# AN ANALYSIS OF GIVEN AND INHERITED NAMES AMONG THE NORTHERN SOTHO SPEAKING PEOPLE IN MOLETJIE AND SEKHUKHUNE, LIMPOPO PROVINCE:  AN ONOMASTIC PERSPECTIVE

**By**

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# DECLARATION

I, HERBETH MOKGADI KOMA, declare that "**AN ANLYSIS OF GIVEN AND INHERITED NAMES AMONG THE NORTHERN SOTHO SPEAKING PEOPLE IN MOLETJIE AND SEKHUKHUNE, LIMPOPO PROVINCE: AN ONOMASTIC PERSPECTIVE"**, is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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**H.M Koma (Ms)**  **Date**

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## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to the closest special people in my life, that is, my family, my fiancé Doctor Phahlamohlaka and our son Phirime Lehlogonolo Koma and, especially to my mother who went through hard times to make my education a success.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## ABSTRACT

This study analyse given and inherited names among the Northern Sotho speaking people in Moletjie and Sekhukhune. The study indicates that names are some of the most important things in people's lives. It has been indicated that naming cannot be taken for granted as a name serves as an important identity feature. A person without a name is an incomplete person. The study has revealed that the people in Moletjie and Sekhukhune bestow names to people based on ancestors, totems, marriage and initiation schools.

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# CHAPTER ONE

# GENERAL INTRODUCTION

## 1.1    INTRODUCTION

Names play an important role in communication because they serve, among other things, to identify and differentiate people. Without names, it would be extremely difficult for human beings to achieve communicative success in their daily activities. This is why this study will examine the use of given and inherited names among the Northern Sotho speaking people.

## 1.2    BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Since the study is going to concentrate on Moletjie and Sekhukhune in the Limpopo province, it is proper to give some background information about these two areas.

Moletjie is one of the largest communities situated in the Capricorn district of Polokwane in Limpopo Province, South Africa. It is composed of a number of villages which belong to two municipalities, namely, Polokwane Municipality and Aganang Municipality. Moletjie is named after the great King Moloto and can therefore be described as a kingdom. The area is currently under the rulership of Kgoši-Kgabo Moloto III and his wife who reside in Moletjie Mošate (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capricorn-District-Municipality, 2012).

Sekhukhune is also found in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. It is a community located about 180km to the south of Polokwane and consists largely of rural areas, though some parts of it are urbanised. It has five local municipalities, namely, Elias Motsoaledi, Ephraim Mogale, Greater Tubatse, Fetakgomo, and Makhuduthamaga. Since Sekhukhune is a highly populated rural area, it can be assumed that only about 5% of the population live in urban areas while the remaining 95% live in the larger rural areas. The area is

named after the great King Sekhukhune of the Bapedi people who was born in 1814 and died in 1882 (www.sekhukhune.gov.za/historical-bg.htm, 2010).

Since onomastics studies names, proper names of people from the Moletjie and Sekhukhune communities would be investigated to determine the meaning and significance of the names.  People from Moletjie differ from people from other geographical areas in Limpopo Province in terms of naming. They usually name their people after animals. The following are some examples of names among the Moletjie people:

(1)    a. *Phuti* (Springbok)
        b. *Koena* (Crocodile)
        c. *Nare* (Buffalo)
        d. *Tlou* (Elephant)

If one hears someone being called by any of the names indicated in (1) above, immediately one becomes curious, and the assumption is that the person might be coming from a rural area where people still follow their norms and values. This study would like to investigate why the Moletjie people name their children after animals.

In Sekhukhune, it would seem many people receive their names after they have passed through an initiation school known as *Koma* in Sepedi. Examples of names among the Sekhukhune are as follows:

(2)    a. *Katiši*.
        b. *Sekwataladi*.
        c. *Morufi*.

This study will be an in-depth analysis of such names in order to determine their meaning. Among the two communities, there are names that pertain to inheritance. In other words, such names are inherited from ancestral chains. Below are some examples:

(3)     a. *Mamphekgo.*

        b. *Lehwelere.*

        c. *Modipadi.*

        d. *Malose.*

Apart from the categories of names mentioned above, there are names which are given based on the wishes of the parents as well as the prevailing circumstances.  Examples are:

(4)     a. *Lehlogonolo* (Blessing).

        b. *Mahlatse* (Lucky).

        c. *Boitumelo* (Happiness).

According to Campbell and Campbell (1996), names such as those in (4) above are regarded as given names because they are assumed by a person at or after birth, as opposed to a family name (also known as a surname or last name) which is passed on from one generation to the next. In many cultures, a woman adopts her husband's family name when she gets married. Therefore, given names are generally not inherited.

This study will examine both given and inherited names among the people of Moletjie and Sekhukhune as there is no 'in-depth' study of names among the Northern Sotho speaking people of Limpopo Province.

## 1.3    AIM OF THE STUDY

The study aims at investigating given and inherited names among the Northern Sotho speaking people in Moletjie and Sekhukhune. In order to achieve this aim, the following questions will be posed:

- ➤ What is the meaning of given and inherited names among the Moletjie and Sekhukhune people?
- ➤ Who has the authority of giving names in these communities?
- ➤ What is the relevance of given and inherited names in present-day South Africa?

> ➢ What are the similarities and dissimilarities of given and inherited names in Moletjie and Sekhukhune?

## 1.4    OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the objectives of this study:

- ➢ To discover the meaning of given and inherited names among the Moletjie and Sekhukhune people.
- ➢ To determine the people who have the authority of giving names in these two communities.
- ➢ To find out the relevance of given and inherited names in contemporary South Africa.
- ➢ To compare given and inherited names in Moletjie and Sekhukhune.

## 1.5    RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study will use the qualitative method.

### 1.5.1   DATA COLLECTION

In gathering information about given and inherited names, the researcher intends to use the following methods:

#### 1.5.1.1   The primary research method

With the primary research method, firsthand information will be obtained from respondents.  In this case, the study will utilise the following respondents:

- Ten elderly people (five from each area of the study).
- Four younger people (two from each area of the study).
- Four traditional healers (two from each area of the study).

- Four traditional leaders (two from each area of the study).
- Four married women (two from each area of the study).

During the process of interviewing, these are some of the questions to be asked:

➢ Where does your name come from?
➢ Is your name a given name or an inherited name?
➢ Does your name serve as a link to your ancestors?
➢ Does your name have a meaning?
➢ Is there any procedure that is followed when giving a name?
➢ When specifically do you married women receive your marriage names?
➢ Do your marriage names also serve as a link to the ancestors?

## 1.5.1.2  The secondary research method

In this instance, data will be collected from dissertations, newspapers, the internet, magazines and journal articles.

## 1.5.2  DATA ANALYSIS

The information gathered from the interview and other documents relevant to the study will be analysed critically taking into consideration every aspect of it and also coming with a clear conclusion based on the subjectivity and the objectivity of the findings. This will therefore lead to the reliability and validity of the information.

## 1.5.3  RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

To measure the degree of reliability and validity, the researcher will use the method of comparison to compare the information gathered from the different respondents of the same name, if the compared results show a high degree of similarity, this means that the information gathered from the respondents is accurate and truthful, hence valid. Thus the high degree of accuracy shows that the results are reliable.

## 1.6    SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

People associate themselves with names. The findings of this study will, therefore, inform and educate people about the meaning behind these names and how important culture is to human beings. Lastly, the study will provide reasons why a name is carried from one generation to the next.

## 1.7    LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Since the places selected for this study are large geographical areas, the researcher has chosen to limit the research site to specific communities within these areas. In Moletjie, the researcher will focus on Moletjie Mošate and Kwena-moloto which are governed by chiefs and are still culturally bound. The two areas selected in Sekhukhune are Ga-Phaahla Manoge and Motšhadi.

# CHAPTER TWO

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1    INTRODUCTION

A literature review is "a critical summary and assessment of the range of existing materials dealing with knowledge and understanding in a given field. Its purpose is to locate the research project, to form its context or background, and to provide insights into previous work" (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 2001:120). The purpose of the literature review is to integrate the study into a broader framework of relevant theory and research. To achieve this, what now follows is a summary of authoritative literature as it relates to the stated research problem.

### 2.1.1    Mahome (1972)

In Mahome's view, naming in Sesotho is both a cultural and linguistic phenomenon. The meaning attached to names by the Basotho, plays a significant role in the definition of personhood because it is believed that a given name does not only serve as identity, but also determines the type of person the individual will be. He says that names are believed to have influence on the character of the bearer.

The scholar carries on to explain that the system of naming children after their paternal or material relatives among the Basotho people serves as a tool to keep alive the names of ancestors, and it brings grandparents and grandchildren closer to one another. And most importantly, he notes that among the Basotho people, names are not often chosen randomly and usually recall a grandfather or another important relation.

### 2.1.2    Lyons (1977)

Lyons's view on names is that there are different types of meaning in a name, which can be symbolic or semantic in nature (1977: 221-22). Thus, names symbolise something that can be associated with the nature of a particular person. For example, 'John' comes

through Greek and Latin, originally from a Hebrew name, which could be interpreted in terms of the ordinary vocabulary of Hebrew as "God has been gracious". This, according to Lyons, is called the etymological meaning of the name. He states that it would seem appropriate to extend the coverage of this term to include the synchronically motivated as well as diachronically discoverable interpretation of names.

Lyons's ideas are important to this study because they will assist the researcher to understand the link between names and what they symbolise.

### 2.1.3  Bakari (1981)

Bakari mentions that among the Swahili people, small children have no names but have only nicknames which are as follows: Mouse, Rat, Cheeks, Cat, Twig And so on. Such kinds of names are therefore given to both boys and girls. He also mentions that some caregivers give their children their true names after a long period, some after seven days, some after forty and some after a year. The author says that as for boys, the naming procedure is done after their mother's family and to girls is done after their father's family and that among these people, a wish is made by any people before conception. That is, when a boy or a girl is born, they will call him or her by such a name as wished.

### 2.1.4  Palmer (1981)

Palmer (1981:17) emphasizes the importance of names when he states the following: "one of the oldest views, found in Plato's dialogue Cratylus, is that the signifier is a word in the language and the signified is the object in the world that it 'stands for', 'refers to' or 'denotes'. Words, that is to say, are 'names' or 'labels' for things".

Palmer continues by saying that a child learns many of his words by a process of naming. He is often given names of objects by his parents, and his first attempts at language will include expressions like *'Da da'* when he sees his father, or producing names for a train, a bus, a cat, or a dog when he sees the relevant objects in real life or in a book. This process of learning, in Palmer's view, is intrinsic to most languages, since most languages have

words or expressions like John Smith, Paris, Wednesday and other proper nouns whose function is that of naming or labeling.

Palmer implies that names play a crucial role in people's lives. They have symbolic value and sometimes hidden meanings. As far as language is concerned, for a child to learn how to talk, the parents or caregivers should name and or label things so that the child can understand them. So naming is important for language development.

### 2.1.5 **Chao (1983)**

Chao explains that in his village called Pai-tang, a child's father chooses a name for the baby and that is traditionally known as his or her milk-name. As the child is growing, for the first few years of this child's life, the young one bears a baby or milk name. This name is generally chosen with reference to the time of his or her birth, or to personal peculiarity. Chao has given one name to illustrate what he means as an example: the milk name ("Liu chin" (six pounds)) is chosen because this was his weight at birth. He also mentions that the milk name is retained until the child goes to school when his other personal name is chosen.

The above discussion shows that a name is critically important as it is bound to the culture of the bearer. For example, In Moletji and Sekhukhune, it is not the father (if he is not yet married) who gives the baby a name after birth, but it is the family of the mother that will have to give the child any name they wish (given name).

### 2.1.6 **Smith (1985)**

Smith (1953:38) indicates that the use of names is inevitable. He therefore starts his theory on names by asking the question: "how many times a day do you identify yourself to someone by name?" By this he asserts that names are so important that hardly a day can pass by without a person mentioning his or her name either telephonically, in greetings, or in signing a cheque. He continues by mentioning that one should think of how often one refers to others by their names, either in their presence or absence. The

point of this exercise which hardly needs to be illustrated is simply that names are important. The author emphasizes that for most of us, a name is much more than just a tag or a label. It is a symbol which stands for the unique combination of character and entity that define us as individuals.

2.1.7 **Chauke (1992)**

The scholar says that names play a significant role in reminding the next generation that a long time ago there lived a particular group of people in a particular place. He mentions that names serve as a symbol which will forever be in the society's lives and even the coming generation remains with the history of names as far as culture is concerned. He thus says that names are a mirror of the society and people will always see their identities through their names.

Lastly, Chauke adds that names play a central role in uncovering a country's history.

2.1.8 **Nelson (1992)**

Nelson speaks of the theory of reference which is about referencing terms of language where he includes names, predicates and the objects they refer to or apply to and for whom. The author explains that it is part of semantics which also studies meaning as well as reference. He states that:

> The words 'not', 'and' and 'also' occurring in a sentence are not names and do not refer (in any clear way) to anything; moreover, they are not predicates and thus convey no news about things. Their office is connective. Of course names and true predicates can be fashioned out of almost any words.

Nelson has given an example of his own to illustrate his theory where he uses the word 'he' and 'also-ran' where he has given 'also' a bit of independent sense by joining it with 'ran' to make a predicate. But playing it straight, the author assumed that all speakers of

English, including himself, know roughly which part of the language has independent meaning and which not.

Nelson discusses the meaning of the names and their references. The author implies that a 'he' alone is not a name but a referent to a name which might mean nothing at all but if a person can simply for instance say 'mermaid', that might mean a half fish, half girl but does not apply to anything. This tells us that there are different types of names but not all the names have a meaning, some have a little, whereas some have no meaning at all.

### 2.1.9 De Klerk (1996)

De Klerk's view on naming is that, it is a linguistic act, intimately linked with values, traditions, hopes, fears and events in people's lives which mean that naming is concerned with the culture of people. The author mentions that the name givers in both the Xhosa and English cultures can be a father or a mother or both. Apart from this, she explains that in the Xhosa culture, the grandfather, grandmother and other relatives can also give names, by contrast, English parents do their naming differently.

De Klerk also states that English speakers place heavy emphasis on the powerful family settings which also play a role among Xhosa speakers. The emphasis in Xhosa naming is on meaning, which is not the case in English naming.

### 2.1.10 Katakami (1997)

Katakami reveals that the Mbeere name the newborn after another person, and this reflects the person's place in the birth order. Deaths and events during pregnancy also affect the basic naming principles among the Mbeere. He goes to state that parents are obliged to name a baby after some memorable event that happened in their lives.

Katakami further explains that in the customary practice of the Mbeere, a baby is named by a midwife at birth who in most cases is an old woman in the community. However, more parents name their babies after the 1960s when maternity wards became familiar.

Thus, to the Mbeere tradition, there are basic Mbeere personal naming characteristics. However, these days most people give Christian names in addition to the given name. Again, a Mbeere personal name, as in the case elsewhere in Africa, is not usually accompanied by the family name as a man would carry his father's given name. In contrast, as for a woman, she usually bears the name of her husband if she is married and that of her father if she is not.

The Mbeere people seem to have some things in common with the Bapedi people because Bapedi women also carry their husband's names after they are married.

### 2.1.11  **Eileen (1998)**

The author discovered that among the Zulu tribe, there is no special ceremony when the child is named. The child may be given his or her name at any time although the name giving process is done when the child is a few weeks old. The father or the grandfather will indicate before a few people whether the name of the child is just a given name or an inherited one.  Such a name is called the *igamu*, and is regarded as a true or great name. This is the case because the child will always be called by his or her parents and people of the parent's generation, even after this child has received a new puberty name or a regimental name.

Eileen further states that in Zulu society the mother may give the child any name she wishes to but as for a father, he has to consult the other members of the kraal in order to name his child. Thus, Zulu names are always of historical importance in the life of the family. Most of the Zulu names are historically important because they reflect past events and some names serve as a remembrance to their ancestors.

### 2.1.12 **Saarelma-Maunumaa (1999)**

The author unfolds to us that the personal naming system of the Ovambo in Namibia is based strongly on the idea of name sharing. He mentions that when a child is born, he or she is first given a temporary name which will be a birth name that will indicate the time

of the day the baby was born. For example, Augula (boy), Naugula (girl), (morning), Usiku (boy), Ngusiku (girl), (night), or even meaning at the time of birth for example, Mvula (rain), Uskonga (boy), Nauskonga (girl)(hunting).

He further states that after a few weeks' time a child is then given a real, permanent name which is used together with a patronymic. He divulges that it is always the father who chooses the name. He further mentions that the prevalent custom is to name a child after a close friend of the father and that the name will become public after the father had visited him or her to greet the child. If the parents died, the namesake was therefore expected to take care of the child.

Saarelma-Maunumaa also reveals that sometimes name sharing is also applied in Xitsonga. Different members of a family or clan share the name of their ancestors. However, temporary names are not necessary in Xitsonga, but rather real, permanent names are given when the child is born. He also adds that Xitsonga children are also given names at the initiation school and that they are named by the owner of the initiation school. He gave an example of a name such as *Motseng*, *Ratanang*, which are some of the names given at the initiation school. Thus, all the people who have not yet attended the school (initiation) are compelled to call those initiants by such names.

### 2.1.13 **Dakubu (2000)**

Dakubu mentions that personal names and naming practices of the Dagomba people are based on their traditional or historical distinctions. The naming of a child shortly after birth is regarded as a public announcement of the child's birthright as a member of a recognised group. Such a name is regarded as the primary name according to Dagomba people. Dakubu explains that names are given at birth or under culturally specified circumstances.

Dakubu continues by explaining that in the traditional ceremony of giving a child a name, the child's hair is shaved. Thus, the name may alternatively be the name of a holy being or place of worship. Names given through a soothsayer are regarded as the main

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primary Dagomba names. However, there are a number of names that deal with circumstances pertaining to birth. Such a name is the only one a child is given in such situations. The names must therefore be classed as primary names.

### 2.1.14 **Duckett (2000)**

According to the author, a large number of Muslims have names without being aware of their meaning, or have names which do not reflect their Islamic heritage. Thus many parents select names that consist of words which may be phonetically appealing, but which lack real meaning.

However, one learns that the name, Salahuddin, comes from the Arabic "Salaah", meaning piety, honesty and goodness, and is fully translated as "rectitude of the faith [Islam]" (Duckett, 2000: 29). One famous bearer of the name was the Sultan of Egypt, Salah ud-Din Yusuf Ayyubi (1138-93), better known in the western world as Saladin, victor over Richard the Lion-heart in the Crusades. Saladin, according to a reference provided by the author to a western writer, behaved in a manner "more Christian" than that of the Crusaders themselves. The author's second name, Ahmed, "the most praised", is one of the names of Muhammad and a favourite among Muslims throughout the world.

Duckett's introduction includes details of the various parts or components of Muslim names such as: kunya (nickname), Ism (proper name), nasab (lineage), nisba (relationship to place of birth, etc.), and laqab (honorific). He also covers the usual problems of transliteration, a general history of origins, and relationship to the Qu'ran.

### 2.1.15 **Hodgson (2003)**

Hodgson focuses on the origin, meaning of a first name, surnames and place names in her book the 'Oxford Names Companion'.

The book is split into three discrete sections ("A dictionary of surnames", "A dictionary of first names" and "A dictionary of British place names"), each with a separate introduction and guide to the scope and arrangement of entries. A general introduction draws the work together and discusses the growth of interest in and development of place-name, first name and surname studies; the geography of surnames; and computers and names studies.

The first section, "A dictionary of surnames" contains an alphabetical list of nearly 70,000 surnames within the English speaking world that are of European origin, explaining their linguistic origins, history, and their current distribution. Each entry groups together the variant forms of the name, diminutives, and patronymics.

The introduction to this section explains that surnames are classified by four broad types according to their origins: those based on patronymics; those derived from local names; those from occupational names; and those from nicknames. Within these broad types there are further levels of classification, such as topographical, seasonal, and status names. The entries indicate to which classification a name belongs. Hodgson gives an example of 'The name Bachelor', which she classifies as a status name for a young knight or novice at arms; and 'Earl' is either a nickname or an occupational name for a servant employed in a noble household.

'A dictionary of first names' covers some 7,000 personal names used in Britain, giving information about their origin, meaning, cultural peculiarities, current usage and European variants. The entries reveal how names with essentially the same meaning have variants in different languages, and how names are shared in the same form by several languages or cultures.

### 2.1.16  Sebashe (2003)

Sebashe in his study mentions that a name is an important social and cultural aspect in all civilised countries. Thus a name gives a sense of self-identity, self-value, and self-esteem. He further explains that in South Africa, both Black and Whites attach meanings which

suit their respective feelings. He therefore says that this is what in the first place caused problems between these two groups in South Africa, because names were not given with the aim of promoting unity but rather of further polarising these two groups.

Sebashe further states that some areas inhabited by Black people were given names that did not appeal to them. The names were just forced on them, hence the sudden need in South Africa to rename these places. An example he has given here is the one of an area such as Sophia-town in Johannesburg that has been renamed Triomf (meaning trimph) after the white people chased Black people away and declared this area a White residential area.

### 2.1.17 **Mokgokong (2004)**

This research focuses on place names. According to Mokgokong (2004), naming is one of the main activities of human beings. Proper names are bestowed upon people, domestic animals, mountains, rivers, villages, schools and many other things. Mokgokong asserts that the purpose of naming is to identify an entity; in other words, to differentiate it from other entities. Often, there are reasons for preferring one name over another, although names can be given randomly because of the meaning they carry and what they communicate about the entity. Another dimension worth considering here is that names are roots from the past (history).

### 2.1.18 **Nziyane (2004)**

According to Nziyane, naming plays an important role in any human society. It portrays the cultural values and traditions of a particular society. He continues to say that naming involves every aspect of life. Generally, the approach used in naming varies from one society to another.

Nziyane notes that the importance and origin of naming can be traced back to the old biblical story of creation which he stated as follows:

Now the Lord God has formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. (*The Holy Bible New International Version*, 1999:3).

This indicates that naming started a long time ago during the creation of the universe, as indicated in the above-given statement. During that time, man, that is, Adam, was the only one responsible for naming all living creatures. He named them randomly so that he could be able to identify them. Therefore, naming is necessary for identification. That is, it is a way of distinguishing one thing from everything else. Hence, the study of this kind is of vital importance.

The scholar's research was a focus on how naming was done in Bushbuckridge. He therefore writes that traditionally, children in Bushbuckridge were named at home by their grandparents, their aunts and uncles. However, these children would often be given names that belong to one of their ancestors. They would often be named after living or their past relatives.

### 2.1.19  **Mabotja (2005)**

According to Mabotja (2005:1-2), naming is a linguistic act intimately linked with values, traditions, hopes, fears and events in a people's lives. He notes with interest that the onomasticon that refers to the corpus of names in any given language is forever on the increase due to the naming activities of humankind and that the country as well is continuously faced with situations that call for the coining of names.

Mabotja states that names as a source of language form reflect various social and other attitudes and relationships, social groups' behaviour towards languages and other aspects of society. He thus continue by saying that on the other hand the question of identity has been and still is a major issue of debate within and outside South Africa. At the very centre of his emphasis, is the activity of naming which provides the starting point for the individual and thus defining him or her.

Mabotja further states that:

> Added to a person being named, or changing a name, there are
> different other layers of identities which help to uncover this
> person's personality. The identities in turn lead to a better
> understanding of the connection and interaction between the person
> and the community in which he or she operates.

The above indicates how important names are to particular societies. The identity that people associate themselves with is constructed through the process of naming.

### 2.1.20  **Vom Bruck and Bodenhorn (2006)**

The authors talk more on naming in different patterns. The authors indicate the fact that names may be valuable economically as well as politically is by no means new but technological developments have also impacted on naming because names these days are also used in a variety of crimes such as credit card fraud.

They continue on explaining that through naming, the identity of a person can be stolen, traded, suspended, and even erased.

The authors further explain that the recitation of names is a crucial aspect of memory that validates the present order more often than not, bringing the political aspect into view. They write that the right to a name is enshrined in the UN convention on the Right of the Child, recognizing the implication of carrying a name that begins at the earliest moments of social beings.

What all this entails, as Geertz (1973:363) illustrates in Vom Bruck and Bodenhorn, naming is a crucial aspect of converting "anybodies" into "somebodies".

Vom Bruck and Bodenhorn imply that the power of the name itself, which varies cross-culturally often plays a critical role in social life. In addition, they state that names may reveal crucial information about gender, kinship, geographical origin, or religion. At the

same time, names may also provide the vehicle for crossing boundaries between those very same categories, as well as between life and death, past and future, humans and non-humans.

### 2.1.21 **Mudau (2009)**

Mudau mentions that a name is a very important social and cultural construct to forge unity, identity, values, and self-esteem within and among communities. It instils a sense of pride and honour. He therefore says that throughout the whole world, name givers have been giving names with specific reasons in mind. These names were given in order to commemorate, honour, or distinguish one place from the other.

Mudau continues by explaining that naming either a person or a place is influenced by different issues such as cultural, social, economic, political, historical and other aspects of life. He says on the other hand, some names are given to express, among others, anger, unity and class and thus some on the other hand particularly place names are given in order to honour or acknowledge those who played prominent roles in their communities.

As Mudau explains, there are different categories of names such as place, personal, stage and nicknames. Looking at these different categories mentioned above, according to the scholar, different factors will however play a role in giving names in each category. For instance, in South Africa, there was a tendency of naming places after headmen, missionaries and other prominent personalities. Nowadays, there is a major shift from this practice. Thus, naming patterns will always evolve according to the situation and circumstances under which people find themselves.

### 2.2    **CONCLUSION**

This chapter presented views of various scholars pertaining to naming in general. It has been shown how people associate themselves through given and inherited names and how names may influence the culture of different societies. From the works of various scholars, one may understand that names are important as they give identity,

differentiation, and might also isolate a thing from other things. According to the works of the authors and scholars listed above, one comes up to a conclusion that people's history is buried and carried beneath names and therefore some names are a linkage to human history.

# CHAPTER THREE

# AN ANALYSIS OF GIVEN NAMES

## 3.1    INTRODUCTION

The chapter will give an overall analysis of given names in general among the Moletjie and the Sekhukhune people and how these names influence the societies of these two diverse places.

## 3.2    DEFINITION OF GIVEN NAMES

Given names may be defined in different ways. A given name is a name that is given to a person either during birth and or after birth by parents, spouses, family members and by people of the community one lives in (Campbell and Campbell, 1996).

Generally, a given name is a word which has a referent and such a word might have a meaning, but not all names have meanings, some have a little whereas others have no meanings at all as the discussion will show later. One can never refer to any word to be a name, there are words which hardly have meaning (Lyons, 1977).

Names are words which people could make sense out of, by identifying a person, an animal, and objects from other things (Dillard, 1976:16). This means that people of different cultures can make sense of the given names of those particular geographical areas they are growing in and with their clear understanding of such names, they may even predict why the child or a person was given such a particular name.

What follows are the categories of given names that will receive attention in this study:

- Biblical names;
- Names given to woman during marriage ceremony;
- Events given names;
- Given names which express happiness;
- Virtue names;

- Family given names;
- Nicknames;
- Overview of name-givers; and
- Overview of name carriers.

## 3.3    BIBLICAL NAMES

The Northern Sotho people say that given English names that their children had many years ago, were only given to the children by the time they went to school so that they would be granted permission to enter the school. They reveal that it was compulsory in the past that the child carried two names of which one had to be an English name. Therefore, it was hard for the parents because they were left with no choice but to give their children the names of the people they did not know such as Josephine, Jonas, and Mavis.  The parents did not even know what these names meant but they had to accede to the system so that the child could receive education.

Some children said that they were chased from schools to their homes to return with the second names or else they would not be taken at that moment. Because one of the interviewee is in her forties now, she finds everything strange because today things are done differently as some of the children today no longer have English names because of democracy and human rights. The old lady from Sekhukhune said she was on the queue to be registered at the school and when the teachers discovered that she did not have a second name, she was sent home several times seeking a name from the parents. Whilst still on the queue she heard a certain girl who was in front of her giving the mistress her two names and a surname (*Thola* Merry *Ngoašeng*). The respondent adopted that girl's family name (from *Thola* to *Tholane*) to be her second name. She was then admitted with that new name until she received her inherited names from her mother-in-law since she did not have any.

In Moletji and Sekhukhune, there are Christian biblical names which were given to children after birth and when they had to go to school. Some children were given the names when they had to undergo their Christian baptism such as Mariah, Joseph and Moses whilst others were given the names because their parents were Christians. In a few

instances, one observes that some children were given the names because of their church prophets who advised the parents to adopt certain biblical names for their children.

The following names belong to some of the children in Moletjie and they received them from the church because they became too sick when they were young and the prophets prayed for them and recommended them names so that they could be healed and be close to the angels or the ancestors of the Holy Bible. Similarly, one finds many Sepedi names which come from a popular hymn book called *Difela tša Sione*, which was a translated version of the English Christian book of hymns:

**Females**

(1) a.  *Mmakgotso* (Mother of Compassion)
   b.  *Mosa* (Grace)
   c.  *Kabelo*  (Share)
   d.  *Mohau/Mogau*  (Mercy)

**Males**

(2) a.  *Kgotso* (Compassion)
   b.  *Kganya* (Brigntness)
   c.  *Lebone*  (Light)
   d.  *Moše* (Moses)
   e.  *Mosa*  (Grace)
   f.  *Kabelo* (Share)
   g.  *Mogau/ Mohau* (Mercy)

Some Christian given names which are found in both Moletjie and Sekhukhune community areas are those names which arrived with the New Testament (Bible). With these names, the Bapedi people have no idea of what they meant or what they mean. Some of the parents read the Bible and end up understanding the carriers and the heroes of the names, they therefore liked their children to have these names.

Some of the Bapedi transliterated these biblical names so that they suit them by sounding as if they belonged to them. This was the case because some Bapedi had a feeling they were losing their culture to a foreign one. In order to avoid losing their culture, some Bapedi opted for transliteration of English biblical names. Moreover, the transliteration process helped because most of the elderly and younger people could not pronounce the English biblical names well. Again, Haugard (2008) explains what the following Christian names (which were discovered in Moletjie and in Sekhukhune) mean. In many African communities, such names are often given to children without any idea of what they mean:

3.3.1 **Types of English Christian or biblical given names found in both Moletjie and Sekhukhune**

**Feminine**

(3) a.  Anna (Grace)

b.  Abigail (Father in rejoicing)

c.  Debora – Dipora (Bee)

d.  Elisabeth – Elisa (The oath)

e.  Johanna – Jwana (Merciful)

f.  Julia – Juliya (Downy)

g.  Mary (Rebellion)

h.  Miriam (same as Mary)

i.  Pricilla  (Ancient)

j.  Rachel (Sheep)

k.  Salome (Peaceful)

l.  Sara (Princess)

**Masculine**

(4) a.  Abel- *Abele* (Breath)

b.  David- *Tafeta* (Beloved)

c.  Daniel- *Taniele* (God is my judge)

d.  Gabriel- *Kgabareya* (God is my strength)

e.  Juda- *Jota/Jotase* (The praise of the Lord or confession)

f.  Lazarus- *Lasaro* (Assistance of God)

g.  Matthew- *Mateu* (Given)

h.  Moses - *Moše* (Taken out)

i.  Titus- *Titose* (Pleasing)

j.  Zacharia- *Sakareya* (The Lord remembers)

k.  James (The heel)

l.  John/Johannes (The grace)

m.  Luke/Lucas - *Lukase* (White)

n.  Mark (Polite)

o.  Noah- *Nowa* (Repose)

p.  Peter- *Phitha* (A rock)

q.  Philemon- *Fili* (Who kisses)

r.  Philip- *filipi* (A lover of horses)

s.  Simon-  *Simone* (To be heard)

t.  Solomon- *Soli* (Peaceble)

u.  Stephen- *Setifene* (Crown)

v.  Thomas – Thomase (A twin)

## 3.4  NAMES GIVEN TO WOMEN DURING MARRIAGE CEREMONIES

In Moletjie, there are names which are given to women by the day of their marriage pertaining to the circumstances they are married in. These names are given to women by their elderly relatives before they could go and be given the inherited ones at their groom's home. Names of this nature are temporary and are meant to indicate the type of a family they are marrying into.

The names are called *maina a bongwetši* which means the names of the bridency. They are also regarded as the ancestors' names since they are carried from generation to generation, however they are not inherited. Morphologically, such names are distinguished by the appearance of the noun *mma* which in this context is the prefix which stands for mother. All the Northern Sotho names which have the prefix *mma*

indicate a name given to a woman on the day she got married. Examples of such names may be listed as follows:

*Mmantshwariše*

Morphologically, *Mmantshwariše* is a compound noun consisting of the noun *mma* (mother) and the verb *tshwara* (catch/hold). *Mmantshwariše* is an opposite of *Mmamoyahabo* which will be explained later. The name literally means hold something with me or help me, because when you hold something with someone, you try to make things simpler for that person and as the adage goes, together is better than one. Thus, the name is given to a woman who gets married to the family where there is no one from her family who is married to that family. She is the first one to be married to that family and if in future someone of her same family becomes married to that family, the new bride will therefore be named *Mmamoyahabo*.

*Mmamoyahabo*

*Mmamoyahabo* is a compound noun formed from the following categories:

Noun              + Verb          + Pronoun

*Mma* (Mother)    + *ya* (*go*)     + *habo* (home)

The name *Mmamoyahabo* comes from *moyahabo* meaning went home. The prefix *mma* is added in order to denote the female person who carries the name. This sort of a name is given to a woman who gets married to the family where one of her family members is or was married to.

*Mmamolatelo*

*Molatelo* is a compound noun formed from the following categories:

Noun             + Verb

*Mma* (mother) + *latela* (follow)

*Molatelo* is the name which has been derived from *latela* in Northern Sotho meaning to follow. *Mmamolatelo*, therefore, is the name given to the bride who follows the first bride of the same family (see *Mmamoyahabo*). In other words, *Mmamolatelo* together with *Mmamoyahabo* follow *Mmantshwariše*.

### *Mmamoloko*

*Mmamoloko* is a compound noun formed from the following categories:

Noun             + Noun

*Mma* (mother)   + *moloko* (relative or generation)

This is the type of a name which is given to a woman who is getting married to a relative. It might be an organised married where the bride and the bridegroom do not know that they are related by blood.

### *Mmamaropeng*

*Mmamaropeng* is a compound noun formed from the following categories:

Noun             + Locative

*Mma* (mother) + *maropeng* (ruins)

*Marope* can be defined as ruins in English. The Bapedi people believe that a family with no mother is an incomplete family and such a family is either ruined or destroyed, so there must be someone who can rescue it from total destruction. A general belief is that children cannot take care of themselves or raise themselves. The name *Mmamaropeng* is usually given to a woman who gets married to a family where the wife of the husband passed away. The second woman becomes a step-mother to the children of the woman who passed away. This means the second woman is going to take care of the husband and

the children of the other woman. Resultantly, the family will rise again and be a better family where children will grow with a mother and be taught respect and the other ways of life.

What follows are some of the names which were discovered at Sekhukhune:

*Mohlakodiši*

*Mohlakodiši* is a compound noun consisting of the noun *motho* (a person) and the verb *hlakodiša* (save or protect). The name *Mohlakodiši* belongs to a woman because in Sekhukhune it is regarded as *leina la bosadi* (a female name). This sort of a name is given to a woman who is not married.

*Ratale*

*Ratale* is the name which is given to the child of the newly married woman replacing the child who is lost in the family. The lost child is the one who bears the name *Ratale*. This is an African name like other African names with no English equivalence.

## 3.5 NAMES GIVEN DURING EVENTS

The following names were discovered from both Moletjie and Sekhukhune and they belong to children who were born during hard times. They are names given to children during some events which happened during and immediately after birth. The names are unisexual and are as follows:

### 3.5.1 Names which express sadness

*Mathata*

*Mathata* means trouble in English. The child is given the name from the experience the mother went through such as the troubles she had with the in-laws when she was carrying the baby, and all the troubles she had with the baby's father. Unsurprisingly, after birth the baby was named *Mathata* to reflect all the unhappiness visited upon her (mother).

*Madimabe*

*Madimabe* means misfortune and the baby was born after his father had passed away. The baby was unfortunate not to see his father. Then the eldest person in the family praises him by his family totem and states that he is misfortune (*ke Madimabe seromo*).

*Motlakadibe*

*Motlakadibe* is a compound noun formed from the following categories:

Noun + Verb + Preposition + Noun

*Mo* (*motho*) person + *tla* (come) + *ka* (with) + *dibe* (sins)

*Motlakadibe* is given to the child because when she was born, the lightning struck the child's home and the parents gave the child the name in the belief that her birth is associated with evil.

*Moleko*

*Moleko* is a trap and during the pregnancy before birth, there were many tricks that the mother had which caused her sicknesses and pains. In such instances, the community would believe that she has been bewitched but in the end, the tricks were defeated and the baby was born and named *Moleko*.

*Mmalehu*

*Mmalehu* is a compound noun formed from the following categories:

Noun + Noun

*Mma* (mother) + *lehu* (death)

*Mmalehu* comes from the noun *lehu* which means death in English. The child is born when there is a funeral at home where his grandmother passed away. During funeral preparations, he is given the name *Mmalehu* despite the prefix *mma*, which denotes females.

*Mmatlala*

*Mmatlala* is a compound noun formed from the following categories:

Noun          + Noun

*Mma* (mother) + *tlala* (hunger)

*Mmatlala* comes from *tlala*, which means hunger. There is a lot of hunger when the baby is conceived. In such instances, the mother struggles with the baby with no food to eat, thus, she tries anything necessary to get food for the whole family. It is therefore apt to state that the baby is born in a family of hunger.

*Diketso* (Victory)

When the mother was pregnant, there were many family problems which lasted until she gave birth, and called the baby *Diketso* (Victory) since she had defeated the circumstances.

*Dipolelo*/*Dipuo* (Talkings)

When the mother was pregnant with the child, there were doubts that the child the mother was carrying might not have been the child of the man she was married to. Under such rumours, the child was given the name *Dipuo*.

*Ditshego* (Laughter)

*Ditshego* is like *Dipuo* because when the mother was pregnant, there were rumours and some people were making fun of her pregnancy since they believed she was not carrying the child of the man she was married to. This was time for mockery, for her enemies to celebrate thinking that her marriage would be over but she would overcome the situation. The following names are the names given to children after birth after a long time of not conceiving where some parents even thought that they would never ever in their lifetime have children.

*Dimakatšo* (Wonders or surprises)

*Dimakatšo* is the child who has surprised the parents and other people in the community. They thought that the mother was old enough to give birth but suddenly Dimakatšo was born, and everyone was surprised.

*Kholofelo* (Hope)

The child came after a long time of waiting, however the parents were always waiting believing and hoping that one of the good days God would answer them and give them what they hoped for. The name *Kholofelo* thus shows that the parents never lost hope; they kept hoping until they had a child. This sort of a name is often given to females than males.

*Semakaleng* (Surprise)

The name itself is talking to the people 'not to be surprised' because of what has happened or what they have seen. The parents had only one child for a longer period of time and out of the blue after fifteen years another child arrived, appropriately named *Semakaleng* (Surprise).

*Thapelo* (**Prayers**)

The parents did not have a child and were praying and asking people to pray with them so that they would be given a child. They even consulted prophets, medical doctors and traditional doctors trying to find out what might be the problem. After a long time having lost all hope, the mother became pregnant with the child who was then named *Thapelo* (Prayers), believing that their prayers were answered and that it was God's will.

*Tidimalo* (Silence)

*Tidimalo* is also the child who was born after a long time where his parents believed that they would never give birth or have a child. People believed that it was the mother who was unable to conceive, until she became pregnant with the child and all the gossips stopped. That is why the child was named *Tidimalo* because people were silenced because of the child's birth.

### 3.5.2 Names given to children after a long grieving period (*Bana ba lehloko*)

The following names are given to children after a long grieving period which is called *Bana ba lehloko*. Some of the names discovered in both Moletjie and Sekhukhune are as follows:

*Semadi*

*Semadi* is a Sepedi name which does not have an English equivalent. The name is given to a female child after her siblings pass away in the family and she is the first child to survive after a long time of stress and trauma.

*Nhlobi*

Nhlobi comes from the word hlobaela in Northern Sotho and it reflects a situation wherein someone has not been sleeping well (sleepless nights). The parents have not been sleeping well because of the trauma in the family of losing the children. Each and every child they had could not survive and they wondered what the main cause of the problem

was until they made some further investigations by consulting traditional doctors whose solution was to tell them that they should no longer give the children their inherited names for their survival. The children might have been inheriting names from the wrong relatives.

*Pudi* (Goat)

After the loss of so many children in the family, parents may feel obliged to give their children any other name which seems not to have meaning or make sense:

*Phiri* -  is a Hyena, see *Nhlobi* and *Pudi*

*Khothiane*-  is a Skunk, see *Nhlobi*

*Nhlobi* and *Pudi* are siblings (they are sisters). After discovering that there was a great loss of many children in the family, the children were no longer given their inherited names. *Pudi* who is younger than *Nhlobi* was also given any name found so that she can also live.

### 3.5.3  Names based on days of the week

Northern Sotho parents also give their children names based on days of the week. According to Dillard (1976), this also happens in other parts of Africa such as Kenya and Ghana.

Dillard (1976) says that a little percentage of parents who named their children Kwame were unaware that the name Kwame means Saturday and that it is the name given to a male child born on that day of the week.

In contrast, in Moletjie and Sekhukhune the names given to children based on week days are given to both males and females. They are therefore unisex given names.

*Sontaga*

*Sontaga* has been adopted from *Sondag* (Afrikaans) and it means Sunday. The name is given to the child who was born on Sunday.

*Mošupologo*

*Mošupologo* means Monday, and it denotes the fact that the child was born on Monday.

Valentine

If the child is named Valentine, it means that the child was born on Valentine's Day, the fourteenth of February.

Freedom

Freedom is also a popular name that is given to children who were born on freedom's day. In South Africa, this day is celebrated on 27 April.

### 3.5.4 Given names based on weather

Most of the names which have the prefix *mma* are given to married women because the said prefix denotes mother. However, nowadays there are some males who bear names which start with the prefix *mma*.

*Mmapula* (Mother of rain)

*Mmapula* is a compound noun formed from the following categories:

Noun            +Noun
*Mma* (Mother) + *pula* (rain)

*Mmapula* originates from pula meaning rain. It means the child was born when it was raining and she was then named *Mmapula* because she was a girl and Pula if it was a boy.

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*Motlalepula*

*Motlalepula* is a compound noun formed from the following categories:

 Noun                     + Verb         + Preposition + Noun
 *Mo* from *Motho* (Person) + *tla* (come) + *le* (with)       + *pula* (rain)

*Motlalepula* is given to a child who is born when there is rain. It means that the child arrived with the rain and it might have been the first time for the rain to fall for that season.

*Phoka*

*Phoka* is dew and it means that the child was born when there was too much dew. This name is however given to females.

*Kgodi*

*Kgodi* is mist; this means that the child was born when there was too much mist in the area.

*Mmaphefo*

*Mmaphefo* is a compound noun consisting of the noun *mma* (mother) and the adjective *phefo* (cold). The noun *mma* indicates the feminine gender and the name means the child of cold.  *Mmaphefo* was born in a cold weather.

## 3.6    GIVEN NAMES WHICH EXPRESS SATISFACTION AND HAPPINESS

Given names which express satisfaction and happiness are prevalent in both Moletjie and Sekhukhune. They are names which express satisfaction and happiness the parents had when they received the child. Most of them have the same type of meaning in different

contexts. They also express the intimacy between the child and the parents, relief, blessings and fortune.

Unisexual names

*Thapelo* (Prayer)

T*hapelo* means "We have prayed, and have been answered".

*Kgaugelo* (Mercy)

God had mercy on us and gave us a baby boy or a baby girl for the parents who needed a girl.

*Karabo* (Answer)

Parents have been answered, after long prayers.

*Kamogelo* (Welcome)

A child is a gift to be welcomed by a family with warmth and care; the name is given to the child as a welcome in the family.

*Refilwe* (Given)

The parents have been blessed and given a child.

*Reneilwe* (Given)

The name is a synonym of *Refilwe*, that is; the name is formed by the noun re (we) and the verb *nea* (give). See Refilwe.

*Rethabile* (Happiness)

We are so happy to be given the child.

*Neo* or *Dineo* (Offerings or given)

Neo is given to male children whereas *Dineo* is given to females. In our time, the names are given to both males and females. The child is given the name because the parents believe that it is what God offered them.

*Lehlogonolo*/*Mahlogonolo* (Felicity or Luck)

It is a blessing to have so much luck, to be given a child.

*Lethabo* (Joy)

The parents are happy, to have been given a child. This means that the child has brought so much joy into the family.

*Lerato* (Love)

The parents are talking to the child on how they feel about him or her. That is, she is always loved.

*Tshepo* (Hope)

'You are our hope'. The child is given the name in the belief that he or she will bring more happy things into the parents' lives.

*Tumisho* (Glory)

The praise goes to God for giving the parents the child.

*Mokgethwa* (The Chosen one)

In this case, the mother had a child when she was too old, she had only one female child who is older than *Mokgethwa*. So, he was named the chosen one, meaning that God chose him.

*Kopano* (Unity)

The name speaks to the parents that it is the child who brought them together, along with the two families, of the bride and the bridegroom.

Other names that express similar sentiments may be listed as follows:

(5) a. *Kholofelo* (Hope)

    b. *Tumelo* (Faith)

    c. *Mosa* (Grace)

    d. *Mohau* (Mercy)

    e. *Mpho* (Gift)

    f. *Lesego* or *Masego* (Fortune)

    g. *Tšhegofatšo* (Blessings)

    h. *Mahlatse* (Lucky)

    i. *Thabo & Lethabo* (Happiness)

All the names above in (3.6) express the same feeling of happiness but in different ways. When analysing the names, they all end up telling one thing, "giving birth to a child is a blessing".

The following names in (3.6.1) are however given to male children only. They are given to children who are regarded as *Bajalefa* (heirs) in Northern Sotho. They are the male

children who will remain at home with their parents' wealth while some children marry and leave the homestead. However, this kind of a decision was made back in the days when there was no democracy. Currently, every child deserves something from his or her parents. Some parents today even write wills to prevent fights among their children.

### 3.6.1 The following names which express happiness are only given to male children

*Lefa*

*Lefa* means inheritance in English. In African cultures, there is a child who remains with the parents when other children leave home, and such a child is called *Lefa* because he inherits his parents' wealth. This name is however given to a boy because other siblings are girls. The belief is that the boy will grow their generations to the next level when the parents are gone as they believe that when he marries, their family grows. If it were not for him, their generation would die since the daughters would be taken and inherit the in-laws' surnames. If the family has boys only, the last born will be the one to be left in the family where he would marry and bring the bride to the parents' house.

As Miller and Swift (1976:41) in Smith indicate, this phenomenon does not only occur among the Northern Sotho people:

> It is still very common for women in Europe and North America adopts their husband's family names when they marry. Thus, 'women are said to "marry into the families"; and families are said to "die out" if all female generation occurs.

*Khumo*

*Khumo* is Wealth in English, see *Lefa*.

*Lehumo*

*Lehumo* is Treasure in English, also see *Khumo* and *Lefa*.

The Northern Sotho have strong beliefs when it comes to giving birth to boys. There are some years when most women give birth to baby boys and to Northern Sotho people, they believe that the year is one of plenty as there would be plenty of food to plant and harvest. In their language it is said *ke ngwaga wa khora*. They believe that it would be a year of the rains, their livestock would not starve from hunger and that they will plant and harvest lots of food that year.

## 3.7    VIRTUE NAMES

Virtue names are those given names which are based on personal beliefs (Manion, 2005). Most names based on personal beliefs/characters and those which express happiness are unisexual. They do not discriminate in terms of gender. These types of names were discovered in both areas of Moletjie and Sekhukhune, where some could only be found in Moletjie and others in both Moletjie and Sekhukhune and are as follows:

*Bohlale* (Clever)

The name is given to a child with a belief that the child would become clever in future. The respondents gave an example of the *Bohlales* they have within their communities who are clever indeed. Some of these kinds of names were given to children after observing the behaviour of such children.

*Mmini* (Dancer)

The name *Mnini* is given to a child because the mother believes that the child would inherit some characters she had when she was young. The mother is a good singer and a dancer so she believes that the child would thus be like her when she grows up.

*Mahlatse* (Lucky)

When the mother was pregnant with the child, she had so many good things happening to her during her pregnancy and was even winning lots of competitions. So, the mother

believed that it was not her but the child who she was carrying who had plenty of luck. That is why after the child's birth, the child was named *Mahlatse*,  meaning luck.

### *Kgošana* (Young king)

For the Northern Sotho people, a child who is born characterise by kindness is said to be *kgoši*, meaning king. These are the children who do not cry most of the time, and are always happy and smiling. Instead of crying when he or she is sick, he or she will just not sleep well and wakeup more often than usual and that is when the parents would know that there was something wrong with the baby. By the time they cried, the parents would know that something serious was bothering the baby.

### *Bonolo* (Softness)

*Bonolo* is similar to *Kgosana* but the difference is brought about because *Bonolo* is the child who most of the time is silence, playing quietly around with other kids. The child does not have problems at all, it is just their character. The parents, therefore, believe that the child will grow up that way, not cruel but kind.

### *Ditshego* (Laughter)

The name is given to the child after birth because she is always laughing and smiling. When one looks at her, she will just laugh.

### *Matheeletša* (Listener)

The child is given the name *Matheeletša* (listener) with the belief that he would be able to be the first one to listen to his parents when they are talking to him or when they are giving him some orders. The child's siblings could not pay attention to anything the family was trying to tell them, so it was hard to tell them what to do because they never listened and they did whatever they wanted to do anytime.

Listening is a skill and it depends on how the child is raised, whether by bad or good parents. Bapedi people like to say *mmala wa kgomo o gola namaneng* which is an idiom which explains that whatever behaviour we observe in a child, it is the behaviour the child acquired from home. It is from the child's behaviour that we can have an idea what kind of a family the child is from. However, it has been confirmed by both Bapedi groups that a good name can positively affect the child's actions in future while a bad name can be destructive.

## 3.8  FAMILY GIVEN NAMES

A family given name is a name which is given to children after birth or when they begin school (Cambell and Cambell 1996). Most of the given names in the past were in English, but currently people are giving their children Northern Sotho names based on a variety of factors such as the advent of democracy in South Africa.

The researcher consulted a few families and to her surprise, most members of such families still bear English names adopted from the bible.

Family given names from Moletjie

(6) Moloto's kingdom

    a. Shubbert
    b. David
    c. Solomon
    d. Julia
    e. Bennet

(7) Koma's family

    a. Simon
    b. Miriam
    c. *Mpho* (Gift)
    d. Abigail

e. Winston

f. *Itumeleng* (Happiness)

g. Herbeth

(8) Setati's family

a. Ephraim

b. Emeranger

c. Joseph

d. Miriam

e. Walter

f. Connie

g. Hamilton

**Family given names from Sekhukhune**

(9) Phahlamohlaka's kingdom

a. Timothy

b. Winnie

c. Dommy

d. Doctor

e. Betty

f. Mariah

g. *Pontsho* (Vision)

h. *Mpho* (Gift)

## 3. 9  NICKNAMES

Nicknames are part of given names as they are not inherited at all. They can be given to a person by friends, spouses, colleagues, teachers, and by anyone else. Nicknames can however defame a person's reputation and even abuse this person emotionally. Thus people give one another nicknames based on many things such as their characters and their physical appearances, pronunciation of words, sports and other things, however some people give themselves some nicknames of praise (Sethosa, 2004).

Molefe (1999) in Sethosa (2004:4) writes that in Zulu culture, a nickname can be formed from praises and sometimes from surnames. He says that the carrier of the nickname always appreciates praises. He further states that in Zulu culture, a person who does not bear a nickname seems not to be active and recognised in the society he or she is living in.

The researcher discovered that in Moletjie there are more nicknames than in Sekhukhune. In Sekhukhune they often call one another with their family names and totem names. In Moletjie, whether you are a visitor or not, a day may not pass before one is given a nickname. Most Northern Sotho nicknames do not have gender features as they are just given to a person despite their masculinity or feminity.

### 3.9.1  Character nicknames from Moletjie

What follows are the character nicknames discovered in Moletjie:

*Fakapatla*

He was given the nickname *Fakapatla* at school by other boys because he used to promise to beat them up when they could not cooperate. They knew that when he said *ke tla go faka patla* he meant it.

*Mapentane* (The painter)

He was given the nickname because he was known for painting houses in the community.

*Sebarabooi*

He was given the nickname Sebarabooi because of the traditional dance (dinaka) he used to perform during community ceremonies. Most people who dance dinaka have received different nicknames because of the way they danced and praised themselves.

*Kgalase* (Glass)

The respondent in this case received his nickname because of the traditional dance *dinaka*. But he is the one who gave himself the nickname because he believed that he was better and more beautiful than everybody. A glass during those times was known to be the most beautiful thing in the community. When they sang the wedding songs for a couple, they used to compare the bride with the glass, which symbolised her beauty.

*Mathaithai* (Tricks)

A nickname of this type is given to someone who is full of tricks and lies. He is given the name by friends because of his actions and is never honest. He is good at bribing others, using them to get what he wants.

*Sa-jaga* (Slow down)

The nickname *Sa-jaga* is a 'tsotsitaal' nickname. He is given the name because he cannot relax at all. He is overhasty and easily jumps to conclusions. He is always told by friends to relax until they realise that a leopard will never change its spots.

*Molori* (Dreamer)

He receives the name because he tells his friends what he has dreamed of and that his dreams are true. He tells them of the things he wants to do in future and as a child the other children make fun of him and say that he is a dreamer because he never stops dreaming. Every day it is him with his stories.

*Majasana*

The bearer of the nickname *Majasana* in this case comes from a poor family. That is why he wears the same coat the whole winter. Because of the coat he wears everyday even if it is warm, he receives the nickname as a child and grows up as a man being called by the nickname.

*Radijo* (The eater)

A person is given the nickname *Radijo* because he is always found where the food is. Moreover, he is a glutton as he eats more food than other people around him.

*Sejagobe* (Worst eater)

*Sejagobe* is a nickname given to someone who eats too much and who seems not to get satisfied. The type of a person called *Sejagobe* is a way of indicating exaggerated eating because he would eat until all the food is finished, before that, he would not stop.

*Kolobe* (Pig)

The nickname *Kolobe* is given to someone who seems not to care about what other people say about her and does not like tidiness and cleanness. Again, the nickname is given to someone who eats a great deal.

*Ntana* (Little louse)

A person is given the nickname *Ntana* because of the bad smell she has. She hates to take a bath and other children do not like to play with her since she is from a poor background.

*Thepetshe* (Problem maker)

The name comes from the English word, bitch. A person is given the name *Thepetshe* because he always causes problems wherever he goes. He is known for a bad behaviour that results in stealing, robbing and bullying other people. Most children are scared of him since he has been in and out of jail and because of his wrong doings, he has no friends at all and is trying to fit where applicable.

*Boroko* (Sleeps)

The nickname is given to a male person because when he is out with friends playing and talking, he boasts to them how well he sleeps and that the reason why he sleeps well is because he was naked. He says to them *boroko bo bose ka lepono*, meaning 'one will enjoy sleeping if one is naked'. The way he says it is funny to his friends, and they laugh about it and give him the nickname.

*Maloma* (The biter)

He is given the nickname *Maloma* because he likes fighting and to rescue himself he uses his teeth to bite others. So when there is a fight, other children are aware that if you are not careful, you are going to end up with a tattoo from *Maloma* as he will bite you until you call your mother for help. Until he sees that you are bleeding, he would not leave you.

*Matsetsela* (Interrupter)

This nickname is given to someone who always interrupts others. It may be given to both females and males. It means someone who interferes every time people are doing something, or the same thing.

What has been discovered in both Moletjie and Sekhukhune when analysing the nicknames is that males have more nicknames than females. This is the case because traditionally males are the ones who are involved in more activities than females.

Character nicknames from Sekhukhune:

*Potla* (Pocket)

*Potla* is something which is designed to be inside the clothes to help carry some personal stuff which one cannot determine what one has in it. The nickname is given to a male person by his friends because he likes hiding himself from them.

*Meroto* (Pee)

The nickname is derived from family members who mock their sibling because he always wets himself at night.


*Manganga* (Obstinacy)

The nickname is also derived from family members who bestow it to a hard-headed person. This is someone who does not listen to anyone but himself.


*Motswipi* (Too tied)

According to the children, something which is too tight like a trouser is called *motswipi*. The nickname is given to a male person by his friends because he likes tight clothes.


*Motsamai* (Traveller)

The person receives the nickname from members of the community because each time they look for him he is nowhere to be found. He is always travelling.


*Mmatsela* (Mother of the road)

The nickname *Mmatsela* is given to a female who likes taking a walk when other people, friends or family members are looking for her. She only takes a break when she is asleep but in the morning she would do some work in the house and thereafter she is gone till late.


*Tsela* (Road)

The nickname *Tsela* is given to a male person who is always on the road. See *Motsamai*.

*Kgowa* (Too stubborn)

If we say someone *wa kgowa* in Sepedi, it simply means that the person is disrespectful and does not listen to others when they talk to them. The nickname is thus given to a very stubborn person by people who know them very well.

*Matshekgi*

*Matshekgi* is a nickname which is given to someone who likes traditional herbs. The name is unisexual.

## 3.9.2 Physical appearance given nicknames

Coming next are the types of physical appearance nicknames which have been discovered at Moletjie:

Nicknames based on people's heads

Bigger

He is given the nickname Bigger because he has a big head.

*Hlogwana ya molodi* (whistle head)

He is given the nickname because he has a small thin head.

*Kolepe*

The nickname derives from *selepe*, an axe in English. He is given the nickname because of his thin head.

*Setoto* (Hill)

He is given the nickname *Setoto* because he has a kind of hill on the back of his head.

*Setolo*

He has a big head which seems like it does not belong to him.

**Nicknames based on people's teeth**

*Fenomeno*

He gets the nickname from his friends at school because he is too talkative and likes making fun of other learners and has big teeth which he cannot cover with his lips.

*Meno* (Teeth)

He receives the nickname because he is a bully, always cruel to other children and uses his teeth as his weapon to fight.

*Lekgema* (Giant)

He receives the nickname from other children in the community because he has big teeth and long brown dread-locks which he does not take care of. He always looks miserable.

*Lengau*

He gets the nickname because he likes to fight with other children and when he gets defeated, he then bites them.

**Nicknames given to slim people**

*Mofokeng*

The nickname comes from *Mofokeng* the actor of the SABC drama *Emzini Wezinsizwa* who is tall and slim. He is given the nicknames by his friends because he has *Mofikeng*'s physical appearances.

*Ntshare*

She receives the nickname from other kids in the community because she is too thin as if she would be blown away by the wind.

**Nicknames given to people based on their legs**

*Dihoro*

He is given the nickname by other kids because his legs look like a bow.

*Yogueta*

She receives the nickname from her street playmates because of her slim legs which they compare to the *yogueta* sweet. They crack jokes out of this by saying her legs break when she walks.

**Nicknames given to short people**

*Topo morwana*

He is given the nickname because he is too thin and too short. So, *barwana* are the type of people of different tribes who travel from one place to another looking for a good place where they could stay with their families. This is just like the Khoi and the San people who Bapedi people call Barwana.

**Small**

The name is given to someone who does not grow tall like people of his age group.

*Setotompana*

*Setotompana* in Northern Sotho is a nickname given to someone who does not grow tall as children of his age. He only gains a great deal of weight, instead of growing tall, but from their appearance people can tell if they are young and of which age.

**Short mistake**

A person who bears this nickname is too old but looks like a small child because of his height and his physical appearance. He receives the nickname at school from his class mates because they crack jokes out of his appearance that he is short by mistake.

Nicknames given to people based on their weight

(10)   a.   *Sagonona* (A fat person)
      b.   *Mafutha* (A fat person)
      c.   *Mafethe* (A very fat person)
      d.   Kolobe (A person who is fat like a pig)
      e.   Fatty *bom bom* (A very fat person)
      f.   Fats (A very fat person)

**Other physical appearance nicknames**

*Thotse* (Seed)

The nickname is given to a child who wears a string which has a seed of watermelon prescribed by a traditional doctor (*ngaka*) which her family believes that it heals the disease she has, namely, Parkinson's disease.

*Ngwana' phetana* (The child of small bead)

The nickname is given to a child who wears some cultural beads on their neck which some of the Bapedi believe that they heal the child who suffers from the disease called Thema in Sepedi (which affects the neck of the child).

*Nkopo* (One eyed)

This type of a nickname is given to a person with one eye. It might have been caused by an accident or birth.

*Raihlwana* (One eye)

*Rra* is a prefix which stands for father. The nickname is given to a male person with one eye. Also see *Nkopo*.

*Nkgopo*/*Nkwazi* (Crooked)

This type of a nickname is given to a person with a crooked hand. The name is unisexual.

*Kgokgo* (Monster)

*Kgokgo* is a name which is used for describing unusual things in Sepedi such as a monster, a dinosaur or a carnivore. The name is used to threaten the children if they cannot cooperate. This type of a nickname is given to someone who likes doing unusual things, not taking care of himself, likes eating strange animals, and who also isolates himself from other people.

*Lekgowa*

The nickname is given to a black person who is too bright in complexion as if he is a white person.

*Bura*

The nickname is given to a black person who has the image of a white person who is also bald.

Physical appearance given nicknames discovered at Sekhukhune:

*Mpatlana*

This type of a nickname is given to short people by other people in the community.

*Kgeru* (Seed of Marula tree)

The nickname is given to a female child because she had no teeth for a long time when she was growing up.

*Ouvas*

The nickname *Ouvas* is given to a black male child by his family members because he was born in a light complexion.

*Monyama*

The nickname is given to a person who is too dark in complexion.

**Nicknames based on sports**

*Letsetse* (Flea)

*Letsetse* is the type of an insect which is too small, which moves very fast. The nickname is given to a male person by his school friends because he is the fastest runner. They believe that he runs like a flea because he could reach the end of the line without anyone being aware.

*Tsarapi*

The nickname is given to a female person because she is too thin and too short. She is given the nickname because she is good at high jump.

**Fish**

This is the nickname which is given to a male person by his soccer mates because he is good at soccer. The name derives from the former South African soccer player Mark Fish. The person is given the nickname because people believe that he plays his soccer like Mark Fish.

**Bricks**

A brick is known as *setena* in Northern Sotho. Most people who are soccer players and are good at stopping the ball to score are compared to a brick because members of the community believe that nothing is harder than a brick. So, the person receives the name because no ball can pass through him, he is good at stopping opponents from scoring.

3.10  **OVERVIEW OF NAME GIVERS**

According to the name givers from both Moletjie and Sekhukhune, the English names which they gave to their family members, were not out of their choice, but due to circumstances. They explain that during apartheid in South Africa (1948-1994) things were not easy as today one has the right to choose a name. They say that now that they know who they are, they no longer give the children names whose origin is strange. They give children the names which belong to their culture.

Duckett (2000: 29-30) explains that to the Muslims, it is a mark of respect and pride to have a name that carries some significant meaning or identification relating to the attributes of Allah (God). According to the author, the Muslims believe that the first thing that Allah (God) taught Adam was names and that it is an important parental duty to provide suitable names for the new-born.

Unfortunately, as Duckett explains, a large number of Muslims have names without being aware of their meanings, or have names which do not bear on their Islamic heritage. That is, many parents select names that consist of words which may be phonetically appealing, but which did not have real meaning.

## 3.11 OVERVIEW OF NAME CARRIERS

As for the name carriers, it is not all of them who hate their names. Most children say that they do not have a problem with their names since they grew up knowing that those are their names. But as for their African names, they love them because they are too easy to understand their meanings and that some names which their parents gave them bring them luck, for example, Mahlatse (Luck).

On the other hand, they believe that names such as *Mathata* (Trouble) are not good names to give a child because they indeed bring bad luck to them. One of the respondents known by the name of *Molahlegi* (Lost) says that the name has never brought her some luck since she was young. When things are supposed to be good, they tend to fade away. She believes that the cause of her misfortune is her name.

## 3.12 CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed how the Northern Sotho (Bapedi) people of Moletjie and Sekhukhune practice their name giving. It depicts the importance of having a name from childhood until adulthood as a name serves as an important identity feature. Parents often name children from the experiences they had through their lives and this ends up affecting the children either positively or negatively as the Bapedi believe that a bad name can bring plenty of unpleasant experiences into a child's life (*lebitso le ya boreelong*).

# CHAPTER FOUR

## AN ANALYSIS OF INHERITED NAMES

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an analysis of inherited names among the people of Moletjie and the people of Sekhukhune. The chapter also concentrates on the meanings of these inherited names and reveals the similarities and dissimilarities pertaining to inherited names of both groups of the Northern Sotho people (that is, Moletjie and Sekhukhune communities).

Fox (2011:65) states that one of the strongest human passions is a passion for a name. That is, something which has a name lasts longer, is memorable and of great worth. In this regard, Moscovici and Duveen (2000, 45) state:

> To bestow a name on something or someone has a very special, almost solemn significance. In naming something we extricate it from a disturbing anonymity, to endow it with a genealogy and to include it in a complex of specific words, to locate it, in fact, in the identity matrix of our culture.

### 4.2 DEFINING INHERITED NAMES

According to Campbell and Campbell (1996), inherited names are related to family names. They explain that they are those names that are carried from one generation to another, and may be regarded as traditional names. They (1996) put emphasis on inheritance by explaining that a patronym is a name derived from the name of the father or another paternal ancestor and that a matronym is a name derived from the name of the mother or another maternal ancestor.

Thus, according to the above mentioned authors explanations, one understands that an inherited name is a name which is carried from one generation to the next, and that this name may derive from both families of the father and the mother.

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Campbell and Campbell (1996) further explain that a family name which is also known as a surname or last name is a name that is passed from one generation to the next. They say that in many cultures a woman adopts her husband's family name when they are married. They indicate that some centuries ago, in Europe, surnames began to be used as a tool to further distinguish people from one another. As some years passed and things began to change, eventually, these surnames got inherited as they were passed from parents to children. This means, it is not only the name which is inherited but also the surname.

The chapter will now discuss features that characterise inherited names prevalent among the people of Moletjie and Sekhukhune. In order to achieve this, the following aspects will receive attention:

- Ancestors.
- Inherited family names.
- Inherited names given to women when getting married.
- Totem names.
- Names from initiation school (*Koma*).
- The phrase: a child cries for a name (*ngwana o llela lebitso*).
- Inherited ceremonies.
- Overview of inherited name-givers.
- Overview of inherited name carriers.

## 4.3  ANCESTORS

According to Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2008), an ancestor is a person who one is related to, who lived a long time ago.

According to the people of Moletjie and Sekhukhune, ancestors are the living dead. By the living dead, they mean that they are the people who once lived and died because of certain circumstances. The reason why the people of Moletjie and Sekhukhune call them (ancestors) the living dead is because they believe that it is only the body which dies but the spirit of the person lives and therefore they can communicate with that person to ask many things of life as they become a guardian angel.

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Bapedi people perform their customs and their rituals aiming their faith at their ancestors, to whom they refer to their grand grandparents, their grandparents, their uncles and aunts, their children and some members of the family who passed away.


## 4.4    INHERITED FAMILY NAMES

Inherited family names are the names which are inherited from the ancestors of the two united families (the family of the father and of the mother).The researcher consulted a few families in Moletjie and Sekhukhune on this matter and discover the following inherited names:

Inherited family names from Moletjie


(1) Moloto's kingdom


a.   *Mmatshwene* (Mother of baboon)
b.   *Mmakgabo* (Mother of monkey)
c.   *Tšhwene* (Baboon)
d.   *Phuti* (Springbok)
e.   *Kwena* (Crocodile)
f.   *Kgabo* (Monkey)
g.   *Nare* (Bufallo)


(2) Koma's inherited family names


a.   *Lesetša* (Summer clouds)
b.   *Moloko* (Relative)
c.   *Raesibe*
d.   *Kwena* (Crocodile)
e.   *Malesela*
f.   *Malose*
g.   *Mokgadi* (One who disciplines people)

(3) Setati's inherited family names

a. *Mmaphuti* (Mother of springbok)

b. *Mmakgabo* (Mother of monkey)

c. *Mmanoko* (Mother of concubine)

d. *Kgabo* (Monkey)

e. *Kwena* (Crocodile)

f. *Nakedi* (Polecat)

g. *Malose*

Other inherited names which were discovered in Moletjie are listed as follows:

(4) a. *Tlou* (Elephant)

b. *Nakedi* (Polecat)

c. *Phoka* (Mist)

d. *Tšhwene* (Monkey)

e. *Pitsi* (Zebra)

f. *Kgwale* (Partridge)

g. *Nare* (Bufallo)

h. *Noko* (Porcupine)

i. *Hlong* (Hedge-hog)

j. *Serole* (Heifer)

k. *Moroka* (Rain caller)

l. *Mankwana* (Mother of lamb)

m. *Mahlodi* (Tears)

n. *Moraka* (A new place)

o. *Ratlou* (Male elephant)

p. *Motsomane* (Young hunter)

q. *Ngwato* (Springbok)

r. *Lesiba*

s. *Matome*

t. *Ntati*

u. *Ramaoka*

In Moletjie, most of the inherited names are of animals. However, there are other names which are not of animals. The secret behind this inheritance from animals is not clearly distinguished as some respondents explain that they found the naming practices in existence. What is evident is that there is no clear meaning to explain the inherited names unlike with given names such as Pula which means Rain. When the young respondents were asked what their inherited names meant, they instead gave the praises (poems) of the names.

Inherited Family names from Sekhukhune

(5) Phahlamohlaka's kingdom

a. *Mmoge*
b. *Manyebeana*
c. *Kadikwe*
d. *Mahlako*
e. *Lehwelere*

Some of the respondents in Phahlamohlaka's family were able to give praises to their names as evidenced below:

*Mmatemekwe*

The praise to the name: *Ke Mmatemekwe Mogotladi' a Phaahla.*

*Mamphekgo*

The name *Mamphekgo* is an inherited family name given to a male child who will be left in the family with the parents' wealth (heir). He is therefore called *mošala lapeng* in Northern Sotho.

The praise to the name: *Ke Mamphekgo ke Ledima lesela, ke Sephekgolela maphegwana ke tau ya Madibong.*

*Lekgala*

The praise to the name: *Ke Lekgala, ke Manthepeng la go bolla, Modipadi' a Kanyane.*

*Manthepeng*

The praise to the name: *Ke Manthepeng bana ba Mmatshego a Dipenta tša Mmangwato a Marumo.*

*Morufi*

*Morufi* is the name of the grandfather ancestor which is given to the bride by the in- laws. In future, if the son of the bride marries, his wife will then take the name from the mother in-law as her married name to be *Morufi*. The name will therefore be carried from that generation to the next.

*Phirime*

The praise to the name: *Ke Phirime o phirimetša Batlokwa ke Motlokwa morwa Mašego a Mogale ke ntho ya go tsoga ka moriti o selwa.*

The people of Sekhukhune do not have animal names as their personal names, instead, they have names which can only be explained by their praises. For one to understand their names, one has to listen to their family praises and totems. However, it is important to mention that the people of Sekhukhune do have animal names as part of their family totems.

## 4.5 INHERITED NAMES GIVEN TO WOMEN WHEN GETTING MARRIED

### 4.5.1 The process of inherited naming in Moletjie

In most African cultures, there are names which are given to women when they get married (Mphela, 2010). Due to this process of naming, it is a must for the Northern Sotho brides to receive their marital names from their in-laws. The names which they receive are the names of the ancestors of the groom (husband) and they would share such names with their first born. This means that the name which is given to a woman on the day of her wedding is the name of the father to her husband, and that she would then share the name with her first born if she gives birth to a male. Should the first born be a girl, the girl would share her name with the mother to her father (grandmother) as her mother would carry the name until she gives birth to a male child to share the grandfather's name with.

In Moletjie, it is only the old people who can call each other with their marital names. A young married woman will call an older married woman by the prefix *mma* which is followed by the woman's marital surname. For instance, *Mmankoana* if the woman is married to Nkoana's family.

The following names which are the names given to women on the day of their weddings were discovered in Moletjie:

(6) a. *Mmamalesela* (Mother of *Malesela*)

 b. *Mmaphuti* (Mother of Springbok)

 c. *Mmanoko* (Mother of Porcupine)

d. *Mmakwena* (Mother of Crocodile)

e. *Mmatlou* (Mother of Elephant)

f. *Mmanare* (Mother of Buffalo)

g. *Mmamoloko* (Mother of *Moloko*)

h. *Mmamadimetja* (Mother of *Madimetja*)

i. *Mmalesetja* (Mother of *Lesetša*)

j. *Mmalesiba* (Mother of Lesiba)

k. *Mmakgabo* (Mother of Monkey)

l. *Mmatshwene* (Mother of Baboon)

m. *Mmapitsi* (Mother of Zebra)

n. *Mmakgwale* (Mother of Partridge)

The above names of married women in (4.5.1) are those names which the woman receives on the day of their wedding, and they are the names which they will thereafter be called with when they are gathered with other woman at the societies, wedding meetings, funerals, and other community meetings.

## 4.5.2 **The process of inherited naming in Sekhukhune**

In Sekhukhune, all the children of a married woman should receive their ancestral names. However, they believe that the ancestors are not the same when it comes to this demand. It is believed that some ancestors take time to request what they want from their clan whereas others act fast.

In Sekhukhune, in *Phaahla-manoge*, a respondent who was a bride, a mother in-law and a grandmother explains that she did not give her children and her bride's children (grandchildren) their inherited names immediately after birth. The woman explains that she left her in-laws at an early age after the husband passed away as she was married as a

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second wife. The fact of leaving made her clueless on how the children should inherit the names. She explained that her former husband kept on visiting her in her dreams telling her to take the children home so that they can be given their inherited names. In this instance, the process which occurred is different from the process of name giving in Moletjie since in Moletjie children are given their inherited names immediately after childbirth if the mother knows how the process is done, and if not, the mother would consult the oldest relatives to take over.

The woman thus took all the children to their grandparents of the father to be given names. One of the respondent's brides had four children, three females and a male. The first two children were given the inherited names from their fathers' side while the other two were given their inherited names from their mothers' side. The first born who was a female was given her name by *rakgadi* (aunt) who is the big *kgadi* in the kingdom (the younger sister of the children's grandfather) which means that the first child inherited her name from the in-laws but not from the grandfather as in Moletjie, but from the younger sister of the grandfather.

The name *rakgadi* derives from the verb *kgala* which means to discipline someone. *Rakgadi* (aunt) is someone who the family always look forward to; if there is a ceremony in the family, she would be the one to be called to perform the rituals and explain to the ancestors what was happening or what was about to happen.

The second born who is only a male was given the name which it is believed is the name given to males who are to be left with the parents' wealth who they call *mošala lapeng-mojalefa* (heir) in Sepedi. This means that the second born just like the first born also inherited his name from the father's side unlike in Moletjie were the sequence changes from the groom's family to the bride's family and from the bride back to the groom.

The third and the fourth female children were then given their names from the mother's family.

The inherited marital names from Sekhukhune do not have the prefix *mma* like the inherited marital names from Moletjie. The names are just given to the bride as they are regardless of their masculinity or feminity.

What follows are some of the marital names discovered in Sekhukhune:

(6) a. *Morufi*

   b. *Modipadi*

   c. *Kanyane*

   d. *Lepasana*

   e. *Marapiana*

   f. *Seruwe*


## 4.6   TOTEM NAMES

Totem names can be referred to as praise names. They are what unite a certain group of people of a particular culture. A totem serves as a coat of arm to people of different cultural groups (Mbiti, 1969). The Northern Sotho people most of the time prefer calling each other with praise names from their totems.

Brochman (2012) explains that "in primal religions, a totem was regarded as a guardian spirit that inhabits certain animals and protects the tribe or clan". According to Bapedi, their inherited names do not have the exact meanings like English names or the Sepedi given names such as *Lehlogonolo* (Luck) where there are equivalents in other languages.

What follows are the totems of the Kingdom of Phahlamohlaka in Sekhukhune *Phaahla-manoge*:

Phahlamohlaka's kingdom (*babina-Tau*)

It is interesting to know and understand cultures of other people. The respondent in Sekhukhune tells us how they got their totem and how important it is to them. Their totem takes us back to some years ago where King Sekhukhune and his people were fighting for

their land during the apartheid regime. An animal that they came across first and ended up killing was a lion. They then realised that they have killed the strongest animal which might have killed them. For this achievement, they gave thanks to their ancestors. They then praised and called themselves *babina-tau* (those who swear by a lion) which became their totem. As they further explain, they believe that anybody, whose totem is a lion, comes from Sekhukhune and that person belongs to the kingdom or has a relationship with the *mošate* (kingdom) of Sekhukhune. This seems to be true, as in Moletjie there is no one whose totem is a lion.

Totems are not easily translatable, they are understood by their owners and the people who lived before them. When respondents were asked to tell what their totems meant, the only way they could describe them was through their praises. One would only understand their praises if one has been told the history of the people concerned.

Moletjie

Moloto's kingdom (*Bahlaloga  babina-kwena*)

Some of the residents of the kingdom of Moloto in Moletjie call themselves *Dikwena* (the crocodiles). Their praise is *Bahlaloga* from the word *hlaloganya* which means understanding.  During the interview when asked why they called themselves *bahlaloga*, *babina-kwena*, the respondents narrated that some centuries ago when their grandparents were migrating from where they were, they came across the biggest Magaliesburg River which made it hard for them to cross to the other side. Some people decided to try to cross the river on their own where they were followed by others who tried to cross the river with them. One of the groups as they explained, was not able to realise how deep the river was and decided to cross the river by walking next to the river. The process is called go *hlahla* in Northern Sotho (to see where the river flows to). After being able to cross the river, they then called and praised themselves as *ba ga-hlahla* (the followers) and even today there is the surname of *Hlahla*.

The other group wanted to go straight into the river in the belief that there is no harm in trying and this became their praise. They then called themselves *ba ga-Maleka* (those who try) from the word *leka* which means to try. When they praise themselves, they say re *ba ga maleka*, go *leka noka ga se go wela* which means we are those who try, to try the river is not to drown.

The totem of the crocodile (*kwena*) was derived when the group discovered a way of crossing the river with the bubbles which were in a form of a crocodile's back. They swore to the ancestors that they would keep the crocodile's name as their totem, that is, the Moloto families swear by a crocodile (*babina-kwena*).

The surname Moloto is derived from the clause *go lotola batho* because the chiefs believed that they had been chosen to take care of people.

What follows is the praises of *Kgoši Seshego Nare Kabela* Moloto who is one of the Moletjie kings who passed away some centuries back. His names give a clear understanding of where the Moloto surname comes from and what it means. The names are analysed as follows:

*Kgoši Seshego Nare Kabela* Moloto

*Kgoši* (king)

*Seshego* (*ke seshego sa mabele le batho*)

*Seshego* is a traditional silo (which is buried in the kraal) used to carry sorghum (*mabele*) to serve the people during the time of drought.

*Nare* (Buffalo)

*Nare* is an inherited name from the grandparents of the father. In this case, the mother of *Nare* is named *Mmanare* as her bridal name. This means *Nare* is the first male born of the bride and the groom.

*Kabela* (share)

*Kabela* is the name which the king received after graduating from an initiation school (*Koma*). The name means to share. This means he has to share the food which is in the *seshego* (silo) with his people. The praise to the name *Kabela* is ba abele baje ke ditšhiwana ga ba na bommagwe which means share with them so that they can eat, they are orphans, they do not have parents.

*Moloto* (*ke Moloto molotola batho*)

When one looks after others, it means *o a ba lotola* in Northern Sotho. You simply rescue them from hunger. The surname Moloto derives from the noun *lota* which means to lead or look after.

The Bapedi of Moletjie explain that when one is *Seshego*, people survive as they would not die of hunger because one would provide for them. As a king, one is expected to take the food which is in the *Seshego* (silo) and share it with one's people (*kabela*). As a result, one becomes a hero called Moloto. All this entails that one has saved people from starvation. The name Moloto, therefore, reminds leaders to be selfless, empathetic and compassionate. Leaders are expected to serve their people in good and bad times.

During the interview, one of the respondents who bears the surname Ngoetjana explains how this came up. He says their original surname was *Masemola* not *Ngoetjana*. He explains that some years ago when their people reached Moletjie it was hard for one to reveal his or her real identity since one was from another kingdom. The hosts would think that you were a spy sent to destroy their kingdom. The best choice to make was to join some of the crews they found as they were defeated by the Moletjie's kingdom and called themselves *Ngoetjana* (which is derived from the noun *ngwetši*). *Ngwetši* means a bride and *Ngoetšana* means a little bride. In other words this means that their people were adopted by the Moletjie's kingdom. However, they did not adopt the Moloto's surname. As they explain, some of them went to the north to join Setati. Those who joined Setati in Moletjie adopted the Setati totems and became *Barolong ba bina tshipi* (The *Barolong*

who swear by an iron) but remained with their lion totem from *Masemola* which is *Batau* from *Masemola* (those who swear by the lion).

Some members of the *Koma* family in Moletjie call themselves *Matebele ba bina tlou* (the Ndebele' who swear by the Elephant). As in this case, the respondent was a bride in the family, she had no idea of where the totem came from. As a wife, she just got married in the family and adopted the family totem without having any idea how it happened.

4.6.1 **The transmission of totems and praises**

The brides, as they explained, learned their totems and their praises from the other brides and the eldest people in the family through the word of mouth. There was no time to write anything down since most of the people during that time were illiterate and the only schools they had were initiation schools. The people were good listeners because they understood and memorised what their elderly people were saying. Unlike the current people, as one of the brides in Sekhukhune explained, most of today's brides do not even know what their family totems are and what they mean. As a result, she believes that as time goes on, their totems will die with them since modern-day people are too ignorant to ask and learn. She continued by saying that it was only a few of them (new brides) who tried to trace their ancestry by writing down their family totems and praises.

4.7    **NAMES FROM INITIATION SCHOOL (*KOMA*)**

The study has discovered that in some parts of Sekhukhune, there are no names which are given to persons at initiation schools. It is only the inherited name which is given to a child after birth which one praises when he or she is at the circumcision school. A child receives their inherited name after birth, thereafter they will go to the initiation school where they would be asked to tell who they are. In case the child is not able to render a family praise, he would be taught one.

It is the old people and traditional healers who are the instructors at the initiation school. Children will thereafter know how to praise themselves. The Northern Sotho people believe that children go to learn manhood and womanhood at the initiation school called

*Koma* (Mphela, 2010:44). Some modern parents read and underestimate *Koma* because they believe that it misleads the children but as for some of Bapedi people who once went to the school, they explain that *Koma* was the only school for them in the past before the missionaries came into South Africa.

4.7.1 **Circle of *Koma* names** (initiation school)

There are twelve names that are used to denote each year in which the initiation school is held. The circle of *Koma* in Moletjie means that, every year, the initiation school (*Koma*) will target specific children for attendance. For example, *Koma* in 2009 will not have the same name as *Koma* in 2010, 2011 and 2012. These names are in a sequence and after they have accommodated all the twelve names, they go back to number one and start again. For instance, if young males go to *Koma* in 2009, they will all be called *Matitša* and the ones who go to *Koma* of the following year will be called *Makeretla* until they reach the twelfth name. But this depends on the place to which the child goes. If a child goes to a mountain school in Matlala or in Sekhukhune, he or she will be called differently depending on the norms and values of that culture since people do things in different ways.

What follows is a circle of *Koma* names discovered in Moletjie:

(7) a. *Matitša*

   b. *Makeretla*

   c. *Mapulane*

   d. *Mabitsi*

   e. *Mahlwana*

   f. *Majanku*

   g. *Malau*

   h. *Mantsho*

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### 4.7.2 Given names from mountain school (*Koma*)

In Moletjie, back in the olden days, *Koma* was the only school children had to go to in order to learn their cultural aspects. As they explained, *Koma* in the past was just like any university children would go to. As at university, one has to work hard in order to achieve his or her degree whereas in mountain school, one had to work hard in order to achieve his or her graduation name. The name was very important because it served as a degree one would obtain from the mountain school. The names were given to boys as regards to their character and duties they showed and performed at the mountain. These names will however, be based on listening skills, hard work, cooperation and other duties.

**Males**

*Kabela* (share)

*Kabela* is the name which was given to one of the royal males of the Moletjie kingdom. It is the name he received after graduating from the mountain school. The name means 'to share' (*go abela*), as a young king, he had to go and share some food with his people in the village.

*Lekwakudu* (One who overheard)

*Lekwakudu* received his name after he overheard his father and the other man talking. He was then told that he overheard the news of the elderly people.

*Kekiši* (Imitator)

He received the name *Kekiši* because he was good in imitating other people.

*Modikana* (Initiator)

*Modikana* is the name given to the child who was born during the time when Koma (initiation) was in session. The elderly people then gave the child the name concerning that particular time.

*Phetodi* (Answer)

*Phetodi* received the name because he always had an answer to each question, whether it were right or wrong.


 *Phonyokgo* (Escaper)

*Phenyokgo* received the name because he always got away with the cruel thing he caused.


## 4.8    THE PHRASE: A CHILD CRIES FOR A NAME

The Northern Sotho people of both Moletjie and Sekhukhune agree on the issue of a child crying for a name. What is meant is that things may not be going well for the child as in these instances: the child is ill and does not get better in spite of the good treatment he receives; the child cries all night for no apparent reasons, he lacks appetite. All this indicates to the parents the need to consult a traditional doctor who in turn will inform them that the child "cries for a name". In most instances, the name cried for would be of an ancestor, and it is a traditional doctor who should help the parents to choose the right name for the child.

The respondent in this case was the wife to a traditional doctor in Sekhukhune. If a child cries for a name and parents do not do something about it, the circumstance may affect the child badly as the child might get more ill and the likelihood is that the illness might paralyse the child, depending on the ancestors of that clan. The Bapedi of Sekhukhune believe that the ancestors are not the same as some become more angry than others and others take time to act. A crucial point to note here is that, according to this respondent, the child may however not die but suffer as the ancestors do not claim one's life.

## 4.9    INHERITED CEREMONIES

Inherited ceremonies go hand in hand with inherited names where ancestors are invited to lead and bless the function. The process is performed according to the rules the participants were taught by their grandparents, their fathers and mothers (Mathews, 1894). This procedure is important to the people of Moletjie and Sekhukhune as children will be called or introduced to the ancestors with their inherited names (not their given names) when performing the rituals for the ceremony. It is the father's younger sister (*rakgadi*) who will be leading the ritual. If *rakgadi* is not available, the mother will then take the lead.

Before the day of the ceremony, be it a wedding ceremony or graduation ceremony, there would be home brewed beer which is called *bjala ba Sesotho* made for the ancestors so that they can bless the function.

### 4.9.1    The inherited beer making

Some month before the ceremony, the family which is about to hold the function, will go and inform the royal family about the ceremony and in turn the royal family will inform the community. Two weeks before the ceremony, women will gather in the family which is going to hold the ceremony for the Sesotho beer making. The women will then gather big traditional pots made of clay (*pitša*), and prepare the beer. The beer is made of water, maize meal and sorghum.

Owing to the ceremony, a cow is slaughtered and people will say in Sepedi *re hlabela badimo, go ja le rena* (we slaughter for the ancestors to come and eat with us). Before the people drink the beer, it must be the ancestors who drink first. When the cultural home brewed beer (*bjala bja Sesotho*) is ready, the family would wake up early in the morning before the sun rise, to talk to the ancestors.

### 4.9.2 **The ancestors' role**

If it is a name giving ceremony, the family and all the children who had to be named will gather so that the eldest family member introduces them to the ancestors and ask for forgiveness for not giving the children their inherited names on time due to unforeseen circumstances. This is known as go *phasa badimo* (telling the ancestors). In this case they use sego which is a traditional wooden dish to help them carry the home brewed beer. They gather in the court-yard called *lapa* in Sesotho, and the leader will do all the talking while using sego to pour the homebrewed beer and snuff known as *fola* or *motsoko* in Sesotho sa Leboa in the ground.

If it is a wedding ceremony, it will depend on whether the daughter who is about to be married is home or not. If so, then she will gather with the mother and the eldest relative to tell the ancestors about her being asked for marriage by the family of the groom. If she is not around, it will only be the eldest family members who talk to and tell the ancestors about the event. The same process with the home brewed beer and a snuff will be performed.

When the sun rises and the rituals have been performed, the neighbours and other people from the village will join the family for a celebration.

The process of talking to the ancestors will be repeated in other inherited ceremonies such as:

*Go boa mašemong* (to come back from the harvest)

This is the ceremony which is made after harvest time. The ceremony is called *reboile*, which means we came back. In this way, they inform the ancestors that they have come back home with the harvest and the ancestors should also in future help them bring back plenty of food and bless them with rain.

*Go tloša setšhila* (to remove the dirt)

This is a small ceremony which is performed after the family funeral. If it is the husband who has passed away, the family will then have to remove their hair to stay bald in respect of their beloved father and a husband. After removing their hair, they will have to show their pain by wearing black clothes. The wife is the only one who wears the black clothes from the head to her toes (which is called *go roula* in Sepedi) while children will only have to remove their hair. If it is the wife who has passed away, the husband will only wear a cloth on his shoulder to show that he is mourning.

After removing their hair, the family has to stay for a period of a year not doing anything to their hair until the next ceremony which is called *go apola* (meaning to undress). As for the wife, before she takes off the black mourning clothes, she is not allowed to go to strangers' homes. With this ceremony, there is no beer made.

*Go apolo* (to undress)

This is a big ceremony which is performed after a year since the husband or the wife has been buried. The ceremony precedes the one above of removing the hair. There will be homebrewed beer called *bjala bja go tloša meriri* (the beer to remove the hair). The Northern Sotho people believe that after the removal of the hair, there is a new start to everything and if one keeps the hair, the hair might bring bad luck.

To Bapedi people, after the husband has passed away, the wife is called *mohlologadi* (widow) and if it is the wife who has passed away, the husband is called *mohlolo* (widower).

*Mohlologadi* (Widow)

Morphologically, *Mohlologadi* is a compound noun consisting of the noun *mohlolo* (miracle) and the adjective *gadi* (big). When the husband dies, it is regarded as the biggest misfortune the community has ever experienced and since the woman was not

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working, the question is: who would take care of the family? In other words, the miracle was too great and hard to handle. That is why the widow is called *mohlologadi*. What all this entails is that the problem is insurmountable.

*Mohlolo* (**Widower**)

*Mohlolo* is a miracle (also see *Mohlologadi*). When a woman dies, to the community, it is a sad thing but since the man is traditionally the only breadwinner, the community believes that the family will still have the father to take care of it. To the community, the phenomenon of losing a mother is not as big as losing a father.

All the Bapedi of Moletjie and Sekhukhune perform the same process when they want to talk to their ancestors about anything, whether they want to introduce the newborn, asking for a fortune, asking for forgiveness, thanking them for the great achievements, asking for jobs, and other aspects of life. If it is a small family thing, the family will just slaughter a chicken for the ancestors, including the home brewed beer calling the ancestors to come and celebrate or eat with them.

As Lamanna and Riedmann (1991) present their views on society, they reveal the fact that people are influenced by the society around them. The authors tell that cultural beliefs and values influence our attitudes to life and the way we take our decisions. In addition, the authors highlight that it is the society or the structural condition which can limit us or expand our options.

## 4.10   CONCLUSION

The chapter has discussed the types and value of several inherited names. The most important names in this regard are those bestowed to people on account of ancestral demands, totems, marriage and initiation schools.

The chapter has shown that many respondents feel unfortunate since they are stuck with biblical names which they no longer want. They love and honour their ancestral names as they say they are their heritage.

# CHAPTER FIVE

# CONCLUSION

## 5.1    INTRODUCTION

Chapter five gives the conclusion of the study. In this instance, it gives the summary of each chapter concerning the findings and recommendations of the study.

## 5.2    SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

**Chapter One** gives an overall background of what is happening in the study, the aim, objectives, the methods which are used in gathering the information about the study, how the information is analysed and the impact which the study will have on the readers.

**Chapter Two** presents a summary of authoritative literature pertaining to the study.

**Chapter Three** examines the impact of given names in general and among the people of Moletjie and Sekhukhune in particular. It also discusses the meaning attached to these names.

**Chapter Four** analyses the importance of inherited names among the Northern Sotho speaking people of Moletjie and Sekhukhune and how they practice their name giving.

**Chapter Five** gives the conclusion of the study.

## 5.3    FINDINGS

The study presents the following findings:

- ❖ The people of Moletjie and Sekhukhune practise their name giving directly after child birth.

❖ People of both societies are found to have lost interest in biblical names and English names.

❖ People of Moletjie inherit their names after animals whereas in Sekhukhune they only inherit animal totems.

❖ The practice of marital names given to women of Moletjie is different from the one of Sekhukhune as in Moletjie the prefix *mma* is added to denote a mother whereas in Sekhukhune the name is just given as it is without distinguishing masculinity and feminity.

❖ The researcher discovered that people of Moletjie are more famous in nickname giving than the ones in Sekhukhune as most nicknames are found in Moletjie.

❖ Many children in Moletjie are not satisfied with the names which their parents gave them pertaining to the hard times as most children end up giving themselves new names.

❖ Most families in Sekhukhune share the same totem whereas those in Moletjie have different animal totems according to the history of where the family comes from.

## 5.4    RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher recommends that:

❖ Parents in both Moletjie and Sekhukhune should avoid giving children names with negative connotations.

❖ People in Moletjie and Sekhukhune should be careful when giving one another nicknames as some nicknames can humiliate, defame and destroy others emotionally.

❖ Some nicknames based on physical appearances are not good to be given to an individual because one does not choose how one should look like.

❖ Totems and praises should also be taught to children in order for them to know their history and their roots.

❖ It is crucial that people should always respect others regardless of their different religion, customs and beliefs.

❖ Name giving practice is an important phenomenon among human beings. That is, there should be further investigations on naming in general seeing that this study was confined to the people in Moletjie and Sekhukhune.

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