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**OUT WITH OLD, IN WITH THE NEW: NEGOTIATING IDENTITY IN RE-NAMING A XHOSA *UMTSHAKAZI***

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**Abstract**

*Umtshakazi* (singular) is a bride and *abatshakazi* (plural) are brides in isiXhosa language. The word is derived from the word ‘*tsha*’ which means new in isiXhosa. The word is popularly known as *Makoti* in other African languages, such as isiZulu. In short, a bride is a woman about to be married or newly married and thus a “new member” of the husband’s family. In a South African context, naming is not reserved for new-born children as there are circumstances whereby older people get new names. In Xhosa re-naming of *abatshakazi*, is a religious practice where name-givers bestow a name on a newlywed and then expect brides to live up to their newly acquired names. Like most things cultural, the brides have no choice but to accept the new name, embrace what the name entails and live up to the family’s expectations. Through the re-naming process the bride assumes a new identity which means taking the responsibility that comes with it. This article examines how such a process gives brides new roles to play; how brides make a conscious effort to live up to the name and how this changes their identity. This article is going to take a phenomenology stance. The phenomenology theory is a theoretical proposition which focuses on people’s perceptions of the world in which they live and what it means to them. It focuses on people’s lived experiences. This theory is essential in this article as the article focuses on the individual experiences of Xhosa *abatshakazi* in the naming process.

**Key Words:** gender, culture, names, identity, marriage

### Introduction

Re-naming marks a new stage and changes in the bride's life. It symbolizes being welcomed into the family. The re-naming of brides in Xhosa societies does not mean the old name vanishes. The new name is used in cultural ceremonies and within the community, however, the old name remains in all official documents. The use of the new name, therefore, is symbolic of the mutual respect between the bride and her in-laws. Xhosa people believe that addressing brides with their original names is a sign of disrespect to the bride and is suggestive of caller's illicit intentions on the bride. The avoidance of a bride's personal name is a common practice in African cultures. The re-naming ceremony, in which a goat is sacrificed, is used to introduce brides to the ancestral spirits by their new name. If a woman remarries, another new name will be given as she has moved to another family and those ancestors need to be notified that a new member has joined the family. The re-naming of a bride does not take place when a bride's husband passes on and his brother takes over (a practice known as *ukungena*). In most African communities, death does not constitute an end to a marriage. The paying of *ilobolo* and the slaughtering of the goat to accept the wife into the groom's family is an eternally binding bond between the surviving spouse and their in-laws'. When a husband dies, his brother has to take over all the responsibilities of a husband, taking care of his late brother's wives and children. *Ukungena* is when the man moves into his late brother's or cousin's house and becomes the husband to the widow(s). Radcliffe-Brown (1950, p. 183) argued that, when the husband dies and an approved relative of his lives with the widow and the children, he begets more children for the dead man. The pro-husband does not pay *ilobolo*.

In African societies marriage for a bride is a lifetime commitment. When a woman marries, she is considered a part of her husband's family until the day she dies. This name reflects the name-giver's wishes for the name-bearer. In the Xhosa re-naming of *abatshakazi*, name-givers also expect brides to behave according to their newly acquired names. In many African societies when a family member bestows a name, the name reflects the events occurring during the birth of the child or soon after the child is born; this also happens when the bride arrives in the family. The older women have the cultural duty of re-naming the bride after considering the state of affairs within the homestead and the present situation. Additionally, they express their expectations of the *umtshakazi*, and the role they have to play as culture prescribes, through the name given.

IsiXhosa is one of the official languages that are indigenous to South Africa. It belongs to the family of isiZulu, Siswati, Ndebele known as Nguni languages. The re-naming of brides in the Xhosa-speaking communities is a demonstration of appreciation and acceptance of the new brides into husband's family, however, in some rare instances Xhosa bride names can be used to reflect conflict within the family. Name-givers expect brides to live up to their newly acquired names. For instance, when the groom's grandmother gave the name **Nosakhele (build for us)**, she expected the new bride to look after the family, help the family to grow and be a good example to other brides within the extended family.

This research was conducted in selected villages around the rural town of Bizana in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. IsiXhosa is the standard language spoken in Bizana which has a number of dialects that fall under it, such as isiMpondo, isiMpondomise, isiHlubi, isiThembu among others. The researchers used random sampling in the data collection process. Certain villages were chosen owing to their proximity to the town, additionally it was wise to consider such villages owing to the need to engage with the stay at home brides who agreed to participate in this research. Bestowal of names and re-naming of grown people is at the centre of

Indigenous Knowledge Systems and African Traditional Religion which dictates that the new bride be introduced to the ancestors using the new name.

In this area the re-naming of the brides is still a common practice. The new name is referred to as *igama lasemzini* (name of the marital homestead) and the original name is known as *igama lasekhaya* (name of the bride's maiden home). When a bride arrives at her in-laws' home for the first time the relatives, especially older women, would be in the traditional house to meet her and give the bride her new name, the rules of her new home and teach her how to behave like a proper Xhosa bride. The re-naming of Xhosa brides has not been affected by cultural evolution, modernity and changes which come with time. It is in this view that this article seeks to examine the re-naming of Xhosa brides, how it affects their identity and how they assume their new roles in the new family. The researchers are fascinated by the fact that people still receive new names when they get married despite the social, cultural and political changes in their lives today. Similarly, the independence of women and their movement away from the African culture as well as the emphasis placed on women's emancipation from the shackles of patriarchal norms.

In the Nguni group (isiZulu, isiXhosa, siSwati, isiNdebele) names are sometimes used to release pentup emotions so as to avoid angering the ancestors. This is at the centre of African Traditional Religion (Zungu, 2014). Names can also be used to diffuse the conflict within polygynous marriages. Names can be used to reflect the social dynamics and specific behaviour-patterns in societies where they are found (Zungu, 2019). AmaXhosa names can be used to reflect social expectations and social identity (Cekiso and Meyiwa, 2014). A common name given to amaXhosa children is a name reflecting a good or positive human quality or attributes that parents hope that their children will one day exhibit this particular character trait (Neethling, 2004).

### Theoretical Framework

This article is going to take a phenomenological stance. The phenomenology theory is a theoretical proposition which focuses on people's perceptions of the world in which they live and what it means to them. It focuses on people's lived experience. This theory is essential in this article because it also focuses on the individual experiences of Xhosa *abatshakazi* in the naming process. Heidegger (2003, p. 51) said that:

phenomenology conceptualises the word and what it signifies to the interpreter. Likewise, the researchers' interest lies in the manner in which the re-naming of brides practice is conceptualised and interpreted to fit in with the practitioners' identity, as well as what it signifies to those engaged in it, either as givers or receivers of new names.

Phenomenology is a qualitative method because it focuses on human experience in its own right. This article is about the experiences of brides who marry Xhosa speaking men and how this practice affects them. The Xhosa re-naming practice is a cultural and religious practice. The newly-married bride is given a name as a sign of respect, so that the in-laws would not use her personal name. In most African countries, culture prescribes that the bride be not addressed by her personal name, for instance, in the Zulu culture a new bride is addressed by her surname e.g., **MaMtshali** (daughter of Mtshali) or by their first child's name e.g., **MakaSipho** (Sipho's mother) or **Makoti kaBongani** (Bongani's bride), and not by her personal name (*igama lasekhaya*). Koopman (1986, p.18) said:

Avoidance of personal names is still very much the case among Zulus today. Although most of my research was conducted in an urban area (subject, one

would have thought, to more change in custom), the vast majority of husbands and wives did not use each other's personal names. Those few who did were invariably the much younger and very well-educated people, and even these only used personal names until the birth of their first child; thereafter using the terms 'mother of ' and 'father of '. Older people, asked if they addressed their spouses by their personal names, were surprised. The most common response was 'How could that be possible, that my wife (husband) address me by my personal name?'

Similar to what Koopman is saying, Xhosa in-laws have to avoid the use of personal names when addressing *abatshakazi* who marry into the family. Phenomenology identifies factors behind the Xhosa renaming of brides and compares them to other naming practices for religious and cultural practices, such as the naming of children in African societies and the changing of names during baptism.

### **Research Methodology**

The authors have drawn from the method proposed by Agnew and Pyke (1989). They suggest that the participant observers are researchers who are directly involved in the socio-cultural life and activities of the group or community within which the investigation is undertaken. While social activities are happening and researchers take part, the researchers gain first-hand experience of participating. Simultaneously, the researchers strive in their observation to be as objective as possible. They suggest that, "the researchers try not to make value judgements like 'good' or 'bad', 'right' or 'wrong', 'beautiful' or 'ugly'" (1989, p. 49). They also warn the researcher against having misleading opinions, beliefs or attitudes about that particular community. They further say that the ethnographer must participate overtly in people's daily lives, for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions, collecting whatever data is available to throw light on the issues with which he or she is concerned. There are different views presented by different scholars on the method of participant observation. The view proposed by Hammersley and Atkinson (1983:97-98) is also supported by Lewis (1976, pp. 24-26). According to Lewis, the participant observers must immerse themselves in the community, and must know their language. Dziva (1997, p. 224) is concerned about the depth of intrusion that researchers make in communities they are investigating. He is also concerned about keeping a critical distance and acting together with the communities in all that they do. Lewis (1976, p. 24) advised that researchers must follow what is going on around them and must record with accuracy and subtlety. The recording must not disturb the flow and volunteering of information. Some authorities say a researcher should immerse him or herself in the community they are investigating. One of the authors is a resident of the area where the research was conducted and speaks and understands the dialects spoken in the area. This made it easier to get the information required for the purposes of this research.

### **Marriage, re-Naming and Identity**

The re-naming of Xhosa brides can influence their identity and individuality. This stresses that a personal name has a strong effect in people's lives as it connects people to their roots and identity. Brides in the Xhosa-speaking communities also feel that they have their identity when they get new names. They are expected to live two lives, a given personal name and bridal name; to satisfy both their own parents and the new family.

Identity and naming are intertwined concepts. Names are given to connect the name-bearer with their sense of belonging. Pfukwa (2007, p. 42) pointed out that "naming oneself can be viewed as an act of self-perception, self-concept

or self-praise". This demonstrates how people perceive themselves within a group.

According to Pfukwa (2007),

Naming and re-naming become an act of claiming and rewriting an identity. To name the self is a declaration of independence from wider society control and it is a choice in identity. Whether society accepts this self-chosen identity is quite another matter (p. 121).

This emphasises that names give a sense of belonging and a sense of pride. Names in the following categories reflect certain expectations the family have on the newly-married bride, some names reflect the way in which the family looks at life. In almost all African societies, marriage is a sacred rite of passage that involves the whole community. The paying of *ilobolo* is the most important part of the marriage negotiating process, as it involves two families and the living-dead. *Ilobolo* used to be a sign of appreciation from the husband's part. He was thanking his parents-in-law for bringing up and looking after his new bride-to-be. Most of the misconceptions about *ilobolo* come from the Western socialisation which translates it as the 'bride price'. This leads to many thinking that African women have a price tag attached to them. However, traditionally paying *ilobolo* has nothing to do with buying a wife. Gelfand (1968, p. 41) said that, "The payment is a token that the husband acknowledges the benefits he is receiving. It is also a compensation for her father for the loss of his daughter, who has gone with her husband, leaving her own kin to join his." Marriage is not just a wedding ceremony; it is a multifaceted relationship of persons with common goals, that forms a bond between the living and the dead. For Mbiti (1969),

Marriage then, is a religious responsibility for everyone. It forms the focal point where departed, present and coming members of society meet. It is the point of hope and expectation for the unmarried and their relatives; once it has been reached and procreation takes place (p. 144).

In a similar vein, (Ngidi 2012, p. 39) says this about the Zulu people of KwaZulu-Natal:

When a woman gets married, she marries the whole clan. From *ukukhonga* (lobola negotiations) to *umgcagco* (the wedding), things are done for the whole family and not solely for the couple. Hence, you would hear the groom saying 'ngivusa umuzi kababa' (I am rebuilding my father's household), or 'ngifuna umuntu ozophekela umama' (I want someone who will cook for my mother). The slaughtering of the goat to report the arrival of the bride is a sign that she is part of the family from then onwards.

Ngidi (2012) emphasises the importance of marriage for African women and she further mentions that in most African societies people who fail to secure a partner to marry them are given nicknames, as in the name *Zendazamshiya* (everybody is getting married and you are left behind), *Mjendevu* (an old maid) or *Mpohlo* (an unmarried man). The husband and his family transfer goods or money to the wife's family, but the words used are quite distinct from buying and selling. The transaction does not give the husband unlimited rights over his wife, she may claim divorce for ill-treatment. In many African communities, women are very independent. In terms of a traditionalist view in an African context when a woman marries, it is a permanent bond between her and her husband's family. In Africa there are both levirate and sororate marriage practices after the death of a spouse. They are valued and are perceived to be important in continuing the family line in the case of levirate marriage and continuing family ties with the in-law in the case of sororate marriages.

### Discussion

This research, it is hoped, will contribute to improved understanding of name-giving in the context within which names are found. Stewart (1994) perceives names as, “a link to all the ancestors who came before you and all the progeny who will follow”. The value of this research is that, in using previous research on Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Onomastics as a point of departure, the researcher will dwell on the language used in name-giving and show how this is embedded in the religious practices of the Xhosa people. Names are divided into different categories which reflect family’s expectations of the bride and the way they are viewed by the family. The brides are expected to fully embrace the husband’s family and take them as her own family. Name-givers bestow names to brides to show that they are welcome and are part of the family they married into. For instance, the name **Nontsapho** (Mother of families) was given by the groom’s aunt in the family to demonstrate that the bride is expected to take care not only of her immediate family but extended family as well. The aunt wanted the bride to take care of entire family because the elders of the family had passed on. Similarly, the name **Nowethu** (She is ours) was bestowed to a bride who got married to a relative. **Nowethu** got the name from her aunt (**dadobawo**), because they believed that she belonged to the family by marriage as well as by blood. **In another instance** the name **Nowam** (She is mine) was given to the bride by her husband to claim her as his own. The name-giver bestowed the name **Nowam** because he was happy with his decision of marrying this particular woman, knew that marriage in African societies must be a decision from a family not an individual.

Names sometimes suggest that the brides will build better homes for their new families. In African societies girls are encouraged to work hard and do household chores from an early age. A new bride is expected to build in the husband’s home. In homesteads where there are many brides, there will be many huts with thatched-rooves. The home the married couple build belongs to their parents and ancestors. For instance, the name, **Nokwakha** (Mother who build), was given to the bride by her mother-in-law who was hoping that she would build a better home for the family. **Nosakhele** (build for us) demonstrates that the name was given to an educated bride and her in-laws expected her to build a home for them. When a person marries an educated person, they anticipate improvements in their lives. The name **Nosakhumzi** (we are building homestead) was given to the bride by her husband’s grandmother because her grandson was not willing to take a wife. In some traditional societies arranged marriages are still prevalent, the parents organise a suitable bride to marry their son when he doesn’t seem keen in taking *umtshakazi* (bride).

It is always assumed that bride(s) will bring unity in the family. In African societies, unity is everyone’s desire, especially within the homestead as members of the same clan have to support each other and work together when there are cultural ceremonies such as weddings, funerals and *intonjane* (a coming-of-age ceremony). The brides are expected to be part and parcel of these rituals which take place within the clan. Brides are expected to be calm and peaceful at all times no matter what the circumstances. They cannot voice their anger within the homestead as that might anger the ancestors. When conflicts arise in the homestead, elderly people are called to solve the matter so they will be peace. Fighting and confrontation may garner the ancestors’ wrath. The name **Simanye** (unite us), was given by a mother-in-law who wanted a joint family, in response to modern *umtshakazi* tendencies of wanting to have their own lives outside the homestead. She was expecting her daughter-in-law to live her name. **Zusakhe** (guide us and give us right directions) was a reflection of the fact that the name-giver wanted *umtshakazi* to feel comfortable and give constructive criticism on the matters concerning the whole family. As a new member of the family, they wanted her to feel at home and to express her feelings where necessary.

In some families within African societies brides are scrutinised and judged because of the way they look. A bride may or may not be favoured because of their appearance. For instance, the name **Nomalawu** (mother of coloureds) was given by the groom's aunt in the family. The bride is light-skinned and it is believed that the grandchildren will be as light-skinned as their mother. African people usually associate white people with wealth and education. If a person is rich you would hear them saying, "*Yhuyu hayi kulosibanibani ngabelungu ndikuxelele*". The name **Nobelungu** (mother of the White people) was given by a mother-in-law, who was excited that her son was marrying an educated woman. She was going to bring a better life to the whole family. The name **Nomakula** – which is a variation of this name is **Nomandiya** (mother of the Indian people) was given to a bride because she has a dark beautiful skin. Xhosa musician Ringo Madlingozi, in his song *uDolly*, mentions that Dolly was beautiful like an Indian, "*isimomondiya*". *Isimomondiya* is a beautiful person in the Xhosa language. The grandmother who gave the name **Nobahle** (beauty) to the bride was happy that her grandchild married a beautiful wife. It must be borne in mind that beauty is not only physical but a person who is good-hearted is also seen as a beautiful.

In African culture the new bride joins the existing family and lives within the same homestead as the in-laws. African societies believe in sustained relationship and continuous contact with the extended family. Nowadays, most women prefer to live with their nuclear families and not with the extended family, but the family expect her to live within the homestead and bear children. Either way the bride is perceived as an addition to the family that will bear children which will carry down the family name.

In the name **Nokwandisa** (mother who increases) the name-giver wanted the bride to bear a lot of children as they are important in carrying out the family name. The name **Nozandile** (the girls have increased) was given to a bride who got married to the family where there was only one girl among nine boys. The name-giver bestowed the name as she believed that the bride has added to the number of girls as now there were two girls.

The arrival of a new person in the family usually brings joy. Some names reflect that the arrival of the bride has brought happiness in the family. The name-giver bestowed the name **Nofika** (taken from a verb 'fika' which means to arrive) because she knew that, if someone is new in a place, she must be treated with dignity. She wanted the bride to feel welcome, expected members of the family to be patient with her (bride) and teach her. The name **Nokhona** (the girl is here) was given to a bride because there were no girls in the husband's family. The mother-in-law gave the bride this name because the bride was now her only daughter. The name-giver who gave the bride the name of **Novuyisile** (made them happy) was referring to his son who made the family happy by bringing the bride home after the son was gone for years without sending money. They were happy that he did not come home empty-handed. In contrast, it is common nowadays that when a new bride joins the family, conflicts arise between her and her in-laws. The name-giver of the name **Siyolise** (please us) expected her son to marry the bride she preferred.

Finding a suitable wife and getting married is a long process which has never been easy in most African societies, from courtship to the negotiation and paying *lobolo*. However, getting married is viewed by society, as an important milestone and a great achievement. Like any other African names, bride names may reflect the number of brides in the family. A man may take as many wives as he can afford to, the more-the-merrier.

The name-giver can express gratitude to her son for taking a wife. By believing **Noncedile** (you helped us) would be an asset and be helpful to the family. The name **Nofezile** (you have accomplished something) is directed to the son because his mother was happy about his

achievement of providing a wife to the family. She felt that he had completely fulfilled his role of getting a wife who will bear children who will carry the family name. The name **Nozamile** (They have tried) was given by the bride's husband. He was expressing the fact that he had struggled to come with the money to pay *lobola*.

In most African societies, brides are expected to have good health and bear a lot of children to carry down the family name. This demonstrates that the presence of the bride as beneficial to the whole family. Canonici (1995, p.141) said this of the Zulu people:

The birth of a child is traditionally considered an event of tremendous importance in a Zulu family. The child is the visible sign of the ancestors' blessing. If it is the firstborn, it sanctions the acceptance of the mother into her husband's clan with all the concomitant privileges; it further renders the father acceptable in the council of elders. The child contains the promise of a continuation of the clan's life and the assurance that the father will one day be counted among the ancestors. A new baby is therefore a great treasure to be carefully guarded and nurtured.

*Ukuphila* is being alive, it also means a person has a good heart, they say *uyaphila* (is kind). The name-giver wanted her daughter-in-law to be kind to people which in turn will make them feel welcome thus she bestowed the name **Nophilile** (she is kind). In Xhosa societies it is important to show respect to one's elders. Name-givers expected their daughter-in-law (so-named) **Nombeko** (mother of respect) to have respect for the whole clan. In African societies, there is a proverb which says *umntu ngumntu ngabantu* (a person is because of other people) which literally means that one does not exist in isolation but belongs to a group. This bride has to be kind to other people and as such she was given the name **Nobubele** (grace). Xhosa society believes that when a person visits another's house, he/she must be offered something to eat, or to drink. The husband gave his wife this name because he solely relied on **Nothembele** (we rely on her) as she was the only immediate family member he had. The name **Nothembile** (we have trust) was given by the husband's aunt, to the bride. The aunt believed that the bride was good for the family. They have believed in her that she will not disappoint them. The name **Nokhwezi** (Morning star) was given to a bride because the mother-in-law expected that everything will change in the family because there is an additional member of the family. *Ikhwezi* (Morning star) is a sign that the darkness is fading and the sun will shine. It brings light and hope to people.

Names can be used to reflect disapproval. African families would like to see their son marry someone they approve of, if he marries any other woman it is regarded as a sign of disobedience and disrespect. Elders seem to believe they know what is best for their children. For the bride who was given the name **Nozenzile** (you did this to yourself) the name was a prediction that the newly married bride would do something bad to her husband and the husband would be on his own. The family vowed that they would not intervene should they have problems in future. This was about the fact that the family did not approve of the marriage between their son and this bride. The name **Nozenzile** was given by the grandmother of the groom, telling her grandchild to be prepared for the ramifications which may come with his decision to marry this bride. Along the same vein names can be used to reflect conflict within the homestead. In African naming societies, this can be directed to any family member. Ngidi (2012, p.109) said:

African names are a purpose of letting people who are not part of the clan know of the situation taking place within the family and the community at large. These names give people an opportunity to vent their anger, voice their dissatisfaction as in the names **Zibeleni** (why are you ignoring me?);

disappointment as in **Bajabhile** (they are disappointed); discontentment with the world, as in naming the child **Zwelinjani** (what kind of the world do we live in?); and suspicions about people practicing witchcraft by giving a child the name **Bhekumuthi** (watching the use of muthi).

The bride got the name **Nohluphekile** (mother of suffering) from her mother-in-law. She did not like the name at all but was scared to tell her mother-in-law. Questioning older people is a sign of disrespect, and an insult to the ancestors. Machaba (2005) says “by denying a name given to her, a child is not just denying the name but disgracing the person who gave the name”. The mother-in-law was not happy with this person her son was marrying. They had fights before, when the bride was not yet married and she knew her behaviour and the mother-in-law never liked her. The name-giver thought that the family will suffer and fall apart because of this new bride. She added “*Ndandingamthandi tu la mtshakazi mntana ndazibona igqwirha nje elaliza kuphethuphethula umzi wam*” (I did not like her at all, I hated her; I thought she was an evil that would destroy this family). In contrast a mother-in-law believed that even though misunderstandings with the family might arise the bride will bring harmony and as such gave the bride the name **Zusakhe** (please show us the right way).

Xhosa people believe in the spirit of the living-dead as well as in God, thus when good things happen in the family, they believe God and ancestors have answered their prayers. The ancestors are mediators between God and the living family members. The name **Liyabona** (His eye sees) was given to a bride by the grandmother of her husband. The name-giver believed that His (God’s) eyes see what is good for the family. This name also means God has finally answered their prayers, since they have been longing to have a daughter-in-law. The name **Siyonela** (we are satisfied) makes reference to the ancestors as they are always providing for the family’s needs: they fulfil their dreams. Additionally, the name denotes that they are happy with the person who is joining the family and that she must feel at home. The name **Bubukho** (His presence) was given to a bride and refers to the wonderful deeds of God. The name-giver gave this name because she believes that, it should be borne in mind that marriage is seen as a gift from God.

In rural areas when people get sick and die of unexplainable ailments there are always suspicions of practice of witchcraft. This is frowned upon within the society, the suspect is shunned from the society and at times they get killed and their homes looted. Ngidi (2012, p. 75) said this about the Zulu context:

There are names that show that people within the polygamous family suspect each other of practicing witchcraft. This usually comes after family members have become sick. The following are the most common diseases that people associate with the acts of witchcraft and examples of names given to suggest each disease family members might have.

The name **Nobuthi** (she has poison) was given to *umtshakazi* by her husband. The name-giver was of the opinion that his mother bewitched his wife when they were still courting because she didn’t like her. As such the husband did not want his mother to name his bride as there were allegations that she was a witch. In this case the name was directed to the mother-in-law and not the bride. In a separate instance the name-giver (*Umamazala*) bestowed a name to mock her co-wives whom she believed were bewitching her, by giving the name **Nobathakathi** (Mother of witches). She told the researcher, she had only one child (**Nobathakathi’s husband**) her other children died at birth and others soon thereafter. Similarly, a name-giver had issues with her co-wives and as a result gave the name **Nojongisisa** (Be careful). This was

a warning to her immediate family that they must be alert about the fights within the family. Her children were not allowed to eat at other houses as she thought they might be poisoned.

In traditional Xhosa societies brides are expected to fulfil the traditional role of a married woman, to be hard working people by working in the fields, making mud huts with thatched roofs and doing the cooking and cleaning. Brides are expected to be kind and easily approachable, hence one may find names like: **Nobubele** (mother of grace), **Nolungile** (mother of righteousness). The family expects brides to love and respect the family, neighbours and the community at large.

### Conclusion

In Xhosa cultures it is evident that naming affects individual identity and behaviours. One is expected to live up to his/her name. During the interviews, people showed a strong connection between the name-bearer and her personal name (*igama lasekhaya*). Re-naming of *abatshakazi* influences their identity as some of them mentioned during interviews, they can't forget where they come from, but they have to adapt to their new life as members of the husband's family. Newly married brides in the Xhosa societies believe that re-naming changes their individuality, they have to try please their new family. They have to behave according to their new names to meet the expectations of the name-givers. New brides are expected to neutralise the situation within the family. They are expected to bring peace where there is chaos and give love and respect to everybody within the family. They have to be beautiful people inside and out. They have to bear children that will carry down the family name. These expectations must be met at all costs. This puts unnecessary pressure on the women.

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