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Men's health, masculinities and work : the psychosocial effects of unemployment on black men from Soweto.

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ABSTRACT

The provider-role continues to be strongly linked to ideas of manhood even in the era where family and work roles have changed. This is mainly because society continues to esteem notions of hegemonic masculinities that reduce men to a single role of providing. Such a discourse is problematic however, especially during the quandary of unemployment that South Africa finds itself. With this in mind, men find themselves battling not only with the stigma arising from their inability to perform manhood (providing) but also with the harsh labour market that refuses them the means to perform this role. As a consequence, men suffer often undiagnosed depression leading to suicide, harmful behaviour and loss of hope for a better future. Through the qualitative research approach, this study adopted the Social Identity Theory, the Eco-systems Approach as well as the Functionalism Theory towards exploring the effects of strong identification with the idea of man as provider on the psychosocial wellbeing of black men during unemployment. Individual interviews were conducted with twenty-two young men aged between 18 and 35 from Soweto as well as three social workers who were previously placed as student social workers with the Ipelegeng Youth Leadership and Development Programme. Through the use of the thematic content analysis, this study found that young men identified with the provider role and therefore participated in informal work under hazardous conditions in order to fulfil this role. Where the men failed to fulfil the provider role, communities often ridiculed and shamed them leading them to feeling stressed and depressed. The study also found that the young men were not utilising psychosocial services; owing to the notions of traditional masculinities; general lack of services and perceived ineffectiveness of programs. This report thus concludes that interventions that are tailored to tackle men's problems should be developed and be made widely available, being stringently cognisant of contextual cultural dynamics however.

Key words: masculinities, provider role, unemployment, psychosocial wellbeing, black men.

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work and has never been published or submitted elsewhere in fulfilment of any other degree.

Ms Naledi Selebano

_____

Signature

_____

Date

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	i
Declaration	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of contents	iv
List of acronyms and abbreviations	vii
Chapter One: Introduction	1
1.2. Rationale of the study	4
1.3. Research question	4
1.4. Aims of the study	5
1.5. Objectives of the study	5
1.6. The report structure	5
Chapter Two: Literature review and the theoretical framework	7
2.1. Introduction	7
2.2.Gender and masculinities	8
2.2.1. Gender	8
2.2.2. Masculinities and the provider role	9
2.3. Unemployment in the 'new' South Africa	14
2.3.1. The dynamics of unemployment in South Africa	14
2.3.2. Unemployment, poverty and crime	17
2.4. Policies adopted to address unemployment in South Africa	19
2.4.1. The shift from RDP to GEAR	19
2.4.2. Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (AsgiSA) and the Joint initiative for priority skills acquisition (JIPSA)	23
2.5. The effects of unemployment on men	25
2.5.1. The effects of unemployment on the psychosocial functioning of men	25
2.6. Psychosocial services: policy v/s reality	28
2.6.1. A macroscopic view of the mental health policy in South Africa	28
2.6.2. The nature of available psychosocial services to men in South Africa	31
2.6.3. 'Other' methods employed by men to manage psycho-social distress	32
2.7. Theoretical frameworks	34
2.7.1. Social identity theory	34
2.7.2. Eco-systems approach	35
2.7.2. Functionalism	35
2.8. Conclusion	36
Chapter Three: Research methodology	37
3.1. Introduction	37
3.2. Qualitative approach	38
3.3. Sampling	39
3.4. Research Site	40
3.4.1. Contextualising Soweto	40
3.5. Piloting	44
3.6. The interviews	45
3.6.1. Semi-structured interviews	45
3.6.2. Interviewing the young black men	45
3.6.2.1. When the interview is about you	47

3.6.3. Interviewing the social workers 48
3.7. Reflections on the researcher characteristics 49
3.7.1. The dynamics of being an insider/outsider 52
3.8. Data analysis 54
3.9. Ethical considerations 55
3.10. Conclusion 55

Chapter Four: Money spins the man's world around 57
4.1. Introduction 57
4.2. "I am a man, I have to provide" 57
4.3. Money as a signifier of readiness for social transitions: intimate love Relationships 62
4.4. Fatherhood and the provider role 67
4.5. Separating boys from men: stigma, shame, work and masculinities 69
4.6. Conclusion 73

Chapter Five "God helps those who help themselves": Hustling to make things happen 74
5.1. Introduction 74
5.2. 'Too poor to be unemployed': Escaping poverty through precarious work 74
5.3. Crime and unemployment: interrogating the dichotomy 80
5.4. Conclusion 84

Chapter Six: The dynamics of help seeking 85
6.1. Introduction 85
6.2. Tigers cry too 86
6.3. Men don't talk because it is unmanly to tell 92
6.4. Questionable professionalism and perceived ineffectiveness of programs 95
6.5. Men need real help: 'talking about feelings doesn't feed a hungry child' 95
6.6. 'Women seek help – men die': men want help – men die 101
6.7. Conclusion 105

Chapter Seven: summary and conclusions 107

References 112

Appendices
Appendix A: Consent for the audio-taping of the interview
A: 1 Unemployed black men from Soweto
A: 2 Social workers
Appendix B: Interview guide
B: 1 Unemployed black men from Soweto
B: 2 Social workers
Appendix C: Participant information sheet
C: 1 Unemployed black men from Soweto
C: 2 Social workers
Appendix D: Consent form for participating in the study
D: 1 Unemployed black men from Soweto
D: 2 Social workers
Appendix E: Ethics clearance certificate

List of tables

Table1: Male youth unemployment and crime statistics
Table 2: GEAR predicted GDP and actual growth
Table3: Unemployment rate
Table4: Labour in the non-agricultural sectors percentage change
Table5: Manufacturing average total number of employees

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
AsgiSA	Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
FAMSA	Family and Marriage Association of South Africa
GDP	Growth Domestic Product
GEAR	Growth Employment and Redistribution
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IYLDP	Ipelegeng Youth Development Program
JIPSA	Joint Initiative for Priority Skills Acquisition
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SACP	South African Communist Party
SANCA	South African National Council on Alcoholism and drug dependence
SAPS	South African Police Services
SEIFSA	Steel and engineering industry federation of South Africa
SME	Small and medium enterprises
TCC	Thuthuzela Care Centres
UIF	Unemployment Insurance Fund
WHO	World Health Organisation