Surname Change Narratives: Naming and Self Identity in Swaziland

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Abstract
The paper discusses surname change narratives. The texts, which often appear in Swaziland’s papers, are viewed as social texts, which create meaning about an individual’s life. The narratives, which appear short in the, are part of a larger text, which is about a life that has been distorted at some point. It is by following the name change process, which is stated in the Births, Deaths and Marriages Act No. 67 of 1962 that individuals can actually correct their names.

The study adopted a narrative approach towards finding information on the three respondents whose lives are discussed in the paper. A question profile that had structured questions was used to recreate the issues in the three people’s lives.

The findings showed that people change their names when they have problems with the family and also when trying to get scholarships. The name-change process seems to help people resolve issues of identity, but it leaves them with a serious sense of belonging when families they aspire to belong to also seem to be voids that are ready to accept a new member.

The study also revealed that there is a serious family crisis when it comes to the circumstances under which children are born. The law needs to tighten the area of birth status of a child.

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