

Maroon

**NAMING OF CHILDREN AMONG THE NDEBELE:
PRE- AND POST-1994**

BY

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DEDICATION

This dissertation, *Naming of children among the Ndebele: pre- and post- 1994*, is dedicated to my fiancé, Clement Mentoor and my daughter, Linda.

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Summary

The practices relating to name giving for children among the Ndebele people are investigated in this study. Since it is a well-known fact that personal names in the case of the Bantu speaking people are generally social-culturally relevant the initial hypothesis namely that there would be a significant increase in the number of politically inspired names after the political events commencing with the release of Nelson Mandela in 1994 was investigated. For the purpose of establishing this hypothesis the focus was on families who have both very young and older children as far as the field research is concerned. However, it transpired that the expected increase in the number of politically inspired names did not occur.

This research is an attempt to indicate how naming among the Ndebele speaking people is determined and influenced by socio-political and cultural factors. Aspects of the naming of children that are investigated in this study and accounted for are amongst others, who is responsible for the decision concerning a particular name?; which aspects give rise to the decision concerning a particular name; similarities and differences between name-giving with the Ndebele people and other ethnic groups.

Chapter 1 constitutes the theoretical basis for this investigation. The rationale, theoretical framework and methodology is discussed in this chapter.

In chapter 2 name-giving in general is discussed. After an overview of the literature the attention is drawn to name-giving in Ghana and Tanzania, thereafter the focus is on name-giving among the Nguni and Sotho groups. Changes in name-giving practices during the period 1960 to 1970 as opposed to the period 1980 to 1999 is also highlighted.

In chapter 3 the focus is on name-giving among the Ndebele in the urban areas as opposed to the rural areas. Similarities and differences between the name-giving practices in these two areas are highlighted.

In chapter 4 the data offered in chapter 3 is analysed.

Chapter 5 is the concluding chapter.

Samevatting

In hierdie studie word die gebruike rondom naamgewing van kinders onder Ndebelesprekers ondersoek. Dit is 'n bekende feit dat eiename oor die algemeen sosiaal-kultureel relevant is by Bantutaalsprekers. Die aanvanklike hipotese, naamlik dat daar na die politieke gebeure wat met die vrylating van Nelson Mandela in 1994 'n aanvang geneem het, 'n skerp toename sou wees van name wat polities-geïnspireerd is, is ondersoek. Vir hierdie doel is daar in die veldnavorsing gekonsentreer op gesinne met sowel baie jong kinders as ouer kinders om hierdie aanname deeglik te ondersoek. Dit het egter geblyk dat die verwagte toename in hierdie tipe eiename nie gerealiseer het nie.

Hierdie navorsing toon aan hoedat naamgewing onder die Ndebele sprekers bepaal en beïnvloed word deur sosio-politiese en kulturele faktore. Aspekte van naamgewing by kinders wat in hierdie studie onder die soeklig geplaas word, en deeglik verantwoord word, is onder meer: wie is verantwoordelik is vir die besluit oor 'n bepaalde naam?; watter aspekte gee aanleiding tot 'n spesifieke naam?; ooreenkomste en verskille tussen naamgewing by die Ndebele en ander etniese groepe.

Hoofstuk 1 vorm die teoretiese onderbou van die ondersoek. Die rasionaal, teoretiese raamwerk en metodologie word in hierdie hoofstuk bespreek.

In hoofstuk 2 word naamgewing in breë trekke ondersoek en na 'n bronneoorsig word daar spesifiek gefokus op naamgewing in Ghana en Tanzanië, waarna die fokus verskuif na naamgewing by die Nguni en Sothogroepe. Daar word ook gewys op veranderinge in die praktyk van naamgewing in die periode 1960 tot 1970 teenoor die periode 1980 tot 1999.

In hoofstuk 3 word daar gefokus op naamgewing by die Ndebele in die stedelike gebiede teenoor die landelike gebiede. Ooreenkomste en verskille tussen naamgewingspraktyke in die twee gebiede word uitgelig.

In hoofstuk 4 word die data van hoofstuk 3 geanaliseer.

Hoofstuk 5 is die samevattende hoofstuk.



CHAPTER 1

THE THEORY AND APPROACHES PERTAINING TO NAMING

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In many African cultures, personal names are meaningful, with meanings traditionally drawn from circumstances prevailing at the time of the child's birth or explained by family conditions. Koopman, Herbert and Suzman have all looked at this issue. For example, the name Lindiwe 'Awaited', the explanation the father provided is that he had longed for a child, especially a boy, who will carry his name (Herbert 1994:3). Koopman on the other hand, states that among the Zulu speaking people, personal names can be passed on to a man's descendants as a clan (1979). This also happens among other Nguni and Sotho speaking people as parents name a child after his/her grandparents or a distant relative.

However, due to a direct consequence of social circumstances and social transformation, there is a change in naming practice. What has been observed is that in the olden days, children were given names drawn from their own cultures but now a child may be given a name drawn from a different culture. For example, in the urban data, there is a child called **Mpho**, whose parents identify themselves as Ndebele speaking people. These parents report that they have bestowed this name on the child because they like Sotho names.

On the other hand, there is also a decrease of European names due to socio-political awareness in which traditionally identity is called upon by the parents to assert themselves, for example, in the urban data there are 45 out of 112 who bear only African names. Suzman (1994) reports that currently many young Zulu people use their Zulu names in all situations. There is a belief that infant naming will respond to the socio-political changes of the new South Africa. Politically-inspired names are considered only in the urban data after 1994. The reason being that young and educated people who are more likely to respond to the political changes live in the urban areas (KwaMhlanga

and Ekangala). With regard to those children born after 1994, two questions were considered. Firstly, do their names have any political significance? Secondly, is there a tendency to reject English names? If so, why?

1.2 AIM

This research aims at studying name giving practices among the Ndebele speaking people. The main focus is on the general question of how traditional names and naming practices have been modified under the impact of many significant changes in social organisation and the culture of everyday life.

1.3 RATIONALE

No research has been done among the Ndebele speaking people as far as naming practice is concerned. Literature available on naming practice relate to Zulu, Sotho, Tswana, Xhosa, Venda and Tsonga. Ndebele as one of the Bantu languages spoken in South Africa, shows similarities and differences with the other cognate languages. Therefore, the focus of this research is of an empirical nature, that is, to add to or extend an existing body of knowledge.

1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The approach used in this research is of a comparative nature, focusing on similarities and differences in the act of naming from the early 1960's in the rural (Kameelrivier and Ekosini) areas and urban (KwaMhlanga and Ekangala) areas. Approaches which were considered were that of Herbert's dynamic onomastics and that of Suzman's Names as pointers. Dynamic onomastics deals with changes in onomastics due to certain factors such as urbanisation, religion, westernisation while in Names as pointers, Suzman states that in

African societies, name givers, traditionally chose personal names that pointed to a range of people and circumstances that were relevant at the time of the child's birth (1994:253). For example, in this research, there are children named after historical events or circumstances at birth. In these two approaches, the main issue is the relationship between name types and name givers.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

Data was collected through personal interviews. Four primary research areas were chosen. Urban data was collected in KwaMhlanga and Ekangala (Mpumalanga Province). The rural areas in which data were collected include Kameelrivier and Ekosini near Siyabuswa in Mpumalanga. In the rural areas, the sample was restricted to families in which both parents declared a common ethnicity. Mixed marriages were relatively rare in the rural data.

The urban research was based on mixed marriages because according to Herbert's hypothesis there is a general weakening of ethnic boundaries in urban areas as a result of the high rate of intermarriage and frequent interaction among people of diverse backgrounds. Furthermore, the emergence of urban vernacular speech also contributed to this state of affairs as reported by Herbert (1995:3).

In both areas, rural and urban, interviews were conducted in people's homes. In other words, the information was collected personally. The majority of the participants were women, especially in the rural areas due to the fact that the men were at work. Most respondents participated willingly, especially in the urban areas while in the rural areas, most of them expressed hesitation about the use to which the information would be put.

1.6 EXPOSITION OF CHAPTERS

Chapter one explains the aim of this dissertation, the method of research and the approach used in this research.

Chapter two focuses on theoretical issues such as the approach used by Herbert which is dynamic onomastics and Suzman's approach, namely names as pointers. An overview of existing literature on naming is attended to in this chapter. Two other African countries, Ghana and Tanzania are also considered. The aim being to compare the naming practices in these countries to that of South Africa with a particular focus on the Nguni and Sotho speaking people. Lastly, a comparison is made in terms of the naming practices during the 1960's to 1970's and the 1980's to the late 1990's.

Chapter three deals with illustrative data collected from KwaMhlanga and Ekangala (the urban areas) and Kameelrivier and Ekosini (the rural areas). The research in this chapter focuses primarily on the meaning of names and their social significance.

In chapter four, a detailed analysis is provided of the findings as far as naming practices is concerned among the Ndebele speaking people. The types of names and the relationship between the name and the name-giver(s) were investigated. An analysis of the data is thus provided in this chapter.

Chapter five is an assessment, that is, what deductions can be made from the data collected. This chapter reflects similarities and differences between the practices of the Ndebele and the Sotho and Tswana speaking people.

CHAPTER 2

NAMING OF CHILDREN IN AFRICA IN GENERAL

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on theoretical framework, namely the approaches used by Herbert which is dynamic onomastics and Suzman's approach which treats names as pointers. Secondly, the overview of existing literature on naming is attended to in this chapter. Thirdly, naming practices are investigated in two other African countries, namely Ghana and Tanzania. The aim of the latter investigation is to compare the practices in these two countries to that found in South Africa (with the focus on the Nguni and Sotho speaking people). Lastly, a comparison is made of the naming practices of the 1960's to 1970's and 1980's until the late 1990's focusing on name giving practices in the South African context during these periods.

2.2 THE CONCEPT ONOMASTICS



As naming is part of onomastics, it is appropriate to briefly define onomastics. According to Raper (1986:265) onomastics may be defined as the scientific study of proper names. It covers a wide range of fields since it includes place-names, personal names, ethnic names, brand and trade names, names of animals, corporate groups, etc. Personal names include family names, bynames, nicknames, pet names, etc. In this study, all the above-mentioned personal names will be investigated except pet names. The debate of what a proper name is will not be entertained, as this debate is not part of this study.

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

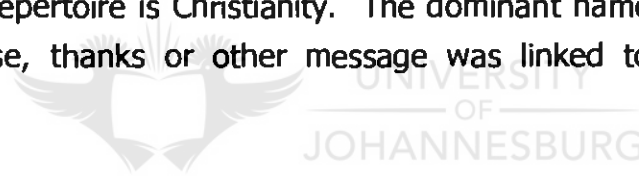
In this study, attention is given to differences between the act of naming children by Ndebele people living in rural areas as opposed to those living in urban areas (who have mixed cultures). The possibility of a change in child

naming practices will also be investigated. The main focus of this study is on the relationship between name types and name-givers.

2.3.1 Approaches

2.3.1.1 Dynamic onomastics

This study deals with changes in onomastics due to certain factors such as urbanisation, religion and westernisation. According to Herbert (1995:2-3) the introduction of Christian names itself produced an important typological change in the naming system. For example, nowadays, name uniqueness is changing. Some of the parents draw names from a 'common stock' of names available. Herbert termed this method of name giving 'name repertoire'. Many children are given names such as Bongani, or Sibongile 'Grateful', Thokozani, Jabulile, Bathabile 'Happy', Siphon 'Gift', Lindiwe 'Awaited', Vusumuzi 'Revive the home' etc. Herbert (1995:15) states that the shaping influence on the repertoire is Christianity. The dominant name type is one in which some praise, thanks or other message was linked to the Christian belief.



2.3.1.2 Names as pointers

Suzman (1994:253) states that in African societies, name-givers, traditionally chose personal names that pointed to a range of people and circumstances that were relevant at the time of the child's birth. This study has revealed that children are often named after historical events or specific circumstances at birth. Such a name will remind the parents or relatives or even the society of that particular event.

2.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to gain better insight into the bestowal of personal names, a review of literature on this topic was undertaken. This overview on existing research is significant in as far as it steers this research. This literature study serves to highlight some of the important issues relevant to the topic as well as

indicating gaps in the body of knowledge pertaining to the bestowal of personal names.

Mohome (1972) focuses on naming among the Basotho who live in rural areas where agriculture and animal husbandry are the main sources of livelihood. These people attached great significance to the meaning of names. Names used by these communities often refer to events, experiences and emotions. Mohome (1972:184) maintains that naming in Sesotho is determined and influenced by socio-cultural factors. This article is valuable for this study, especially as far as the rural areas researched in this study are concerned since most of the people in these areas also still practice agriculture and animal husbandry. The question is: Is naming practice in such areas affected by social transformations that is taking place?

Koopman's (1979:163) informants (Zulus) have stated that it is possible to give a completely meaningless name to a girl as long as it sounds pleasant. For example, uNanana, uFununu, uThululu. Koopman called these names 'euphonies'. In the data collected in the rural areas, there are ten girls who bear such names and the name-givers were the mothers.

Koopman (1979:69) in his study of Zulu naming practices states that the significance of the personal name is relevant even after a man's death, for a man is remembered after his death by his traditional or Zulu name. It is this name that can be passed on to a man's descendants as a clan name.

Koopman (1991:12) points out that names of oxen and dogs may be used in a way in which Zulu personal names are very seldom used, and that is, as a comment on social relations. For example, an ox-name: uBayangizonda 'They hate me'. The owner of the ox lets his neighbours know that he is aware of their feelings of hatred towards him. Among the Ndebele speaking people, through the interviews, it became apparent that personal names do reflect social relations. For example, there is a girl by the name of uBangiswani 'Why are they (neighbours) against this family'.

Koopman, as a major researcher in this field, has done extensive work on Zulu naming, therefore, his work will be of significance in this study as Ndebele is part of the Nguni subgroup of languages.

Thipa (1986) focuses on child naming. In other words, what one considers when he or she names a child. The data were collected among the Basotho and Xhosa speaking people. The names he collected refer to reincarnation, historical and other memorial events and death. For example, a child may be named after a member of the family or of the community especially African political leaders who are regarded as outstanding or as political heroes. He says to name a child in this way is to express the wish that the person after whom he or she is named should be reborn in the child, especially that person's qualities. Those qualities should live on. He also refers to political assertiveness. According to him (1986:287) the Sotho and Xhosa people are increasingly avoiding names that are not considered black (African), that is why names of Black political heroes are often used.

In Ndebele, being one of the Nguni languages, reincarnation, historical and memorial events are also considered in naming a child. Thipa's article is relevant to this study as it also focuses on why there is a decrease in the use of European names, especially in the urban areas. It is true that '*By their names you shall know them*' because it is through the name of the child that one knows why he or she was given such a name.

Herbert and Bogatsu (1990) test the hypothesis that infant naming responded to social and political change after the 1980 riots. They believe that there should be a sharply heightened incidence of indigenous names with political significance that have been bestowed upon children after these political events. To test this hypothesis, a comparison is drawn between name giving in rural and urban areas focusing on the Tswana and Northern Sotho speaking people. It is this article that inspired this research.

Name giving in Ndebele society, is often a reflection of the socio-cultural circumstances or events at the time of birth. Secondly, it is a process in which various role players can participate. Thirdly, the naming of children is a practice undergoing change due to factors such as western influences and the influence of Christianity. Lastly, naming of children has to be explored in terms of general tendencies in relation to factors influencing the process and the broad categories of types of names found.

This study focuses on the 1990's due to the initial expectation that after 1990 politically inspired children's names would show a marked increase. Whether this is true or not, that is what this study investigated.

Herbert (1992) states that personal names at the societal level provide insight into the operative system of cultural values within the community. For example, among the Nguni people it is common to find grandfathers' and fathers' names bestowed upon boys while emotionally relevant names are often given to girls. Therefore, the Nguni people do have some operative system they use in naming. Herbert's article also focuses on the rejection of European names and this aspect also receives attention in this research. According to Herbert this is due to socio-political awareness in which traditional identity is called upon to assert itself (1992:3). Is there a decrease in European names among the Ndebele speaking people? If so, is it due to the reasons mentioned above? That is what this research is about to reveal.

Suzman (1994) states that change in naming practice is a direct consequence of social transformation of the basic clan unit. According to her grandfathers and fathers are no longer regarded as name-givers in our present society as most families no longer live with extended families, especially in urban areas and even in rural areas to some extent.

Children are also given names which are not drawn from their own culture, but from a different culture. This was not the case previously. As Suzman's study focuses on the present day society it has a direct bearing on this research. Surely, there is a dramatic change in family structure and the decline of the father's role in family life as there is an increased occurrence of single parents (especially women) these days.

The questions raised by Herbert (1995) have been considered in this research. These are questions such as:

Who names a child?

How is the name selected?

Are the names drawn from a stock of names available or are they coined freely?

This mini-dissertation furthermore categorises names, that is, whether the name belongs to names relating to the emotions of the name-giver, or family continuity names, for example. Herbert's work will be referred to frequently in this research report.

The sources referred to above are relevant to this study because they raise some of the issues outlined in the introduction such as the traditional way of naming children and changes due to socio-political effects on naming practice. With these sources as a theoretical orientation, this research then assesses whether what has been said in these sources about personal names has some resemblance to the Ndebele speaking people's practices on name giving.

2.5 A COMPARISON OF NAME GIVING PRACTICES IN SOUTH AFRICA, GHANA AND TANZANIA

Apart from South Africa, Ghana and Tanzania will be considered as far as naming of children is concerned. As mentioned in paragraph 2.1 the reason for this comparison is to compare the naming of children in these African countries with that prevalent in South Africa. Hereafter the naming systems and practices will be compared. In the end the similarities and differences in naming practices in these two countries will be compared to that of the Ndebele speaking people.

2.5.1 Name giving practices in Ghana

According to Anim in Ghana the child is considered as a human being only after seven days. When the child is born, he/she stays with his/her mother and his/her maternal grandmother for seven days. After seven days there is a ceremony whereby the child is introduced to other family members and friends (1993:1).

2.5.1.1 The naming ceremony

The naming ceremony takes place early in the morning (at about 4:00) and it is over before sunrise (which is normally around 6:00). The paternal

grandparents are the ones who decide on the particular name for the child when the father will be seeing the child for the first time. However, the father may put in a request to be allowed to name the child. The father may name the child after some living or dead person who has been an important factor in his own life. Naming the child is his way of accepting his new paternal responsibility (Anim, 1993:2).

2.5.1.2 The period of baptism

At baptism a child is given a Christian name and the father's name is invariably used as a middle name (Anim, 1993:3).

2.5.1.3 The importance of a child

In Ghanaian custom if you do not have a child after two years of marriage, your in-laws take you to the herbalists/medicine man to help you to have a child. In such an instance in exchange for a child, the child bears the name of the herbalist/medicine man (Anim, 1993:5).

The fibre of Ghana has a number of factors that indirectly encourage or force couples to go headlong into the production of babies, irrespective of financial or other considerations. For instance, the form of address used to refer to the couple is vested in the children. At social gatherings for example, the father and the mother are called with reference to their children, in which case parents take on the names of their children. No childless woman can stand the indirect social humiliation of not being addressed with reference to her child for long (Anim, 1993:39).

2.5.1.4 Types of names

The types of names given to children in Ghana are the same as those found among the Nguni and Sotho speaking people, for instance family continuity names. For example, in the data, there is a child named **Morake** by his father. This child is named after his grandfather. Death-related names also

occur in which case a child is given a derogatory name, for example, the child by the name of **Baphelile** 'The are finished.' In Ghana, such names are called 'nonsense names', with the purpose of making the angel of death imagine that the living themselves do not like the particular child. So, why would the child then be taken into the land of death? (Anim, 1993:10)

However, one category of names that needs to be discussed as it raises some interesting issues is that of God-related names.

- **God-related names**

The general belief among the Ghanaians is that it is God who gives children. A considerable number of names although related to God, do not in fact refer to the universally accepted omnipotent deity. There are three levels of the deity which the Ghanaians recognise. There is the God of the universe, which is closest to the Christian God, the god of nature and the lesser gods of the earth or idols. These levels of God are represented in the various names given to children. A child may thus be named **Onyankopon** - the name of the Almighty God - equivalent to the Christian God, or **Asase-Yaa** - the god of nature and/or **Abosom** - the lesser god (Anim, 1993: 12).

2.5.2 Child name-giving practices in Tanzania

In his article 'Personal names in socio-cultural context', Omari (1970:66-67) refers to what personal names signify culturally or what they can reveal to us culturally. His main theme is 'names as symbols'. His findings in terms of child naming do not differ substantially from the practices of the Nguni and Sotho speaking people. For instance, personal names can reveal some historical incidents whereby a child may have a name to reflect famine or a locust swarm which invaded the area at the time it was born or during pregnancy.

Personal names may furthermore reveal the importance of certain people. Such people can be ancestors of the family or the heroes and heroines of that

particular society. These may have been political leaders or specialists in religious matters.

With regard to historical incidents, the parents or relatives of the child may like to be reminded of a particular event by naming their child after it. The importance of certain people may inspire the parents or relatives to the extent that their appreciation of the character of a leader/specialist may prompt them to decide that their child should bear the same name.

2.5.3 Child name-giving practices among the Sotho speaking people

This issue which will be discussed in this research with reference to the Sotho speaking people is the nature of the initiate's names which is different from that of the Ndebele speaking people.

According to Mohome (1972: 183-184), initiate names are temporary. Their use and social significance last as long as the initiation period itself and furthermore, these names are used mainly by those who are involved in the initiation rites.

Most of the initiate names refer to good qualities such as strength, speed, agility, etc.

2.5.4 Name giving practices among the Nguni group

2.5.4.1 The Zulu speaking people

Because of tension among the people within a community, the Zulu speaking people may use names of animals to define a person's relation to other members of the society or as a comment on social relations.

Koopman in his article (1991) investigates the way in which the Zulu names of oxen and dogs may be used as social comment, particularly, in reference to the suspected witchcraft of neighbours. What Koopman (1991:16) finds is that Zulu society, like many others in Africa, sees a need to bring conflict out into the open, but prefers to use the names of animals to do so, rather than

the names of people. For example a dog may be named **uZondabathakathi** 'hate the wizards'. The owner may, in this case, let the neighbours know that they are suspected of witchcraft.

2.5.5 Similarities between the Nguni and Sotho speaking people, Ghanaians and Tanzanians with regard to name giving practices

Among the African societies, personal names are not only a verbal notation for the different phases or aspects of a person's status and life history, but they are also symbols deeply charged with meaning derived from the whole culture. These names are associated with family incidents. They explain incidents which occurred at birth or family conditions. For example, due to the devastation of infant mortality, it is common among African societies that the surviving child is given a name that is supposed to him not welcomed to the messenger of death.

Among the Sotho speaking people names such as Moselantja 'Dog's tail', Mokoto 'A thing of naught', etc are found while with the Ghanaians names such as Anonwikpo 'will this one survive' etc. The angel of death is found among the Sotho speaking people and the Ghanaians.

As mentioned (in paragraph 5.5.1.4), the purpose is to make the angel of death/ evil spirits imagine that the living themselves do not like this child, so why should he/she be taken into the valley of death.

With regard to family continuity names, it is also a tradition among African societies to name children after their grandparents. (See chapter 3, paragraph 3.13).

It is also common among African societies to give children especially boys commemorating names. For example, among the Zulu and Ndebele speaking people, the name Vusumuzi 'Revive the homestead' is common for the first born son. It can be the first child being a boy or the first son among the girls while the Sotho speaking people often use the name Mojalefa 'Inheritor' for

the first born son. In the names Vusumuzi and Mojalefa, there may be an element of desperation for a baby boy.

2.5.6 Differences between the Nguni and Sotho speaking people, Ghanaians and Tanzanians with regard to name giving practices

Two areas of name giving practices will be discussed here. Firstly, the bestowal of names and secondly, the initiate names, that is, what they mean and who bestow them.

Among the people of Ghana, the child receives a name after seven days and the father may name the child after obtaining permission from his parents to do so. A ceremony is held and relatives and friends are invited to come and see the child for the first time. The child's father also sees the child for the first time during this ceremony.

Among the Ndebele speaking people, the child generally stays with the maternal grandparents for two or three days. The maternal grandparents or relatives will give the child a name while the child's paternal relatives also gives him/her a name. In other words, the child will have two names and the most popular one will be used daily.

During the field research for the present study, no name giving ceremony was mentioned. Among the Ndebele speaking people, from right after birth, the father is not at all restrained from seeing the child.

As mentioned in paragraph 2.5.3, Sotho initiate's names are temporary and their use and social significance last only as long as the initiation period itself. Furthermore, the names are used mainly by those who are involved in the initiation rites and these names refer to good qualities such as strength, speed, skilfulness, etc. However, with the Ndebele speaking people, the initiate's names last until the initiate gets married and has children. Thereafter he will be called 'father of so-and-so'. The names the boys acquire during initiation are used by everyone in the family and also by the members of the broader society, especially the younger ones as a sign of showing

respect to the man who is now an initiate and no longer a boy. The meaning of such a name may not be known to everyone since initiation is regarded as a secret or a sacred ritual among the Ndebele speaking people.

2.6 CHANGES IN CHILD NAMING PRACTICES

There are changes in terms of child naming and name giving practices. One often hears people talking about the practices of olden days and that of nowadays. This research investigates what happened during 1960's to 1970's as far as naming is concern as compared to 1980's until the late 1990's.

2.6.1 Name giving during the early 1960's to the late 1970's

According to Mönning (in Herbert 1990:1) the Northern Sotho childhood names were bestowed a short time after birth. The name was usually chosen by the mother although it would finally be decided on by the family of the father and particularly by his elder sister, who if the child is a girl, may have a claim on her as a future bride for her own son¹.

Mönning further states that the infancy names bestowed by the mother are ultimately of very little importance.

During 1960's-1970's surnames were used as names by prefixing **Na-** 'Daughter of' onto a surname among the Ndebele speaking people. Such names were bestowed by grandmothers. Consider for names such as **NaMgwezane** 'Daughter of Mgwezane'.

The influence of westernisation and Christianity plays an important role during this period. For example, children were not baptised by their traditional names, but parents were asked to choose a new name, that is, English or Afrikaans name. To have an English or Afrikaans name was regarded as a sign of change from the primitive to the modern world. This attitude was

¹ It is a custom among the Sotho speaking people for cousins to marry each other. This kind of marriage is called cross-cousin marriage.

implanted into people's minds to the extent that Africans themselves were not willing to be baptised into the new religions without having English or Afrikaans names accompanying the act of conversion.

From the interviews it transpired that most of the children, especially the first born children were named after their grandparents (see chapter 4, table 5).

Mohome (1972:171) states that the reason for naming children after their grandparents is that the child thus named will automatically inherit the virtues of its grandparent.

Other children, on the other hand, were named after historical or memorable events. Parents or relatives of such a child may like to be reminded of that event by naming the child after it (Omari, 1970:66).

During this period, English or Afrikaans names were favoured by the Ndebele speaking people as most of these children born during this period have an African and an English or Afrikaans name. Some of the children were given English or Afrikaans names only as there are 39 children in the data who bear English or Afrikaans names only.

2.6.2 Name giving during the period 1980 to 1999

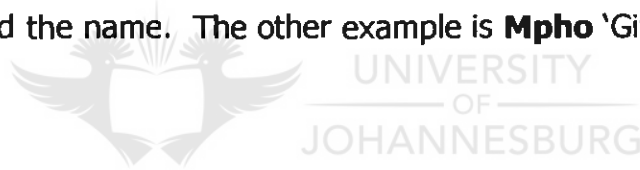
The custom of unique name coining is changing. Most of the names are drawn from a 'common stock' of names available. As Herbert states, the shaping influence is Christianity.

There is also a tendency to translate African names into English. In other words, the child will be given two names that have the same meaning. Therefore, a child may be called **uNqobile** (the African name meaning 'Victory') and **Victor** (the 'school' name). Herbert states that the shift in attitude towards English names is mirrored in the label attached to them. They were formerly known as school names and distinguished from amagama asekhaya 'home names'. Now one occasionally hears the European name being referred to as the 'slave name'.

However, English names are increasingly disfavoured, especially in the urban areas. Many parents refuse to give their children English names.

Because of the cultural revolution, people preferred to be known by their traditional names instead of 'Christian' names and their children are given African names only. This revolution is very often found among the politicised young people. In the data there are 67 children bearing African name(s) only.

There is a dramatic change in the traditional family structure. Grandfathers and fathers are no longer regarded as name-givers as people no longer live with extended families. Children are now given names by their mothers in most instances (or sometimes by their fathers) before they are born. In Ndebele they are sometimes given names that are not drawn from their own language or culture. In the data, there is a child (whose parents identify themselves as Ndebele speaking people) who bears a Sotho name **Thabang** 'Be happy (you [plural])'. The parents said they gave the child the name because they loved the name. The other example is **Mpho** 'Gift' which is also a Sotho name.



2.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter it became apparent that African countries do share some similarities as far as the naming of children is concerned, for example, children are given names reflecting on what happened during their birth or during pregnancy. There are also differences as Sotho initiate's names refer to good qualities while with the Ndebele speaking people the meaning is most often not known.

It has also been apparent that there are changes in name giving practices. During the 1960's most of the children were given two names, that is, an African name and a western name or two western names for that matter. Now children are frequently given African names only.

Most of the young parents refuse to give their children western names due to their attitude towards western names. Some maintain that western names do

not have meaning. Others do have western names, but prefer to be called by their African names.



Chapter 3

NAMING OF CHILDREN AMONG THE NDEBELE: URBAN AND RURAL AREAS

2.8 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the focus is on the presentation of the data. Illustrative data are taken from the mixed group (culture) in the urban areas - kwaMhlanga and Ekangala and from a Ndebele community living in Mpumalanga. The research focuses attention primarily on the meaning of names and their social significance. Each name listed will be followed by its literal meaning and its social significance. The list is not arranged alphabetically, but in terms of the social implications of the names which is the main objective of this chapter. All names listed, are presented in the main categories to which they belong.

For the purpose of comparing and contrasting information collected, the names are divided into two sections, namely, name giving in rural areas and name giving in urban areas.

2.9 NAME GIVING IN THE URBAN AREAS

Data from the urban areas were collected in KwaMhlang and Ekangala. It is primarily the so-called 'black elite' who live in these two areas (doctors, lawyers, nurses, teachers, policemen, technicians, ministers and members of the former KwaNdebele Government). Couples from different language groups were interviewed, for instance, a Ndebele speaking man married to a Northern Sotho speaking lady or *vice versa*. In other words, no restrictions were imposed on the collection of 'Ndebele' data due to the high incidence of intermarriage and frequent interaction among people of diverse background.

In these two areas, 112 names (57 boys and 55 girls) were collected. These names are classified into nine categories, namely; (1) emotion related names,

(2) religious-orientated names, (3) family continuity names, (4) family situation, (5) state of weather at birth, (6) events at birth, (7) name repertoire, (8) politically inspired names and (9) others.

2.9.1 Types of names

2.9.1.1 Emotion related names

According to Herbert (1994:5) emotion related names relate to the here and now of the time surrounding birth. Parents are the most likely name-givers in this category. Names in this category express the feelings of the name-giver during the birth of the child. Different emotions are expressed in this category such as positive emotions, friction or disappointment. As a result, this category is divided into three sub-categories, namely, (a) names reflecting joy, (b) names reflecting disappointment and (c) names reflecting friction.

Abbreviations used in the tables below are:

Ethnic group: N = Ndebele, NS = Northern Sotho, Tsw = Tswana,
V = Venda, Ts = Tsonga, C = Coloured.

Sex of the child: M(ale), F(emale)

Name-giver: M(other), F(ather), B(oth parents), S(ister)
MGM (maternal grandmother),
MGF (maternal grandfather)
PGM (paternal grandmother),
PGF (paternal grandfather)
MA (maternal aunt)
PA (paternal aunt)

(a) Names reflecting joy

The names listed in the table below all reflect joy.

ETHNIC GROUP	SEX	NAME	MEANING	NAME GIVER	EXPLANATION
N	F	Bathabile	'They are happy'	MGF	'His grand daughter had two miscarriages, now they are happy for her and for the child'
Tsw	F	Nthabiseng	'Make me happy'	M	'She wanted a baby girl'
N	F	Nontobeko	'Mother of humbleness'	M	'She was a humble girl wanting her parents to be proud of her, that is why she had children only after marriage'
N	F	Nontokozi	'Mother of joy'	M	'The child brought joy in her life, as she had lots of problems during pregnancy.'
N	F	Noxolo	'Mother of peace'	M	'This child brought peace between her family and her boyfriend's family'



N	F	Khanyisile	'Lightened up'	M	'She had two miscarriages, therefore, this child brought light in her life'
C	M	Lungile	'Right, okay'	MGM	'She didn't approve of her son-in-law as he is a coloured, but she has to accept the baby, now it's okay'
N	F	Minenhle	'Nice afternoon'	M	'It is her day because she is the only girl among two boys'
C	M	Nhlanhla	'Luck'	M	'She was lucky to have another child after 8 years'
N	M	Sifiso	'Wish'	M	'It was her wish to have a boy'

(b) Names reflecting disappointment

Names in this category are given to children who are born under what may be called 'stereotyped' circumstances, that is, when a child is born into a family which, until the birth of the child in question, had only children of one sex (Mohome, 1972: 179-180). Such a state of affairs causes great concern among the Ndebele speaking people, especially in the case where there are only girls. They are concerned about the inheritance and the continuity of the paternal line.

ETHNIC GROUP	SEX	NAME	MEANING	NAME GIVER	EXPLANATION
Tsw	F	Anele	'Enough'	MA	'Her sister had only girls and now all the children are girls'
N	F	Anele	'Enough'	MA	'It is a name given when you have children of one sex being boys or girls'
N	F	Phindile	'Again'	M	'She had a girl yet again - now there are three girls'



(c) Names reflecting friction

The name bestowed upon the innocent newborn serves to publicly encode a complaint about another member of the family or community (Herbert, 1995:6). What has transpired from the interviews conducted, is that such names are given exclusively by women.

ETHNIC GROUP	SEX	NAME	MEANING	NAME GIVER	EXPLANATION
V	F	Dipuo	'Talks'	M	'Her neighbours were gossiping about her, saying she was sleeping around when she fell pregnant'

N	F	Thembeni	'What are you hoping for?'	MGM	"She (MGM) was asking the mother what she is hoping for - why she allowed to be pregnant knowing they are struggling and her husband left them'
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N	M	Velaphi	'Where does he come from'	M	'Her husband was hesitant about the baby - he was not sure whether this baby was his'
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2.9.1.2 Religious-orientated names

In this category names are found that refer to God, though it is often not clear which God is referred to. It may be the ancestors or the Christian God.

Tsw	M	Moseu	'Angel'	F	'This child is an angel from heaven'
N	M	Nkosinathi	'God is with us'	F	'God is always with this family'
Tsw	M	Obakeng	'Praise Him'	B	'They praise God for this blessings'

N	M	Simphiwe	'We were given him'	M	'God gave them this child as they had begged him'
Tsw	M	Thapelo	'Prayer'	F	'It is through prayer that we have this child as the mother was very sick throughout the pregnancy'
N	M	Thapelo	'Prayer'	M	'It was through prayer that this child survived - the mother was very ill'
N	M	Thembikosi	'Trust God'	M	'She is trusting God in whatever she is doing'
N	F	Thembisile	'Promised'	M	'She promised God she will always believe and worship Him'

2.9.1.3 Family continuity names

The names of the grandparents (living or dead) are passed from one generation to another by naming the children who are born into the family after them. This practice of naming children after their grandparents has some significance. According to Omari (1970:67) it is a way of paying respect and remembering the living dead - people who are considered as members of the family. In this way a clan name is continued.

ETHNIC GROUP	SEX	NAME	MEANING	NAME GIVER	EXPLANATION
NS	M	Abraham		F	'He named the child after his father'
Tsw	M	Morake		F	'He named the child after him while he was named after his father'
Tsw	M	Mothibo		PGF	'He named the child after himself'
N	F	Nomvuyo	'Rejoice'	F	'He named the child after his mother'
N	F	Siphenge		PGM	'She name the child after herself'



2.9.1.4 Family situation names

In this category names indicating roles within the family are found. What transpired during the interviews is that, most often, boys were given names indicating their responsibilities in the homestead.

ETHNIC GROUP	SEX	NAME	MEANING	NAME-GIVER	EXPLANATION
N	F	Mongi	'Saviour'	M	'This child was born after a long time, she is thus going to care for them. She is their savour'
N	M	Mongezi	'Addition'	M	'Her husband is the only son among girls, this would thus be 'his brother' and the Ntombele family is going to be enlarged'
N	M	Mzwakhe	'His house/ homestead'	F	'He is the first among his siblings to have a son'
N	M	Nhlanhla	'Luck'	MGM	'Her daughter is lucky to have a boy who is going to look after her'
Tsw	F	(Ra)kgadi	'Aunt'	M	'Given to the first girl among boys as the father does not have a sister whom the children can relate to as an aunt ²

² According to the information provided by the Sotho speaking people the paternal aunt plays an important role in the family. She has to make sure that everything in the household runs smoothly. Therefore, her responsibility is the same as that of the father.

Though it is often boys who are given names indicating responsibilities, girls are also given names assigned to those responsibilities. For example, in the sample there is a girl by the name of **Mongi** 'Saviour'. **Mongi's** family have only girls and **Mongi** is the last born. Realising that they would not have a baby boy, therefore, the mother decided that this young one (Mongi) is the only one who is going to take the responsibility of this household when they (the parents) grow old.

2.9.1.5 Names relating to the state of the weather at birth

The traditional Basotho are dependent on agriculture and animal husbandry for their livelihood, and rain is, accordingly, one of the most pleasant events. Thus children born on a rainy day are often named after rain (Mohome, 1972:173). From the sample, there are two girls, Mapule and Motlalepule whose names mean 'Mother of rain'. Mapule is a Tswana speaking person and Motlalepule is a Venda speaking person. They were both named by their maternal grandmother.



2.9.1.6 Events at birth

Suzman (1994:262) argues that names referring to events at birth are pointers of extraordinary circumstances at the time of birth. This could be a birth which does not go as scheduled or expected.

ETHNIC GROUP	SEX	NAME	MEANING	NAME GIVER	EXPLANATION
N	F	Fikile	'Has arrived'	F	'The mother went to the hospital and the doctor said that it was not time to give birth. When she arrived home, she gave birth.'

The father said,
'What can we do?
The child has
arrived'

C M Khaya 'Home' F
'They were
roofing the house
when the child
was born.
Therefore, he
said: 'This is the
child's home!''

Tsw F Matsela 'Mother of roads' MA
'The child was
nearly born on
the road because
she was born
immediately after
the arrival of her
mother at her
grandparent's
place'

V M Motsamai 'Traveller' MGM
'The mother of
the child was
very fond of
travelling while
she was pregnant
and she
(grandma) was
very worried that
her daughter
would give birth
on the road'



Mohome (1972:171) states that some names are believed even to have some influence on the character of their bearers. Let's consider Khaya 'Home', an eight year old boy, for instance. The father reported that Khaya does not sleep at anyone else's house and spent most of his time at home. His parents believed his nature is such because of the influence his name has on him.

2.9.1.7 Name repertoire

This category is about the common names found among children nowadays. Nowadays you find two or three or even more children sharing the same name. Name uniqueness is no longer so highly valued. In other words parents draw names from existing ones. Herbert (a.s:15) states that the shaping influence on name repertoire is Christianity. According to him a dominant name type is one in which some praise, thanks or other message is linked to Christian beliefs.

ETHNIC GROUP	SEX	NAME	MEANING	NAME GIVER	EXPLANATION
N	M	Bafana	'Boys'	F	'It is a common name especially if you have only boys'
Tsw	M	Boitumelo	'Happiness'	M	'It is a common name given to boys'
Tsw	F	Boitumelo	'Happiness'	F	'It is a nice name for girls'
N	M	Bongani	'Be grateful' (you - plural)	F	'He liked the name'
N	M	Bongani	'Be grateful' (you - plural)	M	'She liked the name'

N	F	Charlotte		M	'She saw the name in a magazine and liked it'
N	F	Jabulile	'Be happy'	MGM	'It is a girl's name'
Tsw	F	Kabelo	'Share'	M	'She liked the name'
Tsw	F	Kgomotso		F	'He liked the name'
N	M	Koketso	'Addition'	F	'He liked this Sotho name'
Tsw	M	Koketso	'Addition'	F	'It's a boy's name'
Tsw	F	Koketso	'Addition'	PGM	'It's a nice name'
Tsw	F	Lebohong	'Grateful'	F	'He liked the name'
Tsw	F	Lebohong	'Grateful'	M	'She liked the name'
Tsw	F	Lerato	'Love'	F	'He liked the name'
NS	F	Lethosi	'Sound of beads when dancing'	F	'It is just a name'
Tsw	F	Mandisa	'Extend'	M	'She liked this Xhosa name'

N	M	Mbulelo	'Grateful'	F	'He liked the name'
N	M	Mfundo	'Education'	M	'She liked the name'
N	M	Mpho	'Gift'	M	'She liked the name'
Tsw	M	Modiseko	(not known)	M	'It is just a name'
N	F	Moreen		S	'It is just a name'
Tsw	F	Naledi	'With light/star'	M	'She liked the name'
N	M	Neo		B	'They liked this Sotho name'
Tsw	F	Nthabiseng	'Be happy'	M	'It is a Sotho name for girls'
Tsw	F	Nthabiseng	'Be happy'	MGM	'She liked the name'
Ns	M	Patrick		M	'He liked the name'
Tsw	F	Refilwe	'We are given'	PGM	'It is a nice name for girls'
N	M	Sandile	'We have been extended'	F	'It is a nice name'
N	F	Sibongile	'We are grateful'	F	'It is a girl's name'

N	F	Sibongile	'We are grateful'	MGM	'it is a common name for girls'
N	M	Sibusiso	'Blessing'	F	'it is a common name given to boys'
N	M	Sibusiso	'Blessing'	F	'He liked the name'
N	M	Sifiso	'Wish'	M	'It is a boy's name'
N	F	Siphesihle	'Nice gift'	Uncle	'He liked the name'
N	M	Sipho	'Gift'	M	'She liked the name'
N	M	Siyabonga	'We are grateful'	F	'It is a nice name for a boy'
N	M	Thabang	'Be happy'	F	'He liked this Sotho name'
Tsw	M	Thabang	'Be happy'	F	'It is a nice name'
N	F	Thandeka	'Lovable'	MGM	'It is a nice name for girls'
N	F	Thembelihle	'Beautiful hope'	M	'It is a nice name'
Tsw	F	Thlol	'Victory'	B	'They liked the name'
N	M	Thokozani	'Be happy' (you - plural)	M	'She liked the name'

N	M	Thokozani	'Be happy (you - plural)	F	'It is a nice name'
Tsw	M	Tshego	'Gift'	F	'He liked the name'
N	M	Xoli	'Forgive'	M	'she liked the name'
N	F	Yvonne		M	'The name sounds nice'
N	F	Zodwa	'Only (girls)'	MGM	'It is a common name, especially if you have only girls'

From the names listed in the category of name repertoire, the explanation given by name-givers is often almost the same. Most of them say the reason for giving such a name is because 'it is a nice name' or 'they liked the name'. Some of them go to the extent of saying 'it is because girls are given this name', for example, **Sibongile** 'We are grateful' while others say 'Bongani 'Be grateful (you - plural)' or Bafana 'Boys' is a name for a boy: These are the common reasons the name-givers provide for giving a child the particular name.

2.9.1.8 Politically inspired names

Due to the prominence of political events since the early 1990's, it was expected that such events would be reflected in personal names given to children. In order to ascertain whether there has been a sudden increase in politically inspired naming, the data base was scrutinized to determine such trends. Generally politically inspired names seem to have a higher incidence in urban areas than in rural areas. 56 names were collected (27 boys and 29 girls) of children born from 1990 till 1999. For each name the following

information was collected: (1) the ethnic group of the mother and the father, (2) date of the child's birth, (3) sex, (4) child's name, (5) English name (if any), (6) reason for name choice and (7) identity of the name-giver.

The politically inspired names are generally easy to identify, for example, Nkululeko 'Freedom'. However, in a number of instances, it is only the explanation of the name that identifies it as a politically inspired name due to the fact that the very same name may have a non-political origin or connotation.

ETHNIC GROUP	SEX	NAME	MEANING	NAME GIVER	EXPLANATION
N	M	Khulekani	'Lets pray'	F	'For the 27 th of April - the birth of the new S.A.
N	M	Lindokuhle	'Expecting good things'	F	'The child was born on the 20 th of April 1994. Everyone expected positive changes in S.A.'
N	F	Nonkululeko	'Mother of Freedom'	B	'She was born on the 27 th of April 1994'
N	M	Nqobile	'Victory'	F	'In the end Nelson Mandela did become the President of S.A.

N	M	Ntuthuko	'Progress'	B	'The father was chosen as the chairperson of the ANC Youth League in the area'
Tsw	M	Sabelo	'share'	F	'He was named after Sabelo Phama – the PAC leader'
N	M	Sithembiso	'Promise'	F	'He was born during the election campaign-things were looking promising for the new S.A.'



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2.9.1.9 Other

Names in this category include those which fall outside the categories that were mentioned earlier in this chapter.

ETHNIC GROUP	SEX	NAME	MEANING	NAME GIVER	EXPLANATION
Tsw	F	Dimakatso	'Wonder'	S	'she was surprised when she discovered that her sister is pregnant because her sister was always at home - she didn't think

that she was seeing someone'

Tsw	M	Kagiso	'Build something together'	F	'Together with his wife they are going to build this family - nothing will come between them'
NS	F	Kelo	'Take a vow'	F	'He is committed to his family'
Tsw	M	Sakhile	'We have build'	F	'After the birth of this child, they got a house. (They now have a complete family)'



2.10 NAME GIVING PRACTICES IN THE RURAL AREAS OF THE NDEBELE SPEAKING PEOPLE

In the areas of Ekosini and Kameelrivier, the people are heterogeneous. In other words, educated people, mostly teachers, those without tertiary education such as clerks with senior certificates and those who are not educated at all, that is, elderly people who happen to know the Ndebele culture very well. The majority of the people are practicing agriculture and animal husbandry as their main source of livelihood. Cattle play a very important role in this society - both economically and socially.

The following discussion is based on data from 30 families from which 200 names (103 boys and 97 girls) were collected. Interviews were restricted to parents who declared themselves to be Ndebele speakers. Fourteen categories were used for classification, namely: (1) emotion-related names,

(2) religious-orientated names, (3) family continuity names, (4) family situation names, (5) names relating to the state of the weather at birth, (6) names reflecting historical/memorable events, (7) events at birth, (8) calendrical names, (9) nicknames, (10) death-related names, (11) name repertoire, (12) compensatory names, (13) names derived from surnames and (14) other.

The same abbreviations used in terms of the data collected in the urban areas also apply here except that the ethnic group is not indicated since all interviewers declared that they were Ndebele speaking people.

2.10.1 Emotion-related names

2.10.1.1 Names expressing a wish/hope/request

SEX	NAME	MEANING	NAME GIVER	EXPLANATION
M	Themba	'Hope /Believe'	M	'She had not hoped for another boy as she already had 3 girls and one boy'
M	Themba	'Hope/ believe'	MGM	'She had not believed that this child would survive as he was born at 7 months and he was very tiny'
M	Khethokuhle	'Choose good (things)'	M	'It was her wish to have a boy'
M	Sifiso	'Wish'	M	'She was longing to have a child for a long time'

2.10.1.2 Names reflecting joy

SEX	NAME	MEANING	NAME GIVER	EXPLANATION
F	Bawinile	'They have won'	M	'They have won because they have a girl'
F	Bawinile	'They have won'	MGM	(Same as above)
F	Khanyisile	'Lighten up'	M	'She had problems during her pregnancy, so this child brought light in her life'
M	Lungile	'Okay/ Right'	PGM	'There was no difficulty during delivery'
F	Noluthando	'Mother of love'	F	'He was involved in several relationships before the birth of this child, so this child makes him realise that the mother of Noluthando is the only one he loves'

2.10.1.3 Names referring to social disharmony

Ndebele naming is marked by a multitude of names denoting social discord. These are names that reflect the people's concern about gossip, hatred, petty jealousies or the lack of co-operation (Mohome, 1972:177)

SEX	NAME	MEANING	NAME GIVER	EXPLANATION
F	Bangiswani	'Why are they fighting them (the family)?'	M	'Referring to the neighbours as they hate them so much'
F	Benzeni	'What have they done?'	M	'What have they done to deserve such hatred from the neighbours'
F	Bikwaphi	'Where should she be reported?'	PA	'The child's father died before the birth of the child'
F	Deliwe	'Satisfied'	MGM	'She was asking the in-laws of her daughter that are they now satisfied as this is the second child. The in laws were convinced that her daughter is barren'
M	Duma(la)	'Disappointment'	MGM	'Her daughters-in-law were disappointed when her daughter gave birth as they were convinced that she was barren'
F	Mandiselwa	'Adding'	M	'People can add something you did not say'
M	Mbangwa	'Conflict'	MGF	'This child is a cause of conflict - his daughter had serious problems with her husband after the birth of this child'



F	Mhlanganelwa	'Ganging against someone'	M	'Her husband was beaten up by his brothers'
M	Ngabomu	'On purpose'	M	'There was a family crisis which (according to her) was brought about purposely'
F	Ngunakhabo	'She does not have a home'	MGF	'He did not approve of his son-in-law'
F	Senzeni	'What did we do?'	Friend	'He was asking the family why the husband married his wife's sister so shortly after his first wife died'
F	Senzeni	'What have we done?'	PGM	'Referring to the neighbours as they hate them so much'
M	Thulani	'Keep quiet (you - plural)'	MGM	'There is nothing we can say now, the child is here (this child was born out of wedlock)'
M	Thulani	'Keep quiet (you - plural)'	M	'Her in-laws were talking too much (gossiping about her)'
F	Tshetshwa- ngubani	'Who is going to look after her?'	F	'The family was struggling as the cattle died'
M	Xolani	'Forgive' (you - plural)	MGM	'This is the second child and the mother is not married'

M	Zabenzeni	'What have they (the family) done?'	PGM	'What have my children done not to have children?, referring to her neighbours as she thought they are bewitching her children not to have children. (This is her first grandchild after such a long time)'
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2.10.1.4 Names expressing relief

SEX	NAME	MEANING	NAME GIVER	EXPLANATION
M	Mduduzi	'Comfort'	M	'She had severe pains before the birth of this child'
F	Nokuthula	'Mother of Peace'	PGM	'This child brought peace between her parents'

2.10.1.5 Names reflecting disappointment

SEX	NAME	MEANING	NAME GIVER	EXPLANATION
M	Bakhona	'They (boys) are here'	M	'She had four boys including this one'
M	Sabelo	'Share'	M	She wanted a girl as she now had four boys including this one'

2.10.2 Religious-orientated names

SEX	NAME	MEANING	NAME GIVER	EXPLANATION
F	Bakholiwe	'They believed (in God)'	F	'He is from a Christian family'
M	Dumisani	'Praise' (you - plural)	M	'We must praise God for everything we have'
M	Mkhonzeni	'Worship Him'	M	'Worship God with all your heart and your questions will be answered'
M	Mpho	'Gift'	M	'She was expecting a baby girl and God gave her a boy'
M	Musawenkosi	'God's mercy'	M	'God had mercy on her as she had a miscarriage before'
F	Nomthandazo	'Mother of prayer'	M	'They used to pray in the hospital'
F	Nomthandazo	'Mother of prayer'	M	'God has answered her prayers as she was longing to have a child'
M	Zimkhona	'God is alive'	PGM	'The child was very sick, so through God he survived'
F	Zimkhona	'God is alive'	MGM	'Her daughter had difficulties during the birth of this baby'

2.10.3 Family continuity names

SEX	NAME	MEANING	NAME GIVER	EXPLANATION
M	Abram		PGM	'Named the child after her husband'
F	Anna		PGM	'Named the child after herself'
F	Balwaphi	'Where do we count her'	F	'Named the child after his mother'
F	Bonwayini	'What is seeing her'	PGM	'Named the child after her mother'
M	Elias		PGF	'Named the child after him'
F	Fanini	'When are you going to die'	F	'Named the child after his mother-in-law'
M	Felani	'Revive'	F	'Named the child after his father'
M	France		PGF	'Named the child after him'
M	Jan		F	'Named the child after his uncle'
F	Khethu	(Meaning not known)	F	'Named the child after his mother'
M	Kleinboy	'Small boy'	PGM	'Named the child after his grandfather'

M	Kosi	'King'	F	'The child has to take after his as he was a chief'
M	Mabusa	'Governor'	F	(Same as above)
M	Makhosona	'Chiefs'	F	(Same as Kosi)
M	Makhosonke	'Chiefs- all of them'	F	(Same as above)
M	Malanga	'Days'	F	'Named the child after his mother'
F	Malimo	(Meaning not known)	F	'Named the child after his aunt'
F	Maria		PGM	'Named the child after herself'
F	Martha		PGM	(Same as above)
M	Mbana	(Meaning not known)	PGF	'Named the child after him'
M	Mkhulwane	(Meaning not known)	F	'Named the child after his father'
M	Peter		M	'Named the child after her cousin'
M	Petros		F	'Named the child after himself'
M	Phephi	(Meaning not known)	PGM	'Named the child after her husband'



M	Rasi	(Meaning not known)	F	'Named the child after his brother'
M	Richard		F	'Named the child after himself'
F	Sarah		PGM	'Named the child after herself'
F	Siphenge	(Meaning not known)	PGM	(Same as above)
M	Sobafunani	'Father of Bafunani - What do they want'	M	'Named the child after his father'
M	Stemmer	(Meaning not known)	PGF	'Named the child after him'
F	Sungubala	(Meaning not known)	F	'Named the child after his mother'
F	Tiri	(Meaning not known)	F	'Named the child after his aunt'
F	Zimbizindlela	'Roads are bad'	PGM	'Named the child after herself'

As is evident above, most of the children were named after their grandparents and the meaning of those names were not known and some of them have only English or Afrikaans names. It should be noted that the Ndebele speaking people frequently use the prefixes **So-** ('father of') and **No-** ('mother of') in deriving children's names, as is evident in the names: **Sobafunani** 'Father of Bafunani' in the data. These prefixes serve two functions, namely to address or to refer to a person by using the name of his or her child. By naming the children after relatives they express the wish that

the person after whom the child is named, be reborn in the child and his or her qualities should live on.

2.10.4 Family situation names

SEX	NAME	MEANING	NAME GIVER	EXPLANATION
M	Mndeni	'Family'	F	'With this child they are a complete family'
M	Mondli	'Saver'	PA	'He is going to take care of his parents'
M	Vusumuzi	'Revive the homestead'	F	'Because he was born among girls'
M	Vusumuzi	(Same as above)	B	'He is the first child'
M	Vusumuzi	(Same as above)	F	(Same as above)

2.10.5 Names relating to the state of the weather at birth

SEX	NAME	MEANING	NAME GIVER	EXPLANATION
F	Nomoya	'Wind/Spirit'	F	'She was born on a very windy day'

2.10.6 Names reflecting historical/memorable events

SEX	NAME	MEANING	NAME GIVER	EXPLANATION
M	Botshiwe	'Arrested'	M	'They were visited by the police two days after the child was born. (The police got lost.)'
M	Mbotshwa	'Arrested'	PGF	'There was a civil war at KwaNdebele during the Apartheid Government - the Prime Minister was fighting the king and the members of the royal family were arrested'
M	Apolo	'Streetlights'	M	'It was the introduction of electricity in the area'
M	Ndzundza	(Name of the Ndebele king)	F	'P.W. Botha (previous President of S.A.) visited the area that day
M	Sikhukhuni	(Name of Northern Sotho king)	PA	'It was the introduction of movies. She saw this king'

Another function of event-names seems to be to take care of what may be termed the psychological needs of the people. In a society where technological development is lacking and where the lives of the people are directly affected by changes in nature, particular significance is attached to events (Mohome, 1972:173). This is born out by names such as **Apolo** 'Street lights' included in the data.

2.10.7 Events at birth/physical features

Traditionally, the proper place for an African woman to deliver her baby is at her parent's home. However, due to modern facilities nowadays, the common practice is to send the expectant mother to the hospital or clinic. However, it does happen that a woman delivers a baby at an unexpected time and place. For example, there is a boy named **Jeep** because he was born in a jeep (vehicle) on the way to the hospital. He was given this name by his paternal grandfather.

On the other hand, children are given names reflecting their physical features as is evident in the table below.

SEX	NAME	MEANING	NAME GIVER	EXPLANATION
F	Gigida	'Very big'	MGM	'The child was very big'
M	Mumbi	'Ugly'	F	'According to him the child was ugly'
F	Ncane	'Small	MGM	'The child was tiny'
M	Ngangayizolo	'Still as big as yesterday'	PA	'The child was not growing well'
F	S'dudla	'Big'	MGF	'The child was big'

2.10.8 Calendrical names

These are names derived from days of the week or months of the year. The explanation provided by name-givers is that the children are given such names because they were born on that day or during that particular month. Consider the table below.

SEX	NAME	MEANING	NAME GIVER
F	Nomgqibelo	'Saturday'	PGM
F	Sonto	'Sunday'	PGM
F	Sonto	'Sunday'	PGM
M	Sunday	'Sunday'	M

2.10.9 Nicknames

These names are often given to girls. Such names are meaningless. They start as being play names and end up being attached to that particular child. According to Koopman (1979:163) Zulu respondents have stated that it is possible to give a completely meaningless name to a girl as long as it sounds pleasant. The table below contains such names selected from the data.

NAME	NAME-GIVER	NAME	NAME-GIVER
Dzwingi	M	Monki	M
Kiya	M	Nanazi	M
Madudu	M	Teke	M
Maki	M	Tshoda	M

2.10.10 Death-related names

Death-related names sometimes denote repeated death in the same family. According to Mhome a name of this type is given to a child who is born after the still-birth or death of (an) immediate preceding sibling(s). The interesting

thing about a child born under these circumstances is the concern or anxiety of the parents regarding the survival of the infant. There is always the fear that it too may not survive. Therefore, a special name would be given to the child and this is usually a derogatory or non-human name. For example, there is an example of a girl named Baphelile 'They are finished' in the data. This child was born after there was a succession of deaths in the family. She was given this name by the maternal grandmother. According to Mohome (1972:175) the intended implication of such a name is to provide the opposite effect of its literal meaning.

2.10.11 Name repertoire

The explanation provided by the name-giver for such a particular name is that he/she likes the name or that it is the name mostly given to boys or girls. Consider the table below.

SEX	NAME	MEANING	NAME GIVER
M	Aubry		M
F	Bathabile	'They are happy'	Cousin
F	Bathandwa	'They are loved'	S
M	Bezile	'They have come'	M
M	Bhuti	'Brother'	F
M	Bhuti	'Brother'	F
M	Bongani	'Be grateful'	M
M	Bongani	Be grateful'	MGM

M	Busi ³	'Blessed'	M
F	Deliwe	'Satisfied'	M
F	Duduzile	'Comfort'	M
F	Doran		Mm
M	Elias		M
F	Elizabeth		F
M	Elvis		B
M	Jabulani	'Be happy (you - plural)'	PA
M	Jabulani	(Same as above)	Priest
F	Jabulile	'Be happy'	
F	Joana		M
M	John		M
F	Lindiwe	'Awaited'	M
M	Lukas		M
F	Lungile	'Okay/ right'	B
F	Mandisa	'Extension'	M

³ A boy having a girl's name.



M	Mandla	'Strength'	F
F	Margaret		M
F	Maria		M
M	Melvin		B
M	Michael		B
M	Mlamuli	'Mediator'	F
M	Mthokozisi	'Making him/her happy'	M
M	Nhlakanipho	'Intelligence'	Neighbour
F	Nokuthula	'Mother of peace'	F
F	Nomsa	'Mercy'	F
F	Nomsa	'Mercy'	M
F	Nomusa	'Mother of mercy'	M
F	Nomfundo	'Mother of education'	PGM
F	Nomthadazo	'Mother of prayer'	M
F	Nonhlanhla	'Mother of luck'	PA
M	Nqobile	'Victory'	M



F	Ntando	'Will'	PA
F	Ntombizodwa	'Only girls'	Friend
F	Ntombizodwa	'Only girls'	M
M	Peter		Priest
F	Phumzile	'Relieved'	M
F	Poppy		M
F	Praiscilla		PGF
F	Sibongile	'We are grateful'	F
F	Sibongile	As above	F
F	Sibongile	(As above)	PGM
F	Sibongile	(As above)	M
M	Sibusiso	'Blessing'	F
M	Sibusiso	'Blessing'	S
M	Sipho	'Gift'	F
M	Sipho	'Gift'	M
M	Sipho	'Gift'	PGM
F	Sipho ⁴	'Gift'	PGM

⁴ A girl having a boy's name.

M	Sipho	'Gift'	F
M	Sitjaba	'Nation'	B
M	Solomon		M
M	Sunnyboy		PGM
M	Thabo	'Happy'	PGF
M	Thebejana	(Meaning not known)	M
M	Themba	'Hope/ believe'	M
F	Thembelihle	'Be trustworthy'	Friend
F	Thembi	'Hope'	PGM
F	Thobile	'Humble'	PGM
M	Thokozani	'Be happy (you - plural)'	M
F	Thokozile	Be happy'	M
F	Volley		M
F	Zodwa	'Only (girls)'	M

2.10.12 Compensatory names (both urban and rural)

These are names given to children who are born following the death of (a) preceding child(ren). Such children are regarded as repayment or compensation for the dead ones (Mohome, 1972:174). The names below belong to this category.

SEX	NAME	MEANING	NAME GIVER	EXPLANATION
F	Bathabile	'They are happy'	PGF	'The mother had two miscarriages, therefore, they are so happy because one has survived'
F	Khanyisile	'Lighten /brighten up'	M	'This child brought light in her life as she had had two miscarriages'
M	Mduduzi	'Comforter'	M	'This child has comforted her as she had a miscarriage before this child'

Considering the death-related names and compensatory names, from the information gathered, there is a change. Name-givers are no longer giving their children death-related names, instead, they have adopted a positive attitude towards a child who is born following the death of a preceding child. For example, names such as **Mduduzi** 'Comforter', **Bathabile** 'They are happy' are used instead of the typical death-related names. These children were born after their mothers had had stillbirths or miscarriages.

2.10.13 Names derived from surnames

The most striking change within African systems of naming has been the introduction of names derived from surnames. For example, there are six names derived from surnames in the data - Namkwati, Namtshogwana, Namgwezana, NaMgwezana, NaSibiya and NaDlambili. The name-givers are patenal grandmothers. According to Herbert (a.s: 4-5) there are some cases in which the system of surnames was crafted onto the indigenous system of second names. The above-mentioned names are formed by prefixing **Na**-meaning 'daughter of' to the surname.

In these examples the paternal grandmothers named their children after their maiden names. These surnames are like names to them (grandmothers) because they are called by their surnames by their in-laws if they do not have children. This implies that **NaMgwezana** is 'Daughter of Mgwezana', for example.

2.10.14 Others

There are eight names which fall outside the mentioned categories. As a result they have been classified under the category 'others'.

SEX	NAME	MEANING	NAME GIVER	EXPLANATION
F	Bingweni	(Meaning not known)	M	'The name came through a dream'
M	Fangasela	'Fig'	The child himself	'He was eating this fruit when the teacher asked him his school name'
F	Hlophe	'White'	M	'She just likes the name as the child is not even light in complexion'
F	Khabonina	'At her mother's place'	PGM	'She was telling her son that he needs to marry now as this is his second child from the same girl. The children must come home now'
M	Mangisi	'English'	M	'The child was given and English name by her employer, then she said they have an Englishman in the family'

M	Msebenzi	'Work'	F	'He was doing some job outside when the mother gave birth'
M	Msotho	'A Sotho speaking person'	MGM	'The father of the child is a Sotho speaking person'
M	Tikana	'Money'	M	'Because of this child her life is going to change as this child is going to take care of her'

This category reflects innovation within naming practices whereby people give names which mean something different from what the society or members of the family expect. For example, **Fangasela** 'Fig', or **Hlophe** 'White' which is the opposite of what the child looks like in terms of complexion.

2.11 CONCLUSION



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From the data gathered, it is clear that there are changes that take place in terms of name giving of children. It became apparent that name uniqueness is disappearing rapidly as most of the names are now drawn from the 'stock of names' available - both in the rural and urban areas. There are 119 names drawn from the 'stock of names' out of 312 names collected.

Referring to death-related names it is evident from paragraph 3.3.12, what the parents, instead of selecting a traditional death-related name the birth of a child under such circumstances is a comforter for the dead or some form of happiness being offered to the parents for their loss. The parents have adopted positive names instead of derogatory names to react to these trying circumstances.

Friction names, on the other hand, are directly focused on someone in the name-giver's personal life. Suzman (1994:26) argues that friction names are commands or questions that are often the identity source of conflict. In

making the source of the conflict public, one might suggest that he/she perhaps neutralise or contain themselves by pointing at those responsible for the conflict.

The classification also emphasises the social input that is part of the naming tradition of which the name-giver's explanation for the name is very important.



CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA ON NAMING OF CHILDREN AMONG THE NDEBELE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

For the purpose of this research, 75 families were interviewed, 30 of them in the rural areas and 45 in the urban areas. These families were randomly selected from the Ndebele speaking people in the rural areas and mixed groups from the urban residences. Criteria for inclusion in the study were, firstly, self-reported as being primarily Ndebele speaking and children within the family. Secondly, only families with children born between 1990 and 1999 were interviewed. This criterion was designed to test the hypothesis that politically inspired names had increased in prominence in the urban area(s) during the 1990's. The parents provided information on the names and ages of the children and information on the identity of the name-giver(s) and reasons for giving a child the particular name. Information on English/Afrikaans names given to children, was also collected and the reason(s) for using such a name was also noted. In analysing the names the categories of names mentioned in chapter 3 were considered.

The 75 families interviewed provided a name base of 312 names. The average number of children per family in the urban areas was 3 to 4 children while a large number of children were found per family (6 to 11) in the rural areas. In the data collected from the rural areas, the names of 103 boys and 97 girls were included.

4.2 DATA FROM THE URBAN AREAS

Urban data were collected in KwaNhlanga and Ekangala. It is mostly the so-called 'Black elite', that is, doctors lawyers, nurses, teachers, policemen, technicians, ministers and members of the former KwaNdebele Government

who live in these areas. In KwaMhlanga and Ekangala, 112 names (57 boys and 55 girls) were collected.

4.2.1 Politically inspired names

Of the hundred and twelve names collected in the urban areas, only seven can be said to be politically inspired. Consider for example the name **Nonkululeko** 'Mother of freedom', a name given to a girl born on the 27th of April 1994 and **Ntuthuko** 'Progress', a name given to a child whose father had been elected as the chairperson of the ANC Youth League in the area.

The other five are fairly common names. However, these names are regarded as belonging to this category due to the explanation provided by the name-givers, who happened to be the fathers in these instances. These names are **Lindokuhle** 'Expecting good things', borne by the child who was born on the 20th of April 1994. According to the father everybody was expecting good changes due to the coming election. **Sithembiso** 'Promise' – 'our leaders did fulfil their promises because through the new government I was able to go to France to watch the (soccer) world cup', the father said. **Nqobile** 'Conquered' – 'in the end Nelson Mandela did become President.' **Khulekani** 'You (plural) should pray' - borne by a child who was born on the 13th of March 1994. The father prompted the family to pray since the new South Africa would be born on the 27th April 1994. The seventh name **Sabelo** 'Share' was given to a boy. This boy was named after Sabelo Phama who was a leading figure in the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC).

The number of politically inspired names show an increase compared to the data collected by Herbert. Of the 113 names recorded by him, only 2 were politically inspired. In this investigation 7 names of children were found which were politically inspired. In contrast to this Mönnig (1967) reports that children (especially Sotho speaking children) were named after celebrated generals and British monarchs. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is an increased frequency of politically inspired names is correct, however, the occurrence of such names is far less than anticipated.

4.2.2 Cultural influence

Five children bear Sotho names that are not drawn from the native language of their families. For example, a ten year old boy whose family is identified as being Ndebele is called **Mpho**, a name meaning 'Gift' in Sotho given by the mother to indicate that the child is a gift from God as the mother had a stillborn before Mpho. In the case of two other children with Sotho names, both parents identified themselves as Ndebele speaking people. Their children were called **Thapelo** 'Prayer' and **Thabang** 'Be happy (you [plural])'. The other child whose parents both identified themselves as Tsonga speaking, is called **Dipuo** 'Talks', a name which the mother reports as an ideal name to convey a message to her neighbours because they were gossiping about her. The last child was named **Koketso** 'Addition' by the father to indicate that with this boy, there will be lots of children in the family. Koketso's father is Ndebele while the mother is a Tsonga speaker. Herbert and Bogatsu (1990:8) state that the bestowal of non-ethnic internal names to young children might be read as a weakening of ethnic boundaries within the African population. It may to some extent offer support for the popular notion that a new 'shared common urban ethnicity' is evolving in the townships (Herbert, 1995:4).

However, the incidence of this type of non-ethnic name giving is still relatively low.

4.2.3 Analysis and findings

For the purpose of typological analysis, the remaining hundred names were classified into seven categories which were (1) emotion-related names, (2) family continuity names, (3) religious-orientated names, (4) historical and memorable events, (5) events at birth, (6) nicknames and (7) name repertoire. With regard to the categorisation of the names into these categories and a detailed classification, refer to chapter three.

In the discussion below the collected names are divided as those collected in urban areas and rural areas respectively. These names are furthermore classified into broad types. Moreover, an analysis is made of the source of

name-giving being either of the parents, both parents or the grandparents from the father's side or the mother's side.

Table 1: Urban data - Names distinguished according to types

	Males	Females	Total
Emotion-related	7	17	24
Religious	8	4	12
Family continuity	5	3	8
Historical/ memorable	1	3	4
Events at birth	2	1	3
Nicknames	2	1	3
Name repertoire	22	24	46
Politically inspired	6	1	7
Non-Nguni names	4	1	5
Total	57	55	112

Seven boys were given emotion-related names as compared to 17 girls.

The bulk of names for both girls and boys is drawn from a stock of the category 'name repertoire', that is, 22 boys and 24 girls. With regard to names based on family continuity, only 5 boys and 3 girls were bestowed such names.

Table 2: Urban data - names classified in terms of name-giver being from the mother's family or the father's family

	Mother's Family	Father's Family	Total
Emotion-related	14	10	24
Religious	6	5	11
Family continuity	2	6	8
Historical/memorable	4	-	4
Events at birth	1	2	3
Nicknames	2	1	3
Name repertoire	21	23	44
Politically inspired	-	7	7
Non-Nguni names	3	2	5
Total	53	56	109

Note that names that were given by both parents were excluded because they cannot be classified exclusively as belonging to the categories 'mother's family' nor to 'father's family'. That is why the table contains only 109 names instead of 112.

The maternal family is responsible for 53 names and the paternal family for 56 names. Six family continuity names were given by the paternal family as apposed to the two of the maternal family. This clearly reflects a tendency towards a patrilineal society.

Table 3 Urban data - names of boys and girls classified in terms of the specific name-giver

The distribution of name types by the various name-givers is reflected in table 3. In other words, the interaction between the identity of the name-giver and the name type is revealed.

The list below clarifies the meaning of the symbols used in the table on the next page.

- B = Both parents
M = Mother
MM = Mother's mother
OMR = Other Maternal Relative
F = Father
FM = Father's mother
FF = Father's father
OPR = Other Paternal Relative

	Boys & Girls	B	M	MM	OMR	F	FM	FF	OPR	TOTAL
Emotion-related	B	-	4	-	-	2	1	-	-	7
	G	-	8	2	-	5	-	1	1	17
Religious	B	1	3	-	-	4	-	-	-	8
	G	-	3	-	-	1	-	-	-	4
Family continuity	B	-	-	1	-	1	-	3	-	4
	G	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
Historical/ memorable event	B	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	4
	G	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Events at birth	B	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	2
	G	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Nicknames	B	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
	G	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Name repertoire	B	1	9	1	-	12	-	-	-	23
	G	1	7	2	2	5	5	-	1	23
Politically inspired	B	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	6
	G	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Non-Nguni names	B	-	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	4
	G	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
TOTAL	B	2	18	4	2	29	1	0	0	59
	G	1	22	4	2	12	5	1	4	52
GRAND TOTAL		3	40	98	4	41	6	1	4	111

Several points of interest emerge from the data. Firstly, both parents are actively involved as name-givers, 40 names were bestowed by mothers while 41 were bestowed by fathers. Parents (mother, father and both parents) are responsible for 84 names. The parents are thus primarily the name-givers in the urban areas. Secondly, the majority of emotion-related names are bestowed on children by their mothers. They are furthermore responsible for the bestowment of sixteen name repertoire names and six religious orientated names. By contrast, fathers chose only seven emotion-related names, seventeen name repertoire names and five religious orientated names.

Family continuity names, however, is not emphasized that much in the urban areas as compared to the rural areas. In this category only one name was given by a father (to a boy), three by the paternal grandfathers (to boys), one by the mother (to a girl) and two by the maternal grandmother (to girls).

Finally what is striking in these findings is that there is no instance of name giving by a mother's father!

4.3 DATA FROM THE RURAL AREAS



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Data collected from the rural areas were collected at Kameelrivier and Ekosini. These two areas have 'mixed groups'. In other words, educated people, mostly teachers, those without tertiary education such as clerks with senior certificates and those who are not educated at all, that is, elderly people who happen to know the Ndebele culture very well. In these areas, Kameelrivier and Ekosini, 200 names (103 boys and 97 girls) were collected.

Table 4: Rural data - Names distinguished according to types

	Males	Females	Total
Emotion-related	18	16	34
Religious	8	4	12
Family continuity	27	23	50
Historical/memorable event	5	1	6
Events at birth	1	-	1
Nicknames	2	3	5
Name repertoire	35	37	72
Calendrical	5	10	15
Physical Features	2	3	5
Total	103	97	200

According to this table, 18 boys were given emotion-related names as compared to 16 girls.

The likely names for both girls and boys are drawn from a stock of the category 'name repertoire', that is, 37 girls and 35 boys. Boys and girls are not equally distributed throughout the 9 categories. With regard to boys, there are 5 nicknames, 2 related to physical features, 2 calendrical names and 1 to events at birth. In the case of the girls, on the other hand, 4 names are religious-orientated, 1 based on historical/memorable events, 3 are on calendrical names and 3 names are based on physical features.

27 family continuity names are borne by boys as apposed to the 23 borne by girls. The reason being that according to Herbert (1995:4) boys are recipients of names commemorating family members or acknowledging roles within the family.

Table 5 : Rural data - Names classified in terms of name-giver being from the mother's family or the father's family

	Mother's Family	Father's Family	Total
Emotion-related	18	16	34
Religious	8	4	12
Family continuity	2	48	50
Historical/memorable event	4	2	6
Events at birth	-	1	1
Nicknames	12	2	14
Name repertoire	40	27	67
Calendrical	2	3	5
Physical Features	3	2	5
Total	89	105	194

Note that names given by both parents, are excluded in this table because they do not belong to the categories 'mothers family' nor to 'fathers family' exclusively. That is why the table contains only 194 names instead of 200 names.

The paternal family is thus responsible for 105 names and the maternal family only 89 names. 48 family continuity names are given by the paternal family reflecting a patrilineal society. Names given by the maternal family fall into 4 categories, namely, emotion-related - 18 names; religious orientated - 8 names; name repertoire - 40 names and nicknames - 12 names. In these 4 categories the contribution from the paternal family is minimal.

Table 6: Rural data - names of boys and girls classified in terms of specific name-giver

	Boys & Girls	B	M	MM	OMR	F	FM	FF	OPR	TOTAL
Emotion-related	B	-	6	3	1	2	4	1	2	18
	G	-	7	1	-	2	3	1	1	16
Religious	B	-	5	-	-	1	2	-	-	8
	G	-	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	4
Family continuity	B	-	-	-	-	15	-	12	-	27
	G	-	2	-	-	6	14	1	-	23
Historical/Memorable event	B	-	2	-	1	2	-	-	-	5
	G	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Events at birth	B	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
	G	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nicknames	B	1	2	-	-	-	1	-	1	5
	G	-	9	-	1	-	-	-	-	10
Name repertoire	B	4	14	1	3	6	2	1	4	35
	G	1	19	-	3	6	5	-	3	37
Calendrical	B	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	2
	G	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	3
Physical features	B	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	2
	G	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	3
TOTAL	B	5	30	5	5	27	10	15	7	104
	G	1	40	4	5	15	25	2	4	96
		6	70	9	10	42	35	17	11	200

Note that in the table above, the symbols used in clarifying the urban data were also used in the rural data.

Several interesting points emerge from the above data. Firstly, mother's are prominent name-givers in the rural areas. 70 names were given by mothers while fathers are responsible for only 42 names. In the urban areas, on the other hand, both parents are prominent name-givers, as 40 names were

given by mothers and 41 by fathers. From the rural data parents (mothers, fathers and both parents) are thus responsible for 118 names. Parents, therefore, are the primary name-givers in both rural and urban areas. Secondly, the majority of emotion-related names are bestowed by mothers in both areas, 13 from the rural areas and 12 from the urban areas while the fathers chose only 11 emotion-related names - 4 in the rural areas and 7 in the urban areas. With regard to religious orientated names from the rural areas, mothers are responsible for 7 names and fathers for only 2. Of the 23 name repertoire names 12 were bestowed by fathers. 11 nicknames were bestowed by mothers and none by fathers. 3 names within the category historical/memorable events were bestowed by mothers and 2 by fathers. 1 name based on physical features was given by a father and none by a mother. Note, however, that 21 of the family continuity names were bestowed by fathers and only two by mothers.

Addressing the question of who names the child, it appears that the majority of names are given by family members especially parents and grandparents. Parents are the most common name-givers followed by paternal grandparents and then maternal grandparents, especially the grandmothers in the rural areas. Consider the summary below.

- | | | | |
|------|------------------------------------|----------------|------|
| i) | Parents: 118 names | = Mothers | - 70 |
| | | = Fathers | - 42 |
| | | = Both parents | - 6 |
| ii) | Paternal grandparents: 52 names | = Grandmothers | - 35 |
| | | = Grandfathers | - 17 |
| iii) | Maternal grandparents: 9 names | = Grandmothers | - 9 |
| iv) | Other paternal relatives: 11 names | | |
| v) | Other maternal relatives: 10 names | | |

Table 7 : Urban and rural data - statistical correlation between the sex of the child and name typology.

	Males	Females	Total
Emotion-related	25	33	58
Religious	16	8	24
Family continuity	32	26	58
Historical/memorable event	6	4	10
Events at birth	3	1	4
Nicknames	7	11	18
Name repertoire	57	61	118
Politically inspired	6	1	7
Non-Nguni names	4	1	5
Calendrical names	2	3	5
Physical features	2	3	5
Total	160	152	312

4.4 ASSESSMENT/OUTCOMES

Many African societies are/were characterized by name uniqueness. There is accordingly very little incidence of name repetition in the earliest documents (Herbert, a.s.:2). However, it should be noted that this custom is changing as many parents draw names from a stock of the category 'name repertoire'. It is also not uncommon that ward sisters or hospital administrators choose infants' names. These names do not reflect family or birth circumstances (Herbert, a.s.: 14). In the rural sample, for example, there are two girls who were named by ward sisters, Elma and Mary-Ann, while two boys, Jabulani and Petros were named by prophets. Andrew was named by the mother's employer and Christine by a friend.

In the urban sample, the 4 children, 2 boys - Jonathan and Raymond were named by their mother's employers and 2 girls, Beverley was named by her grandmother's employer and Edith was coined a non-African name by her teacher. This leads to a child bearing a name that is not even from the child's home language, as all these names except, Jabulani, are European names.

Surprisingly enough, what has been discovered is that, the bearers of these names do not have negative attitudes towards these names. European surnames, were also found to be used as names in the sample. For example, there is a girl by the name of Mitchel, she was named after Brian Mitchel. Her mother was a fan of the boxing champion, Brian Mitchel.

4.5 CONCLUSION: GENERAL TENDENCIES IN TERMS OF NAME-GIVING

A total of 312 names - 200 of them collected from the rural areas and 112 from the urban areas were analysed in this study.

The names collected in both the urban and rural areas were classified into 9 broad types of names, of which the first seven (that is, emotion-related, religious, family continuity, historically/memorable events, events at birth, nicknames and name-repertoire) are found in both areas. The other 4 categories comprise politically inspired and non-Nguni names in the urban data, and calendrical and physical features in the rural data.

In the urban data, the role of both families (the mother's family and the father's family) is more or less the same in terms of the name giving process. The mother's family contributed 53 names and the father's family 56 names in the urban data.

In the rural data, however, the mother's family is responsible for 89 names while the father's family is responsible for 105 names. It is thus surprising that in both the rural and urban data, the paternal family, are the prominent name-givers.

There are also some striking differences between the two sets of data. In the rural data, no children bear politically inspired names while in the urban data there are seven of them. In the urban data no children were given calendrical names and in the rural data there are fifteen.

Another interesting observation is that in both areas the mother's father did not play any role in name giving. In other words, no children were bestowed names by their maternal grandfathers.

Finally, the data also suggest a decrease in the incidence of name uniqueness as there is a repertoire of conventional names established by urban and rural dwellers and names seem to be selected from this repertoire more and more rather than bestowing a unique name to a child.



CHAPTER 5

CONCLUDING CHAPTER

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is an assessment of the data collected. Some similarities and differences between the practices of the Ndebele and those of the Sotho and Tswana speaking people are highlighted.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS BASED ON THE DATA

The system and pattern of naming reflect social organization and cultural values. This reflection is seen firstly, in the evolution of the name topology to accommodate the demands and values of a colonial bureaucracy. For example, in the 1960's the children 'had to have western names as school names'. In the rural data, Afrikaans and English names have a higher occurrence during the particular period investigated, as there are 15 out of 64 boys who have only Afrikaans or English names and 9 out of 70 girls. Secondly, in the rise and fall of foreign language names in both areas, there are 36 out of 174 boys and 31 out of 138 girls bearing one or two African names especially those children born since the early 1990's. Thirdly, in the development of a repertoire of recurrent names in the African languages most of the boys, that is 62 out of 162, and 61 out of 152 girl's names are drawn from a stock of the category 'name repertoire'. And finally, in response to naming patterns to heighten prominence of political events since 1990 reflecting the traditional 'history-keeping' function of personal names (Herbert, a.s.: 3) the social function of name giving is highlighted. In this regard there are seven children in the urban data with politically inspired names.

A large sample of rural names indicates that some trends in naming practices began with people who are now forty and fifty years of age. Name-givers of twenty to thirty years ago chose predominantly traditional names, with more modern names appearing occasionally. In this respect it was interesting to

investigate the changes in terms of less-permanent relationships that are now common to both rural and urban areas and to younger groups. The general conclusion is that much of the direction of change observed in naming practice is also a direct consequence of social transformation of the basic clan.

Other changes also include a shift from negative to positive types of names, the loss of name uniqueness in favour of a stock of more conventional names, the growth of emotion-related names and a broader cultural perspective. With regard to emotion-related names, there are 58 of the 312 children who bear such names. In the case of children born after the death of a loved one in the family, children are no longer given sombre or derogatory names but positive names such as Mduduzi, 'Comforter' or Nomsa, 'Mercy'. There is a complete absence of protective names in both samples. Suzman's view for such a shift is that, it is due to the fact that name-givers gradually come to draw on different resources in naming children (1994: 266-267). Whatever individual explanations are, the practice of name giving and the names are changing. Therefore, the data obtained in this research support the observation that name uniqueness is disappearing due to changed social circumstances.

There are also changes in the actual token of English names bestowed nowadays in that they are often direct translations of African names. Often a child may have two names – an African name and a western name but both of them having the same meaning. For example, **Mlamuli** and **Abitrator**, **Nqobile** and **Victor** (from victory) and **Njabulo** and **Happiness**.

According to Herbert, the changes in names and naming practices are due to the result of cultural contact and westernisation. He furthermore states that colonization, urbanization and western education have affected the processes of name coinage and bestowal in the native language (a.s.: 18). It should be noted that the various practices associated with naming have also undergone change as a result of the move from a traditional to a modern context. The absence of the traditional name-givers in the urban environment has already been mentioned. However, the criterion of meaningfulness of a name continues to distinguish traditional African and European naming systems.

Names also change with societal changes, as people move from rural to urban environments and their social framework is transformed (Suzman 1994: 253). For example, the younger parents in the urban areas, though they are Ndebele speaking people, no longer follow the traditional way of naming. This is borne out by the fact that there are few children in the urban sample who were named after their grandparents as compared to the rural sample. In the olden Ndebele society, children were given names by their paternal grandparents. That is why there are a substantial number of children who bear family continuity names - 50 out of 200 (both boys and girls). Most of them are named after grandparents while others have names acknowledging their roles or position in the family. Traditionally, fathers were the most important people in the homestead and in name giving. Their disposition as name-givers is an indication of the dramatic change in family structure and the declining role of the father in the family. During the interviews, it was established that there were a large number of single mothers.

5.3 SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE NDEBELE AND SOTHO SPEAKING PEOPLE'S PRACTICES IN TERMS OF THE NAMING OF CHILDREN

To name a child after its grandparents or senior relatives is very important among the Ndebele and Sotho speaking people. It seems to have been the most widespread practice in the olden days. Most of the names were drawn from the father's side. Mohome (1972: 172) states that the system of naming children after their paternal or maternal relatives seems to follow a recognisable pattern. What has been discovered in this research is that, in the case of the eldest son, the name of the grandfather (paternal) is preferred to any other name and the first daughter is often named after the paternal grandmother. However, if the paternal grandmother is younger than the maternal grandmother, then the first daughter could be named after her maternal grandmother instead. Other sons and daughters may also be named after some of their kinsmen such as the father's brothers or the father's uncles, aunts or even after the maternal kinsmen.

Traditional Ndebele and Sotho speaking people are dependent on agriculture and animal husbandry for their livelihood. Rain is one of the most desperately

needed commodities and a very pleasant event, thus children born on a rainy day are often named Nomvula (Nguni), or Puleng/Pule (Sotho).

Other events/characteristics regarded as being pleasant by both the Nguni and Sotho societies are widespread peace and good relations with kinsmen and the community at large. Thus the occurrence of the Sotho boy's name Kgotso 'peace' and the Nguni girl's name Nokuthula/Noxolo 'mother of peace' is quite common.

5.4 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE NDEBELE AND SOTHO SPEAKING PEOPLE'S PRACTICES IN TERMS OF NAME-GIVING

Depending on the society or culture, a child may be given one or more than one name in life as among the Ndebele speaking people, there is a name given at birth, initiation and marriage while the Sotho speaking people has birth and initiation names. Among the Ndebele speaking people these different names are regarded as most important as they indicate development in that person's life and they are being used productively. For example, after initiation (especially among boys) such a boy will no longer be called by his birth name, but by his initiation name by his siblings and peers to show respect and to emphasise that he is no longer a boy, but a man. On the other hand Mohome (1972) points out that among the Sotho speaking people initiation names are used during that period only. Therefore, initiation names are regarded as more important by the Nguni speaking people as opposed to the Sotho speaking people.

5.5 THE IMPORTANCE OF CHILDREN

The desire for children is so strong that couples will go to any extent and pay any price in order to have children. There are a number of factors within society that indirectly encourage or force couples to go headlong into the production of babies, irrespective of financial or other considerations (Amin, 1993: 39). Among the Ndebele speaking people, during initiation especially, family assets and values are reported as being associated with children. The father and the mother are called referring to them as father of so-and-so or mother of so-and-so, for example. uSoVusi (Father of Vusi), uNoVusi (Mother

children. No barren woman can stand the indirect social humiliation for long, as Amin states.

5.6 THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL NAMES

From the names listed in chapter three, it is clear that a strong bond was established in the traditional society, especially in the rural areas between the individual and his immediate family, between the individual and his extended family and generally between the individual and the society in which he enjoys his upbringing. All these relations are evident from the names that the individual has and the society in which he is brought up. This is also evident from the names that the individual bears in the traditional setting. During this research, several cases were noted where the individual responded to several names depending on who was demanding his or her attention. For example, there was a boy by the name of **Kosi** 'King'. He was called **Daniel** by his class teacher, **Koos** by his friends and **Kosi** by his family. Thus everybody related to this boy in a manner appropriate, meaningful and convenient to him/her. The boy, when asked what his real name was, however, mentioned the one given to him by his father, thus **Kosi**. Therefore, the birth name remains the centrepiece of the child's name and the one that establishes his own identity (Amin, 1993:36).

According to Koopman (1979: 68) the importance of the Zulu personal name is further underlined by the custom of **hlonipha** 'respectful avoidance' where especially a woman will never use the personal names of men but refer to them as father of so-and-so. During the interviews, there was a situation where a woman was prohibited from pronouncing the name of her son because he was named after his paternal grandfather. This woman has to spit on the floor before she can pronounce the name. Asking why she has to do that, she simply replied that it is a custom among the Ndebele speaking people. Furthermore, women do not address their husbands by their first names or western names (if any), but prefix **So-** to the name of the first born child, be it a boy or a girl. The father of Vusi is thus called using the name **SoVusi** 'Father of Vusi'.

It has transpired though that in the urban areas women are starting to use their husband's personal names when they refer to or call them. For example, during the interviews, when the mother did not bestow the name upon the child, she would simply say 'It was not me who gave the child that name, ask Vusi' or 'It is Vusi who gave the child that name', referring to her husband.

5.7 CONCLUSION

In this research the practice of the naming of children among the Ndebele speakers was investigated. A comparison between the rural and urban areas of the Ndebele speaking people shows that naming practices have changed. It is predicted that traditional name giving practices will continue to decline. Names-acknowledging-roles-in-the-family-or-commemorating-members-of-the family appear to be declining in urban areas where the families are smaller or less intensely interdependent.

This research supports many of the observations made by other researchers on naming practices. Such developments are not unique to Ndebele society. Similar acculturation, urbanization and industrialization processes reduce cultural diversity in other societies as well. However, they may do so in different ways among different cultures.

Cultural revival has entered into the area of personal names. One process which is happening right now is to name children using traditional personal names rather than Christian or western names. Some people have even argued that by doing so they were liberating themselves from at least one aspect of colonial mentality and heritage.

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