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Youth unemployment in Namibia
A qualitative study among young unemployed in Katutura

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This bachelor’s study has been one of my life’s most challenging achievements in so many ways. I accomplished it on my own, travelling to Namibia, a very different country from Sweden considering culture, economy and weather etcetera.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to reach an understanding of how young unemployed in Namibia perceive their chances of getting an official employment. The unemployment rates in the country are high and many have to work on the informal labour market to get an income at all.

A qualitative methodology using interviews was chosen to reach an understanding of the interviewees’ situations. The interview guide was based on YOUNEX interview guide, but changed a bit to fit the Namibian context. Three women and three men were interviewed. The analyzing of the material was performed using theories discussing functions of an employment, social exclusion, social surroundings, finances and shame and different ways of entering the labour market.

The results show that positive thinking and dreams of a better life are strong driving forces that keep unemployed persons’ hopes up of finding an employment. The biggest issues are the financial problems that force them to work the streets.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION ..............................................................................................................1
   Background .....................................................................................................................1
   Purpose ..........................................................................................................................2
   Research questions .......................................................................................................3
   Definitions .......................................................................................................................3
   Disposition .....................................................................................................................3

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .........................................................................................4
   The importance of employment ......................................................................................5
      Latent functions ...........................................................................................................5
   Exclusion .......................................................................................................................6
   The effects of having unemployed parents or friends ....................................................8
   Finances and shame .......................................................................................................9
      Finances .......................................................................................................................10
      Shame .........................................................................................................................10
      The financial hardship-shaming model ......................................................................11
   Ways to enter the labour market ..................................................................................11

3 METHODOLOGY ............................................................................................................14
   The choice of a qualitative methodology .....................................................................14
   The interviews ...............................................................................................................15
      The making of the interview guide ..........................................................................15
         Standard and structure of the interviews ...............................................................16
   The analyzing of the empirical material ........................................................................16
   Ethics .............................................................................................................................17

4 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS ............................................................................................19
   Difficulties the unemployed youth in Namibia have to deal with ................................19
      Financial problems ...................................................................................................19
      Psychosocial effects of unemployment ....................................................................21
         Routines and structure .........................................................................................21
         Social matters .......................................................................................................22
         How shame can affect the unemployed ................................................................24
      How the unemployed are excluded from the bigger structures ................................25
   How the young unemployed solve their financial strains .........................................28
   What the unemployed are in lack of ............................................................................29
   Education as a door-opener to the labour market .......................................................30
   Not everything is negative ..........................................................................................31
      Social support ...........................................................................................................31
      Dreamjobs among the interviewees .........................................................................32
Looking at life from the bright side .................................................................32

5 SUMMARIZING AND DISCUSSION .................................................................34

Conclusions ...........................................................................................................34

What problems do the unemployed young people in Namibia face?.........................34
How do the young unemployed persons handle these problems?............................35
Is there anything the young unemployed people in Namibia are in lack of?...............35

Discussion ............................................................................................................36

Future research ....................................................................................................37

6 REFERENCES ....................................................................................................38

APPENDIX 1 – INTERVIEW GUIDE ..................................................................41
1 – INTRODUCTION

Background

Namibia is a relatively young country, being the last colony in Africa to finally reach independence in 1990 (Ilan & Lacey 2011:111ff). The country has been called German South West Africa and (British) South West Africa, and was practically a fifth province of South Africa until independence. During apartheid the aim was to segregate the black Namibian population from the white population. This is still a bleeding wound in Namibia, because the country is continuously struck by social and economic inequalities. These inequalities are told by many to be some of the most intense in the world today, according to Ilcan and Lacey. New townships were built in the late 1950s and early 1960s to make sure the black population were excluded from the white society. This included the construction of Katutura, a well-known township in Windhoek, placed kilometres away from white townships.

Since independence, Namibia has been a stable country in peace. But this is now threatened by the high unemployment rates (Ashipala 2010). Ashipala means that unemployment can cause crime, alcoholism, family breakups and have other bad influences on different social phenomenon. It also has a general impact on poverty and homelessness, mostly affecting the young people of Namibia. Since independence, black young adults have gotten their hopes up for achieving a good life, which was not the case before 1990 when apartheid ruled the country. Unfortunately, there are not enough job opportunities created for these young persons to get employments. Ashipala argues that increased investments in the country and stimulation to consumption can turn the unemployment rate around.

The industries that employ the largest amount of people are agriculture, forestry and fishing. Between the years 2008 and 2012, the workforce increased with almost the double, from 331,444 to 630,094, while the population only increased from 1,789,933 to 2,085,927 (Namibian Labour Force Surveys of 2008 and 2013). This implies that there are a lot more people employed in Namibia today than in 2008, in relation to the population. Although, in the 2013 version of the survey, it is said that the large increase in employment rates is partly because of an improved methodology. This methodology includes other categories of employed persons besides employees, like self-employed persons.

When talking about unemployment, the Namibian Labour Force Surveys (2008; 2013) use two different measurements. These are the broad measurement and the strict measurement. The broad measurement includes people that are unemployed and looking for work, but also unemployed people that are not looking for work. In the strict measurement, only the unemployed that are looking for work are included. The
unemployment rate for the broad measurement decreased from 51.2 percent in 2008 to 27.4 percent in 2012. The respective numbers for the strict measurement was a decrease from 37.6 percent in 2008 to 16.7 percent in 2012.

These measurements are criticized by Jauch (2007) who means that it is problematic to use the strict measurement for the Namibian labour market. He says that people excluded in the strict measurement can be persons who have tried for a long period of time to get a job without success, making them feel like it is a hopeless case to even try. This can actually make it irrelevant to even use the criteria of not looking for a job in a labour market consistent of such a high unemployment rate as the one in Namibia, Jauch argues.

When the attempts of getting a job fail over and over again, the young adults of Namibia tend to start working the streets, according to Mufune (2002). That means they work in the informal sector and therefore more or less are hustling for their living. This can make them seem immoral to the rest of the society. The fact is that they are just trying to earn some money to make a living, not only for themselves, but for their siblings, parents and perhaps even grandparents or cousins. Street-work is illegal because it does not result in government taxes. It seems to satisfy the persons paying for it since it ends up in a form of income, even though it is a very unstable and irregular kind of income. Mufune argues many of the street-working young people come from a background of poverty and large families of the average of ten people in one household. This means that everyone in workable condition needs to work in order to keep the family up and going, although they are already marginalized and very vulnerable.

**Purpose**

Namibia is a developing country who surely will need its young adults’ energies, curiosities, knowledge and experiences in the future. Living without a job can be hard and stressful for anyone and can affect the societal development negatively if the young adults get no chances of entering the official labour market.

The aim of the study is focused on how the interviewees feel and perceive their situation as unemployed and to deepen the understanding about the phenomenon of young adults´ unemployment situation in Namibia. The interviewees live in the town-ship of Katutura, an area that was obviously built to keep the black people far from the higher and white class areas, according to Ilcan & Lacey (2011:111).
Research questions

The research questions to be answered in this study are:
- What problems do the unemployed young people in Namibia face?
- How do the young unemployed persons handle these problems?
- Is there anything the young unemployed people in Namibia are in lack of?

Definitions

Unemployment is in this study defined as not working, being available for work and looking for work.
A longer period of unemployment in this study is 6 months or more.
Young adults refer to the ages between 18 and 30.
The interviewees have an educational level of at least grade 9 (senior secondary school).

Disposition

The next chapter presents the theoretical framework on which this study is based upon.
The following chapter consists of the methodology of collecting the data, how and why the specific methods were chosen over others. Then it is time for the analysis and results of this study. Finally, there is a concluding chapter in which the answers to the research questions are given together with a discussion of the study as a whole.
2 – THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter the theories which are used to understand the situation of unemployed young adults will be presented.

Work is hard to define and includes different forms of activities like housework and homework (Jahoda 1982:8ff). When talking about work it is employment that she refers to. Employment, in its turn, is most commonly meant as when you work to get paid. Furåker (1991) is also talking about employment in these types of terms. A gainfully employed person usually means the person is a wage earner. That also includes self-employed persons and helpers in small businesses within the household.

Temporary work is a type of employment contracted on a fixed term. It can be seasonal work or working as a substitute for somebody else, but it also includes employment that is contracted to specific jobtasks (Harsløf 2003). When these jobtasks are finished, the contract is fulfilled and the employment is over. Further, occasional work is included in temporary work. This is a bit harder to define, but Harsløf still offers two kinds of definitions as possible. The first one is work that is very short-term temporary, like day labour contracting. The other one is work that has no formal contract, mainly meaning work outside the official labour market, which may not necessarily exclude the first one.

Jahoda (1982:9) says all types of work will contribute to a nation’s wealth, including work on the unofficial labour market. This can be explained by the fact that the wage earned by a person will be used to consume, in order for the person and their family to have a normal life with food on the table and roof over their heads. At the same time it is also devastating for the society that people work outside the official labour market, because that type of work brings huge losses in tax incomes, Jahoda continues.

Youth is a period in a person’s life often consisting of many different workplaces which can be interrupted by for example travelling, maternity leaves and education periods (Harsløf 2003). To integrate into the labour market is therefore only one of many transitions young adults have to deal with. Young people today are the first generation in recent history that has to enter a labour market where temporary contracts are allowed to a larger extent than ever seen before. Both in countries with high and low youth unemployment rates, temporarily employed persons consider themselves as underemployed. Being underemployed means that you work at least ten hours less than you want to on a temporary contract or an occasional employment. Harsløf argues that when you work under these conditions, you are not very well integrated on the labour market.

In the next section there is a presentation of what an employment can mean in a person’s life, but also what can happen when you are/get unemployed.
The importance of employment

An employment is important in people’s lives for many reasons. One of the most obvious reasons is the income you get when you are employed. An employment is the most reliable insurance for living a good life. It offers structures and opportunities for the unemployed young adults to show they can provide to the society. At a workplace the young adults can get included in the society by the fact that they meet people every day, according to Mufune (2002).

But there are other factors that perhaps are less obvious until you start to think about them. It is shown that people who have been employed at a workplace where they felt stimulated, have bigger problems than ones that consider their former jobs as something they just needed to do to get paid (Nordenmark & Strandh 1999). According to Nordenmark (1999a; 1999b), unemployed young people have stronger non-financial employment motivation than older unemployed have. This means the young adults can have a harder time during unemployment than the older do, because they seem to find more positive psychosocial effects of work. The unemployed people who cannot replace the employment’s effects on psychosocial needs, suffer more from negative consequences than those who can (Nordenmark & Strandh).

Latent functions
In this section a presentation of psychosocial effects of an employment are exemplified by Jahoda’s (1982) latent functions which include matters like regularity and social needs.

One of the most commonly used approaches to the functions of an employment is Marie Jahoda’s functionalistic approach, which describes five latent functions that come along with an employment. The functions are (1) time structure, (2) social contacts, (3) inclusion in collective purposes, (4) regular activity and (5) status and identity (Jahoda 1982:39). They were singled out during the unemployment in the 1930s and are additional to the economic, or the manifest, function. A loss of these functions can cause negative consequences for people during unemployment.

The first function suggests that having a job gives people a time structure, making it possible to plan their days. According to Jahoda it is devastating to miss out on the regularity an employment gives, even though it might be stressful to know that one always has to be on a schedule. When you do not have an employment, you miss out on the structures of a normal day.

In the second function, Jahoda argues you also get provided with social contacts when working. The workplace is indeed the place where people spend their time most, apart from family time. During a workweek you have all that time to spend with your
colleagues, giving you plenty of time to get to know each other. During free-time you probably spend time with the nearest family, making it hard to find time for friends and relatives. As unemployed you might not have the same amount of people around you that can be your friend, disconnecting you from an important social network in life.

The third function discusses that an employment offers a chance to be included in collective purposes where working together is an important matter and the employees work towards a goal together. It could by instance be a group of employees at a company that build cars. They work as a team with different areas of expertise, but they are all needed in order for the goal to be reached – a new car is built and ready to be sold. Unemployed persons can miss out on this if they are not able to find a substitute in the world of unemployment.

In the fourth function, it is argued that a regular activity is important to people, for example so that they know what they are about to do instead of having the time just fly by. So if you are unemployed, this means that you lack of this regularity.

Finally, Jahoda’s fifth function suggests that a job can provide a person with a specific social status and identity. You might reflect yourself in a job, making it a part of your persona. If a job is something you lack, then you might find yourself unknowing of who you are and you can lose status in your social network.

When you are unemployed, you can miss out on these important latent functions, which in its turn can lead to exclusion in different ways.

Exclusion

Below is a presentation of Kronauer’s (1998) thoughts about social exclusion – what it means, the effects of it and how it can be established in a person’s life.

Social exclusion should only be used as a concept when a person is in a marginally economic situation and also is socially isolated (Kronauer 1998). A marginalized person might have been pushed away from the employment system. They can be considered as excluded from the society by others, but also by themselves. This is because they do not live by what is accepted as good standards in general, according to Kronauer. For these people, the next thing is to learn to live on the basic income they can get from the welfare state, if they are lucky to live in one. And even if they do, many probably need to work on the informal labour market to survive. There are basically six central dimensions of social exclusion, which are (1) labour market exclusion, (2) economic exclusion, (3) cultural exclusion, (4) social isolation, (5) spatial exclusion and finally (6) institutional exclusion.
Labour market exclusion happens when barriers to employment are formed, like employers demanding specific educational levels even for easy jobs like cleaning. This makes it hard for people with few skills to enter or re-enter the labour market. But to consider a person who is excluded from the labour market as being socially excluded is not satisfying, Kronauer argues. Instead, the labour market exclusion must also be combined with others of the mentioned dimensions to cause social exclusion.

When excluded from the labour market, unemployed can find themselves dependent on the welfare system and not being able to support the family or themselves as society expect individuals to do. Kronauer says that economic exclusion means that a person basically is poor, meaning they live under circumstances that are extremely restricted. They can be in need of working in the informal labour market to be able to live a normal life, as people in general perceive is accepted.

Cultural exclusion is reached when a person has no chance of living his/her life after generally accepted norms and values. Further, Kronauer argues that it can lead to social sanctions when a person is not able to reach what is expected by their social surroundings.

The manifestations of social isolation can result in individual isolation or group formation. When individual isolation is the case, the person has lost many of their social contacts and their identity can be barricaded. When a person seems to be concentrated with other people in the same kind of situation, they together create a group formation where they can identify themselves with each other.

Social isolation can also be related to social support. This seems to be very important to young adults struggling from unemployment (Lorenzini & Giugni 2010; Bergqvist et al. 2012), especially the support coming from family and their closest friends. The closest people seem to be very supportive and try to help their unemployed near ones. This help can involve showing appropriate job opportunities they have noticed, perhaps online or in a newspaper.

Spatial exclusion can become the result of the above named types of exclusion. People struggling with the same type of life situations, like financial problems, can be gathered in specific areas. In some cases many of them can be placed in a town-ship in a city, leaving them segregated from the normal society.

When a person is poor or unemployed, Kronauer argues that it is quite common that they do not get access to different institutions, like getting a loan from a bank or getting governmental support. This can be understood as institutional exclusion. They can find themselves in the need of turning to specific institutions that administrate people who are marginalized.
All these types of exclusion might lead to a situation where young adults suffering from unemployment can find themselves not being accepted in the society. This means they can become victims of societal exclusion, which is argued by Kieselbach (2003) who addresses that unemployment can make it hard for young adults to get integrated to society. He says that Kronauer’s six dimensions of social exclusion are important when speaking about young adults and their integration to society. Further, Kieselbach lists several factors that can lead to social exclusion of young people; low qualifications, low or no social support at all and the case of them not getting any institutional support. Out of these factors Kieselbach finds that social support seems to be the most important one. In areas where a high level of family support is given, there is lower risk of social exclusion for young persons. When considering this, an assumption can be made that people who do not receive social support have a higher risk of finding themselves being socially excluded.

As presented below, one can see that family, relatives and friends can be an advantage or a malfunction for unemployed young adults having a hard time with unemployment.

**The effects of having unemployed parents or friends**

An interesting aspect of unemployment is whether the surrounding people of the unemployed persons are in the same situation as them, or not. Below is a presentation of this subject, suggesting that this aspect is especially important when people are born into a problematic economic situation that can affect their lives in the long-term (Kieselbach 2003; Mufune 2002; Nordenmark 1999a; 1999b).

The burden of the households that include at least two unemployed persons is very high, especially considering that about half of these households are categorized as disconnected from the labour market (Klasen and Woolard 2008). This means that they receive no labour income and no payments from relatives not living in the specific household. Unemployment often forces people to stay within these types of households. This is stopping the unemployed young adults to create their own households and prevents them from moving out of a rural area where an employment is hard to find. In rural areas it is also problematic to get a good education and the non-existence of training programmes and employment services are also problematic issues. This is a big problem since the unemployed young adults cannot improve their human capital, keeping them unskilled. Their connection to the labour market is for that reason continuously small, Klasen and Woolard argue.

The uneducated young people often seem to walk in their parents’ shoes. The combination of this and a low social economic background often lead them to the need of working the streets (Mufune 2002). This means they work in the unofficial labour market which is not considered as a proper way of working, because it does not generate
income taxes for the society to develop. Mufune means the young unemployed people are also seen as not being in the possession of employable skills. This makes it hard for them to sell their workforce even for irregular jobs at the official labour market. Also Kieselbach (2003) argues that indeed the social origin of the young people can be a key factor in their lives, suggesting that the risk of social exclusion is increased if they origin from a family who struggle with social problems like poverty.

According to Nordenmark (1999a; 1999b) it is common that unemployed young adults’ parents and/or partners are unemployed as well. Nordenmark’s findings suggest unemployment tends to be concentrated within groups. Unemployed young adults have many friends struggling with unemployment as well. It can be tempting to suggest that unemployed people that are surrounded by other unemployed persons do not want to search for a job. But Nordenmark means that looking for a job is still a high priority, even if people around are unemployed too. Unemployed young people surrounded by other unemployed persons find it hard to adapt to their situation. If they would know people holding employments, perhaps these could introduce them to employers.

As presented above, it is more common that unemployed young people have unemployed parents compared with the ones who have an employment. This can mean the unemployed were raised in an environment of financial problems, causing shaming experiences that can follow them in life. In the following section a presentation of finances and shame is made.

**Finances and shame**

As consequences of unemployment, financial problems and shaming experiences can become the reality for many young adults (Rantakeisu et al. 1997; Rantakeisu et al. 1999; Starrin et al. 1997; Starrin et al. 2009). Financial problems are common among young adults who are unemployed (Lorenzini & Giugni 2010). What these young people really wish for is to have a normal life including a job, which would make them able to pay bills and other expenses, and have a social life.

**Finances**

To be able to live requires a certain amount of income and the amount is dependent on how many you have to support with that income. Rantakeisu et al (1996:112) suggest that age plays an important role in their reasoning. Young adults living at home probably do not have the same financial pressures as an adult who has children to support. Neither would probably an elderly person, who already have completed their payments on their house and so on, have the same financial strains as a parent with children living at home.
Rantakeisu et al. (1999) found that more than half of the unemployed had to use their personal savings as finances after becoming unemployed, while about 25 percent of the unemployed had been forced to look for financial help at a social security office. Further, there seemed to be a relation between the degree of financial hardship and the amount of mental problems such as depression and a feeling of being powerless.

A link between a higher degree of financial hardship and reduced contacts with near ones among the unemployed is found by Rantakeisu et al. (1999), along with a decrease of activities in free time. A high degree of financial hardship also leaves a majority of the unemployed with anxiety, worries and low self-confidence.

The existence of financial problems can thus lead to situations where the unemployed pull themselves away from social activities because they feel ashamed of their situation (Rantakeisu et al. 1997; Rantakeisu et al. 1999; Starrin et al. 1997; Starrin et al. 2009).

Shame
To have an employment is decent and suits the standards of being part of a society today (Rantakeisu et al. 1996:55f). An honorable person does what is right and expected by society and social standards, meaning he/she is working. The problem therefore is that an unemployed person apparently does not live up to these standards and expectations from their social surroundings. It can be dishonorable and shameful to be unemployed, but it is often the unemployed themselves who think that people around them consider them as lazy and unproductive, Rantakeisu et al. continues. The unemployed persons´ feelings of being humiliated and criticized can develop into shame when they are excluded from a social group; the employed persons. The unemployment situation can lead to feelings of being less valuable since an employment is considered as normal and decent. When a person is not in possession of an employment, he/she can lose the feeling of being competent and respected by others, making them vulnerable to how others consider them. If people keep handing the unemployed negative comments about their unemployment, social contacts might become something the unemployed avoid.

People around the unemployed seemed to shame them because they did not have an employment (Rantakeisu et al. 1997; Rantakeisu et al. 1999). Some unemployed persons experience irritation and annoyance by others. Being talked to judgmentally and seen as incapable or less competent are experiences unemployed persons have to deal with as well. The longer the unemployment period proceeds, the more attitudes seem negative, such as the unemployed are lazy and not worth listening to. Another report (Bergqvist et al. 2012) shows similar results where the unemployed young adults blame themselves for not having a job. But they also perceive that employed people in their surroundings are expecting them to find a job after finished education.
The financial hardship-shaming model

The assumptions of the financial hardship-shaming model are that financial hardship, together with shaming experiences, can cause negative psychosocial effects like lowered level of activity and the withdrawal from social gatherings and activities (Rantakeisu et al. 1999). Starrin et al. (1997) argue that unemployment and its negative effects on social activities for the individual can be linked to the combination of financial problems and feelings of shame. They found that financial distress and high feelings of shame combined created several psychosocial problems for the young unemployed. Later studies confirm the relation between financial difficulties and psychosocial problems, for example by Starrin et al. (2009). According to their results, psychosocial problems like anxiety, depression and low psychological well-being are significantly higher for persons struggling with financial hardship, especially for the groups young, unemployed and persons with low educational levels. The same groups also showed even higher significance levels when the relation between psychosocial problems and shaming experiences were tested. For both sexes, psychosocial problems were significantly higher in combination with financial distress and shaming experiences compared with persons not struggling with financial problems and/or shame.

On background of the above presented theories, it is now time to present some ideas on how to find a way into the labour market when being unemployed.

Ways to enter the labour market

There are different ways to improve one’s chances of entering the labour market. Education is often one of the first methods that come to mind, which is also what for instance Mufune (2002), Recollitet and Werquin (2003) and Strandh and Nordlund (2008) support in different ways. In a country like Namibia, it can also be easier to find employment opportunities in urban areas, rather than rural ones, which Klasen and Woolard (2008) suggest.

Moving to urban areas can help people find employment since the highest unemployment rates are found in rural areas (Klasen and Woolard 2008). Many unemployed persons stay in households in rural areas because that is where they can find economic support through a private safety net. This can lead to a bad circle where the chances of being continuously unemployed are very high. For those who are supporting the unemployed it can also be very stressful, since they might not have another option. When a household consist of many people they usually house small children as well, meaning that there are many mouths to be fed on a usually small income, the authors continue. Therefore, if the unemployed would migrate to urban areas with higher probabilities of getting an employment, the remaining people in the household would have more money per person to use. At the same time, if the
unemployed would find an employment, they would probably help out in their old household with money.

Mufune (2002) argues that formal education can help the individual to change their lives as an investment for their own future. When young adults drop out of school, they also make themselves unavailable for skilled work. This leads to the fact that they can only do unskilled work. When unemployed young adults are searching for jobs they usually have to have been experienced for it. Experience achieved by unskilled work will not be considered as highly valuable on the labour market as experience achieved by skilled work, Mufune argues.

For the young adults to really develop, they need to have a good education to rely on, Mufune argues. When attending to school they can also get socially included. Formal education is basically built on passing knowledge on to the next generation. An education of secondary school and more is a door-opener for young adults to join the official labour market and a formal job in Namibia. But Mufune says it is also necessary for young adults to be able to speak English since it is the official language of the country. This knowledge can lead to their involvement in Namibia’s modern society. Since independence the government has put more commitment into education for young adults, but the access to education is still very varied for the youth.

The older the young adult is when experiencing their first unemployment, the less they are likely to be unemployed later on, according to Recollitet and Werquin (2003). This goes hand in hand with educational level. If they do not study they have to enter the labour market, suggesting youth unemployment can only become reality for young adults if they decide to avoid education. Thus, a higher education usually prevents a young adult from becoming unemployed. An inverse correlation is existing between average length of unemployment and the estimated risk of being unemployed later on. This means that long-term unemployed young adults have a lower risk of being recurrent unemployed than other unemployed young adults. The contradictory situation can possibly have two explanations, Recollitet and Werquin argue. The first one is that unemployed young adults in western countries can get quite a lot of support from society through training programmes and active labour market policies (ALMPs). A second possible explanation is that the time between the beginning of the study and end of the follow up study is a bit short. This means the chance of being recurrent unemployed can be the same between the groups in a similar study performed during a longer period of time.

Education is a well-grounded method to get closer to entering the labour market, but it is not the only one. To enter the labour market can also be facilitated by above named societal support like active labour market programmes. The ALMPs are designed for young adults who are not well educated, perhaps they have troubles with learning or
there is something else that makes education a hard way to go for some. Recollitet and Werquin (2003), as well as Strandh and Nordlund (2008) mention ALMPs as possible ways to enter the labour market.

There are two forms of ALMPs (Nordlund 2010). The first kind focuses on direct training, which searches to improve the human capital through education and by developing skills. This is called ALMP training. The other one, called ALMP employment focuses on subsidized employment, meaning that the tasks done are not competing with regular jobs. ALMPs are searching to broaden an unemployed person’s labour market networks and to encourage them to work. The two forms of ALMPs are to be seen as investments of human capital, Strand and Nordlund (2008) argue. The ALMPs are positive in two different ways depending on if the unemployed is included in ALMP training or ALMP employment, the authors continue. ALMP training has more effects in the long-term while ALMP employment mainly shows very positive results in the short-term.
3 – METHODOLOGY

This chapter will consist of the presentation of how the study was performed, why the specific theories included was chosen and why a qualitative methodology was preferred. First, a presentation of the qualitative methodology and why this was the chosen methodology in this specific study. In the next section there is a description of the choice of interviewees and how the interviews were made. This is followed by the explanation of how the interview guide was created. Then it is time to present how the analyzing of the material was made. Finally, a description of the research ethics this study is based upon, together with a discussion about how these were reached.

Research within the subject of this study has been made for example by Bergqvist et al. (2012). The authors´ report was included in the YOUNEX (Youth, Unemployment and Exclusion in Europe) project, examining unemployment and consequences of it among young adults. Some comparisons between this study and the results of the YOUNEX project were made. Questions used in the YOUNEX project was also used in this study, with changes made to fit a Namibian context. The comparisons were made to judge if there were different results between young unemployed people in Namibia and young unemployed people in Sweden.

The choice of a qualitative methodology

The methodology chosen was qualitative since the aim of the study was focused on how the interviewees felt and perceived their situation (Trost 2010:53) as unemployed and to deepen the understanding about the phenomenon of young adults´ unemployment situation in Namibia. To be able to do that it was necessary to talk to them and try to understand what they meant. This could be done by asking follow up questions during the interviews. If a quantitative methodology would have been chosen, the study would be focused on how many people were unemployed similar questions where the answers could be generalized, which was not a main concern in this study.

A strategic sampling of the interviewees is not representative for a population but this is not what a qualitative study is aiming for (Trost 2010:141). Since this was the type of sampling it meant that this study was not supposed to produce any general results. The aim was instead to reach an understanding about the specific conditions of unemployment among young adults in Namibia.

The amount of interviews that should be performed in a qualitative study depended on what was to be investigated, but a relatively small amount of interviews was preferred (Trost 2010:143). In the end, six interviews were performed in this study, including three females and three males. About 45-60 minutes were used for each interview.
The interviews

The six interviewees included in this study were chosen strategically. A couple of criterion had to be fulfilled to fit into the study’s context. First, they had to be between the ages of 18 and 30, secondly, they had to be finished with grade 9 in school and thirdly, they had to live in Katutura, an area within the capital of Windhoek. To make sure all of these criteria were fulfilled, help was provided from two contact persons in Windhoek that could be considered as “gate-keepers” (Trost 2010:140). Their help meant that they were the ones who chose the persons according to who they knew and those persons´ willingness to take part in this study. It was their contacts with the locals in the area that made this study possible.

The contact persons were given the criterion of what the interviewees were to fulfill to fit into the study. They contacted appropriate candidates to ask if they would take part in the study and when they had accepted their participation, a time for the interview was set. It was important that the interviewees felt secure during the interview, which was why they had a chance to decide where they wanted it to take place (Trost 2010:65). The interviews were supposed to be made without others around to make sure they were not affected by surrounding people. As far as possible, the surroundings during the interviews were quiet and calm without interruptions. This was at times hard to achieve since it was common that they lived together with other people. The places where the interviews were performed were at their homes or a home of someone they knew in all cases except for one, which was performed where the author lived during the study. The only reason this interview was made there was that this person was comfortable there as well as home.

The making of the interview guide

The interview guide was based on the Swedish interview guide from the YOUNEX project (Bergqvist et al. 2012). The Swedish questions were translated by the author and a few questions were not used because of cultural differences between the countries. A few questions were added and a few were changed a bit to fit the cultural aspect of Namibia. For example, because of our different ways of talking about family, the word household was chosen to be used instead of the word family, which was used in the YOUNEX interview guide.

The interview guide had eight areas of subject, where two areas treated background questions. Other areas of subject were handling the social dimension of the interviewees’ lives and how they coped with their unemployment situation. The interview guide also included questions about the financial situations of the young unemployed, as well as how they perceived their societal connections. Finally, questions about how they expected their future to look like were asked.
Standard and structure of the interviews

The interviews had a low degree of standardizing since the questions were not asked in a specific order, but were asked depending on how the interviewees answered other questions (Trost 2010:39). The questions were unstructured, which meant they were as open as possible to let the interviewee decide on how they wanted to answer instead of getting questions that could only be answered in specific ways. Leading questions were avoided to the farthest. Since the interview guide had specific fields of subject together with possibilities of varied understandings and answers for the interviewees, the interviews could be considered as semi-structured (Patel & Davidson 2011:81f).

The analyzing of the empirical material

The interviews were all transcribed and printed by the author to make sure everything was included. The transcription was as exact as possible to make sure that what the interviewees said was quoted word by word. The interviews were recorded with a dictaphone after asking if the interviewees would allow it. The use of a dictaphone was to get the interviews in MP3-format, so that the transcription could be made on a computer. In that way the interviews could be paused and rewinded very smoothly, making it easier to make sure everything they said was written down. This is the normal way of processing recorded interviews and it usually creates a large amount of texts to be handled (Patel & Davidson 2011:120).

The material was read several times before the final analyzing was started and during the analysis it was read again to make sure the process was continuant (Patel & Davidson 2011:121). Several notes were written in the copies of the transcribed interviews to make sure the thoughts about specific quotes were to be remembered and included in the analyzing. It was important that the comments around the quotes were detailed to make sure the reader did not have to guess what in the quote was interesting and informative. At the same time, the comments was not to give everything away so the reader could create an own understanding of the analyzing and its credibility. As Patel and Davidson argue, the using of names together with the quotes was made to point out that there were interesting findings in all interviews.

During the reading of the material there were different categories that could be observed. These were partly put together using Corbin and Strauss´ (2008:159f) grounded theory and the part of analyzing data for concepts. Higher-level concepts, or categories, were created during the reading after patterns were revealed from interesting sentences in the material. The names of the categories were chosen depending on what was found, for example one category could be named finances. Under the higher-level concept there are lower-level concepts within the category. An example of a lower-level concept within the category named finances was financial strains. The concepts were
developed from the collected material. This was all made to understand what was included in the data that perhaps was not obvious until it was conceptualized.

The following quote is an example of where the category *finances* was found, together with the concept *financial strains*:

.../ My mother is unemployed... ah... and she’s suffering a lot. And since I’m her first born... ah... you know, she’s always relying on me, though I’m not working. So, the little that I get from my friends and all that... I sometimes have to share that with her... yeah... So... it’s quite difficult. (Edward)

Edward was talking about how he could not just think about himself when it came to finances, he also had to look after his own mother. Since he did not have an income it was very hard for him to support her as well. The little money he got, he also had to share with her to make sure she was okay. The whole quote referred to money, which was therefore included in the higher-level concept *finances*. As Edward had to share the money on an already restrained financial situation, it was therefore included in the lower-level concept *financial strains*.

**Ethics**

During research it is very important that principles of research ethics are being considered (Vetenskapsrådet 2002). Society and its population are dependent on qualified research for the achievement of societal development. The demand of research is achieved when existing knowledge and methods are continually advanced, while the demand of individual protection is reached when the research do not reveal any personal information. According to Vetenskapsrådet, the second demand of these two is the most important when considering ethics during research. Within the demand of individual protection, there are four main demands, which are presented below.

The four general rules of ethics to be considered within the demand of individual protection are (1) the demand of information, (2) the demand of agreement, (3) the demand of confidentiality and (4) the demand of usage (Vetenskapsrådet 2002).

The demand of information was achieved by explaining to the interviewees what field of subject the study was to discuss. They were also told that the study was for a bachelor’s study at Karlstad University in Sweden and that their active participation was voluntary. Information that they could interrupt the participation at any time was given. The author also explained that the study was to be executed by interviewing six persons who were living under similar conditions. The information was given before the
interview took place to make sure they understood they could interrupt and choose not to answer questions they did not want to answer.

The author made sure the interviewees agreed to participate since they were active participants in the study. An explanation was given that the participation was voluntary. They were told it was possible to drop out of the interview at any time if they wanted to, which included a chance to cancel their participation even after the interview was completed. Therefore, the demand of agreement was reached.

To reach the confidentiality demand, the persons involved in the study was not to be named or by other personal information recognized. Instead of using their real names, simulated names were created. The interviewees were assured that the only person who would keep the full interviews was the author. Thus, the demand of confidentiality was to be considered as fulfilled.

The demand of usage referred to the using of the interviews in research purposes only. This was achieved by the destruction of the recorded interviews and the transcription of the same when the study was completed.

In addition to these demands, the author also sent the completed study to the contact persons in Windhoek, who in their turn could hand the results of the study to the interviewees, which was a recommendation from Vetenskapsrådet (2002).

It was very important that the relation between the author and the interviewee was as relaxed and neutral as possible. The author had to show interest and acceptance before the interviewee and their expressions during the interview situation (Patel & Davidson 2011:75). This was reached when the author always tried to follow the interviewee’s expression, for example if they answered something they thought was funny and laughed, the author would laugh with them to show an understanding of the interviewee. For the same reason, the author avoided as far as possible to show reaction to the interviewee’s answer, which could otherwise be noted as judgment or criticism.
In this chapter the data collected will be analyzed based on the research questions singled out in the introduction. First, some of the difficulties emerging from unemployment are presented. This is followed by examples on how the unemployed solve their financial problems, what they feel they are in lack of and how education can be a way to get closer to the labour market. Finally, there is a section describing how life still can be appreciated and positive for the interviewees.

**Difficulties the unemployed youth in Namibia have to deal with**

The unemployed young adults in this study face many problems in their everyday life, consistent with earlier research results (Jahoda 1982; Rantakeisu et al. 1999; Nordenmark 1999a; Nordenmark 1999b). Financial difficulties are the first noticeable problems and will be the first subject of analysis.

*Financial problems*

The clearest detail that comes out from this study is that the interviewees live under circumstances that can be considered as being poor. Being poor means they live under extreme conditions with no income. The interviewees are therefore facing economic exclusion (Kronauer 1998). The money they do have is earned by for example selling kapana\(^1\) or helping people with damaged cars. Money can also be given or loaned to them from relatives.

When the unemployed young people in Namibia live under these kinds of circumstances they can be considered as disconnected from the labour market, as the case is in Klasen and Woolard’s (2008) study. Their study is discussing the problems of households with several people, including at least two unemployed persons and where incomes are not stable. This means the unemployed people often have to rely on others around them for financial support. These quotes support and exemplify this:

/.../ still unemployed, still under my father’s roof... ah... so I don’t think it is a very easy thing at all. It’s very difficult, it’s quite difficult... to live under your parents... Ah... they do help me a lot... /.../ I can’t just rely on him... for him to buy me clothes and all that, so that is... So those are the things I have to... to take care of myself you know... So... it’s a very... it’s a very, very delicate matter, like seriously... (Edward)

\(^1\) Kapana is barbecued meat which people sell directly from the barbecue on the side of the street, usually just outside their homes.
And so far my income comes from little jobs I get to do here and there I go help out, in order for me to like buy my kids some shoes and buy myself some stuff. So, with the support of my mum, which I really appreciate she supports me, in ways which I can’t even explain. (Samuel)

There are situations where the unemployed have no money at all and they have to share a household with relatives. But there might be other relatives or friends, not living within the household that have an income. These persons might be able to contribute to the unemployed people’s financial situation, below shown in two different ways:

... my brother, he’s in engineering, maybe when he get money, then he bring for us the money so that we can buy the food. He’s the only one. ... not borrowing the money, he just give us. (Linda)

Ahm… If I have the financial problem that my husband cannot solve, I can talk with one of my friends, if they can help me. So, if it’s in the middle of the month I talk to one of my friend if I’m in need of N$200 or N$300, then if he can help me, so when my husband get paid I can pay back, end of the month. (Sophie)

A certain amount of income is needed in order to live a normal life (Rantakeisu et al. 1996:112). Age plays a role in this, where young adults and elderly probably do not have the same amount of financial strains as people who live with children at home. But in this study this is not necessarily the case. Some of the interviewees need to help other family members with finances at the same time as they have financial troubles of their own. Below is an example of problems emerging from being born into a family with financial strains. You can actually become the one that your parents have to rely on, instead of being the one who can rely on your parents, as in Edward’s case:

My mother is unemployed… ah… and she’s suffering a lot. And since I’m her first born… ah… you know, she’s always relying on me, though I’m not working. So, the little that I get from my friends and all that… I sometimes have to share that with her… yeah… So… it’s quite difficult.

Edward’s situation as being the one his mother has to rely on can probably be traced back to the financial hardship of his own childhood. This can be connected to Mufune’s (2002) arguments about walking in your parents’ shoes together with being born into financial hardship. This is also supported by Kieselbach (2003), who says that being
born into social exclusion in a family struggling with economic issues might follow them into grown life as well.

**Psychosocial effects of unemployment**

Unemployment can create many psychosocial problems among different groups of people (Jahoda 1982; Rantakeisu et al. 1997; Rantakeisu et al. 1999; Starrin et al. 1997; Starrin et al. 2009). In the following part, psychosocial problems are presented in three segments. These are (1) routines and structure, (2) social matters and (3) how shame can affect the unemployed.

**Routines and structure**

An employment makes sure that you have your days covered with work activities and you also probably have specific times when you have breaks during a workday (Jahoda 1982:39, 59). So when you are unemployed, you can miss out on that if you do not make sure that you do things on special times. Perhaps you can get up in the morning and have breakfast, just to get the day started and not just sleep the time away. Then you can put up goals like looking for jobs and writing CV’s that you can use in different job applications. It is when you lose the *time structure* you can end up with days that just fly by. Not having a job makes it necessary for unemployed people to do something else in order to have a form of daily routines and *regular activity*. Some can handle that by doing things the same way every day and creating new routines, like Samuel’s quote implies:

/…/ Basically I just do the same thing – wake up, go bath, take my CVs, go jobhunting, go home and clean up, and then that’s it. That’s it. It´s the same day each and every day, it´s what I do.

Samuel has found his way to stay focused on his goal of finding an employment and continues to push himself towards that goal. For others, it can be harder to fill the days with activities, as can be understood by the following quotes:

Normally… Let me say… I´m always at home, I only get time to go out when there is like working posts that’s being advertised in newspapers sometimes, handing my CVs and all that. That’s… let me say that, that is the only time I can say I had a busy day. (Edward)

/…/ I´m struggling. I can only clean my house, buy something to sell, like kapana or fry meat… People in Windhoek by five, this time, you make meat and people buy this time… /…/ (Sophie)
A normal day, it’s just with friends… so… just staying at home with my family, just talking. (John)

It seems like *daily routines* and *time structure* are important for the unemployed in order not to fall into a wheel where you do nothing. Thus, the results of this study support Jahoda’s (1982) findings. It is necessary for the interviewees to continue or start up routines and structure their days since they do not have a job to attend to.

**Social matters**

People can include their job as a part of their personality (Jahoda 1982:39), meaning that during unemployment they lack that part of themselves, especially if they have had an employment before. At the same time they might lose the *status and identity* in their social network. The following quote from Samuel shows how the status can change from being employed to unemployed:

Yeah, I used to like… I used to go with my friends out, but now… it seems like they are the ones paying, I’m not the one paying which is not a good feeling, so I just… I rather just stay at home, because it’s not a good feeling. /…/ I just left it in the past. I’m just living the life because I can’t keep on dreaming about something which I’m not going to have, even though if I wanted to so… I just leave it there in the past.

Samuel shows feelings of missing the *status and identity* he had when he was employed, but since his situation is different now, he feels he has to leave those feelings behind for now.

When you are around other unemployed people, you can get stuck in doing nothing or just “hanging out” without any specific purpose. And when you want to do something else with your life, you can end up being very lonely. This might happen because the persons around you can still be stuck in the same old patterns of just spending time together. They are not trying to push and support themselves or each other towards getting a life with goals and ambitions. The following quote from Samuel exemplifies what can happen when you decide to break up with your destructive *social contacts* in order to find your own way of creating a better life for yourself:

/…/ but we are not so in to each other anymore, because now I try to take a new path, which is a one man path, trying to achieve something in life, yeah.

Samuel’s situation supports one of Kronauer’s (1998) types of *social isolation*, which is the loss of social contacts for the individual. Even if Samuel has chosen to leave them
behind, it is still a loss of contacts in his life. It might also be hard to find new friends who can stand behind and support his choice of becoming something more than just an unemployed young adult.

The interviewees speak about groups being formed by several people who are unemployed. Perhaps this occurs because none of them have anything to do. Groups formed like this is supported by Kronauer’s (1998) findings as well. Some people live together with relatives where none in the household have an employment. This means they all spend their time at home doing nothing. At the same time, they do not even have friends at all. All their contacts with people are within the family, making it even harder to break out of the social isolation. Louise says the following:

Yeah, I have my auntie. She’s the one who support me in everything. And friends… I don’t have friends, really… I don’t have friends, seriously.

In Namibia you need to have a good network of contacts that can help you get a job, people who can recommend you to employers. This can become a form of exclusion from the labour market, if you do not have a good contact network. If this is the case, you probably have lower possibilities of being recommended to employers. But it is not just a good network of contacts that can help you. Namibia is still a corrupted country according to the interviewees. You might need to pay the possible contact to push you forward in the hiring process, as can be understood by this quote from Samuel:

/…/ Seriously, I don’t know… because our system in Namibia is corrupt, the only way you can get a job faster is when you have money to pay somebody to get that job for you. Yeah… If you look for a job, you have to have someone on the inside. Then you pay that someone to push your CV forward so that you can be the first one to be employed. So, since I don’t have any money, so I just have to wait, ’til my day comes maybe.

It seems like the interviewees that have had employments before were just happy they had an income. According to Nordenmark and Strandh’s (1999) findings, this should mean they are not affected with as big problems as if they would have felt stimulated at their former workplace. The authors mean that unemployed people who can replace the psychosocial and economic effects of an employment will enjoy a higher psychological well-being, compared to the ones who cannot perform that replacement. If this would be applicable on the interviewees in this study as well, they should not suffer from psychosocial problems related to their unemployment situation. The interviewees that have had employments before, even just for the income, still feel psychologically bad
about their unemployment situations. The results of this study are thus contradictory to Nordenmark and Strandh’s (1999) findings.

When you are unemployed you will probably take any kind of employment regardless of the type of contract. The biggest wish among the interviewees is to get a permanent employment, but they would take jobs on contracts as well just to get an income to support themselves and their near ones. To work on a temporary contract can mean you work for a specific time period or that you work as a substitute for somebody else (Harslof 2003), for example during illness or maternity leave. But a permanent job is definitely what is preferred among the interviewees, as you can understand from the following quotes:

/…/ you’re just staying for six or seven month, or maybe even for one year. Actually, the permanent work is the thing that I want, so that I can help my auntie, even to help in the house, to buy something. (Linda)

/…/ Permanent job would be better because by then you will have benefit in everything you… then you know that I can work here for as long as I want to instead of always thinking that this contract going to end soon, when will I get the next job. At least it’s a place you can feel like, okay, let me settle down and I will do my job as I’m supposed to… for as long as I can. (Samuel)

Yeah, I’d really love a permanent job. Just to help out at home, most of the time. (John)

How shame can affect the unemployed
The interviewees reveal that being unemployed can be considered as being less valuable to people around you and can cause feelings of shame. Samuel’s quote shows that this can be hard for the young unemployed to deal with:

There are times when they talk about, when they talk badly of you… like you are unemployed, what can you do and stuff like but… as a human being it´s an understandable factor too…

Samuel’s experience is consistent with results of other studies (Rantakeisu et al. 1997; Rantakeisu et al. 1999; Starrin et al. 1997; Starrin et al. 2009), where unemployed young adults feel they are being talked to judgmentally by others. The interviewees also consider themselves as being useless in many ways and that their situation as unemployed is their own fault. This is consistent with the results in a Swedish context as well (Bergqvist et al. 2012). The reasons the interviewees feel that way are many. It
often comes back to the fact that they cannot help their relatives in the household as much as they wish. When they are asked about how they feel about being unemployed, the shame factor shines through again, as these quotes indicate:

It´s not a good feeling really… It feels like you´re useless, it feels like you… It feels like you´re doing nothing with your life. People look at you down, you feel like people are looking at you down, as if you are now a midget or something, but you´re not. It feels like everybody, it seems like… because here in Namibia in order to gain respect you have to have a job or have money. (/…/ (Samuel)

I´m feeling bad… cause, if… I have some of my friend who are working. You can see there is a big difference. You know, sometimes if you need something that you cannot get it. You can just face stress and feel unhappy, at that time you don´t even talk to someone. But if you´re working you´re happy and support yourself… it´s difficult to ask someone for help, you can just wait for someone to want to help you, but from him or her. (Sophie)

I feel very bad, cause I don´t have money to help myself and… even to help family… /…/ … If you don´t have money… if you don´t have income, you won´t help your family and… and… ah… (Louise)

Yeah… it´s like… You don´t… If you don´t have money… If you don´t have income, you won´t help your family and… and… ah…

The interviewees´ quotes show that financial hardship can cause anxiety and worries, consistent with Rantakeisu et al.´s (1999) findings. According to Starrin et al. (2009) these types of feelings are even more common if the person is young, unemployed and/or have a low educational level, as the interviewees in this study are. The results from this study therefore support Starrin et al.´s (2009) arguments.

How the unemployed are excluded from the bigger structures
There are many ways for people to be excluded. In this part, focus is directed on exclusion from governmental and societal sections rather than the individual´s personal surroundings.
The usual demand for getting an employment in Namibia is that you have finished grade 12 in school. So if you have not done so, it means that you are practically banned from even applying for a posted job. This can be considered as *labour market exclusion*, if comparing the interviewees’ statements with Kronauer’s (1998) dimensions of social exclusion. He argues that barriers are created to keep people with low skills out of the labour market. But sometimes, even if you have the qualifications, they are not enough when competing for jobs. You can end up losing a job opportunity to someone who does not have the requirements necessary for the job, as shown in this quote by Edward:

/…/ We do apply for jobs, but sometimes being called for interviews that are just… so to say, that are just waste of time, because… the funny thing about things here in this country is that you… you sometimes apply for a job requiring the requirements you are having, but at the end of the day you ended up seeing someone that you know, or someone that you grew up with, a person you know that, that person is not qualified. But I don’t know due to what, that person is the one taking that post. Yeah… so that is one of the problems here.

It can be hard not to be able to do things with your friends because you are unemployed. Since the interviewees have no money to spend, they cannot always do what they would like to. This can create barriers between them and their employed friends or relatives. They say it is a very negative feeling not to be able to buy things that their friends might have because of their economic situation. This feeling can be very concrete for some. The following quote by Linda can be considered as an example of Kronauer’s (1998) dimension *cultural exclusion*:

/…/ you know… when you know you’re going to go visit your friend, they got everything, like… the bed and… everything that they bought, and then you feel bad because you’re not working and you want the things.

A bed can be considered as a normal item to own or at least to be able to make use of. When a person does not have a bed to sleep in during the night, one can consider them to have reached *cultural exclusion*. This is argued because Kronauer (1998) means that cultural exclusion follows when a person has no chance of living his/her life according to the generally accepted standards and norms in society. Cultural exclusion could also lead to exclusion from society, which is argued by Kieselbach (2003), who means that unemployment among young adults can make it hard for them to be accepted and integrated to society.
It can be said that concrete evidence of *spatial exclusion* exists in Katutura since it is a town-ship where blacks are supposed to live, according to Ilcan & Lacey (2011:111ff). Many in the area live under circumstances of financial problems (Kronauer 1998). In other words, they are segregated and victims of *spatial exclusion*. In this case the segregation is created to keep them away from the white society and their higher class areas in the city (Ilcan & Lacey 2011:111ff). The interviewees state that people living in Katutura are struggling overall. The following quote from Sophie is the answer to a question whether the political situation in Namibia is getting better or worse:

> Ah, it´s like… You know, ehm… Here, in Windhoek, we are, those… the unemployed people… I cannot buy the house in town to stay, so we only make the sheik\(^2\) where you can find that, here I can make my small room so I can stay. Then, someone will come, and destroy that, say this is not yours. He can destroy everything.

Sophie is talking about people who are not living there, but sometimes go there just to destroy their homes. She speaks of people who have a lot of power in society and who want to use the land where she lives for something of their own interest. Sophie has seen neighbors’ homes being destroyed for someone else’s interests. But in the end the land has not been used for those interests anyway, but just left with shredded homes.

The unemployed young people in this study do not get any governmental support and they do not have the chance of financial help to, for example, start their own business or not even for child support. This means that they are victims of *institutional exclusion*, because they are not granted any support from the government or other institutions (Kronauer 1998). These quotes come from persons who point out the government as responsible for some of the problems in unemployed people´s lives:

> I feel so bad… it feels so bad… /…/ … the government don´t help you. It´s the government that have to help the people so they can like… like, some people they got the child but you are not working and your child that are going to school and pay their schoolfees. Maybe there are some people, they don´t even have one in their family working even. (Linda)

> It’s our government. They need to give us some job. Yeah, they need to look at us and give us some job and… start our own

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\(^2\) A sheik is a habitat built by the people living there. A sheik is constructed with zink-material usually used for roofs on balconies, terraces or outside storerooms. These make the walls and the roof, then it is a habitat for them.
business and help ourselves. They need to give us fundings and support us. (Louise)

As the quotes indicate, the interviewees think they are not receiving any support from the government or other institutions. As a result of that, they cannot be the contributing citizens of society as they would like to be. This means they are not included in the collective purpose (Jahoda 1982:39, 59) of developing Namibia into a better society.

**How the young unemployed solve their financial strains**

To be able to live, the unemployed young adults need to find ways to get an income. This can be made in some different ways, but in the context of living in a town-ship like Katutura (Ilcan & Lacey 2011:111ff), it is a challenge with many different results.

Some unemployed young adults work on the informal labour market to get an income. This way, they can at least get some money to support themselves and their family. There are different ways in how this can be done. In Katutura people are selling different things just outside their houses. It is a type of self-employment that many people use to create an income to the household they live in. Some borrow money to buy things to sell while others get money from a family member or friend. This way they can earn a profit from it, as can be understood by these quotes:

Yeah, I´ve tried to help out myself and just make a little stand for myself for people come to me and buying stuff and things, it really worked. (John)

Yeah, when I´m selling the products which I earn my own profit. It’s like a… I earn in my own profit. The kapana and the products, spray, lotions… or you say kapana, that’s… you get your own profit. Cause, if you get something, someone like… my brother or my sister came and say, ah, this N$100 is for you. Then I would try to spend that on things which I can sell, so I can get more profit. (Sophie)

Others are fortunate enough to have the knowledge of something specific they can use to get an income. In Samuel’s case it is the knowledge of how to repair cars, as you can see in this quote:

Yeah, it’s what I do now basically, because some people bring their cars here, then I fix them… it’s basically what I do. And I help like people selling stuff and help them to sell.
Sometimes, selling things along the streets works out and they can continue to buy things to sell. Unfortunately, this is not the case for everybody even though they try hard to make their own money. This is supported by the following quote from Linda:

Yeah, we was trying. We was trying, but people, they were not coming. Actually I was trying with my sister. And then… just to sell meat and so, like nobody was coming and we give up.

The fact that the interviewees go out and barbecue meat on the side of the streets or help neighbors fix their cars to earn some money is very different from how an unemployment situation can be handled in Sweden. Sweden is a welfare state where there are opportunities like getting a basic income from a social security office (Rantakeisu et al. 1999). In comparison, the interviewees have nothing to lean back on in Namibia. They can only try their hardest to survive. As you have seen, this means they have to borrow money, rely on relatives, work the streets or work on insecure contracts on the unofficial labour market. This is consistent with Mufune’s (2002) results that unemployed people trying to find work over and over again without success, in the end will start working on the unofficial labour market to create an income when nothing else is possible.

**What the unemployed are in lack of**

There might be ways for the unemployed to get support in their situation if the government would consider using different types of programmes to help the unemployed population. The young unemployed in this study are talking about the absence of this kind of help and that they would want something that could help them in their situation and get them closer to an employment. Apparently there are non-governmental organizations (NGOs) who can help people find an employment, but according to the following quote by Edward, it might not be economically clever to accept that help:

Actually I heard of employment agencies here in Windhoek. But I heard that the problem with those agencies… ah… what you basically do, you draft your CV’s, take your CV there. I think you pay a little amount of money, and once they find you a job… what they do… they deduct… I think for three, four months they deduct a certain amount from your salary, since they are saying that they are your agency or… because they are saying that because there are ones who will find you a job, so you must give them something in return. So that is what is happening here. /…/ Those are non-governmental organizations.
The interviewees express feelings of a need for good help from the Namibian government. The government could investigate what other countries have done about unemployment and use the same strategy to lower the unemployment rate in Namibia. Active labour market programmes (ALMPs) could be a way to help the unemployed population. With this kind of support the unemployed might be able to find a way to get a job. ALMPs have been shown to broaden the labour market network for unemployed people before (Strandh & Nordlund 2008). It could be useful among the young unemployed people in Namibia as well. The two forms of ALMPs can be of big use when striving to improve human capital among the unemployed young adults. ALMP employment focuses on subsidized employment that is not competitive with regular employment, and ALMP training focuses on developing skills by education (Nordlund 2010).

**Education as a door-opener to the labour market**

Education might be a way to get closer to, or even enter, the labour market for the unemployed. At least they will be occupied during the time they study (Mufune 2002). Also Recollitet and Werquin (2003) mean that if a young person continues to attend to education they keep themselves away from unemployment for a longer time, rather than having to get an employment in hard times consistent of high unemployment rate.

The unemployed in this study think that education is the best way to ensure future employment. They are all talking about the knowledge of speaking English as one of the top priorities to have a good chance of getting a job. Overall, they think that high qualifications and education are the most important knowledge in order to get a job, as you can understand from the quotes below:

/*/* It’s like… ah, I’m studying in the north. Between me and those people studying in Windhoek or any other city. Our English and developing is different. Because… there, at the north it’s no much foreigners teacher, but in the cities you can find some teachers from Sweden, from England, from Germany… so there’s a big difference. (Sophie)

Oh, things like qualifications. Yeah, without qualifications it’s hard to get a job, most of the times. Cause, you should have experience most of the times and most jobs want experienced people. (John)
I always wanted to go to school. That has been my first priority in my life since I was… because when I was raised by my parents, the only thing they talked about was going to school, getting better education and all that. (Edward)

As you can see from the following quotes, the interviewees even talk about their future children’s education and how important it is:

Just, when they’re going to school, they are just concentrating on school. And then, until they finish their school, we would just get them a job. They must not suffer like me when I suffer. Because I have to tell them my situation when they’re grown up. They should get a better education. (Linda)

Ah… frankly speaking, I think the most important thing… is education. That’s the only important thing in life. So that is something that I will also love to preach to my children. /…/
(Edward)

**Not everything is negative**

Fortunalety, the interviewees are able to see some positive sides of their situations as young and unemployed. Their social surroundings are supportive and they have hopes and dreams that they believe can become reality in their future lives.

**Social support**
The unemployed young adults in this study receive *social support* from people around them. They are being encouraged to continue looking for employment and making sure they do not lose hope of getting a job. Edward seems to have a very supportive social surrounding, which makes him keep the fire going, as quoted:

Eh… they are… in a way or another they are very encouraging, that I must not lose hope, I must keep on trying looking for a job. Eh… my stride is always keep on strong looking for a job. They are very encouraging.

Life becomes easier for the unemployed young adult if surrounding people support them in their struggles of getting an employment. This is in line with the results of Lorenzini and Giugni (2010) and Bergqvist et al. (2012), where *social support* seems to be important to unemployed young people. That social support is important for these people is also argued by Kieselbach (2003), who says that support from near ones lowers the risk of becoming socially excluded.
**Dreamjobs among the interviewees**

To work in the tourism business in different professions seems to be the most interesting types of employment among the interviewees. The interviewees also showed interest to become self-employed and to start their own businesses as well, as you can understand from these quotes:

/…/ that is something that I always dreamed of. Ah… since I did tourism I always… always wanted to have my own tour operating company… eh… based on reservations. And these things like… ah… cultural tours, since I´m very interesting in culture. And this shuttle company also. So I´ve always wanted to get myself a car and start up my business with a shuttle first, shuttle company… before going in to the other… ah… other fields, regarding tourism/…/ (Edward)

My dream… I just want to own my own salon. (Louise)

If someone would prefer a job as a receptionist, there is a connection to the industry of accommodation and food services. This is an industry with relatively high levels of employment opportunities in Namibia (Namibian Labour Force Survey 2013). Sophie gives an example of her dreamjob:

Oh, I… One day I have… like, working as a receptionist or secretary. /…/ But if there´s others… as long as I get a job.

As you can see, the hopes of getting a job exist, just like Ashipala (2010) argues, but it does not necessary have to be the job of their dreams. To have an employment, almost no matter what it is, is enough for the one who has no income at all.

**Looking at life from the bright side**

Although life can be hard on the young unemployed, their lives do not always seem to appear as bad. When asked about if they like their lives, some seem to be able to appreciate it and concentrate on the positive parts, as the quotes below imply:

I appreciate life, because every day I wake up not hungry, not starving. At least I have a little money in my pockets. But it´s not the life I dream to be, it´s not the life I wished it could be, it´s the life which came to me with my mistakes which I did in life. So, hopefully I wish for a better life. (Samuel)

Yeah, I do like my life a lot, cause I´m with my family and friends, they´re just close here. (John)
Yeah, I like it. Cause my life… in my life I’ll do much better than others here. (Louise)

In the end, it seems like the interviewees think their chances of getting an employment on the official labour market in Namibia is pretty positive. They do not think it is easy, but they still stay positive. The answers are fairly short, but they are hopeful. These answers to the question if they believe they can get a job on the official labour market can exemplify these positive feelings:

Eh… I think so. I think so. (Edward)

Yeah, there´s a possibility yeah… (Samuel)

Oh, yeah… I think it´s really hard but… yeah… (John)
5 – SUMMARIZING AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the conclusions of this study will be presented. First, a reminder of the purpose and research questions of the study.

The purpose of the study is focused on how the interviewees feel and perceive their situation as unemployed and to deepen the understanding about the phenomenon of young adults’ unemployment situation in Namibia.

The research questions to be answered in this study are:
- What problems do the unemployed young people in Namibia face?
- How do the young unemployed persons handle these problems?
- Is there anything the young unemployed people in Namibia are in lack of?

Conclusions

The purpose of the study was to create an understanding of how the unemployed young adults included in the study perceive their chances of finding an employment on the official labour market in Namibia. The understanding was reached – they do believe in their future and that they are going to get an employment in the end. Their hopes and dreams are strong driving forces in their lives and probably a key factor for their positive thoughts.

What problems do the unemployed young people in Namibia face?
The young unemployed people interviewed in this study have to face several problems, but the financial problems are the main issues. Many people in the town-ship of Katutura live under extremely hard financial circumstances because of the widely spread unemployment rate in the area and the country overall. People move from rural areas of the country into the capital of Windhoek to take a chance of finding an employment. They often find themselves moving in together with relatives and they will end up in Katutura. The households usually consist of many relatives and most of them are unemployed, creating an even more strained financial situation.

Another key problem is the shaming experience of the unemployed. One could think that since unemployment is a big problem in Katutura, they would not feel as much shame as they really do. But they do have friends and relatives who are employed and they are ashamed that they cannot have the things their employed near ones have. In some cases, they do not have a bed to sleep in. Other psychosocial problems they face are the lack of routines, structure, status and identity.
The interviewees can be considered as excluded in many ways, by the barriers built around the labour market that keep unskilled people away. This means that their already vulnerable situation gets even more extreme, since labour market exclusion is often combined with several other types of exclusion, making them victims of social exclusion in the end.

**How do the young unemployed persons handle these problems?**

The financial problems are often solved by them starting to work the unofficial labour market. Some fix cars and they firstly have to think about the income from doing that. In unfortunate situations, they are helping someone fix a stolen car to be sold on the black market. Others sell kapana (barbecued meat) for their living, which is one of the most common sights along the residential roads in Katutura.

The problem of shaming experience is very hard to handle, but it seems like the main issue is the shame of not being able to help their near ones. This can lead to them working the streets, as presented above.

It seems that the psychosocial problems are the least troubling issues for the young adults in this study. They can create new routines and activate themselves since many others around them are unemployed as well.

The case of exclusion is difficult to handle. To be excluded in one dimension often leads to the exclusion in another, and the circle keeps on going like that. They have to really push themselves to get out of this situation, which they also try to do. This is made by deciding to get more education or breaking up from groups of people where everyone is unemployed and do not care to change their situation.

**Is there anything the young unemployed people in Namibia are in lack of?**

According to the interviewees, they would really like their government to provide some help for them and other people in the same type of situation in the country. They suggest the government should create more job opportunities for young adults. They would also like to see some kind of governmental jobcentres or employment offices that can guide unemployed persons in their search for an employment. This could be made by for example by showing them how a good CV is written or how they can manage a jobinterview.

Another thing the interviewees talk about is the demand of speaking good English to get an employment. For those living in urban areas, the problem is not by far as big as for those raised in rural areas. They speak of teachers that cannot manage the English language themselves, making it even harder for the pupils to learn it. They want to see better teachers, preferably from foreign countries like for example England, America, Australia, Germany and Sweden. The interviewees mean people from these countries.
can teach them, which in its turn can lead to that the people who study to become teachers can speak English well and therefore can teach the children of today.

The next section will discuss the writing process and the strengths and weaknesses of the conclusions. What could have been done better and what more could have been done overall is also subject to discussion in this section.

Discussion

The subject of this study is relevant since unemployment is a problem that exists worldwide. It has been a problem for many years in the past and will probably be a problem for many years to come as well. The purpose was to reach an understanding about how unemployed young adults in Namibia perceive their chances of finding an official employment. Although they have many troubles in life, including few job opportunities for young people, they still seem to have a positive attitude about the future. Since I was born and raised in Sweden, it was very interesting to investigate if there were big differences between being unemployed here and being unemployed in Namibia. I have experienced unemployment in 2006, when I was 23 years old, so I could compare my own situation with theirs. The biggest difference I noticed was definitely the governmental support during unemployment. Sweden is a well-functioning welfare state that offers a basic income if you are unemployed (Bergqvist et al. 2012). In addition to this there are trade unions and if you are a member of one of these and have had a gainful employment, you can get an income-based benefit. This will most certainly entitle you to higher benefits than the basic benefit that all unemployed Swedish citizens are entitled to. In Namibia, there is no unemployment benefit, which means the unemployed have to get an income from somewhere else. This often leads to the need of working the informal labour market (Mufune 2002), as have also been showed in this study.

Most of the used theories are from a western context, but as this study shows, they can also be applied on people in other societies. I would like to say this is a strength in the study. People are the same wherever they live. When they do not have an income and/or a meaningful everyday life with routines and other psychosocial functions, they will have similar feelings.

As for speaking of weaknesses in this study, the first that comes to mind is my low experience of interviewing people. This was though compensated by the interview guide based on YOUNEX’s (Bergqvist et al. 2012) interview guide that already had possible follow-up questions prepared. If I would not have this, the interviews might not have been as well executed as they were in the end. Another weakness could be that the interviews sometimes were subject to surrounding noises. Fortunately, I recorded all interviews and could listen to them several times before finally writing down exactly
what had been said. I believe that the study might have been easier to accomplish if it was executed by two persons because that could create a more dynamic foundation for discussion, choice of theories and background understanding of the subject.

**Future research**

It would be very interesting to see if an implementation of active labour market programmes (ALMPs) can develop unemployed young adults’ human capital and create a way for them to enter the labour market in Namibia. This could be a more practical investigation that perhaps would be of big use for the individual, but also for the development of the Namibian society. To let a group of young unemployed take part in ALMPs and see what comes out of it could be of interest, since a big part of the population are people younger than 30.
6 – REFERENCES

Articles


Books


Chapters in books


Papers


Reports


Internet sources


APPENDIX 1 – INTERVIEW GUIDE

When talking about work, I mean paid work. A longer period of unemployment in this interview means at least 6 months.

**Background questions**

1. What do you think of Windhoek as a city?
   - Would you recommend others to visit?
   - Do you find Windhoek attractive as a place to live and work?

2. Where did you grow up?
   - Has it affected you in any way?
   - Would you like to move back if possible?

3. Could you tell me a bit about your life and where you live?
   - Do you like it?
   - What do you think about the infrastructure, like transportation and security?
   - Do you have family or friends nearby?
   - Would you say that you go to other places in the city a lot? Maybe visiting friends or family?

**The Social Dimension**

4. How would you describe a normal day in your life?
   - Do you have any specific interests or hobbies?
   - Where do you usually go?
   - What do you usually do?
   - Are there any special activities you like to attend to?

5. Could you tell me a bit about your household (family) that lives within Windhoek?
   - Are there many people in your household?
   - Do you have siblings living in the household, how old are they? Schoolage, workage?
   - What do they do? Work?
   - Is anybody else in your family unemployed?
   - How would you describe your relationship with them?
   - Do you think you can confide to them and trust them?
   - Is there anyone special in your family that you talk more to about personal matters?
   - When do you feel you can confide to family members?
6. How about your friends, can you tell me about them too?
   - What kind of people are they?
   - What do they do? Work?
   - Is there anybody of your friends that is unemployed?
   - What kind of relationship do you have to them?
   - Do you feel you can confide to and trust them?
   - Do you have a person who you like to confide more to?
   - In which situations do you think you can talk to them?

7. What do your family and friends think of your situation as unemployed?
   - Do you talk to them about your unemployment?
   - Do you think your relationship with family and friends have been affected by your problems on finding a job?
   - Have their way of understanding or seeing your situation changed?
   - Did they try to help you find a job?
   - Is there anyone you can talk to about anything you want?

Life Course/ Coping with unemployment

8. Can you tell me a bit more about your paid working life experiences and about your first paid job?
   - When you think back – what event/events do you think have been important when it comes to paid work?
   - How come you became unemployed?
   - Have you been unemployed for a longer period of time (6 months)?
   - If yes – is this the first time?

9. Have you ever been self-employed?
   - If yes – what did you do?
   - If no – is that something you can think of doing to get an income?

10. Do you think it’s some special persons fault that you’re unemployed?
    - Who?
    - Who do you think is responsible for the unemployment situation in Windhoek?

11. How do you feel about being unemployed?

12. How do you handle your unemployment?
- Can you exemplify something, perhaps a situation that is/was especially hard for you as unemployed? How do/did you try to fix the situation?

13. Can you get any help from someone to get an employment?
   - If yes – How?
   - If no – Would you like there to exist any sort of help to get employed?

14. Are there other things that make your situation even harder (A disease, addiction, criminal background etc)?

15. Would you like to change your unemployment situation?
   - Would you like to have a permanent employment?
   - Are you searching for a permanent job now?
   - Can you give me an example of what you do to get a job?
   - What kind of jobs would you take?
   - What kind of jobs would you NOT take?
   - Do you have a job of your dreams? What is that?
   - What job would be the perfect job for you?

16. Do you think you will be able to get a paid job at the official labour market?
   - If not – why?
   - If yes – when? Looking long-term or within a few weeks, maybe two months?

Financial problems

17. Difficulties finding a job can also cause economic problems. Is that something you are having troubles with?

18. How do you make it economically?
   - From where do you get an income?
   - Do you have an income?

19. What are you using your money at?
   - How about regular costs (food, rent etc)?
   - What can you afford after regular costs?
   - Is there something you had to stop doing because of economy lately?
   - Is there something you really miss but can’t afford right now?

20. Is there anyone you can count on (economically) to support you?
   - Who?
21. Do you ever find yourself in the situation where you need to borrow money?
   - Do you hesitate before doing that? Why/why not?
   - Is it easy or hard to find someone that can help you in that way?
   - From who or where do you usually borrow money?

22. Apart from what you already told me about – Can you remember any other way unemployed people try to solve their financial situation?
   - Does it happen that people you know work without contracts or outside the official labour market?
   - Has this happened to you?

23. Have you been in a situation where you felt unfairly or worse treated because of your unemployment?
   - In what way?
   - Who treated you like that?
   - How often has that happened?
   - How did you react?

24. Do you think there is a difference if the unemployed is male or female?

25. (Can you think of any positive things with being unemployed?)

**Relations with the civilian society**

26. Have you been in contact with any non-governmental organization (NGO’s)?
   - What kind of organization was it?
   - How did you find your contact with them?

27. Did any of the organizations work with unemployed?
   - How did you find your contact with them?
   - Did you attend to any of their activities or programs?
   - What do you think of their work?

**A political dimension**

28. Now I want to talk a bit more about general things. How do you think the situation is in Namibia at the moment?
   - Do you think it seems like it’s getting better or worse?
   - Do you feel the same way about Windhoek?

29. Do you find politics interesting?
- What does politics mean to you?
- What areas are you most interested in?
- In what level are these interests? Local, national, international?

30. Do you speak about politics a lot?
- Why?
- Who do you discuss it with?
- Are people around you interested in politics?

31. What do you generally think of politicians?
- Do you think they’re doing a good job?
- Do you think that people in general trust politicians? Why/why not?
- Do you trust in politicians? Why/why not?

32. Are you, or have you been politically active?
- What did you do?
- What made you join?
- How would you describe the political activities you engaged in (important, effective etc)?
- How are these activities perceived by others, what do they think about them (friends, family, politicians etc)?

33. When there is an election, do you participate in it?
- Why/why not?
- Do you think it’s important to vote when there is an election?

34. If these questions about politics were asked a few years ago, do you think you would have answered the same or have your opinions changed?

Future outlooks

A few last questions, also general ones.

35. When you look back at your life, can you identify any better or worse periods?
- Which ones were better and which ones were worse?
- In what way were these periods better or worse?

36. Do you have any plans for the future?
- Where do you see yourself in a year?
- And how about in five or ten years?
- If you plan on having a family (or if you already have one), where do you see yourselves in ten years from now?
- If you plan on raising children (or if you already have children), what would you like them to achieve?
- What would you want to be able to offer your children?

37. Overall, are you happy with your life?

38. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about, something important that I forgot?

Make a summary, make sure I understand what the person have meant etc.

**Background information**

BQ 1. Sex: F/M

BQ 2. Year of birth?

BQ 3. Educational level?

BQ 4. What do you do?
   - Acquired?
   - Latest or actual?

BQ 5. Marital status?
   - Married, living together, in a relationship, single?

BQ 6. Children?
   - How many?
   - How old are they?

BQ 7. How many people live in the household, including yourself and children?

BQ 8. Who live with you?
   - Partner, husband, wife, children, mother, father, other relatives, friends?

BQ 9. How do you live?
   - Rental apartment, bought apartment, house?

BQ 10. Siblings?
   - How many?
   - How old are they?
- Their educational level?
- What do they do?
- Personal situation? (marital status etc)

BQ 11. Are you a Namibian citizen?
    - If not, what is your citizenship?

BQ 12. Your country of birth?
    - If not Namibia, which year did you come to Namibia?

BQ 13. Religion?
    - If none, what about your parents?