

## Editorial

### Father Connections

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South Africa celebrated twenty years of democracy in 2014 following more than 100 years of colonization and institutionalized discrimination through Apartheid. A 'broken' family structure is one of the pathetic legacies left by political instability in post-colonial and post war countries globally. This phenomenon of broken families is evident in South Africa following the period of discrimination against Black people and the systematic migrant labor system that was sponsored by and for the Apartheid government. The migrant labor system separated fathers from their families and men left their families in the rural communities to work in the burgeoning mines and factories in urban areas. The current democratic State has a responsibility to strengthen broken families through policies and intervention informed by research evidence. There is an emerging body of research on Father Connections in post-war and post-colonial settings.

This special issue brings together eight articles on Father Connections in South Africa. The articles present data from diverse but interesting research; for example the piece by Nduna M and Taulela M focuses on the experiences of 'discovering' biological fathers for youth who grew up with absent and unknown fathers. The participants that the article draws from are young women from a small town, in Mpumalanga. Through narrative analysis, the article explores how young people deal with finding out who their biological fathers are. In the article by Selebano N and Khunou G, the experiences of young fathers from Soweto are explored.

It is illustrated in this article that, there are strong ties between young men's experiences and the community values, history and culture where they experience fatherhood. The article by Langa M interestingly looks at narratives and meaning makings of young boys who grew up without fathers. Langa looks at how young boys can adopt alternative ideas of what it means to be a man in contexts that would otherwise be assumed to automatically lead to an embrace of hegemonic notions of masculinities. On a similar note the article by Nduna M focuses on experiences of young people who grow up without a father entering into endeavours to find and use their father's surname. The article looks at how the signifying paternal ancestry is developed and maintained in contexts of father absence, through pursuing an absent father's surname as the 'right surname'.

The article by Lesch E and Ismail A focuses on the significant question of the father daughter relationship and examines constraining constructions of fatherhood for daughters with a specific focus on the Cape Winelands community in South Africa. In Chauke P and Khunou G's contribution on the media's influence on societal notions of fatherhood in relation to the maintenance system is examined. The article looks at how cases of maintenance are dealt with in print media. Franklin A & Makiwane M's article provides a significant examination of male attitudes of family and children. This article begins to speak to the transformations of expectations of men in families. This transformation is addressed through a look at racially disaggregated quantitative data. Mthombeni A reviews a book, *Good Morning Mr. Mandela* by Zelda Le Grange where she examines some of the challenges of fatherhood in South Africa's past and present.

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