

## Abstract

*Title* The faces of unemployment – Four studies of the social and health related expressions of unemployment

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*Key words* Unemployment, youth, white collar workers, health, ill-health, shame, financial hardship, work involvement, financial situation, long-term unemployment, resource mobilisation, work values

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*ISBN* 91-86796-35-6

*ISSN* 1401-5781

This thesis examines the social and health-related expressions of unemployment.

Article I explores the connection between the degree of shaming experience and mental health among unemployed youth. Data collected from a mailed survey completed by 502 unemployed youth in six smaller Swedish municipalities was interpreted using conventional table analysis. Experiences of shaming were relatively common. A higher proportion of long-term unemployed youth reported more experiences of shaming than did the short-term unemployed as did a higher proportion of men than women. A higher proportion of those with more experiences of shaming reported psychological difficulties, and declining health and social situation compared to the group with less experience of shaming.

Article II examines the assumption that a financial/shaming model can explain variations in health and social problems among young unemployed. The same data used in article I were analysed using simple statistical models. There seems to be a connection between the social and health effects of unemployment and the degree of financial hardship as well as the degree of shaming. The group of unemployed experiencing a greater degree of financial hardship and who simultaneously have more experiences of shaming has the lowest health status and reports to a greater extent a decline in health and a worsening of the social situation than do other unemployed. The reverse is the case for the unemployed reporting a lower degree of financial hardship and less experience of shaming.

Article III investigates the link between work involvement and financial situation – concentrating on two measures of each dimension – and mental health among a group of unemployed white collar workers. Data collected from a mailed survey completed by 868 unemployed municipal/county public officials were interpreted using multivariate analysis techniques. The results indicate that the stronger the perceived employment commitment, the weaker the perceived psychological health. The relationship between perceived economic concern was also strongly linked to psychological health. The greater the economic concern, the poorer the mental health. Even economic security played a moderate but significant part. The results support the existence of both a psychosocial need and an economic need for employment. On the whole, the analysis shows that it is the perceived assessed measures of work involvement and financial situation that are linked to mental health.

Article IV investigates how long-term unemployed youth relate to a situation of unemployment and reconcile it to future aspirations. A qualitative analysis is based upon primary material in which a renewed inductive analysis has been made of 35 interviews. Four ideal types of relationship can be constructed – the 'traditionalists', the 'drifters', the 'seekers' and the 'free spirits'. These types refer partly to the value they place on work and partly to the type of resources they mobilise. A differentiation shows that the actual life situation, even health, is especially problematic for some while for others it is considerably less of a problem.

The introduction provides a societal context for the articles as well as an overview of earlier research on the social and health consequences of unemployment.