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The Purpose and Meaning of Renamed Soccer Stadiums in the Province of Kwazulu-Natal

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Abstract- This article investigates the naming of professional soccer grounds in South Africa as they are globally known by football lovers. Naming is a phenomenon or a universal tradition. It occurs when a new person is born into a family or when a place is given name. This paper uses a qualitative research approach to collect data. The theoretical framework underlying this study combines hermeneutics and transformation theory. The names of the football stadiums were obtained through interviews with soccer fans, soccer legends, and the internet. The naming of soccer grounds reveals the radical transformation in South Africa, as well as aspects of liberation, history and cultural preservation.

I. Introduction

The practice of naming and the changing names is a significant and sensitive issue, especially in countries that have endured historical oppression, like South Africa. The naming of public spaces, landmarks, and structures holds particular importance in the political arena. It can show power dynamics and clearly indicate who is in charge. This was evident in the United States when African Americans pushed to rename landmarks after Martin Luther King Jr. The failure of their efforts made it apparent who exercised power and authority in the United States of America.

After South Africa attained democracy in 1994, people anticipated significant changes indicating their liberation. Manifesting these changes, the post-1994 South African government, along with the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture, committed to revising colonial legacies and altering names. Changing names of public spaces and landmarks is very important to Black African communities and other groups, as it reflects their history and values.

Therefore, it is important to examine the objectives and meanings behind the names we use in our daily lives. According to Suzman (1994:254), many countries acknowledge the significance of naming as a vital symbol of identity, and this issue is particularly delicate in African countries. Therefore, Mhlongo (2017: 02) asserts that the culture of naming reflects the current state of affairs in a family, community, and a country when the name is given. This suggests that a name can reveal important information about the community, family, or individual to whom it is given. Hence, naming is a significant tradition in KwaZulu and should be conducted carefully (Moyo 1996; Ngubane 2002; Hadebe 2002; Neethling 2007).

Naming plays a crucial role in all communities by reinforcing power, beliefs, and values within that community. In the past, it was a discriminatory practice where positive things were named in a language that honoured white people exclusively. This includes various types of public infrastructure, such as hospitals, buildings, landmarks, and schools. The naming of football stadiums is an area that has been extensively studied in Africa. Therefore, under our democratic government, we need to understand whether the names of soccer fields in South Africa truly reflect the country's liberation and the government's power dynamics, or if they simple continue colonial practices.

II. Literature Review

It is important to note that there has been minimal research on the naming of soccer stadiums in Africa. The study of names (Onomastics) is discussed by Msomi (2019:283) as a study focusing on the creation and the history of names. This study investigates the objectives and meaning of names bestowed on soccer fields in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Neethling (2018:83) states that South Africa has various sports, including football, rugby, and cricket. He further notes that all these sports are played in stadiums with names. The significance of the location where the stadium is situated and the team representing that area play a crucial role in the naming of stadiums, especially in the political contexts (Neethling, 2018:83).

The naming of soccer fields is not unique to South Africa; it occurs in countries around the world. In England, for example, all stadiums are commonly referred to by their names, such as Wembley Stadium, which hosts significant England national team games and music concerts. Moshood Abiola National Stadium in Abuja, Nigeria, is the home turf of the Nigerian football team. These football stadiums are important and mean a lot to football fans. That is why Greeff (2018) suggests that when stadiums are appropriated for football matches, consideration should be given to ensuring that fans appreciate their localities, especially where their teams are based. Therefore, the names of places where teams are located should ideally be reflected in the names of the stadiums, and these football stadiums should hold significant meaning for them. (Greeff, 2018).

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According to Guyot and Seethal (2007:56), renaming places or landmarks is a contentious issue, especially in countries with a history of government oppression, as it often reflects deeper social and political conflicts. After the oppression, renaming requires careful consideration as it can signify two things: it can erase reminders of past oppression or convey a message to those overpowered through elections.

During the apartheid era, significant roads, buildings, bridges, and schools were often named after white individuals, reflecting the dominance of the white minority in the government. For example, the town Port Shepstone was named after Theophilus Shepstone, a government official, and West Street in Durban's CBD was named after Martin West, a governor of Natal. This practice suggests that the naming of essential places was closely linked to political and power dynamics.

When there is a change in government, some people may feel hopeful, while others might experience despair and frustration. When the ANC government came into power in 1994, people were eager to see changes such as shifts in power dynamics, the renaming of places, and the reallocation of spaces that had been reserved for whites only. Much of what was accepted in the past remains unchanged even now. Many Black people in South Africa anticipated changes with the new government. When these changes were not achieved, some people and political parties began demanding changes in government and amendments to the constitution.

This trend has been observed at many South African universities, where students have demanded the removal of structures or symbols associated with colonialism, including those of Cecil Rhodes, the English mining magnate and politician in South Africa. This suggest tha significant efforts are being made to bring about transformation in South Africa, but the government needs to do more.

III. Theoretical Framework

Mabuza (2008:32) explains theory as a mirror reflecting clear thoughts in the mind when one thinks. Ndimande (2001:19) emphasizes the importance of the theory in naming, stating that:

> The naming process requires the ability to correspond with truths as reflected in the naming process, just as it aligns with the levels of language. People who use names should know their history. It should reflect the relationship between the naming process and how people live, their religion, culture, and the nature of things. The definition of a name should distinguish between personal names and names of things.

This study utilizes two research theories- hermeneutics and transformation theory- in the context of South Africa's transitional phase. Ndimande-Hlongwa and Dlamini (2015:190) explain that hermeneutics, derived from Hermes, the son of Zeus. Hermes, a figure of great importance to the Greeks, served not only as the messenger of the gods but also as the sole transmitter of divine instructions. This hermeneutics approach is crucial to our investigation into the purpose and meaning of soccer stadiums in KwaZulu-Natal.

The second theory that aids in interpreting the research findings is the transformation theory. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (2000) defines the term transformation as follows:

> "Transformation is the process or an occurrence of change; the condition of being transformed; a significant alteration, typically resulting in an improvement, in appearance or character."

Nkosi (2014:303) asserts that transformation, which brings positive changes to people, tends to inspire hope, especially among those who have been historically marginalized. With the shift in government in 1994, many South Africans anticipated positive transformations. Therefore, the transformation theory is crucial in this study as it will show how the naming of the soccer fields in KwaZulu-Natal corresponds with transformations the government seeks to achieve.

IV. Research Methodology

This paper employs qualitative research methods to gather information. According to Ndimande-Hlongwa (2015:192), qualitative research involves collecting data, perspectices, actions, and people's voices about the topic. This approach is used here to examine the objectives and meanings associated with the naming of football stadiums. Data was collected through interviews and literature analysis.

Data was gathered using a non-probability sampling method, specifically purposive sampling. Collins et al. (2000) explain that non-probability sampling includes various approaches such as judgemental, snowball, convenience, and purposive sampling, with the latter being used in this study. Mustaffa, Yacob, Mustapha, Ringgit, and Abdullah (2013), they define purposive sampling as follows:

> Purposive sampling is a non-probability method where researchers deliberately choose specific elements or subjects with crucial characteristics relevant to the study. This method creates a non-representative subset of a larger population, tailored to meet a specific research need or objective, Typically focusing on a particular group of individuals.

Ndimande-Hlongwa and Dlamini (2015:192) explain that purposive sampling involves selecting a specific portion of people, focusing on that small segment rather than the larger population. In this paper, the researchers delibarately chose this method because not everyone in KwaZulu-Natal is familiar with the naming practices and meanings associated with names, mainly sports names. This paper utilizes interviews and

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literature review as data collection methods. Engaging with individuals to gather information through various suitable avenues is one of the effective ways of obtaining the desired insights the researcher seeks.

a) Data Presentation

In this section, we present the data gathered during the research process. The obtained data is categorized based on the naming method used by the relevant stakeholders. The findings indicate that the names of football fields in KwaZulu-Natal are derived from various sources, including politics, the KwaZulu royal family, past soccer legends, and geographical place names.

b) The Names of Football Fields are Influenced by Politics.

Moses Mabhida Stadium

The Moses Mabhida Stadium is a soccer stadium located in eThekwini in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Previously, it was predominantly known as the Kings Park Soccer Stadium when ABSA bought the naming rights. When South Africa became the first country in Africa to host the FIFA World Cup, the stadium underwent renovations. It was renamed by the ANC government in honour of Moses Mncane Mabhida, a prominent figure in politics and lifelong member of the South African Communist Party from 1978 until he died in 1986. Mr Chiliza had this to say:

> The naming of Moses Mabhida Stadium does not mean we are rewriting our history in this good province because our history has never been better and proper. This is a positive step forward. As a province and as a soccer fans, we are pleased that the stadium is named after a political activist who fought against the past injustices. This naming instills a sense of belonging and pride in our community.

Naming the stadium after Moses Mabhida honors history and commemorates the struggles endured to liberate South Africa from oppression, marking a significant shift. Moses Mabhida Stadium serves as a venue for international and domestic sporting events, including FIFA World Cup matches, CAF competitions, and PSL matches.

Harry Gwala Stadium

Themba Harry Gwala was a prominent leader of the African National Congress and a communist who was well known as the lion of the Midlands. Gwala was a prominent figure in the struggle, imprisoned on Robben Island alongside Nelson Mandela. The Harry Gwala Stadium is in the capital city of the KwaZulu-Natal province, Pietermaritzburg. This stadium is named after the political figure Harry Gwala as a sign of honour and respect. One of the research participants, Mr Mthembu, said:

> During apartheid, prominent structures were named solely after white figures, and we were pushed to remote areas. Naming Harry Gwala Stadium symbolizes the increased recognition of Black people in spaces that were previously dominated by white individuals. It underscores that Blacks are longer marginalized at the bottom of the national hierarchy. South Africa belongs to all.

This demonstrates that the naming process reflects who holds power and authority in government. The Maritzburg United Football Club and Royal AM often use this stadium as their home ground.

c) The Name of the Soccer Stadiums Derive from the Zulu Monarch

King Zwelithini Stadium

The King Zwelithini Stadium is located in the township of eMlazi, adjacent to the city of Durban. This stadium is named after the late Zulu monarch, Goodwill Zwelithini kaBhekizulu, the son of King Cyprian Bhekizulu. The naming of the stadium after him, also used by the team Amazulu FC, symbolizes the honour and recognition of the Zulu monarchy in South Africa. This ensures that the stadium's name will be remembered by future generations around world. AmaZulu FC, a team utilizing the King Zwelithini Stadium, is a team that was traditionally based at the royal palace in Nongoma to seek blessings from the king. This illustrates the profound relationship between Amazulu FC and King Zwelithini Stadium.

Princess Magogo Stadium

The Princess Magogo Stadium is a soccer stadium located in the township of KwaMashu, north of Durban. It is named after Princess Constance Magogo kaDinizulu, the mother of the late Prime Minister of Traditional Affairs, Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, who also founded the Inkatha Freedom Party. Princess Magogo was highly respected for her skill in playing indigenous instruments like the ugubhu and for her singing ability. The naming of the stadium after her is a significant way to preserve her legacy and respect for the Zulu monarch. Mfanafuthi said:

> Naming a soccer stadium after Princess Magogo plays a significant role in this province. The Zulu monarch greatly contributes to cohesion and stability here. Therefore, naming the soccer ground after Princess Magogo is an important gesture, honoring history and emphasizing the significance of the Zulu monarch in this region.

d) The Stadium's Names Derive from Geographical Names

Chatsworth Stadium

The Chatsworth Stadium is located in Chatsworth, a suburb of Durban inhabited mainly by people of Indian descent. This football stadium was previously known as the home stadium of the Manning Rangers football team. The Chatsworth Stadium is primarily used for soccer matches and community events. Built in the early 1950s, the stadium is still named Chatsworth because it is located in the area predominantly inhabited by people of Indian descent.

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The government seeks to honor and respect this community's history and contributions.

Mhlathuze Sport Complex

Mhlathuze Sports Complex is named after the nearby Mhlathuze River. Located in Richards Bay and associated with the Mhlathuze municipality, this football stadium is the home for NFD clubs and hosts various government events.

Mpumalanga Stadium

This stadium, located in the Mpumalanga township of Hammarsdale near Cator Ridge, is known as the Mpumalanga Stadium. With regards to Mpumalanga stadium, Ndonga said:

> Naming stadiums with local names, such as Mpumalanga Stadium, helps demonstrate to the public that these developments belong to everyone and should be protected. This practice of using local names for soccer stadiums is beneficial and is also common in countries like England and France.

It is renowned for hosting various Premier Soccer League matches. Additionally, the Mpumalanga Stadium hosts other events, such as music concerts and religious gatherings, making it a cherished venue in the hearts of diverse communities.

e) Stadiums Named after Retired Soccer Legends

The Sugar Ray Stadium is situated in the Clermont area, near Pinetown. It is named after the renowned footballer Cedric "Sugar Ray" Xulu, who became famous from eThekwini to Swaziland. Xulu was a distinguished player for Amazulu Football Club and Mbabane Swallows in Swaziland. The Sugar Ray Stadium is the home ground for Golden Arrows FC as their secondary venue for DSTV Premiership matches. Naming the stadium after this player aims to preserve the football legacy in the Clermont area and inspire youth to pursue their dreams, whether they grow up in urban or rural areas, as long as they have a passion for the sport.

f) Data Analysis

The research indicates that the Department of Sports, Arts, and Culture, in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders, uses specific skills in naming these entities. As South Africa transitions from apartheid, the naming of football stadiums in KwaZulu-Natal reflects sociatal norms and highlights the ongoing transformation within the province. The data reveal that the naming of soccer stadiums in KwaZulu-Natal illustrates the preservation of history, commemorates political heroes who fought against past injustices, honors Zulu monarch, and celebrates soccer legends.

Another finding shows that we live in a transformed South Africa, as the names of soccer stadiums in KZN are derived not only from men but also from women. This indicates significant change in South Africa during these times. It is evident from the research data that when immense structures like soccer stadiums are named, it signifies which political party is in charge and holds authority. Another commendable and evident aspect is that the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture (DSAC) has made an effort to name stadiums after people while they are still alive. King Goodwill Zwelithini and Sugaray Xulu were still alive when stadiums were named after them. This indicates that people should be celebrated whether they are alive or deceased. The respect for living people in stadiums is evident in England, as seen in part of the Old Trafford named after Sir Alex Ferguson.*

V. Recommendations and Conclusion

The researchers suggest that there is a need for further research. This study focused on uncovering the rich history behind the names of KZN stadiums. Politics, place names, the Zulu monarch, and veteran soccer players greatly influence the naming of soccer stadiums in KwaZulu-Natal. The data was collected through the qualitative research methodology. The hermeneutics and transformation theories were used to underpin the study. The naming process in Africa is one way to preserve and safeguard our history for future generations. Naming soccer stadiums in South Africa is essential because it should reflect community development, making people feel that the stadiums belong to them and should be protected.

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