Lone mothers, social security and dignity in South Africa: About the project

Colloquium 6th June 2014

Professor Michael Noble
The research team

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- Institute for Poverty, Land & Agrarian Studies (PLAAS), University of the Western Cape, RSA
- Human Sciences Research Council, RSA
Overview of project

- Main question: What is the role of social security in respecting and protecting dignity for lone mothers in South Africa?
- Catalyst: Previous research on attitudes to work and social security in South Africa – the prominence of ‘dignity’
- Hypothesis: if poverty erodes dignity, and social security reduces poverty, then does this mean that social security helps to respect and protect dignity as espoused in the Constitution?
- Focus of enquiry: lone mothers
- Context: loss of the parent component of the State Maintenance Grant when it was de-racialised and converted into the Child Support Grant
Social security for lone mothers

Diagram:
- Old Age Grant
- Disability Grant
- Grant-in-Aid
- Lone Mothers
- Unemplt. Insurance Fund

Centre for the Analysis of South African Social Policy
Methods

- Analysis of General Household Survey
- 30 focus groups
- 16 in-depth interviews
- 10 elite interviews with policy makers
- Analysis of modules in South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2006 and 2007
- Design and analysis of module in SASAS 2012
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Focus groups</th>
<th>In-depth interviews</th>
<th>Elite interviews</th>
<th>Social Attitudes Survey</th>
<th>Other secondary data analysis</th>
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<td>Q1: Given the importance accorded to dignity in the Constitution and elsewhere, how do lone mothers interpret its meaning in the context of their own lives? [Chapter 4]</td>
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<td>Q2: How do lone mothers’ lived experiences of poverty and inequality impact on their dignity? [Chapter 5]</td>
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<td>Q3: To what extent do lone mothers regard social grants as respecting and protecting their dignity? [Chapters 7-10]</td>
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<td>Q4: How does the actual experience of claiming CSG intersect with lone mothers’ sense of dignity? [Chapter 7]</td>
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<td>Q5: To what extent do policy makers take into account people’s dignity in the process of social security design and implementation? [Chapter 6]</td>
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<td>Q6: What is the relationship between dignity, social security and ubuntu? [Chapter 9]</td>
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<td>Context setting e.g. profile of lone mothers (GHS) [Chapter 3]; selection of focus group</td>
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This morning

- Lone mothers’ portrayals of dignity and the impact of poverty on dignity
- Social security and social solidarity
- Dignity and the CSG: findings from the focus groups
- Policy implications