

# Deprivation among unemployed South African youth: Intergenerational or transitional?

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## Abstract

The trioka of poverty, unemployment and inequality are hallmarks of the South African socio-economic landscape. With approximately one out of every four young people between the ages of 15 and 35 being employed, unemployment is a fact of life experienced by the majority of South African youth. This study sets out to explore this phenomenon, particularly whether the factors giving rise to youth unemployment are transitory or intergenerational in nature. The study is based on a sample of 3.236 unemployed youths originating from four provinces together with data extracted from a dedicated poverty survey conducted by Statistics South Africa from 2008 to 2009. Instead of focusing on the rather narrow income-poverty viewpoint, the study follows a multidimensional approach, using a range of social and material deprivation indicators to measure poverty. Results show that only transitory factors are significant in explaining the prevalence of deprivation among unemployed youths, suggesting that their poverty is temporary in nature. Of particular significance is the fact that provinces with quite disparate conventional poverty profiles displayed rather similar results in their range of material and social deprivations. In addition, the more prosperous provinces such as Gauteng performed worse than poorer provinces such as Limpopo and Eastern Cape. This research contributes to the National Development Plan vision for 2030, which recognises the issues of social security and supports an understanding of a minimum level of social protection. Among the study's many recommendations is that certain components of the survey instruments be improved, that the role of households in mitigating against the ravages of poverty among the young be appreciated, and that state intervention to alleviate youth poverty be emphasised.

## ONTNEMING ONDER WERKLOSE SUID-AFRIKAANSE JEUG: INTERGENERASIE OF OORGANG?

Armoede, werkloosheid en ongelykheid is eie aan die Suid-Afrikaanse sosio-ekonomiese landskap. Gegewe dat slegs een uit elke vier jongmense tussen die ouderdom van 15 en 35 een of ander werk verrig, is werkloosheid onder die jeug aan die orde van die dag. Hierdie studie beoog om die studies rakende armoede onder die werklose jeug in Suid-Afrika te ondersoek en sal spesifiek bepaal of die faktore wat aanleiding gee tot werkloosheid, onder die jeug, transitief (verbygaande) van aard is en of dit van geslag (generasie) tot geslag (generasie) oorgedra word. Die studie is geskoei op data afkomstig van 'n steekproef bestaande uit 3.236 werklose jongmense uit vier van die nege provinsies in die land. Die data is verkry van 'n armoede-peiling deur Statistieke Suid-Afrika tydens 2008/2009. Die studie wyk af van die eng-gedefinieerde inkomste-gebaseerde armoede studies en probeer om armoede vanuit 'n multidimensionele oogpunt te beskou en aan die hand van 'n reeks sosiale en materiële deprivasie-(onthoudings-) faktore te verduidelik. Resultate dui daarop dat slegs transitoriese faktore 'n noemenswaardige rol speel om deprivasie onder werklose jongmense te verduidelik. Dit dui daarop dat armoede van verbygaande aard is en net tot 'n spesifieke tydperk in die lewens van die jeug beperk is. 'n Wesenlike uitvloeisel van die studie is dat provinsies met uiteenlopende armoede-profiel, groot ooreenkomste toon ten opsigte van 'n aantal sosiale en materiële deprivasie veranderlikes. Die navorsing fokus op sosiale sekuriteit asook die minimum sosiale beskerming wat in die Nasionale Ontwikkelingsplan se visie vir 2030 aangespreek word. Voorstelle voortvloeiend uit die studie sluit onder meer in dat sekere dele van die armoede peilingsvraelys van Statistieke Suid-Afrika aangepas moet word, staatsgeleide ingryping om armoede onder die jeug te verlig beklemtoon moet word, en daar groter waardering moet wees vir die rol wat huishoudings speel om jeug-armoede die hoof te bied.

- 1 The UN adopted the MDGs in its Millennium declaration in 2000 as a means of harnessing worldwide commitment towards assisting developing countries in dealing with poverty, unemployment and other critical social and economic matters.
- 2 Youth is defined as all individuals between the ages of 15 and 35. Although the definition of youth varies widely from country to country and even within countries, the definition used in this study is in line with that adopted by the official statistical agency, Stats SA, in determining youth unemployment rates, and is also roughly in line with that used by the National Youth Policy which defines the youth as all individuals between the ages of 14 and 35 (The Presidency, 2008).

## DITLHOKO TSA BACHA BA SE NANG MESEBETSI AFRIKA BORWA: KOPAHANO EA LILEMO KA HO FAPANA KAPPA TSAMAISO EA LILEMO KA MORA LILEMO?

Bofutsana, ho hloka mosebetsi le ho se lekane ha batho ke dinthla tse kholo tsa phedisano le moruo oa Afrika Borwa ka bophara. Ka dipalopalo tse bontshang hore hara bacha ba bane ba dilemong tse tlohang ho 15 ho isa ho dilemo tse 35, a mong fela o na le mosebetsi, ho oa bontsha hore ho hloka mosebetsi ke bothata bo boholo hara bacha ba naha ea Afrika Borwa. Thuto ena e ipapisitse le sampole ea bacha ba 3236 ba se nang mosebetsi tsoang diprofenseng tse nne ka palo ha mmoho le pokello tsa tsebiso ka bofutsana tse tsoang di ofising tsa dipalopalo Afrika Borwa, selemong sa 2008 ho isa ho sa 2009. Ntle le ho shebana le leside la mokholo tsabeng tsa bofutsana, thuto ena e shebana le dikarolo tse ngata moo ho sebelisong dithulusi tsa ho metha bofutsana ka hara naha. Sephetho sa ditaba tse bontsha diketsahalo tse etsahalang ha nako e ntse e ya pele e le tsona tse leng bohlokoa ho hlalosa kaho ea ditlhoko hara bacha ba sechaba ba se nang mosebetsi, ho bontshang bofutsana e se ntho ea ho fihlela le ho fihlela. Se bohlokoa hlokoa ke hore diporofensi tse nang le bofutsana tse bongata di bontshitse di na le ditlhoko tse tsoanang tsa sechaba. Difrofensi tse nang le buruo nyana joalo ka Gauteng, di bontshitse di na le bofokodi ba dithloko bo fetang tse nang le bofutsana joalo ka Limpopo le Eastern Cape. Thuto ena e sebellsetsa ho kenya tsebo ea eona ho National Development Plan ea selemo sa 2030 e shebanang le mathata a bululo bo phethahetseng e ngoe ea tse ngata ea thuto ena ke hore mekhoha ea ho fumana mohlodi oa pokello e lokiso le hore bofutsana ba bacha bo loantsoe ka malapeng, le hore mmuso u thuse bacha ba futsaneileng.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

As a signatory to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)<sup>1</sup>, the South African government committed itself to halving national poverty by 2015 (Keyser & Wesenbeeck, 2006: 449). Although poverty is a scourge that may affect people from all walks of life, Boarini & d'Ercole (2006: 43) contend that certain categories of individuals such as the aged, the youth<sup>2</sup> and the unemployed,

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are more at risk of suffering deprivation than other groups. If we consider that unemployment among the young is generally three times higher than in the rest of society, then their increased vulnerability becomes more apparent (Cunningham, Sanchez-Puerta & Wuermli, 2010: 1). South Africa is no exception, with youth unemployment at approximately 77%, as opposed to 25% among the economically active population, and where approximately 49% of unemployed youths have been unemployed for longer than a year (Stats SA, 2011a: xvi). Given the adverse effects of long-term unemployment in perpetuating deprivation, dealing with these high levels and the persistence of unemployment over time is fundamental to addressing the realities of deprivation (Whelan & Whelan 1996: 38; Layte, Whelan, Maitre & Nolan, 2001). A further consideration is the real threat that unemployment poses to social and political stability (ILO, 2012; Kingdon & Knight, 2007: 814; Curtain, 2001: 4; NPC, 2011). Another impact on planning and development indicates that the young are migrating from rural areas, contributing to the rural development challenge (Van Huyssteen, Oranje & Meiklejohn, 2010: 10). They are migrating to urban areas in search of economic opportunities (Oranje, Van Huyssteen & Meiklejohn, 2009: 8; Van Huyssteen *et al.*, 2010: 14).

In a ground-breaking study, Townsend (1979) used the concept of 'cumulative deprivation' to develop an understanding of poverty in the United Kingdom, and observed two forms of deprivation, namely material and social. These distinctions of material and social deprivation have been used to describe issues ranging from youth poverty (Julkunen, 2002: 240; Ginwright, Cammarota & Noguera, 2005: 25; Daly, 2012: 276) to health (Pampalon, Hamel, Gamache & Raymond, 2009) and will form the basis of this research for analysing youth deprivation in South Africa. In South Africa, research data focusing specifically on youth deprivation is very limited. Therefore, this study aims to shed some light on this particular form of poverty among South Africans. Although factors such as households' asset base, remittances to households, household composition, family structure, unemployment in the household, unemployment duration, social networks, etc. are important to consider, two critical factors emerge in

the fight against poverty, namely the economy and education. In order to create lasting solutions to the poverty challenge, the importance of a skilled, competent and knowledgeable workforce able to function within a growing, job-creating economy is indisputable.

Since the advent of democracy in South Africa, a range of development programmes such as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) framework and the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative-South Africa (AsgiSA) were initiated, all aimed at the socio-economic transformation of society through economic growth. Although each of these attempts achieved some success, none was able to deliver the capacity that the state required in order to deliver the social goods at the necessary rate and scale (Luiz, 2002: 612; Magubane, 2004; McGrath & Akoojee, 2007: 424). Even when economic growth at the projected AsgiSA levels was recorded during the early 2000s, very few jobs were created. It became a period which some observers referred to as jobless growth (Aliber, 2003: 476). Furthermore, those government initiatives aimed at alleviating poverty through short-term job creation, mainly through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP),<sup>3</sup> have limited effects.

One of the main reasons put forward for the lacklustre performance of the South African economy was a lack of adequately skilled individuals (Mlambo-Ngcuka, 2006), who could effectively exploit the benefits of globalisation and the knowledge economy (McGrath & Akoojee, 2007: 428).

Haughton & Khandker (2009: 2) underline the critical link between education and poverty, indicating that the educated are less prone to being poor than the uneducated. In South Africa, this link has a special significance, not only because a large proportion of society is either uneducated or poorly educated, but because this phenomenon was the outcome of a deliberate act of the apartheid system which asserted that Blacks be given minimal education and be trained only for certain forms of labour (Gillomee, 2009: 192; Gradin, 2011: 4). The education policies and actions of successive governments

ensured separate and very unequal race-based education systems for South African scholars and a system of job reservation that ensured the under skilling of the Black masses (Lowenberg, 1997: 62; Bhattacharya & Lowenberg, 2010; Hunter & May, 2011: 1). Nearly sixty years later and eighteen years into democracy, the country is still burdened with the legacy of these policies. However, a report by the Minister of Education highlighted the quality of teachers and schools, as well as learning material and the willingness of pupils to learn (DOE, 2011: 8). Nowhere is this more starkly displayed than in the poor performance of learners in the 1999 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) (Van den Berg, 2008: 146). According to this study, the performance of South African learners in Mathematics and Science, when compared to that of learners from 38 other countries worldwide, was found to be the worst, and participants from historically White South African schools outperformed their peers from historically Black schools.

Traditionally, researchers had a very narrow income focus when dealing with poverty, but increasingly the notion of poverty as a more multidimensional concept is taking root, hence the focus on poverty as more than merely income deprivation (Nolan & Whelan, 2010: 305; Chung, Isaacs & Smeeding, 2012: 1). This research focuses particularly on the comparison between social and material deprivation of unemployed youths from selected provinces. The underlying poverty transmission mechanism is identified in an attempt to inform intervention policies and strategies. Furthermore, given the bias of poverty in terms of gender and geographic location, introducing these areas of concern into the study is also fundamentally important (Woolard & Leibbrandt, 1999: 18; Aliber, 2003: 479; Bhorat, 2004: 941).

This study provides an overview of the current levels and extent of material and social deprivation of youth in South Africa at the hand of a range of variables obtained from the LCS. Along with this, a set of factors has been developed to examine poverty through social and material deprivation among unemployed youths in four provinces, namely Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Gauteng and Limpopo. These provinces

3 Expanded public works programme is a Department of Public Works initiative aimed at improving employment opportunities for unemployed individuals by means of short-term job creation and skills-building initiatives focusing, in particular, on women, youth and the disabled (DPW, 2010).

were selected because Gauteng and Cape Town are mainly urban and the least deprived of all provinces, according to the Department of Social Development (2009: 9). On the other hand, the Eastern Cape and Limpopo are mainly rural and have the highest levels of children living in both income- and/or materially deprived households (Wright & Noble, 2009: 9).

## 2. BACKGROUND TO MATERIAL AND SOCIAL DEPRIVATION AMONG YOUTH

Definitions of poverty range from the narrowly defined one-dimensional income-based definition to the conceptualisation of poverty as a complex multifaceted social and economic phenomenon. The World Bank refers to poverty as a state of deprivation comprising multiple dimensions (Haughton & Khandker, 2009). Townsend (1979) views the accumulation of such deprivations or the state of a multiplicity of deprivations suffered by individuals as poverty. Approaching poverty from the perspective of multiple deprivation frees the concept from the one-dimensional income or consumption (in)adequacy viewpoint (Mitchell, 1991; McFate, Smeeding & Rainwater, 1995) and, consequently, extends the intervention process beyond merely seeking an improved income dispensation, while also seeking strategies against future shocks or risks, or the elimination of impediments to a better quality of life, such as a corrupt or poorly functioning health or education system (Haughton & Khandker, 2009).

Deprivation indicators such as family unemployment, growing up with one parent, educational deprivation, and weak social networks were found to be important in understanding the transmission of intergenerational poverty (Julkunen, 2002: 238). In a study among six European countries with differing welfare regimes, Julkunen (2002: 235) found that family support was the most significant factor shielding unemployed youth from deprivation. According to this study, the labour market, the family and the welfare regime are important determinants of poverty. The study concluded that deprivation is as much a transitional as an intergenerational construct.

Andress & Schulte (1998), in Julkunen (2002: 238), summarise the research on poverty transmission in terms of

three hypotheses, namely persistence, life-cycle and individualisation. Understanding whether unemployed youth are caught in a poverty trap (chronic or intergenerational poverty) or only deprived at a specific point in time (transitory poverty) is critical to ensure the optimum utilisation of scarce resources (Mackie, 2013: 4). The persistence (intergenerational) hypothesis, proposed by Lewis (1966: 19), argues that poverty is passed on from generation to generation through particular ways of socialisation in the family, reinforcing their state of poverty. The second hypothesis put forward by Rowntree (1902) states that poverty is transient in nature and that individuals can thus move in and out of poverty at any time, and that it is normally associated with particular negative occurrences at a specific point in the life cycle. The third hypothesis, more libertarian in nature, is the individualisation hypothesis; this places greater emphasis on individuals exercising choices which, ultimately, determine their state of well-being (Leßmann, 2011: 440). Due to an absence of relevant data on the individualisation hypothesis, this study will only consider whether poverty among unemployed South African youth is either generational or transitory.

As there is no uniform definition for poverty and deprivation across the world, each country also has to come to terms with the different factors contributing to poverty and its transmission thereof. Based on a study in the developing countries of Namibia, Mozambique and Zambia, Devereux (2002: 672) concluded that social security nets can impact meaningfully on both transitory and chronic poverty. A study by Nega, Mathijs, Deckers, Haile, Nyssen & Tollens (2010: 95) among Ethiopian rural households found that interventions aimed at enhancing the asset base of households reduced the impact of chronic poverty, but had little effect on transitory poverty. Adams & Page (2003: 1980) identified international migration or remittances, and public-sector employment to explain why Middle Eastern and North African countries have relatively lower poverty and income inequality rates than other African regions. Sackey (2004: 609) identified economic activity, physical capital ownership, financial capital accessibility and education as important determinants of poverty.

Using data obtained from the KwaZulu-Natal Income Dynamics Study (KIDS) of Black South Africans, authors such as May, Carter, Haddad & Maluccio (2000: 572), Carter & May (2001: 1987) and Gradin (2011: 21) found that for a significant portion of Black South Africans, political freedom did not translate into economic freedom and well-being. They concluded that the markets are unable to provide the necessary capacity to facilitate escape from the poverty trap in which a significant proportion of the poor find themselves. This notion of being caught in a poverty trap is reinforced by a study conducted in four Pretoria suburbs by Naidoo (2011: 634). This study found that a common 'fatalistic' belief among poor households was that the situation they faced would not change and that their children would suffer the same circumstances, if not worse. In a study among rural poor, Du Toit (2004: 998) similarly drives home the point of a lack of improved material well-being for the poor and concludes that the advent of globalisation has brought little relief to impoverished farmworkers due to casualisation of labour broking, which has become common practice. In a study on the role of social security grants in poor households, Møller (2010: 156) argues for the expansion of the social security net to include unemployed youth, given the inability of the economy to provide them with adequate employment opportunities. He contends that the ability of households to deal with financial shocks is greatly enhanced by the variety of social grants they are able to access.

Social assistance grants and safety nets should not be the only means to consider in the fight against poverty. The South African government has, as one of the poverty reduction strategies, implemented the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) which had its origins in the Growth and Development Summit of 2003 (Department of Public Works, 2013). Poverty reduction, addressing unemployment, skills development, and service delivery are stated objectives of the EPWP.

## 3. DATA DISCUSSION AND METHODOLOGY

Data was obtained from the Living Conditions Survey (LCS) conducted by Stats SA during 2008/2009. The survey was based on a sample size of 30.000 households and included households

from the four settlement types used by Stats SA, namely urban formal, urban informal, traditional, and rural formal. Although other studies aimed at understanding poverty dynamics in South Africa were undertaken, such as the National Income Dynamics Survey (Woolard, Leibbrandt & De Villiers, 2010), the KwaZulu-Natal Income Dynamics Study (May *et al.*, 2000: 572) and the Project for Statistics on Living Standards and Development (Carter & May, 2001: 2002), the LCS was the first dedicated poverty study undertaken by Stats SA, and the first of its kind and scope in the country. The Living Conditions Survey (LCS) is briefly described and is followed by a discussion on the method of extracting the study data and the data's limitations.

Historically, South Africa used data obtained from the income and expenditure surveys to establish the level, intensity and scope of deprivation in the country, by focusing entirely on income deprivation. In 2008, Statistics South Africa undertook its first dedicated survey to look beyond the mere monetary aspects of poverty, the LCS. The survey consisted of a questionnaire containing both individual and household-level questions, a diary that contained daily household expenditures and a community-level questionnaire that focused on service provision and infrastructure development within the community. The data obtained from the LCS was augmented by a subset of the 36 questions proposed by Noble, Wright & Cluver (2007: 56), used to measure deprivation based on people's perceptions of their own circumstances. Material deprivations were measured, using the enforced lack approach, which helps to distinguish between individuals who choose not to have a specific item and those forced to forego the item due to a lack of necessary resources.

Sample selection was done at two levels: initially only unemployed individuals between the ages of 15 and 35 were selected from the person file generated by Wright & Noble (2009: 25). The results from the person file were then linked to the rest of the dataset in the household file through a unique identifier, resulting in a dataset consisting of 3.236 unemployed, aged between 15 and 35, associated with a range of household and individual information items. The resulting sample consisted of 497 individuals from the

Western Cape, 715 from the Eastern Cape, 1.285 from Gauteng and 739 from Limpopo. One limitation of the study was that data was measured mainly at the household level. Consequently, data for certain variables used in the analysis were only available at this level, while the unit of study in this research is essentially at the individual level. In instances where data at the individual level was unavailable, household characteristics were assigned to individual household members.

Table 1: Deprivation variables used in the study

Deprivation variables used in the study			
Deprivation factors	Background factors	Transitory factors	Reinforcing factors
Visiting friends and relatives in hospital/ other institutions	Age	Household composition	Employment duration
Expenditure on movies, theatres, concerts or festivals	Gender	Financial support from household members	Physical problems
Expenditure on gifts	Marital status	Welfare assistance	Emotional problems
Expenditure on newspapers	Education		Intellectual problems
Expenditure on hobbies	Housing quality		
Expenditure in restaurants, shebeens, taverns, hotels, canteens and fast-food outlets	Geographic location		
Someone to look after you when ill			
Someone to talk to when depressed			
Adult present when kids younger than 10 are at home			
Someone to borrow money from			
Someone to provide transport in an emergency			
Have meat or fish or a vegetarian equivalent every day (adequate food)			
Have clothing to keep household members warm and dry (adequate clothing)			
Adequate housing			
Shower or bath in house			
Pay/contribute to funerals/funeral insurance/burial society			

According to Julkunen (2002: 239), the poverty mechanisms associated with social and material deprivation among the young are fundamentally different, and need to be investigated separately rather than as part of a single deprivation index. The process began with a factor analysis on 16 deprivation variables identified from the literature (Column 1 in Table 4). Additional variables were identified

from the hypotheses of Julkunen (2002: 246), Lewis (1966) and Rowntree (1902), and these were grouped into background factors, transitory factors and reinforcing factors (Table 4). All of these variables were used as input in the factor analysis procedure, using SPSS statistical software with Principal Component Analysis (PCA) as a method of extraction, and VARIMAX as a method of rotation.

Of the initial variables included in the factor analysis (Table 1), seven were

dropped due to their poor correlation with the others. The analysis was restarted with the remaining nine significant variables to indicate the two components of social and material deprivation. Three of these variables (someone to look after you when ill; someone to talk to when depressed, and someone to provide transport in an emergency) would reflect social deprivation component alone,

Table 2: Detail of the independent variables used in the multivariate regression analyses

Independent variables	Detail
Education	No schooling Less than matriculation Matriculation University qualification Vocational qualification
Settlement type	Urban formal Urban informal Traditional Rural formal (farms and small holdings)
Gender	Male and female
Household composition	Married (including customary marriages) Cohabiting Widowed Divorced Single individuals
Employment duration during last year	< 3 months 3 to less than 6 months 6 to less than 9 months 9 months to less than 12 months 1 year
Family background	This refers to intellectual and emotional problems in the household
Welfare protection	Included was unemployment insurance fund cover Grants Social assistance Free water or electricity Free housing
Financial support from household members	
Housing quality	Quality of roof and walls
Community services and infrastructure	Access to piped water Electricity from mains Tarred roads Victims of crime

the subsequent multivariate logistic regression analysis. Table 2 shows details of the independent variables used in the multivariate regression analysis. Regression analysis is useful in determining a set of statistically significant predictors of social and material deprivation among unemployed youths; it also provides insight into the relative importance of each of these predictor variables in explaining variations in social and material deprivation levels.

#### 4. DISCUSSION OF ANALYSIS RESULTS

Preliminary analysis was performed on some of the key poverty indicators such as unemployment, poverty headcount,<sup>4</sup> poverty gap,<sup>5</sup> and poverty severity<sup>6</sup> as well as on social and material deprivation rates. Thereafter, social and material deprivation indices were computed, using factor analysis, followed by multiple regression analysis to determine the contribution of predictor variables in describing variations in social or material deprivation among the unemployed, and whether these variables differed significantly between the sexes or across areas of residence.

while the other six (ability to pay for or contribute to funerals or funeral insurance; bath or shower in house; adult present when children younger than 10 years are home; ability to visit institutions; having meat or fish or a vegetarian equivalent daily, and having clothing to keep household members warm and dry) would indicate only the material deprivation component.

The second part of the analysis involved establishing whether the poverty mechanism is driven by either transitory or intergenerational factors. To this end, multivariate logistic regression analysis was performed on the variables in Table 1. These variables were then used to construct two composite indices, one for social deprivation and the other for material deprivation, and these acted as the dependent variables in

Table 3: Unemployment ratios between 2001 and 2010

Unemployed	Time									
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008*	2009	2010
Unemployed Youth (15-35 years)	77	77	78	78	78	78	78	76	76	75
Short-term unemployment as % of youth unemployment	36	36	36	36	38	42	48	43	41	35
Long-term unemployment as % of youth unemployment	64	64	63	63	60	56	50	57	59	65
Short-term unemployment as % of overall unemployed	28	27	28	28	30	32	37	33	31	27
Long-term unemployment as % of overall unemployed	49	49	49	49	47	44	39	44	45	48

Source: Stats SA, 2011a

4 Headcount poverty refers to the number of individuals whose income falls below a certain minimum threshold, the poverty line.

5 The poverty gap refers to the amount necessary to increase the income of the poor to the level of the poverty line. The World Bank definition indicates that this measure provides information regarding how far off households are from the poverty line (World Bank, 2012).

6 Severity index takes into account not only the distance separating the poor from the poverty line (the poverty gap), but also the inequality among the poor. That is, a higher weight is placed on those households who are further away from the poverty line (World Bank, 2012).

### 4.1 Unemployment

Both short- and long-term unemployment trends covering the period from 2001 to 2010 were evaluated. During the ten-year period under review, long-term unemployment was the dominant component of youth unemployment (Table 3).

It is clear that not only do the young suffer disproportionately from a lack of employment opportunities, but the majority of those unemployed over the ten-year period have been without work for a year or more. Equally important when examining unemployment is to consider the ability of the economy to create jobs and how these jobs are distributed among labour-market participants. To this end, Figure 1 indicates the labour-absorption trend between 2001 and 2010. The youth labour-absorption rates were approximately 10% lower than the overall absorption rate; thus youths were less likely to be employed than their older counterparts, an observation which is in line with international trends (Cunningham, Sanchez-Puerta & Wuermli, 2010).

### 4.2 Poverty levels

Three national measures of poverty are based on the results of the LCS: a food poverty line, as well as a lower bound and an upper bound poverty line (Table 4). Applying the lower bound poverty line of R416 per capita per month, just less than 40% of the population would be considered poor, while this figure increases to more than 50% when the upper bound poverty line of R577 per capita per month is used (Stats SA 2012: 5).<sup>7</sup> Furthermore,

Table 4: Key poverty indicators, using various national and international poverty lines

Poverty line	Poverty headcount (%)	Poverty gap (%)	Severity of poverty
Food poverty line (R305) per capita per month	26.3	8.5	3.8
Lower bound poverty line (R416) per capita per month	38.9	15.0	7.5
Upper bound poverty line (R577) per capita per month	52.0	23.4	13.2
R4.81 (PPP) per capita per day (\$1.25)	10.7	2.8	1.1
R9.62 (PPP) per capita per day (\$2.50)	36.4	13.5	6.7

Source: Stats SA, 2012

approximately 11% of the population experienced extreme poverty, while slightly more than a third of the population were suffering moderate poverty. Table 4 considers deprivation levels at a more disaggregated level. Using the upper bound poverty line (R577) as a benchmark, the provincial poverty figures range from just under a third of Gauteng inhabitants to about two thirds of Eastern Cape residents, and three out of every four individuals living in Limpopo Province are eking out a living on incomes below the poverty line.

The poverty gap similarly shows an increase from just below 11% in Gauteng to slightly less than 31% in the Eastern Cape and nearly 39% in Limpopo Province (Table 5). The severity of poverty was the worst in the Eastern Cape and Limpopo Province, at approximately 18% and 23%, respectively. These measures provide insight into the dire situation

Table 5: Provincial poverty rates as at 2008/2009

Province	Upper bound poverty line (R577)		
	Poverty head-count (%)	Poverty gap (%)	Severity of poverty
Limpopo	74.0	38.5	23.3
Eastern Cape	65.7	30.8	17.8
Western Cape	30.5	10.7	5.1
Gauteng	28.7	10.6	5.2
RSA	52.0	23.4	13.2

Source: Stats SA, 2012

prevailing in the two poorest provinces in the country.

### 4.3 Deprivation rates

Deprivation rates were computed for each province (Table 6), using the deprivation variables identified

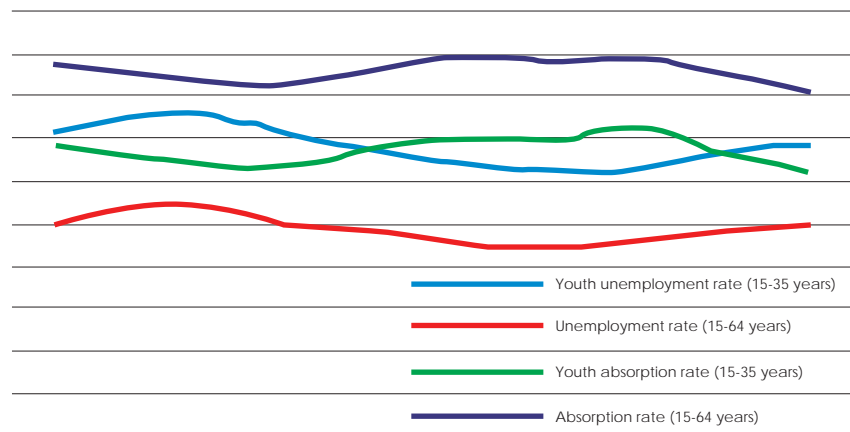


Figure 1: Labour-absorption and unemployment trend between 2001 and 2010  
Source: Stats SA, 2011a

during the factor analysis procedure. These rates indicate the proportion of unemployed youths who suffered deprivation due to an inability to perform certain activities or because they lacked certain items. Low levels of deprivation were recorded across all provinces for items such as the availability of adequate clothing (< 20%); the availability of transport in emergencies (< 10%); the availability of a helping hand in case of illness or bouts of depression, and the availability of adults to oversee young kids at home (all < = 10%). However, considerably

<sup>7</sup> For the calculation of poverty line figures, see supporting documentation "Measuring poverty in South Africa: Methodological report on the development of the poverty lines for statistical reporting" for more information on the construction of the national poverty lines.

Table 6: Rates of deprivation in specific activities or items among unemployed youths by province

Items/activities	Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Gauteng	Limpopo
	%	%	%	%
Having a meal (food)	30	54	36	43
Having adequate clothing	6	14	14	18
Able to pay for funeral or funeral insurance	22	28	30	11
Having a bath or shower	29	69	48	75
Adult present when children < 12 years at home	4	7	10	8
Someone to take care of you when ill	10	8	5	10
Someone to talk to when depressed	10	1	5	2
Someone to provide transport in emergency	8	2	7	3
Able to visit friends or family in hospital or other institutions	35	43	49	38
Someone to borrow money from	32	33	39	36
Mean total	18.6	25.9	24.3	24.4

Source: Stats SA, 2011b

Table 7: Unemployment rate by province

	Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Gauteng	Limpopo
Q4: 2008	16.9	25.2	20.7	28.9
Q1: 2009	18.4	28.4	21.7	28.1
Q2: 2009	20.5	27.9	23.1	24.9
Q3: 2009	22.5	26.8	25.8	25.5

Source: Stats SA, 2011a

Table 8: Rates of social and material deprivation among unemployed youths by province

	Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Gauteng	Limpopo
	%	%	%	%
Social deprivation				
No deprivation	55	56	46	59
High deprivation	8	3	8	2
Material deprivation				
No deprivation	19	8	13	4
High deprivation	13	29	21	22

Source: Stats SA, 2011b

higher levels of unemployed youth lacked, for example, adequate food (between 30% and 54%) or indoor bathing facilities (as high as 75%). Although this tendency was consistent across all provinces, the incidence of certain deprivations such as food and bathing facilities were more pronounced among unemployed youths in Limpopo and the Eastern Cape. Significantly, the economic hub of the country, Gauteng, performed

worst among the provinces in four of the items/activities considered.

The emergence of a similar pattern between the two poorest provinces, Eastern Cape and Limpopo, is not surprising. However, the similarities across a range of items and overall deprivation between Gauteng and the two poor provinces are remarkable. Eastern Cape (25.9%), Gauteng (24.3%) and Limpopo (24.4%) had,

on average, very similar rates of deprivation, higher than that of the Western Cape (18.6%). This pattern seems to mimic the unemployment pattern for this period (Table 7). Thus, the better performance of the Western Cape seems to be related to the lower unemployment levels experienced by this province in comparison to the other three provinces.

Whereas Table 6 shows the incidence of deprivation in individual items or activities among unemployed youths in the four provinces, Table 8 takes an overall view of material and social deprivation within these provinces. Individuals are deemed to have suffered high social deprivation if they were deprived of half or more of the items considered. On the other hand, individuals were considered to have suffered no deprivation if they did not have to forego any of these items.

The provinces of Limpopo (2%) and Eastern Cape (3%) had the lowest levels of individuals suffering high social deprivation as well as the highest proportion of individuals (59% and 56%, respectively) who did not suffer any deprivation at all. Generally, socialisation does not seem to be a major concern in any of the four provinces, with approximately half or more of unemployed youths having no problem partaking in social activities. Of particular significance is that the less affluent provinces such as Limpopo and Eastern Cape have fewer individuals experiencing difficulties participating in social activities.

When considering overall material deprivation levels, the situation is considerably different. A significant proportion of unemployed young people across the four provinces had great difficulty with regards to enjoying basic material needs. Nineteen per cent of the unemployed youths of the Western Cape indicated that they did not have to forego any of the items or activities, and were significantly better off than their counterparts from other provinces. Gauteng and Limpopo were rather similar in terms of the proportion of individuals suffering two or more material deprivations (21% and 22%, respectively). The fact that these two provinces are so very different in terms of traditional poverty measurements such as headcount poverty, and yet so similar in certain aspects of deprivation, lends weight to the argument for looking beyond mere money-metric measurements to fully understand and deal with poverty.

Table 9: Factors explaining social and material deprivation among unemployed youth: A multivariate logistic regression analysis

Predictors	Western Cape		Eastern Cape		Gauteng		Limpopo	
	Social deprivation B	Material deprivation B	Social deprivation B	Material deprivation B	Social deprivation B	Material deprivation B	Social deprivation B	Material deprivation B
Background factors(R2)								
Residential type (Ref-Urban Formal) Urban Informal					3.559			
Highest Education (Ref-Less than Matric) Vocational								-2.132
Poor Housing Conditions (Ref-No)		1.447						
Piped Water (Ref-Yes)								2.437
Mains Electricity (Ref-Yes)								1.904
Street Lights (Ref-Yes)								-1.781
Tarred roads (Ref-Yes)						0.682		
No rubbish (Ref-Yes)				0.804				
Police on streets (Ref-Yes)		1.562		1.103				
Victim of crime (Ref-No)		1.671					3.162	
Marital status (Ref-Never married) Married: Trad								-2.121
Transitory factors (R2)								
Free electricity (Ref-No)		2.069						
Financial support in hh (Ref-Yes)		2.475						
Reinforcing factors (R2)								
R2(%)*	0.000	0.515	0.178	0.549	0.237	0.367	0.163	0.554

Note: \* = Nagelkerke Pseudo R squared<sup>8</sup>

#### 4.4 Establishing the poverty transmission mechanism

Tables 9 and 10 only contain those variables from the background, transitory and reinforcing factors that were found to be statistically significant in explaining the transmission mechanism of either social or material deprivation. These tables also highlight the explanatory power of the full set of significant predictor variables for individual provinces as well as for pooled provincial data.

Within the Western Cape, background factors such as poor housing conditions, a lack of police on the street, and the fear of becoming a victim of crime, and transitory factors such as a lack of financial support from household members, and the receipt of free electricity are indicative of increased levels of material deprivation. Among the youth of Limpopo, the background factors of education, piped water, mains electricity, street lighting and marital status were significant indicators of material deprivation. Those Limpopo youths who have vocational

qualifications are more particularly associated with lower levels of material deprivation than those with less than a matriculation certificate. Remarkably, none of the reinforcing factors included played any significant part in describing either social or material deprivation, while two transitory factors (financial support from household members and the provision of free electricity) were significant predictors of material deprivation in the Western Cape only. Physical infrastructure, in particular the lack of tarred roads in Gauteng, was associated with increased material deprivation among unemployed youths.

No variables were significant in describing social deprivation in the Eastern and Western Cape. No proof that gender impacted on either social or material deprivation could be found in any of the provinces and settlement type was found to be significant only in terms of social deprivation - and then only in Gauteng, where unemployed youths from urban informal settlements were found to be more socially deprived than those from urban formal areas.

None of the included reinforcing factors associated with intergenerational poverty were found to be significant in explaining deprivation within individual provinces, while transitory factors could only assist in accounting for deprivation in one of the more affluent provinces, the Western Cape. Overall, the regression model used in this study explained material deprivation relatively better than it did social deprivation across all provinces. This would indicate that the processes underlying these two phenomena (social and material deprivation) are significantly different.

#### 4.5 Combined provincial data

Table 10 gives an indication of the significance and combined explanatory power of variables in the model when data for all provinces are combined, or 'pooled'. Material deprivation has a definite provincial bias, the results suggesting that Eastern Cape and Limpopo are both associated with lower levels of material deprivation than Gauteng. However, this is at odds with the preliminary results which indicated that both Limpopo and Eastern Cape

<sup>8</sup> Nagelkerke Pseudo R<sup>2</sup> provides a measure of the model fit and, in particular, indicates the improvement in the model with the inclusion of additional variables relative to the null model, i.e. the model with no predictive variables included.



Table 10: Factors explaining social and material deprivation among unemployed youth across the four combined provinces: A multi-variate logistic regression analysis

Predictors	Social deprivation	Material deprivation
	B	B
Background factors (R2)		
Province (Ref-Gauteng) Eastern Cape Limpopo	-2.370	-0.774 -1.033
Residential type (Ref-Urban Formal) Traditional	2.429	
Education (Ref - <Matric) Matric		-0.568
Mains connection-Electricity (Ref-Yes)		1.300
Housing condition-Poor (Ref-No)		0.616
Police on streets (Ref-Yes)		0.443
Victim of crime (Ref-No)	1.295	
Marital status (Ref-Never married) Divorced/Separated	1.986	
Transitional factors (R2)		
Financial support in hh (Ref-Yes)		0.880
Free electricity (Ref-No)		
Reinforcing factors (R2)		
R2(%)*	0.152	0.369

Note: \* = Nagelkerke Pseudo R<sup>2</sup>

generally suffered higher levels of material deprivation than Gauteng, even though the average overall levels of deprivation of Gauteng and Limpopo were very similar. Compared to youths who have not yet achieved a matriculation certificate, those individuals who have done so are associated with decreased levels of material deprivation. Lack of financial support to unemployed household members is associated with increased incidences of material deprivation. This observation supports the international experience that support from the family (loosely correlated with the concept of household) is an important contributor in mitigating the effects of material deprivation among unemployed young people.

Deprivation among unemployed youths is more strongly associated with material (R<sup>2</sup> = 0.369) than with social deprivation factors (R<sup>2</sup> = 0.152). Furthermore, only transitory and background factors were found to be significant in explaining the prevalence of material deprivation, while social deprivation was indicated by background factors alone.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

A matriculation certificate generally seems to be instrumental in reducing the levels of material deprivation, within all four provinces, and a vocational qualification among Limpopo youths produced similar results. This suggests that action to improve education is imperative, and that the National Government should prioritise the attainment of at least a matriculation certificate or vocational qualification by means of education legislation, policy development in respect of early childhood education, adult and basic education and training, curriculum reform and the implementation of new ways of delivering education. The implementation of the EPWP is also geared towards "[m]ore jobs, better jobs, decent work for all" (DPW, 2013: 1).

Evidence in the study, although limited, shows that poverty among unemployed youth is a transitional rather than an intergenerational phenomenon, and that material rather than social deprivation was found to be more prevalent. What does this mean for intervention strategies?

No statistical evidence of gender bias was found. The only statistical support for any form of deprivation associated with areas of residence pertained to

social deprivation and related more, in general, to unemployed youth from traditional areas than to those from urban formal areas – in particular in Gauteng where urban informal youth are less socially active than those from Gauteng's urban formal areas.

This study established very limited evidence in support of social security nets, as a significant determinant of deprivation. However, the importance placed on family or household support in mitigating material deprivation among the young was confirmed for both the Western Cape and the combined provincial results.

Although the importance of the welfare state could not be conclusively proven, aspects of the importance of government intervention such as basic service provision and infrastructure development – water and electricity, proper housing, tarred roads, policing, etc. – should be encouraged as it plays a clear role in mitigating the effects of deprivation. The study points to material deprivation as the dominant component; therefore, intervention efforts should focus on providing material support to the areas of deprivation identified in this study. This study has also shown that intervention policies and strategies should also be aimed at countering transitory (short-term) poverty.

Given that pooled household resources are instrumental in providing support to unemployed young people, programmes aimed at strengthening the abilities of households to continue fulfilling this role should be encouraged. Furthermore, the proposal of financial support to young unemployed males, as proposed by Møller (2010: 150, 156), should receive serious consideration. Unemployed able-bodied male household members fall through the social security net and remain financially dependent, unless they can access a disability grant. These measures cannot in any way obviate the need to provide the necessary environment that will stimulate the creation of quality jobs. However, as an interim measure and in the absence of a job-creating economy, these should be considered viable policy alternatives. If the ILO Conference report (2012: 3) is to be believed, the current and future job prospects for youth, in what the report terms "the post-crisis labour market", are not only bleak, but also deteriorating, bringing

greater urgency to some form of government intervention. Adjustments to the structuring of certain questions such as unemployment duration (to improve the capturing of long-term unemployment data), and questions related particularly to reinforcing factors would greatly enhance the use of the survey data in studies of this nature.

The results of this study link to the NDP's vision on education and social protection for 2030,<sup>9</sup> and show that government should place a special focus on the socially deprived youths of rural areas when developing policies to support and improve the plight of youth in general. The understanding of the role that cities and regions play in the movement of youths in search of a better life and economic opportunities can contribute to a better understanding of deprivation among the young unemployed and to the development of policies (Van Huyssteen & Meiklejohn 2010: 14). Similarly, there is a need to fill the social protection gap where able-bodied unemployed youths are dependent on family resources and grants. This study also highlighted the vital importance of developing and improving the education system. This component is probably the single most important outflow of the study and could lead to more sustainable forms of poverty alleviation as opposed to creating a dependency syndrome in young people on government hand-outs. Two areas for policy intervention unfold, namely greater emphasis on quality education preparing individuals for the new economy, and incentives for private-public sector partnerships to ensure that the young can also be trained in specific vocational skills.

This research contributes to the National Development Plan vision for 2030, which recognises the issue of social security and supports a minimum level of social protection.

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