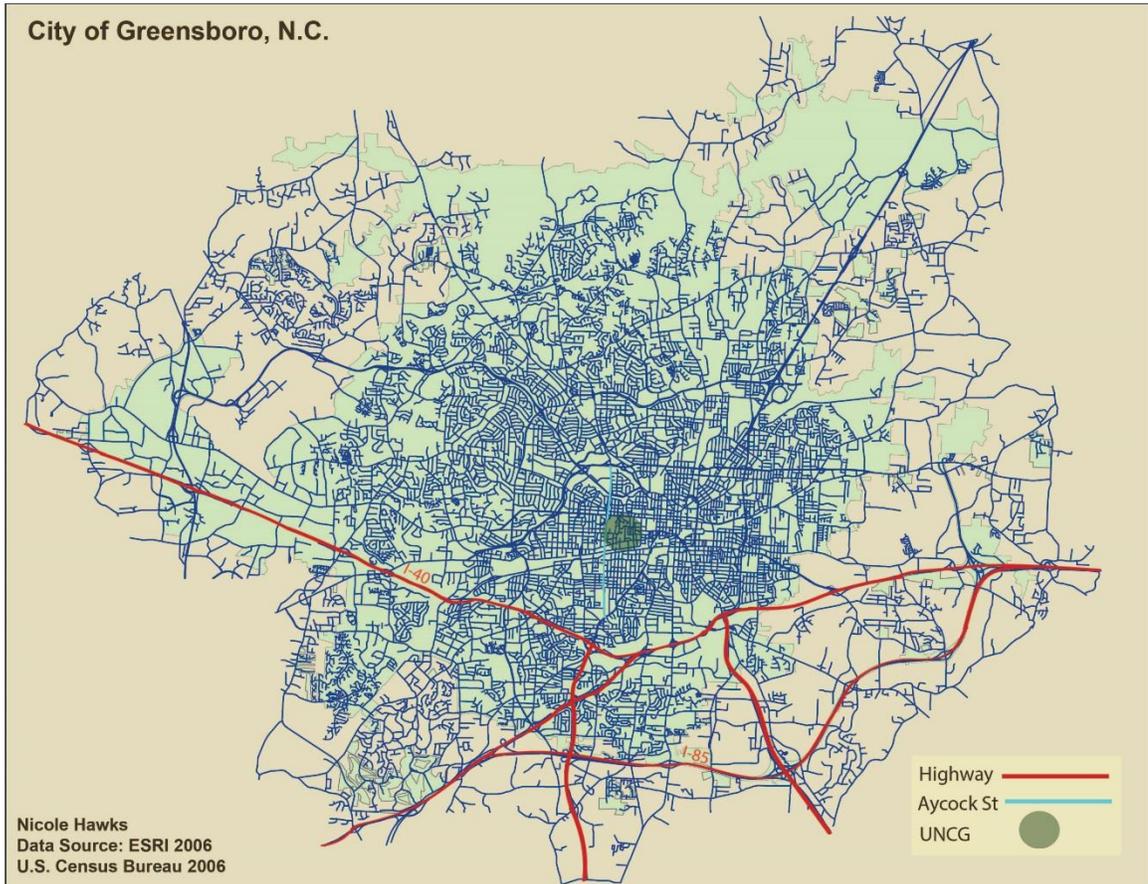
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Appendix A.1. Map of City of Greensboro.

State of North Carolina with Guilford County and the city of Greensboro

NORTH CAROLINA

GREENSBORO

Nicole Hawks

Data Source: ESRI 2006
U.S. Census Bureau 2006

Appendix A.2. Reference Map of Guilford County and Greensboro, N.C.

APPENDIX B

PHOTOGRAPH

Appendix B.1. Aycock Name Being Removed from UNCG Auditorium.
(Balentine, 2016).