

Building on work which has taken a discursive approach to place attachment, this article will use accounts of (dis)connections to past, present, and imagined future places of residence produced by two UK residents from Zimbabwe to demonstrate that when people talk about their relationships with particular places, they are engaging in linguistic practice which is social in nature and effects. The remainder of this introduction will describe some commonly employed linguistic resources for talking about people-place bonds, outline the politics of belonging and discuss the socio-political and interactional effects talk about relationships with places may have. This will be followed by an exploration of how the interviewees talked about their place attachments. The conclusion will discuss the implications of this analysis for the discursive approach to place attachment.

### **Linguistic resources for talking about relationships to places**

One commonly employed linguistic resource for talking about the connection between people and places is the root metaphor (Malkki 1992; Wampole 2016). This organising trope, which has been used through time and across cultures (Wampole 2016), suggests that people, like plants, are rooted in a particular place and derive their identity from that rootedness (Malkki 1992). The rooting of people is considered not only normal but a moral and spiritual need (Malkki 1992). Notions of rooted belonging make nation and citizenship seem like natural phenomena (Gilroy 2000) and render displacement a pathological experience (Malkki 1992). Indeed, the notion of an immutable link between people and places has been used to justify repatriation as the best available “durable solution” to the “refugee problem” (Hammond 1999).

A related linguistic resource for talking about place attachment identified by Taylor (2001, 2003, 2005, 2010) is the born-and-bred narrative. Like the root metaphor, this mode of talking about place attachment naturalizes the relationship between people and places by suggesting that birth and long term residence within a place constitutes the basis of belonging. This normative linguistic resource sets up a distinction between those who authentically belong and those who are newcomers or outsiders (Taylor 2010).

An alternative to the born-and-bred narrative discussed by Taylor (2010) involves a speaker constructing a connection to a place on the basis that it corresponds to and enables them to be the kind of person they want to be. New identities of place allow individuals to claim a relationship with a particular place irrespective of length of residence. Rather, people talk about having an affinity with a particular place because of the opportunities it offers, the things you can do there, and how easily it is to get to other places. Taylor's (2010) new identities of place has parallels with Savage, Bagnall and Longhursts (2005) elective belonging narrative. This narrative for claiming local affiliation “pitches choice against history as the migrant consumer rubs up against