

THE SOUTH AFRICAN INDIAN MUSLIM FAMILY: PERSONAL NARRATIVES

By

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SUMMARY

This study can be seen as an exploration of the contributions (or lack thereof) made from various schools of family therapy with regards to culture, and, as an augmentation to the current literature, through articulating a South African Indian Muslim family narrative.

It commences with a review of the academic literature, comprising of the studies and general approaches taken towards the subject matter of culture and family therapy within this field. The study thereafter offers a description of the epistemological framework from which the author is operating which can be seen as a combination of second-order cybernetics and social constructionism. This serves to familiarize readers with the frame of reference that has guided the approach to this study as it impacts significantly on the manner in which research is conducted. A detailed discussion of the research approach adopted in this study thus ensues. The research approach assumes a postmodern flavour and can be regarded as alternate paradigm research.

The study also engages in an examination of the various discourses or schools of thought that have provided the predominant epistemological orientations within the field of family therapy. These are the systemic, first and second order cybernetics, constructivist, social constructionist and narrative approaches. The core characteristics of these discourses are critically described and their associated ramifications for culture are explored.

Finally, the study attempts to articulate a South African Indian Muslim family narrative. In doing so, it draws on a number of combined resources. The primary source of data is in the form of personal narratives that are extracted from the author's own experiences and observations of being a member of this specific cultural group. This data is supplemented with community narratives regarding the family. These narratives are extrapolated through participant observation in a community setting. The main themes that emerge from both sources are then utilized as areas of discussion. At the same time, these narratives reflect specific cultural and religious discourses as the latter is threaded into the fabric of the former. The main areas of discussion involve family structure, cohesion, role allocation, communication, hierarchy and life cycle. Those academic narratives which are considered to be applicable and relevant are applied to the data where necessary, thereby highlighting

features of significance and illuminating points of convergence and contrast. The author also attempts to explore the systems of meaning that may inform the patterns in the family.

Keywords: South African, Indian, Muslim, family therapy, epistemology, social constructionism, narrative, culture

OPSOMMING

Hierdie verhandeling kan beskou word as 'n ondersoek van die bydrae (of gebrek daaraan) van verskeie skole van familie terapie met betrekking tot kultuur. Deur die weergawe van 'n Suid-Afrikaanse Indiër Moslem familie-narratief kan dit ook gesien word as 'n toevoeging tot die bestaande literatuur.

Dit begin met 'n oorsig van die akademiese literatuur in die veld, wat uit studies en algemene benaderings tot die onderwerp van kultuur en familie terapie bestaan. Daarna gee die verhandeling 'n beskrywing van die gekose epistemologiese raamwerk ten einde die leser te oriënteer met die verwysingsraam van die skrywer. Die kombinasie van tweede-orde kibernetika en sosiale konstruksionisme het 'n groot impak op die manier wat die navorsing uitgevoer is. 'n Omslagtige bespreking van die navorsingsbenadering wat gebruik is in die studie volg daarop. Die navorsingsbenadering het 'n posmodernistiese aanslag en kan gesien word as alternatiewe paradigma navorsing.

Die verhandeling ondersoek verder die verskeie diskoerse wat tot die heersende epistemologiese oriëntasies binne die veld van familie-terapie aanleiding gegee het. Hierdie sluit in sistemiese, eerste- en tweede- orde kibernetika, konstruktivisme, sosiale konstruksionisme en narratiewe benaderings. Die sentrale eienskappe van hierdie diskoerse word krities beskryf en die geassosieerde ramifikasies vir kultuur word ondersoek.

Ten slotte, poog die verhandeling om 'n Suid-Afrikaanse Indiër Moslem familie narratief weer te gee deur 'n kombinasie van bronne te raadpleeg. Die primêre bron van data is in die vorm van persoonlike narratiewe vanuit die skrywer se eie ervarings en waarnemings as lid van die spesifieke kulturele groep. Die data is aangevul met gemeenskapsnarratiewe ten opsigte van die familie. Hierdie narratiewe is verkry deur deelnemerobservasie teen 'n gemeenskapsagtergrond. Die hoofemas wat vanuit hierdie bronne gedistilleer is word dan as aftrekpunte vir bespreking gebruik. Terselfdertyd reflekteer die narratiewe spesifieke kulturele en religieuse diskoerse soos wat die laasgenoemde die eersgenoemde deurspek. Die hoofareas van bespreking sluit familie-struktuur, kohesie, roltoewysing, kommunikasie, hierargie en lewenssiklus in. Waar nodig word gepaste akademiese narratiewe dan op die data toegepas ten einde betekenisvolle kenmerke en die punte van ooreenstemming en

teenstelling uit te wys. Die skrywer poog verder om die sisteme van betekenis, wat patrone binne die familie kan beïnvloed, te ondersoek.

Sleutelwoorde: Suid-Afrikaans, Indiër, Moslem, kultuur, familieterapie, epistemologie, sosiale konstruksionisme, narratief.

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