

ABSTRACT

Male Reproductive Behaviour and Fatherhood – An Exploration of Social Roles and Responsibility Patterns in Trinidad and Tobago

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This dissertation explores the determinants of male reproductive behaviour and fatherhood in Trinidad and Tobago. The interpretive outcomes and findings update the ethnographic accounts of male behaviours from the period of the 1950s and provide current empirical data to support the policy and programme initiatives of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

The conceptual framework underlying the research is based on a synthesis of phenomenology and rational choice theory. Two major research strategies have been incorporated in a sequential mixed methods design to encompass a QUAL→QUAN→QUAL methodology in three phases of inquiry as follows: semi structured interviews with men and women, followed by a nationally representative sample survey of adult males, and later, building on the findings of the earlier methods, semi structured interviews with policy makers and programme planners in the social sector.

The interpretive outcomes of the first phase of inquiry suggest that the meanings associated with male reproductive behaviour and fatherhood are socially constructed during primary socialization and later determines behaviours in intimate relationships and the manifestation of father roles. Results of logistic regression models developed during the second phase of inquiry indicate that male reproductive behaviour and fatherhood are differentially influenced by individual characteristics, socioeconomic status, the situations in which the behaviours occur and sociocultural factors. Model fit diagnostics and statistical power inferences indicate applicability of findings to the wider population of males in Trinidad and Tobago. Qualitative assessment of programme and policy initiatives suggest a greater advocacy and support role for the media, civil society organizations, and state agencies, alongside full engagement of specific gender, family and population policy and programme initiatives directed at men in the context of male reproductive behaviour and fatherhood.

Keywords: Denise Gaspard-Richards; male reproductive behaviour; father roles