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Whose crisis? Development interventions and the politics of representation of masculinities and migration in Africa

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While anthropologists have been occupied on focusing on certain 'cultures' and their supposed impediment to development, relatively little research has been done on the institutional cultures of specific development actors such as NGOs particularly in the ways they produce and disseminate their knowledge and how such processes may contribute to the crisis narrative. The crisis of masculinities and migration crisis narratives in South Africa as elsewhere emanate from the development actors because they are mandated to identify and respond to problems and crises affecting communities. Their effectiveness in responding to such problems is directly tied to continued streams of funding. As a result, the narratives that currently dominate the development work paint a gloomy picture of the said crises to justify their interventions that are supposedly the needed solutions to bring about change. With this case study, I explore how problematising narratives around masculinities emerge, specifically highlighting the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in perpetuating such hegemonic ideologies. I advance my arguments using data drawn from an ethnographic study which focused on masculinities and violence, conducted from June 2017 to February 2018 in Johannesburg. I use politics of representation as a lens to unpack the processes of knowledge production within development interventions linking this to the colonial trope that represent Africa as a place of perpetual deficiencies and crises. I conclude that the development interventions aiming to 'fix' men have led to a proliferation of the crisis discourse presenting a black marginalized man as the face of problematic masculinities in South Africa.

Key words: representation; crisis; migration; masculinities; international development; Johannesburg; South Africa; civil society; evidence; statistics; anthropology

Vignette

July 2017, Sandton, Johannesburg. After several presentations, Charles' turn finally came. He made his presentation on behalf of his organization, Involve Men (Pseudonym), where he was a senior manager. He was very eloquent and energetic throughout his presentation. Here and there, he would chant 'Hallelujah' to which the audience would respond with an 'Amen' as

they laughed. People laughed because of Charles approach of mimicking a church setting in a professional meeting. This was a two-day roundtable workshop which was convened by several of the United Nation (UN) agencies from Africa. The workshop on *Building evidence within Violence against Women (VAW) prevention projects* brought together more than forty people, many of which were UN country representatives and a few directors of well-known non-governmental organizations (NGOs) across Africa. The majority were from other African countries with a few from the UN headquarters in the USA. From South Africa, delegates came from the academia, NGOs, corporate sector as well as the government. While I was there representing the NGO that I once worked with, I also would wear my anthropologist hat here and there. Many acronyms were being thrown around across the room, IPV, GBV, VAW, VAWC, VAW in politics, violence against LGBTIQ, GTA and the like. In order to constitute as 'problem' enough statistics had to concur, or it had to be quantifiable for monitoring and evaluation processes. 'We need to know the numbers!' a director from one UN agency would constantly interrupt presenters that took too long to share statistics of the different forms of violence. If it could be measured in monetary terms, the better. In that way, the 'problem' would be considered for a possible budget allocation. Global funding opportunities were also announced during the meeting, for example the global Spotlight Initiative worth €500 million that had just been released at the time.

Charles made a presentation showcasing Involve Men's work with men in areas that they had identified as 'hotspots' for domestic violence as evidenced by high rates of violence. Using a power point presentation, full of photos, videos, statistical graphs and quotations of participants, the evidence of their impact was convincing. After the presentation, another one of the directors from UN seemed impressed and applauded Charles for Involve Men's amazing 'groundbreaking' work. This made me nervous wondering if I, too, would be able to impress the director with my presentation. Although I was no longer working for the NGO I was representing, I did understand the importance of this presentation, particularly to the funding stream of the organization and consequently its sustainability. Although unvoiced, both my former director and I had hoped that my presentation would possibly be appealing to the UN and bring them on board as a funding partner. Commending Charles after the workshop, I would tell him about my research and request if I could do a follow up interview. In the following meetings, I would learn that a few years previously, his organisation had employed a religious approach in raising awareness among men. However, they dropped it along the way when they realized it was not attracting donors. With the aim of 'staying in the game' by catching the attention of UN, Involve Men had changed its approach. In fact, the NGO had even adopted the HeforShe campaign, spearheaded by UN Women, and localized it and integrated it within their work. This shift clearly paid off when UN Women made their partnership official by endorsing Involve Men's work within several taverns in South Africa.

Introduction

During the workshop, with so many catchy lines being thrown around as organizations present their missions, visions and findings from their monitoring and evaluation exercises, I find Bates (1975) reflection on Gramsci's work insightful in understanding the work by NGOs in South Africa and Africa as whole. In exploring Gramsci's concept of hegemony, Bates posits that 'civil society is the marketplace of ideas, where intellectuals enter as "salesmen" of contending cultures' (Bates 1975: 353, see also Lorist, 2020). Cummings and colleagues (2018: 729) make a similar argument in relation to the 'knowledge economy' to refer to the commodification of scientific knowledge. The UN meeting in the vignette could clearly fit these descriptions as many of us who were there had presented with hope of making an impression to the funder. Underlying theme for the meeting was evidence based, and data driven interventions. Seeing the competition for recognition in the room and within the NGO sector as a whole, I became interested in the process of knowledge production and evidence making. Aligning to Gramsci, Heywood argues that knowledge is a social construct that serves to legitimate social structures (Heywood, 1994: 101). In this article I explore the process of knowledge making focusing specifically on the 'techno-scientific-economic discourse' (Cummings 2018: 728), which intertwined with economic factors, favours the use of statistical indicators over other forms of knowledge. Merry (2011: s86) define statistical indicators as 'statistical measures that are used to consolidate complex data into a simple number or rank that is meaningful to policy makers and the public.' Presented as numbers, rates, ratios and percentages, indicators have managed to compress complex qualitative data in ways that are easily accessible to facilitate decision making, resource allocation and governance. At the same time, in the process of simplifying data, indicators erase contexts, including the individual specificities, histories, nuances while creating stable and fixed entities and identities. Consequently, such representations result in the othering of specific individuals through processes of essentializing and stereotyping (Anand, 2007). Studies that have applied representation as analytical tool particularly within migration studies have focused on representations emerging from mainstream media including television, film, photograph, social media and other popular culture platforms (Vanyoro and Ncube, 2019). Representations within NGOs are scantly researched in part because of their position as development actors. Similarly, statistics as tools of representation particularly within the NGO sector also not well researched. However, it is imperative to understand the contexts in which NGOs in South Africa employ tools of representation and examine the impact this has on how certain groups are perceived. Mueller-Hirth (2019) specifically points out the crisis in funding for NGOs in South Africa and how this may cause the development practitioners to over emphasize the problems in order to attract donors' attention (see also Burchardt et al, 2013).

I, therefore, examine statistical indicators as tools of representations mobilized by the development world (NGO sector and activist scholars) in the construction of problematizing narratives in order to validate their proposed solutions as I noted in the workshop outlined above where I witnessed social issues being crafted into problems. The use of statistics was meant to construct problems as self-evident, measurable and consequently solvable through different interventions that were pitched on the day. As such, I argue against the presentation of statistical indicators as well as the development world as neutral and apolitical. Using a case study of Diepsloot- a migrant marginalized neighbourhood, identified as a hotspot for violence, crime and toxic masculinity, I advance my arguments drawing from decolonial scholarship critiquing the ideas of development, and science and technology studies (STS) scholarship critiquing the uncritical use of indicators. In what follows I present the context of NGOs in South Africa and their use of statistics as a mode of representation. This will be followed by my methods section and the case study of the Diepsloot neighborhood which shows how crisis is constructed with a predetermined solution. After the case study, I will conclude by advancing my argument that through their knowledge making practices, development actors produce the crises they claim or intend to address, and this has enduring 'othering' effects on the images of their targeted populations.

Background

With a heavy presence of humanitarian work concentrated particularly in the area migration response and research, the scholarship tends to be skewed towards 'development' 'crisis' and this usually comes in form of reports and policy briefs. Such publications make use of representations that are easily digestible by intended audience such as policy makers, funders and the government. Emelobe (2009: 211) understands representation as a form of 'stating facts in order to influence the action of others' (Emelobe, 2009: 211). Post-colonial theorists have long established how representation was part and parcel of the imperial and colonial projects where 'emphasis was on recording observed facts' shrouded in the language of objectivity hiding inequalities and forms of domination (Anand 2007: 24). As a tool of European imperialism, representation was mediated through either fiction or non-fiction. Non-fiction forms of representation such as journalist work, memoirs of colonial officials, statistics, documentaries, ethnographic work were presented as unadulterated facts often objective particularly in the case of statistical figures.

Similarly, statistics within the academic and NGO world have been presented as representative of scientific truth that cannot be contested presumably because they are objective, and 'abstracted from social and political contexts' (Biehl 2016: 129; see also

Merry, 2011). Statistical indicators find place within the current political and economic landscape characterised by the default language of evidence-based intervention which favors identifying measurable problems and outcomes (Biehl, 2016; Lorist 2020). As tools of representation, statistics have been appealing to the development world particularly the NGO sector which like the numbers they produce claim to be apolitical and objective. However, Greenhalgh (2003:165) reminds us that 'numbers are created by particular human beings working in specific historical contexts and both the people and the context leave their imprints on the science that gets made.' Statistics have proven important to the development discourse, in the creation of categories, based on specific indicators, in assessing effectiveness of interventions and for aiding donors to assess value for money in the projects that they fund. The efficiency discourse that entered the development paradigm, following the global financial crisis of the late 1990s saw donors cutting budget towards development work as well as calling for efficiency and effectiveness by implementing organisations. With the efficiency discourse came increased competition, emphasis on measurement and results and consequently the emergence of evidence-based interventions permeating the NGO vocabulary (Lorist, 2020:166).

Therefore, in this paper I call to attention the historical and contemporary contexts as well as the silent power of statistics in the governance of populations (Merry, 2016). For example, at the commencement of my PhD fieldwork, it was not my intention to study men from low resource settings such as inner-city Johannesburg. However, it was in the process of following the work of Men and Boys NGO[i] that I found Uncle Kofi's Corner, my ethnographic site which is situated in the impoverished high density and predominantly black neighborhood as I detail in my findings.

The neighborhood where I conducted my study, is inhabited by black migrants from other African countries who are usually presented as problematic within the mainstream media and political spheres. Like many other marginalized communities, the neighborhood has apparently been identified as a hotspot of violence, based on crime statistics. Just the presentation of such statistics compels certain actors to (want to) act (Vigneswaran, 2013). For example, researchers like me wanting to conduct research in such areas. Such is the power of statistics as representation tools of governance. In the case study presented in this paper, I am interested in exploring how statistics are mobilized by the development world in the historical and contemporary context of problematising narratives around migration and masculinities.

In post-apartheid South Africa, migrant men find themselves backed in a corner of two intersecting crisis narratives particularly within the development world; masculinity in crisis and migration in crisis. Within this crisis narrative migrant men are placed within a

paradoxical position; as *men* they constitute problematic masculinities, while simultaneously, as (international) *migrants*, they are framed as helpless victims at the hands of 'failed' South African men (Musariri, 2021). The category of migrant men therefore necessitates quite a drastic rethinking of several givens regarding vulnerability, marginalisation, representations particularly within the NGO sector. In the following section I briefly explore how representation is employed in the development world.

Conceptual framework: politics of representation in the development world

The notion of 'development' gained traction after the second war, resulting in the stratification of the world into developed and underdeveloped regions, with the same modernist assumptions that necessitated imperialism, civilisation, colonialism and, most recently, globalisation. As Escobar (1995) puts it, the development discourse colonised reality so much that many countries came to perceive themselves as underdeveloped and began working towards developing themselves by implementing various policies and interventions, many of which were imported from the developed regions. This pattern continues to this day for example gender empowerment interventions as discussed in this paper. The development paradigm has been heavily criticised for imitating if not perpetuating the colonial logic of categorising people and places into hierarchies premised on dichotomies such as modern/traditional, developed/underdeveloped, civil/uncivilised and the like and for the discursive production of subjects that can be intervened upon through development actors such as NGOs.

Having been identified as vehicles of development like social media, the NGO sector in South Africa as elsewhere, plays a critical role in not only redirecting public opinion but in creating and shaping knowledge about specific issues such as migration (Torkington and Ribeiro, 2019: 23) and masculinities. In their work of activism, several NGOs are mandated to address the various social problems that plague societies. They conceptualise their work as mandated to 'speak for' those whose voices are not loud enough or are usually silenced by louder hegemonic voices. However, Spivak (1992:108), a post-colonial theorist, cautions us to be mindful of the complicity between 'speaking for' and 'portraying'; the former which usually involves political subjects entails one speaking the needs of somebody and the latter pertains to 'placing there' or creating a portrait (Spivak, 1992:108). In their efforts to speak for vulnerable groups, such as marginalised migrants or women, a grotesque picture of problematic masculinities has been portrayed as well as an image of 'migrants in crisis'. Such representations by NGOs are not so much about being opportunistic or malicious as it is about the issue of 'burden of representation' (Baldonado 1996, n.p). This result from having a scarcity of representations of particular groups of people. The few representations from the

NGO world, seem to follow the same strand of portraying hopelessness, crisis and emergency. These depictions have, over the years, been thought of as representative of everyone who falls within the identified groups of people, such as marginalised men and migrants. In this paper, I trace such representations of migrants as they are associated with violence and HIV.

While representations may appear harmless in some instances, several studies show how representations shape the ways in which individuals are perceived or perceive themselves (Baldonado 1996; Greenhaulgh 2003; Torkington and Ribeiro 2019). This is particularly so because such representations over time become hegemonic ideologies that are difficult to dismantle, more particularly in the minds of the people. Speaking specifically on statistics, Vigneswaran (2013) highlights how crime statistics in South Africa not only invoke feelings in people but also inform what they should do about the problem, for example, by looking for information on where crime tends to happen. Through crime statistics and violence prevalence rates, hotspots and key populations have been identified (Lorist, 2020).

Although I acknowledge that specific representations are unintended, I seek to highlight the resemblance with the colonial trope that represent Africa as a place of perpetual deficiencies and crises (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1999; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015; Nyamnjoh, 2015; Vigneswaran, 2013; Boateng, 2016). The development discourse has been likened to the colonial discourse which operates through producing knowledge about a certain people with the aim of exerting power over them; power to name and presume to know (Escobar 1995, Boateng, 2016). This production of knowledge simultaneously produces certain subjects. Wa Thiongo's commentary on colonialism alludes to how certain narratives were constructed and achieved through representing Africans as racial subjects. Wa Thiongo is quoted saying colonialism's 'most important area of domination was the mental universe of the colonized, the control, through culture, of how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the world' (wa Thiong'o 1986:16 as cited in Bose and Gordon, 2019). Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) identifies the core elements of colonial governmentality violence as constituting 'defining' and 'ruling' the colonised as well as 'legitimation' for the ruling. The defining entailed coming up with specific categories in which the colonised subjects where put.

Commenting specifically on the gender and development discourse, Escobar (1995) argues that western feminism of the 1970s through various forms of knowledge, including statistics, constructed women from the 'Third World' as passive and plagued with problems with no freedom to act. Simultaneously, black African men were constructed as violent, and irrational and therefore in need of intervention (Lorist, 2020; Musariri, 2021). Some scholars highlight how men as a category became a targeted key population within gender and development discourse, following the International Conference on Population and Development Program

of Action (ICPD) in 1994 and the Beijing Platform of Action in 1995 which presented men as possible allies in achieving gender equality. The need to engage men was further 'evidenced' by HIV statistics which show men, particularly migrant men and men who have sex with men (MSM), as disproportionately infected by the virus (Lorist, 2020; Wyrod, 2016).

Associated with the discourse of development was a regime of objectivism in which European researchers were required to be detached and remain objective in their observations. This was made possible through participant observation where the observer was made invisible and set apart from the community he studied. Anand (2007) posits that western colonial representation of the other, particularly the native, thrived on the claims of scientific objectivity as captured in this quote '[t]he mask of objectivity in the colonial discourse hid relations of inequality and domination' (Anand, 2007: 24). This is further amplified in the use of statistics where the context, data collector, data analyst is eliminated. The project of modernity is objectivist and empiricist in character in that it assumes a certain people in the global South can be known and intervened upon (Escobar, 1995: 8). The development has epistemological implications as most of the development interventions are usually conceptualized in western/secular contexts and implemented in non-western/non secular contexts, resulting in the epistemological dissonance -often interpreted as illiteracy, or lack of consciousness by the implementers (Istratii, 2017).

Therefore, I propose looking at statistical indicators as tools for legitimation. Legitimation according to Mbembe (2001:10) in (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015) sought to provide colonial order using 'a language and self-interpreting models.' No doubt the language of numbers would be appealing to this process given their contested status as self-explanatory, objective and neutral. I identify the use of statistical indicators as one tool used by the NGOs to narrowly frame certain groups of people's experiences as well as perpetuating crisis narratives. I also argue that disproportionate targeting of particular groups of the population and overemphasis of specific topics has perpetuate the single story of a crisis.

Methodology

This article is based on findings from ethnographic research which aimed to examine how the everyday politics and economy of Johannesburg inner-city shapes ideas and practices of masculinity among migrant men and women and how these intersect with masculinity ideals advocated for by development interventions such as NGOs. The research was conducted from June 2017 to February 2018 and in May 2019 in various neighbourhoods in Johannesburg inner city with Uncle Kofi's and Tino's corners being the main ethnographic sites. I spent nine months following men from these street corners with the aim of understanding their

experiences of gendered violence within the contexts of marginalization, precarity and other challenges that come with urbanization. Simultaneously I have also followed a couple of NGOs that work towards raising awareness around gender (in)equality including gender-based violence. In total, I attended nine events organised by different NGOs. These events included workshops, community dialogues, think tank meetings and commemorations of special days such as International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. I collected data using participant observation, in-depth interviews, and informal conversations with men and women aged between seventeen to fifty plus years.

In order to understand the role of statistics in knowledge production practices within the NGO sector, I also draw from my experience of working as a quantitative data analyst for NGOs in South Africa from 2013 to 2016. My role was to develop data collection tools, conduct household surveys, analyse data, write reports that we would use for advocacy purposes. I would present the findings to various actors, including government departments, donor and other partner organisations as exemplified in the opening vignette. It was from this process that I understood the importance of statistical data as a political tool used in governance processes, including securing funds for NGOs.

Case study: Crisis and masculinities in Diepsloot

In March 2017 when I went to Johannesburg for my preliminary fieldwork, I visited Men and Boys, the NGO that works with men and boys to address gender inequality in South Africa. I met the Research Director of the organisation and pitched my research proposal. I intended to look at violence against women from men's perspective. Inspired by Oscar Pistorius' femicide case, I wanted to include men from various classes in my study, not only the often-studied poor black men. 'You came at the right time Sonke has just released findings from their preliminary study in Diepsloot, which shows that 56% of men perpetrated violence against women…I think you should focus your study there, though I should warn you that it is a dangerous place especially for women', the Director informed me to my disappointment because I really did not want to visit yet another low resource setting. In my proposal, I had out rightly criticised studies on violence that consistently focus on low resource settings. My argument was such studies reify marginalised groups of people as well as perpetuate the representation of poor black men as the face of violence. Who will research the middle- and upper-class men who despite perpetrating violence can afford the privacy from prying researchers like myself? However, the numbers had spoken and were already directing me which route to take in my research focus: Diepsloot (although I ended up conducting my research in a different nieghbourhood (see Musariri, 2021)

Diepsloot is an informal settlement that was established in 1994 to accommodate people who were moved from shackland informal settlements (Chiolane-Tsoka and Mmako, 2014). Situated just a few kilometres from Johannesburg's flashy northern suburbs of Sandton, Diepsloot is an undeniable reminder of the racially skewed economic inequalities that have their roots in the apartheid regime. With a population of about 200 000 internal and international (mostly Zimbabwean) migrants, it is considered a cosmopolitan community (Chiolane-Tsoka and Mmako, 2014). The neighbourhood is known for high levels of crime, poverty and drug problems and has been making news headlines, for example, during 2008 xenophobic attacks. Amid a vibrant informal labour market, Diepsloot also has burgeoning NGO sector which focuses on the various social problems that plague the community.

The NGOs vary in mandate with some emphasising the vulnerability of the marginalised residents. Sonke Gender Justice Network, referred to above, was one of the NGOs operating in Diepsloot at the time of my study. Sonke, like Men and Boys that I had worked for, seeks to address gender inequality in South Africa through the engagement of men. Sonke had just released preliminary findings of their Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) in Diepsloot. Funded by the UK Agency for International Development (UKAID) through What Works to Prevent Violence, a global consortium of research managed by the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC), the RCT was conducted in partnership with Wits University School of Public Health and SAMRC. It aimed to test a behavioural change intervention, spearheaded by Sonke, known as the Sonke Community Health Action for Norms and Gender Equity (CHANGE) intervention. The intervention entails community action and local advocacy activities aimed at addressing men's use of VAW by implementing the One Man Can campaign[ii]. The CHANGE intervention posits that 'masculine norms can be progressively transformed through community activities that stimulate personal as well as collective reflection and action' (Christofedis et al, 2018). The study used various externally produced templates to 'measure' particular behaviours and attitudes: the Gender Equitable Men's Scale; the Gender Norms scale which was developed using a small sample of men from Brazil; the World Health Organisation (WHO) alcohol use disorders identification test: and the Harvard Trauma Questionnaire. These tools, among many other tools most of which were developed elsewhere, were superimposed on African contexts, such as Diepsloot.

The RCT preliminary results established that 56% of men enacted violence against women in the past 12 months - a rate more than double the prevalence in other parts of the country. As I witnessed during my time as a data analyst, the whole iterative process of cleaning and analyzing data, including the analysts behind the numbers shared publicly, remained invisible save to mention the statistical models and software used. The categories of men, such as gender equitable or inequitable, are determined using statistical models where, for example, the probability of men perpetrating violence is ascertained under the assumption that 'all

things remain constant' which could not be further from reality (Pulerwitz and Barker, 2008). At the end of this messy process, absolute numbers and neat categories remain as labels and stereotypes are crystallized; this becomes the uncontested evidence qualifying the need for intervention.

On their website, Sonke presents the findings with the title 'Urgent change is needed in Diepsloot' with a graph comparing the prevalence rate of violence against women in Diepsloot to the national prevalence rate. The visuals are self-evident that there is a problem if not a crisis in Diepsloot. Another article, promulgating the findings which was also published on Bhekisisa an online platform for health journalism, was titled 'Diepsloot: A place of hell for women.' Without disputing the good intentions of the organisation and their partners, it is also imperative to look at the unintended consequences of their knowledge production and dissemination. These findings have given impetus and solidified the justification for interventions such as One Man Can in shaping men's behaviour and ideas. The tone of both publications conveyed the alarm that readers, including donors, were supposed to feel. In the following years, Sonke would proceed to implement their behavioural change intervention in Diepsloot, aiming at reducing violence against women and targeting mostly men as part of the two-year randomised controlled trial to determine the effectiveness of the Sonke CHANGE intervention. At the end of the trial, it was established that the intervention did not make any significant change towards the intended outcome implying there was no reduction of violence with poverty, crime and mental health issues being some of the broader factors hindering the effectiveness of the intervention (Christofedis et al, 2020). While making an important contribution to the need to look at underlying structural issues, the impact of the study in crystalizing the image of Diepsloot as a violent community can only be imagined, and the economic benefit to the implementers of the trial was ignored. Using statistics, especially from an RCT whose efficacy is highly accepted in the scientific community, hid all the other social, political and economic contexts.

Discussion: statistics and the construction of men as violent

In the case study presented above, I seek to highlight how narratives are created through knowledge practices and emphasise the words of Nguyen (2009) in his reference to HIV interventions that 'Practice produces knowledge, rather than knowledge informing practice, and the knowledge serves to legitimate practice. Programmes are implemented first and afterwards lessons are learned, and best practices identified…' The cumulative studies conducted in particular locations and populations have resulted in a well-crafted story. Statistics in these scenarios play a critical role in presenting the 'evidence' produced in these studies as objective, undeniable, self-evident and apolitical. The whole context, for example,

of Diepsloot as a marginal, poverty-stricken area is not accounted for in the number '56% of men'. Furthermore, the epistemological situatedness and personal positionality (Istratii, 2020), including economic and political motives of the producers of this knowledge, is invisible. As I showed in the vignette introducing this paper, when NGOs pitch their ideas to funders, it is like a market of ideas in which funding plays a central role. While the preliminary findings were widely publicized, presenting Diepsloot as 'hell for women', the final findings which showed the ineffectiveness of the intervention were not as widely shared. Interestingly, Sonke looked only at South African men, despite a significant presence of migrants, because South African men are 'known' worldwide as violent (Wilkinson, 2014).

I view the case study presented above as a microcosm of the macrocosm as far as the construction of crisis narrative in South Africa is concerned. At national level, men in South Africa are known world over to be violent and this has given rise to terms such as problematic or toxic masculinity making headline news within the mainstream media as well as within the masculinity scholarship of South Africa (Musariri, 2021). The term 'crisis in/of masculinity' was coined by feminist scholars in order 'to draw attention to problems confronting men in the face of changing work and family structure' (Dube 2016: 73; Adamson, 2017; Morrell, 1998; Jewkes and Morrell 2010). The term 'crisis of masculinity' has been used interchangeably with terms such as problematic or toxic masculinities by development interventions whose aim is to justify their interventions. In South Africa, the term has been specifically mobilised in relation to the astounding rape and murder statistics, triggered by the changing legal, political and economic landscape that emerged in the country following rapid urbanisation and increased migration at the end of apartheid as evidenced by informal settlements such as Diepsloot (Adamson, 2017; Morrell, 1998; Jewkes and Morrell, 2010). South Africa has been referred as the rape capital of the world (Wilkinson, 2014), and is also known to have the highest prevalence of HIV and AIDS (Avert, 2019) which is recursively associated with pervasive sexual violence.

The statistical wars surrounding the official HIV/AIDS story are revelatory in our understanding of how indicators and so-called Western science shape masculinities in South Africa. With the AIDS statistics showing that majority of the people infected and at higher risk of contracting HIV were in rural areas or homelands and mostly black, it became apparent that AIDS was a 'black disease'. With this racial and geographical profiling of AIDS, nationalist dissidents read this as racial tendency by the white imperialists (Robins, 2008). However, within public health interventions, this would mean the black population was at higher risk and thus interventions should be cognizant of this. A similar controversy continues regarding violence which also has a poor black man's face. Again, interventions that then target can easily pass for racist efforts to tame black men, especially in the contexts

where management of implementing institutions and researchers are predominantly from the middle and upper class, sometimes non-black and using templates imported from elsewhere.

As necessary as such statistical representations are useful, they simultaneously have contributed to the construction of that which they claim to measure (Merry, 2011). In her study of the China's One Child Policy, Greenhalgh (2003) argues that in order to implement the policy, population had to be understood as a crisis first. She posits that China's social scientists framed the population problem as one of disproportion between economic and demographic development (2003: 172). As she puts it 'China's crisis was created out of numbers, the most compelling of which came arranged in tables and graphs' (Greenhalgh, 2003: 172).

The crisis language is meant to create a certain picture about a particular population. For this reason, certain details are removed with the aim of telling a particular story. Vanyoro and Ncube (2018) in their study of migration research coverage in the media, highlight that the newspapers they researched did not report on research findings, rather they used research findings to build certain stories. In other words, through research findings development practitioners can construct a crisis as a way of providing rationale for whatever intervention or policy they are promoting. Greenhalgh (2003) and Crewe (2014) posit that development practitioners package their work as the ultimate solution to a problem. These solutions come in the form of policies and projects with clearly defined beneficiaries and outcomes, leaving no room for other possibilities. For example, in the case study, Dieplsoot was presented as 'hell for women' and the solution was 'urgent change' in the behaviour of men. With behavioural change as the identified solution, development practitioners have fallen into the trap of allowing the solution to define the problem (Hillier and Abrahams, 2013). Adams (2022) in his study focusing on the low uptake of medical male circumcision (MMC) among Swati men in Eswatini, posits that, following the low uptake of the biomedical intervention, the government, funders and implementing NGOs had to create a demand for MMC through information dissemination. Some of the information included numbers showing high levels of HIV prevalence in the country and mortality ratio between men and women. Such information, indeed, was meant to *compel* not only men to act but also governments who wanted to meet the international goals of reducing HIV infections and lowering AIDS related mortality rates.

Within the NGO sector, statistics are used to transform the otherwise politically charged presentations to technical ones because statistics as tools of representation are said to be objective, apolitical and undeniably scientific. This stance is in line with the general claim by NGOs as apolitical institutions, driven by their mandates towards development advancements. However, Merry (2011) posits that statistical indicators confer a certain level of power on

those who do the measurement, those who define what statistical variables to use, population groups to focus on as well as how and what statistical findings to report.

Conclusions

Given that development agencies are mandated to identify and respond to problems and crises affecting communities, they have contributed to weaving together and popularising narrative of needy, risky, vulnerable migrants and problematic masculinities in need of one intervention or another. Their effectiveness in responding to such problems is directly tied to continued streams of funding. As a result, the narratives that currently dominate the development work paint a gloomy picture of crises to justify their interventions that are supposedly the needed solutions to bring about change. One-way development interventions have employed in their work is the use of representation in form of images, research texts, statistics, policy documents and billboards, all of which are crafted to tell a particular story. One such story is to ensure men and masculinities are conceived as problematic or in crisis. The rise in NGOs and interventions aiming to fix men contributed to a proliferation of the crisis discourse circulating in the form of conference papers, public service reports and scholarly publications (Musariri, 2021). In these discursive spaces, the black man from low resource settings, such as Diepsloot, becomes the face of problematic masculinities. Simultaneously, black African women are framed as being at greater risk of being harmed by such masculinities, a claim usually backed up by selected and sometimes self-generated statistics (Musariri, 2021). According to Burchardt, Patterson, and Rasmussen (2013), such representations could be described as extraversion. This entails African states and civil society highlighting particular social problems as a display of desperation and deservingness of donor money. I concur with Escobar (1995: 0) as he argues that '[r]egimes of representation can be analyzed as places of encounter where identities are constructed and also where violence is originated, symbolized, and managed.' Therefore, I conclude that the production of the violence crisis in Diepsloot through the articulation of knowledge and power is essential to the development discourse.

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[i] Men and Boys is an NGO based in South Africa, whose mandate is to raise awareness on human rights, migration, gender inequality and HIV with the aim of bringing about positive behavioral change in men.
[ii] One Man Can Campaign is an intervention implemented by Sonke Gender Justice Network as a model of promoting positive masculinities in the context of high levels of gender based violence and HIV infections associated with problematic masculinities