

10 *Is a woman's place still in the home?*

Gender-role attitudes and women's position in the South African labour market

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At the dawn of South Africa's democracy, access to resources, employment opportunities and well-paid jobs were starkly divided along racial and traditional gender lines. Women in general, and black women in particular, were largely relegated to the domestic sphere and to lower-income employment, most often involving service or care work (Ntuli & Wittenberg 2013; Orr & Van Meelis 2014). Reversing this status quo by integrating women into the labour market became an important goal of South Africa's transformation agenda (Ntuli & Wittenberg 2013). The last few decades have seen a definite growth in women's employment, yet on the whole, men, and white men in particular, are still in a better position than their female counterparts (Orr & Van Meelis 2014). Men as a group experience lower rates of unemployment, higher-paid employment, more opportunities for career advancement and lower participation in unprotected forms of employment like domestic work, subsistence farming and small-scale informal activities (Casale & Posel 2002). The increase in female employment has been accompanied by a simultaneous decline in the quality of jobs available to women (Orr & Van Meelis 2014), which we outline in more detail in this chapter.

The reason for the enduring differences between women's and men's employment is the fundamentally different structural positions that each gender occupies in the economy. These positions are supported by a range of attitudes and perceptions about gender and work. Thus, 'gender outcomes in labour markets do not reflect natural or objective differences between men and women but, rather, reflect the outcome of discrimination and disadvantage' (Standing 1999: 583). Deep-seated beliefs about women's subordinate place in society influence the type of work that is available to women and how this work is viewed (Orr & Van Meelis 2014). As a result, much of the work that women engage in is not for pay and is largely unrecognised. Where work is done for pay, much of it is in the informal economy, largely limited to certain sectors and less valued by society (Orr & Van Meelis 2014).

A core belief that has shaped what the labour force looks like in terms of gender is the division of work into the public sphere of the formal paid economy – dominated by men, who are seen primarily as breadwinners in families – and the domestic sphere of unpaid reproductive labour, dominated by women who are seen first and foremost as homemakers and who are not formally employed or directly remunerated for their labour (Nentwich 2008; Orr & Van Meelis 2014). This division of labour has become

less rigid in recent years, with more women entering the workforce, but it persists. The fact that women are still largely seen as responsible for domestic work, and men for paid work, shapes the way that people respond to women's paid employment, particularly if it is seen as interfering with motherhood and care for families.

In this chapter, we investigate South Africans' attitudes towards women's employment, drawing on the SASAS data related to women's economic participation and the gendered division of labour within heterosexual households. In the sections that follow, we give an overview of changes in women's participation in the labour force in South Africa, discuss feminist literature about the gendered division of labour, and review available studies exploring shifts in attitudes towards women's economic and domestic involvement over time and across different country contexts. Against this backdrop, we then present our findings of South African society's attitudes regarding women's economic participation and caregiving roles. The analysis is based on two sets of items; the first captures attitudes towards women's employment in relation to their parenting role, while the second centres on attitudes toward working mothers with young children. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the results and recommendations for family-related policy and interventions.

Women's position in the South African labour market

The demise of apartheid brought about profound social shifts in South Africa, with gender equity forming part of the new government's transformation agenda. Toward this end,

international commitments on gender equity were both ratified and later championed by the Government, and a quota system ensured 30 per cent of seats in parliament were reserved for women. Various offices were created to mainstream gender equality and create the bureaucratic machinery to convert law into policy and policy into law. (Morrell et al. 2012: 16)

In addition to paid maternity leave, which had been granted to women in 1991, the Employment Equity Act (No. 55 of 1998) outlined provisions to prevent unfair discrimination against women and was again strengthened in 2013 (Pienaar 2015). The post-1994 years saw substantial increases in women's participation in the paid economy, mirroring international trends of increasing female employment (Boeri et al. 2005; Scott 2008). The past two decades have seen initial fast growth in women's employment, albeit with slower growth in recent times, amid general slower economic growth and increases in unemployment. Nevertheless, the female labour force is still dramatically transformed when compared to two decades ago. The last ten years have seen the difference in the proportion of working-age South African women versus men who are employed remaining more or less the same, as represented by gender gaps in labour force participation and labour absorption rates, which stood at 13.5 per cent and 13.1 per cent, respectively, in 2003 and 2012

(Statistics South Africa 2003, 2012). Recent statistics show that about half of all women of working age are employed. These statistics are shown in Table 10-1.

Table 10-1: *Labour force rates by sex, 1995, 2003, 2008, 2012 (%)*

		1995	2003	2008	2012
Labour force participation	Female	49	48	51	48
	Male	66	61	65	62
Labour absorption rate	Female	30	33	38	35
	Male	51	46	53	48

Source: Stats SA 1995, Stats SA 2003, Stats SA 2008; Stats SA 2012

As the table shows, in the last quarter of 2012, 48 per cent of the 16 995 000 working-age women had entered the job market, constituting the female share of the labour force.¹ This rate is lower than the labour force participation rates recorded in 2008 and largely on par with the 2003 figure.² Considering the proportion of women employed in these periods, the female labour absorption rate³ in the last quarter of 2012 was 35 per cent. This is a 3-percentage-point decrease in the quarter-to-quarter change since 2008, but remains higher than the 2003 rate of 33 per cent (Stats SA 2012).

Still, while women's share of employment has risen overall, this growth has not matched the demand for employment. Unemployment remains high for women, especially young black women (Orr & Van Mellis 2014). Moreover, it is not enough to simply consider employment rates. To get a full picture of women's role in the labour force, Budlender (2008) argues that consideration must also be given to the nature of women's employment – allowing one to assess real progress in terms of gender differences. It is useful to ask the following questions: What kinds of jobs are women employed in? What are the conditions of their employment? Which women do which jobs?

Orr and Van Meelis (2014) shed some light on these questions in their 20-year review of the South African labour market. The authors note that increased female employment has not reflected an improvement in the quality of jobs, pay and working conditions, nor, indeed, in the overall economic position of women. Instead, new areas of employment for women have tended to be insecure and they continue to represent occupations traditionally associated with 'women's work' (such as domestic work, cleaning, nursing and teaching) and the gendered division of labour in the home. Indeed, globally, 80 per cent of those performing domestic work are women (Hoobler 2016). This kind of work tends to have low status and low pay. Women take up low-waged, informal or self-employment often due to a lack of viable alternatives (Cock 2011), but also because they offer a measure of flexibility and so allow women to meet the childcare and household expectations placed on them (Parker & Wang 2013). Working mothers thus experience the 'motherhood penalty': systematic disadvantage in pay, perceived incompetence and benefits,

relative to childless women and men (Budig et al. 2012). We discuss this in greater detail further below.

In addition to low status and insecure employment, South African women as a group (mothers and those without children, alike) still receive less pay than men in the same jobs, despite the Employment Equity Act's stipulation of equal pay for equal value. Women, on average, earn an estimated 15 to 17 per cent less than men (Bosch 2015). Research indicates that there are also disparities among women, with black women being the most disadvantaged by pay inequality (Casale & Posel 2002, 2011; Van Klaveren et al. 2009). Black women still face 'increased insecurity and inequality' (Casale 2004), tending to experience low income, insecure working conditions and few opportunities for advancement (Budlender & Lund 2011; Casale & Posel 2002; Orr & Van Meelis 2014). This is a worrying trend in a context where many black and working-class households rely on female earnings (Casale 2004).

Domestic work forms the largest single occupation for women in South Africa, with almost one million black women employed in domestic work (Cock 2011; Hoobler 2016). This situation is the result of the historical legacy of colonial and apartheid labour control and, to this day, many black women remain 'trapped' in domestic servitude due to poverty and a lack of employment alternatives (Cock 1987, 2011). Though regulations have been put in place to protect domestic workers, the work continues to be precarious and their 'education and income levels remain relatively unequal' (Gama & Willemse 2015). Feminist scholars have noted how the outsourcing of labour in this way transfers much of the unfair burden of domestic labour experienced by middle-class, mostly white, women onto working-class black women. While the 'second shift' of domestic labour, in addition to work outside of the home, is lessened for white women, for their black counterparts it is aggravated (Hoobler 2016).

It is possible, therefore, to see that, more than two decades since the fall of apartheid, the South African labour market 'remains shaped by the mutually reinforcing relationship between race, class, and gender' (Orr & Van Meelis 2014). Women in general, and black women in particular, remain disadvantaged in the labour market and, thus, in the economy more broadly. In the following section, we discuss gender ideology, which supports the gendered division of labour as a key factor to women's position in the labour market.

The gendered division of labour

A substantial feminist literature foregrounds how gender ideologies contribute to women's position in the labour market (Tamboukou 2016). The gendered division of labour is based upon the belief in natural, innate motherhood. Hence, female identity has long been constructed primarily around childcare and domesticity, with women widely believed to be naturally suited to childcare (Morison & Macleod 2015; Wall 2013). This belief has meant that women's work has been delineated as involving domestic and care roles. The view 'of motherhood as constitutive of

feminine gender identity, of women's social role, and as desirable and fulfilling for all women remains entrenched in industrial, urban, and rural societies' (Gillespie 2003: 122). A woman's primary role is still largely seen as that of wife and mother, and women who work outside of the home generally do so only of necessity, ideally working in what are considered feminine occupations, for example, cleaning, care work and service (Orr & Van Meelis 2014).

Indeed, the gendered division of labour has also been justified and reinforced by cultural understandings of motherhood and children's needs (Morison & Macleod 2015; Wall 2013). Mothers have increasingly been seen as important to child development, resulting in the belief of some that children and family life will be negatively impacted if a woman works outside of the home (Budig et al. 2012; Nentwich 2008). Mothers' responsibility for children's normal development has grown from the mid-twentieth century, crystallising in the 1990s in the ideology of 'intensive motherhood' (Wall 2013). Intensive motherhood is characterised by the following beliefs, among others: that mothers should be the primary caregivers; a child's needs should guide caregiving, rather than the mother's; parenting should be labour-intensive, as well as financially expensive and emotionally absorbing, with mothers spending maximum time with children (Hays 1996). In line with this ideology, 'good mothers' are those who, although they might be employed part- or even full-time, prioritise their children and domestic responsibilities (Damaske 2013; Nentwich 2008).

It is likely no coincidence that the rise of the middle-class ideology of intensive motherhood corresponds with women's increased participation in the labour market. Consigning women to the home, or to low status, low-paid work meant that better-paid employment was reserved for men and helped preserve the traditional male-breadwinner/female-caregiver roles. Indeed, despite gendered changes in the South African labour market, 'expressions of masculinity and the cultural ideals of fatherhood attach significant power to breadwinning status' (Bhana & Nkani 2014: 337). Women's contribution to household income is often deemed supplementary to that of men's or given less importance. Likewise, despite newer gender scripts that encourage male participation in caregiving, and potentially allow for women and men to share parenting work and paid labour, in South Africa, as in most other parts of the world, 'the mother's primary responsibility is still the children's emotional wellbeing while the father's is the family's financial wellbeing' (Nentwich 2008: 208). This gendered arrangement of labour supports, and is supported by, structural arrangements, such as the lack of paid parental leave for fathers (Basic Conditions of Employment Amendment Act 2002). In late 2018, legislative gains were made with the promulgation of the Labour Laws Amendment Act 2018, which extended parental leave for employees not covered by maternity leave to 10 days when their child is born or an adoption order is granted. Despite this progressive change, questions still remain about whether this is generous enough.

Hence, while women's roles have changed to accommodate greater participation in the traditionally masculine sphere of paid work, including in jobs traditionally

reserved for men, men's roles have not shifted to include the domestic and care work traditionally considered to be women's work. A wealth of literature indicates that, globally, the conventional division of roles remains persistent and durable across contexts and that, despite the gains women have made in the public sphere, these have not been matched in the private sphere. In countries where parental leave is available to parents of any gender, men do not make use of such leave to the same extent as women and are still reluctant to share domestic labour and childcare equitably (Bittman et al. 2004). Time-use surveys show that men tend to do less unpaid care work in heterosexual families than women across all economies and cultures, despite women's increased entry into the labour market (Budlender 2008, Budlender & Lund 2011). Women generally spend more time than their male partners on caregiving and domestic tasks, in addition to the hours they spend in formal employment (Bianchi et al. 2014; Budlender 2010). In South Africa, it was found that women with children living with them spent, on average, over 12 times more time on childcare than men in the same situation, as reported in the only time-use study to date, conducted by Statistics South Africa (Budlender et al. 2001, see also Budlender 2007).

Thus, the gendered division of labour, and particularly the male-breadwinner/female-caregiver model, remains a key feature of the South African labour market. Inequality persists despite the implementation of measures and policies (described earlier) that were designed to ensure fair access and equal treatment along racial and gender lines (Ntuli & Wittenberg 2013). In order to understand why this may be, it is important to consider the broader cultural context. 'Policies interact with culture to influence women's (and men's) choices about managing work and family' (Budig et al. 2012: 164), and these choices are shaped by cultural beliefs and norms about gender and work (Budig et al. 2012). For example, Budig and colleagues (2012) observed in a range of countries that cultural support for maternal employment was related to the success or failure of policies for working mothers. They found positive associations between parental leave, public childcare and maternal earnings in countries with strong cultural support for maternal employment. Less positive associations, and negative associations in some cases, were noted in countries that display strong support for the traditional male-breadwinner/female-caregiver model. So while enabling policies are important, so too is the environment in which these policies will be enacted. In this chapter, we consider attitudes toward the gendered division of labour as an important factor in this regard. In the following section, we provide an overview of research that has sought to determine the extent of these attitudes and changes over time.

Measuring gender-role attitudes

Internationally, several studies have attempted to gauge attitudes toward the gendered division of labour in families and employment, largely drawing on survey research that can establish trends over time as well as within and across countries (Aboim 2010; Scott et al. 1996; Scott 2008; Thornton & De Marco 2001). In general, studies

have been informed by Parsons and Bales (1955), who differentiated two distinct gender roles in families: an 'instrumental role' corresponding to the traditional male-breadwinner model, and an 'expressive or nurturant role' corresponding to normative beliefs about women being mainly responsible for family care. This allows researchers to explore the extent to which there is support for the notion that women are mainly responsible for care work in the domestic sphere, and men are primarily responsible for economic participation outside the home (Scott 2008). Existing studies indicate that attitudes regarding equality in women's economic participation and parenting roles vary, perhaps predictably, across different country contexts (Scott 2008; Scott et al. 1996). Across Western industrialised countries, there are marked differences in terms of the particular issue surveyed, as well as in 'trajectories and speed of change' (Scott 2008), but with consensus that, since the 1980s, there has been a slow (at times inconsistent) shift away from strong investment in the conventional gendered breadwinner/caretaker roles towards increased role-sharing (Aboim 2010; Scott 2008). Whether these attitudes translate into more egalitarian practices is questionable, as time-use studies suggest.

Also relatively consistent across country contexts are differences between men's and women's endorsement of gendered ideals related to care work and employment (Inglehart & Norris 2003; Scott 2008). In general, men are less supportive of egalitarian ideals regarding women's economic and domestic role than women are (Aboim 2010; Crompton et al. 2005; Scott 2008). This attitudinal gap between women and men has been attributed to the benefits that men derive from their limited involvement in the domestic sphere, resulting in men's reluctance to support more gender-equitable ideals. These differences have also been explained in terms of the opportunities that are made possible for women in particular contexts, which then help to shift gender norms and to empower women. That is, in more progressive contexts, women's increased participation in the labour force has created changes in family life that result in more egalitarian attitudes among women in particular (Korpi 2000). Aboim's (2010) analysis of European attitudes links this attitudinal gap to broader changes in gender relations in post-industrial countries: 'The more independent women become, the more they disengage themselves from the dominant masculine gender system, and, consequently, the more their attitudes differ from men's' (Aboim 2010: 35). In contrast, the reverse appears to occur in contexts with low state support for family-friendly policy. In these countries, when more women participate in the labour force, there also tends to be a hardening of 'conservative' attitudes among women, who are more likely to privilege women's domestic role (Aboim 2007). This points to how the absence of supportive policies that not only enable women's economic participation but also ease their burden in terms of care work may discourage women from pursuing paid employment.

In South Africa, there is a dearth of studies exploring these questions. The broad trends of support for – and opposition to – conventional gendered division of labour in South Africa remain to be investigated. Who subscribes most strongly to the view that women should be primarily responsible for childcare? Is there resistance to

conventional ideas about gender roles in families and support for women's entry into the labour force and, if so, by whom? Have there been shifts in these attitudes over time? In the sections that follow, we first outline our research methodology before considering our findings in response to these questions.

Measures

The 2012 round of SASAS included a number of questions related to women's economic participation, gendered division of labour and support for the heterosexual nuclear family structure. These modules draw on items informed by the work of Parsons and Bales (1955), referred to earlier, and form part of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) module on changing family and gender roles. The items in the scale are differentiated into two sets. The first set captures attitudes towards women's employment as it relates to their parenting role, measured on a 5-point scale ranging from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5). This set includes the following seven statements, to which respondents have to indicate the extent of their dis/agreement:

- A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work. (reverse coded)
- A child younger than 5 years is likely to suffer if his or her mother works.
- All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job.
- A job is all right, but what most women really want is a home and children
- Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay.
- Both the man and woman should contribute to the household income. (reverse coded)
- A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family. (SASAS 2102: Q8–14)

The second set of items specifically investigates attitudes towards female employment when women have young children. Respondents were asked 'Do you think that women should work outside of the home full-time, part-time or not at all under the following circumstances? (i) When a child is younger than 5 years and (ii) After the youngest child starts school' (SASAS 20112: Q15–16). The responses to these two items were measured on a 3-point scale (1 = work full-time, 2 = work part-time and 3 = stay at home) and reverse scored.

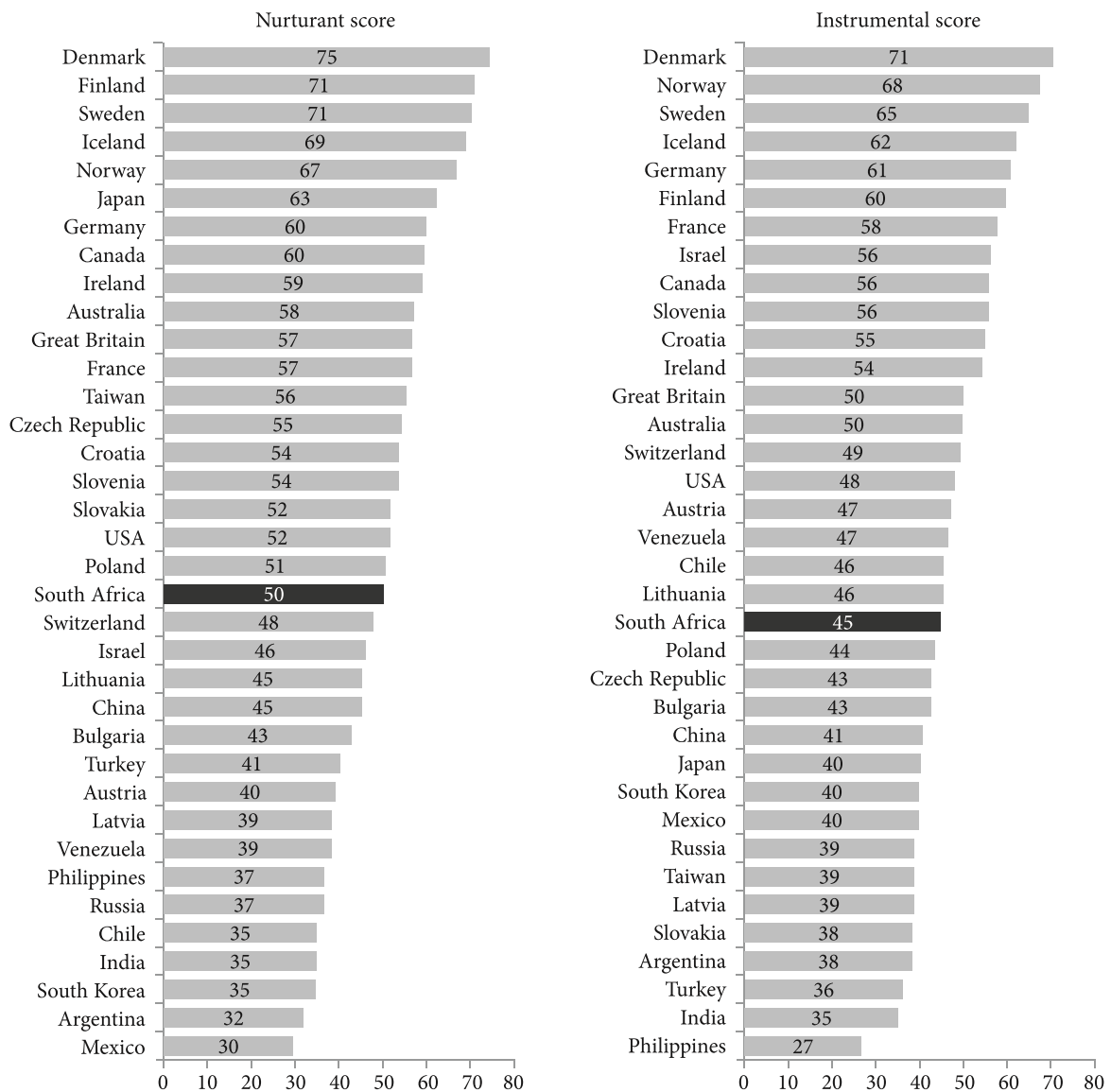
In addition to reporting the findings related to each of the sets of questions described above, we also consider two scales made up of a combination of the items above. We grouped items into two scales based on Parsons and Bales' (1955) distinction between nurturing and instrumental roles. The *nurturant roles* scale⁴ (items 1 to 3) corresponds to traditional notions regarding care and domestic work as part of the female role. The *instrumental roles*⁵ scale (items 4 to 9) concerns women's participation in paid employment outside of the home, a role traditionally deemed masculine. These standardised scales were used as the measures. In all cases, scores

range from extremely conservative (0) to extremely progressive (100). Note that all data are weighted unless otherwise stated.

Findings

We begin the presentation of findings with a discussion of the results from our cross-national analysis. This analysis helps to situate South Africa within global trends in order to get a better sense of the cultural climate in relation to gender roles and employment. Having provided these background findings, we then turn to the South African-specific findings related to three main questions: (i) What are South Africans' attitudes toward women's work and parenting roles? (ii) How do gender

Figure 10-1: Mean cross-national nurturant and instrumental scores, 2012



Source: Own calculations using ICCP 2012 data

roles and other social characteristics affect these attitudes? and (iii) Have these attitudes remained constant or changed over time?

Cross-national attitudes towards gender roles

In order to ascertain how South African attitudes towards women's economic and domestic involvement compared with the rest of the world, we conducted a cross-national analysis of 36 nations on the nurturant and instrumental scales in 2012, shown in Figure 10-1. These data allow one to consider attitudes, in relation to the country context, as generally progressive and with policy supportive of female employment – or the opposite.

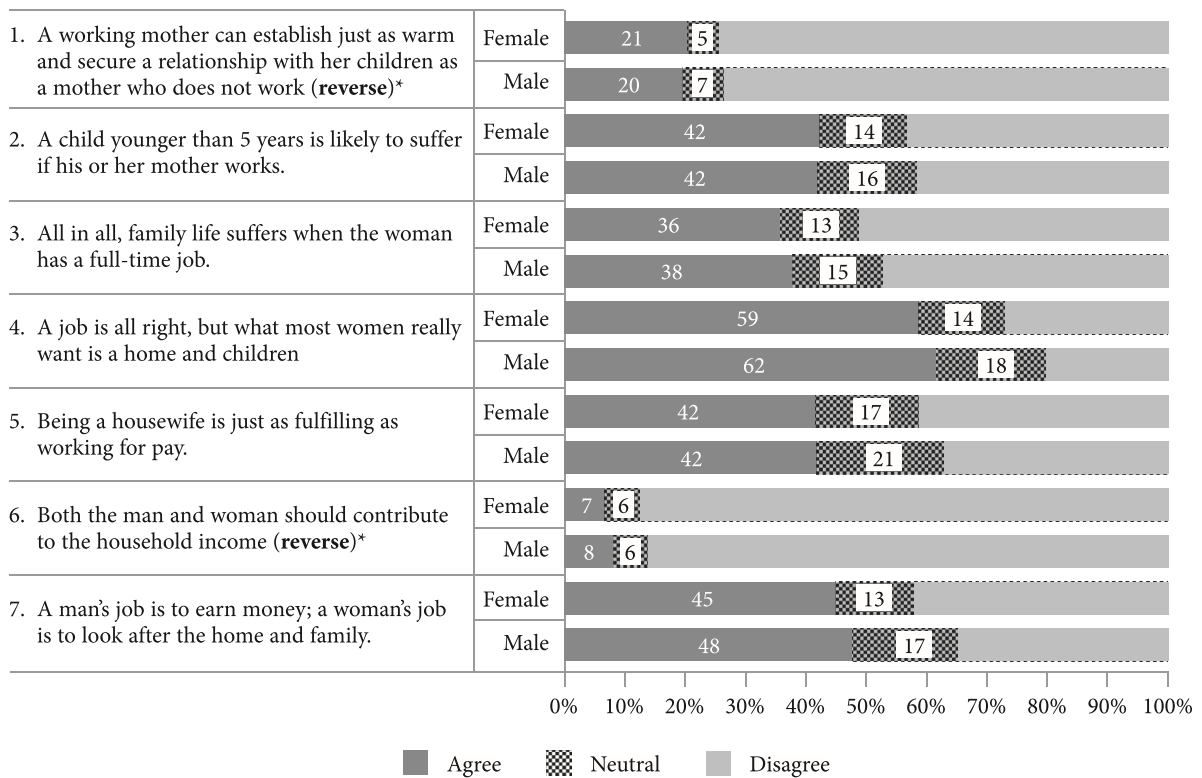
The results provide support for the observation that attitudes towards female roles vary according to (i) the level of economic development and (ii) the presence of progressive family policies, which encompass parental leave policies, provision of child care, child support and income support (Rostgaard 2014; Thévenon & Neyer 2014). Hence, it is possible to see that countries with the most progressive views are primarily the wealthy Nordic countries, with overall mean scores on the 100-point scale of around 70. These countries are known for high levels of gender equality, female labour-force participation and investments in childcare (Gíslason 2011). In contrast, the opposite is true in emerging economies, such as India and China, where 'persistent gender norms...imply the centrality of marriage and nonmarket unpaid labour for women' (Mukherjee 2015: 846) and, thus, provide less support for women's employment (Mukherjee 2015).

As indicated in Figure 10-1, most countries had higher nurturant scores than instrumental scores, indicating greater support for working women's abilities in caregiving than participation in paid employment. As in the other countries, South Africa scored higher on the nurturant scale than the instrumental scale. On both scales, South Africa ranks higher than most other emerging economies (such as Russia, China and India) and on par with some high-income countries (such as Switzerland and the USA). This suggests that South Africans are, by and large, more progressive or gender-egalitarian than other developing countries but, as the findings that follow suggest, are still largely supportive of the traditional gendered division of labour, with some minor exceptions.

Perspectives on women's work and parenting roles

In 2012, views towards women's work and parenting roles ranged considerably across the seven items described in the measures section. Results suggest that, while women's labour outside of their families is generally accepted, this is considered secondary to their parental roles. Overall, whether conservative or progressive in their views, most South Africans have a clear stance on the matter, with only about 20 per cent holding a neutral viewpoint. Figure 10-2 summarises these findings.

Figure 10-2: South African attitudes towards women's nurturant and instrumental roles, disaggregated by gender, 2012 (%)

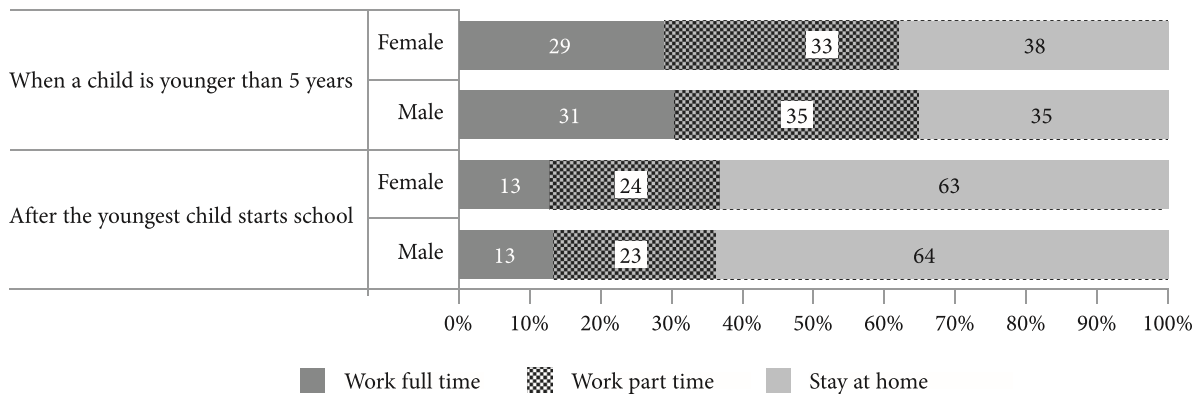


Source: SASAS 2012

* Significant at the 0.01 (99%) level

It is possible to see that a working mother's nurturing abilities are seen as comparable to stay-at-home mothers, with around three-quarters of South Africans, irrespective of gender, agreeing with this sentiment. Keeping with this trend, 8 in 10 South Africans support the view that women and men should both contribute to household income. However, support for women's work outside of their families wanes when

Figure 10-3: South African attitudes towards a mother's place during childrearing, disaggregated by gender, 2012 (%)



Source: SASAS 2012

(young) children are involved. As we show in Figure 10-2, the proportion of people who oppose women's paid labour on the basis of its impact on families (36% of women and 38% of men) increases on the basis of negative consequences for children (42% of women and men). These findings suggest not only that care work is still largely seen as the role of women but also that women are held chiefly responsible for the healthy development of (young) children. This is further confirmed when examining the items that focus specifically on working mothers, summarised in Figure 10-3.

Around two-thirds of South Africans expressed the belief that mothers of young children should be employed full time (29% women, 31% men) or work part time (33% women, 35% men). This decreases dramatically during the schooling years of a child's life where two-thirds of both women and men believe that a mother's place is at home (63% women, 64% men). This is indicative of a belief that a woman should be present, as much as possible, during the schooling years of a child's life. These findings indicate that most South Africans see the mother-caregiver/father-provider model as ideal. We can infer, therefore, that perceptions of children's needs play a role in ideas about female employment.

How can we make sense of this seemingly contradictory lack of support for working mothers, particularly during the schooling years, given the equally strong support for dual-income households described earlier? It appears that women's paid labour may be supported out of economic necessity, and seen as supplementary to income generated by men. This becomes evident when we consider that a large proportion (roughly 60 per cent) agree with the view that 'what most women really want is a home and children.' We consider the implications of this finding further, in the discussion section.

The role of respondents' gender and other characteristics in shaping attitudes

In addition to the broad description offered above, we were also interested in exploring whether certain participant characteristics were associated with greater or lesser support of the gendered division of labour in families, and women's paid labour in particular. Using the scale described above, we explored gender differences among participants' mean scores along three main areas:

- demographic characteristics (including race, age, religiosity⁶);
- family characteristics (relationship status, reproductive status, mother's employment history);
- employment and socioeconomic status (with employment encompassing all forms of work and the Living Standards Measure (LSM) as an indication of socioeconomic status).⁷

We first evaluate these characteristics in relation to attitudes towards women's gendered role as primary caregiver (a nurturant role). We then explore attitudes towards women's roles as financial providers (an instrumental role). This allows us to establish whether certain participant characteristics are significantly

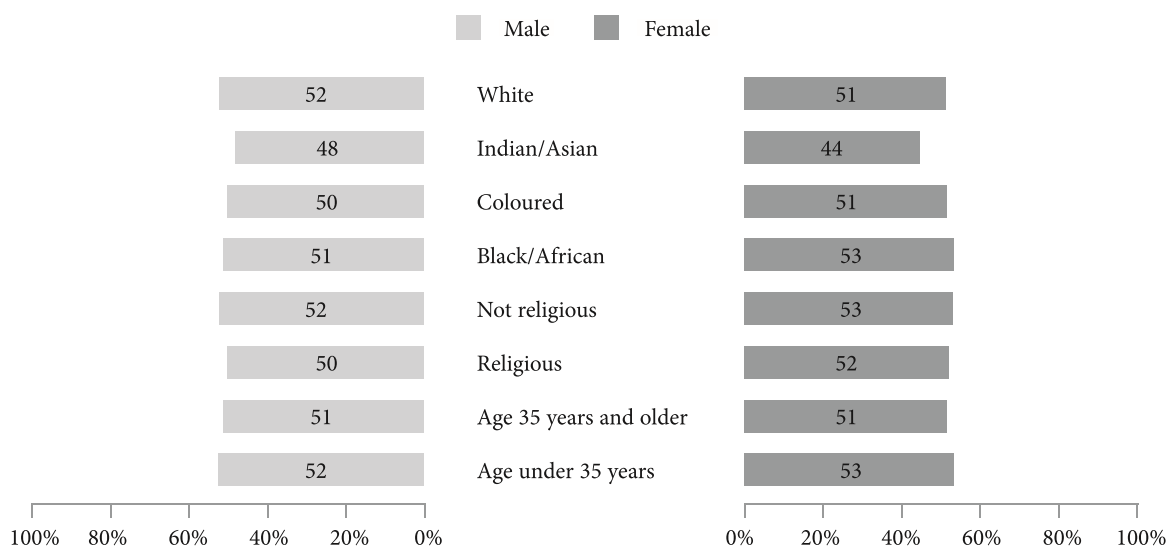
associated with support for (or rejection of) a gendered division of labour within heterosexual partnerships.

Characteristics associated with support for women’s caregiving role

This scale, as mentioned, was designed to measure attitudes regarding the caregiving and nurturant roles of women. Scores range from extremely traditional (0) to extremely progressive/egalitarian (100). A high mean score on this scale thus reflects less support for the notion of women being regarded as primarily responsible for caregiving. When considering differences among women and men based on demographic characteristics, we see that men and women hold largely similar views regarding women’s caregiving role, given that no significant differences were noted, as shown in Figure 10-4.

Considering family characteristics, women who have never been married have more progressive attitudes toward motherhood than those who have been married (Figure 10-5). While the differences are small, the differences are statistically significant.⁸ Marital status does not, however, yield significant differences in mean scores for men. Similarly, reproductive status was also not found to be significant, with parents and those without children holding largely similar views regarding women’s domestic roles. In contrast, views of women’s roles may be influenced by whether a person’s own mother worked outside of the home. More conservative views of women’s caregiving responsibilities in the home are held by women whose own mothers did *not* work for more than a year before the women turned 14 years old.⁹ This group is more likely to support beliefs around women being primarily responsible for care work in the home. No significant differences were noted between men and women.

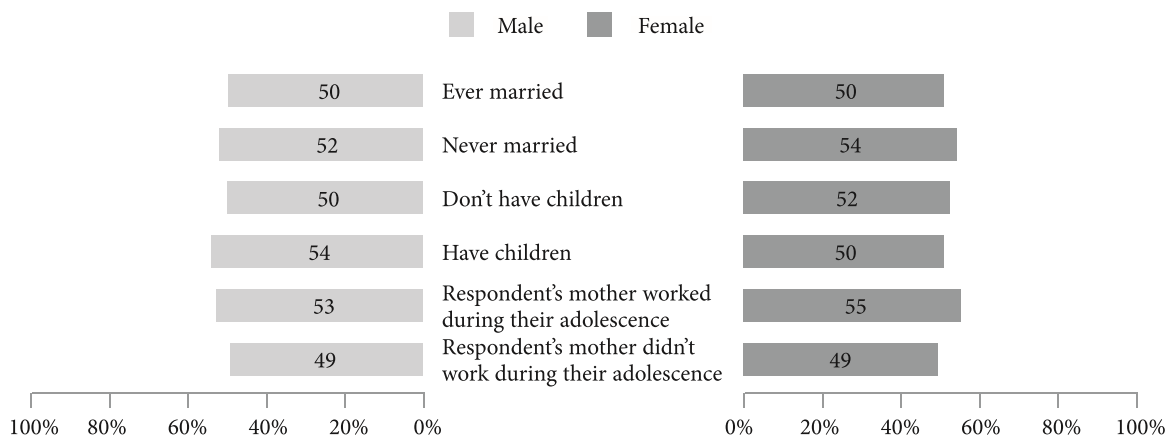
Figure 10-4: Demographic characteristics and attitudes towards women’s nurturant roles (2012, mean scores based on a 0–100 nurturant roles scale)



Source: SASAS 2012

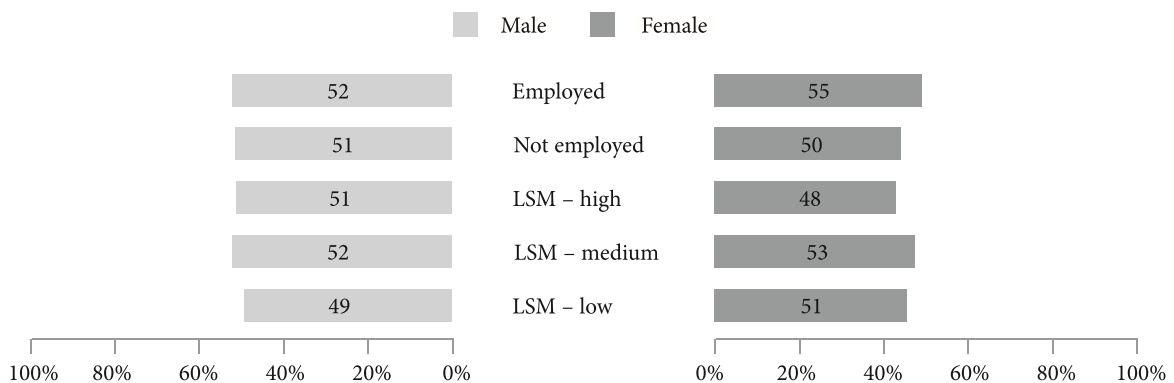
A person's employment and socioeconomic status may also influence their views, in that they are proxies for a number of factors including income, social class, education and opportunities, among others (Johnston et al. 2012). Employed women hold slightly more progressive views of women's domestic roles than employed men; however, this difference is not statistically significant. Within gender groups, women of a high socioeconomic status hold more conservative views compared to those women of middle or low socioeconomic status (Figure 10-6). The differences noted are marginal but significant.¹⁰ The opposite is true for men (that is, men of a higher socioeconomic status have more progressive views of women's domestic role compared to those men of a lower socioeconomic status); however, the differences noted were not found to be statistically significant. Women's employment status was also found to be associated with significant¹¹ differences in mean scoring, with

Figure 10-5: Family characteristics and attitudes towards women's nurturant roles (2012, mean scores based on a 0–100 nurturant roles scale)



Source: SASAS 2012

Figure 10-6: Employment and socioeconomic characteristics and attitudes towards women's nurturant roles (2012, mean scores based on a 0–100 nurturant roles scale)



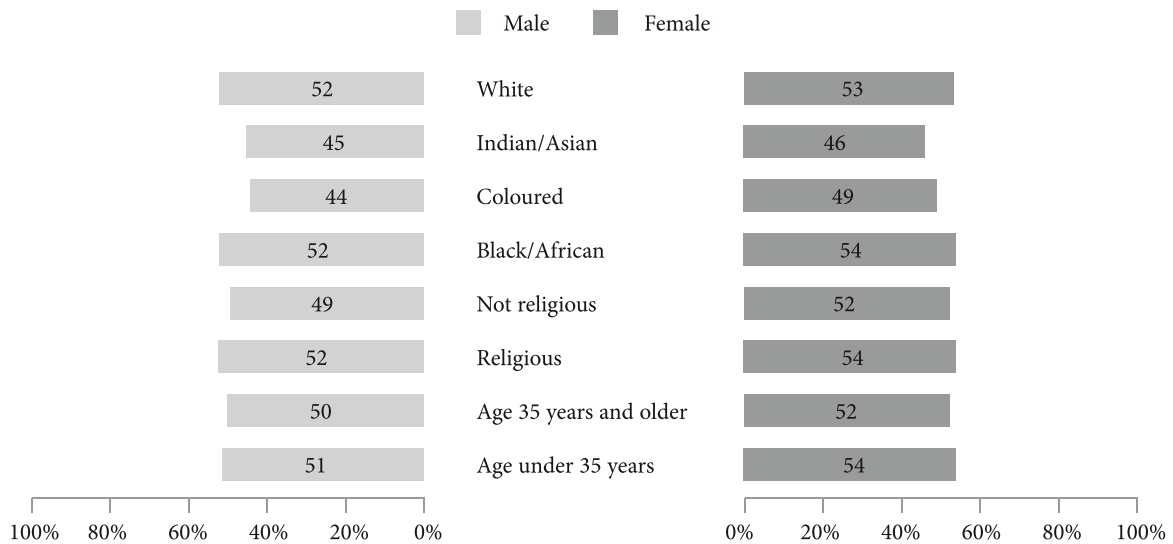
Source: SASAS 2012

employed women holding more progressive views of women’s domestic role. Again, only slight differences in the mean scores were noted between men and women.

Characteristics associated with support for women’s role in financial provision

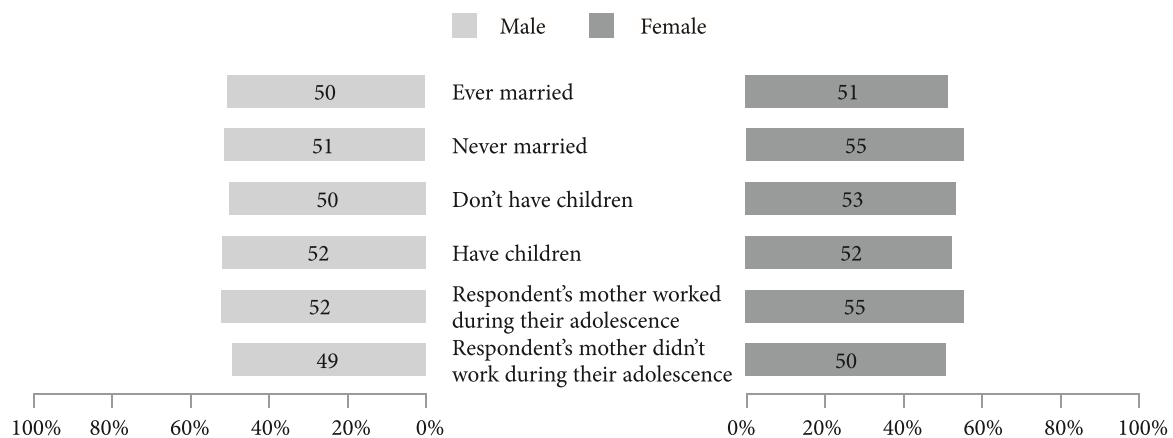
As mentioned earlier, an instrumental roles scale was constructed in order to measure attitudes towards women’s role as financial providers. A high mean score on this scale reflects a break from the traditional notion that women should be responsible for the provision of care, and men for financial provision. Black African men¹² and women¹³ have significantly higher mean scores on instrumental items

Figure 10-7: Demographic characteristics and attitudes towards women’s employment (2012, mean scores based on a 0–100 instrumental roles scale)



Source: SASAS 2012

Figure 10-8: Family characteristics and attitudes towards women’s employment (2012, mean scores based on a 0–100 instrumental roles scale)



Source: SASAS 2012

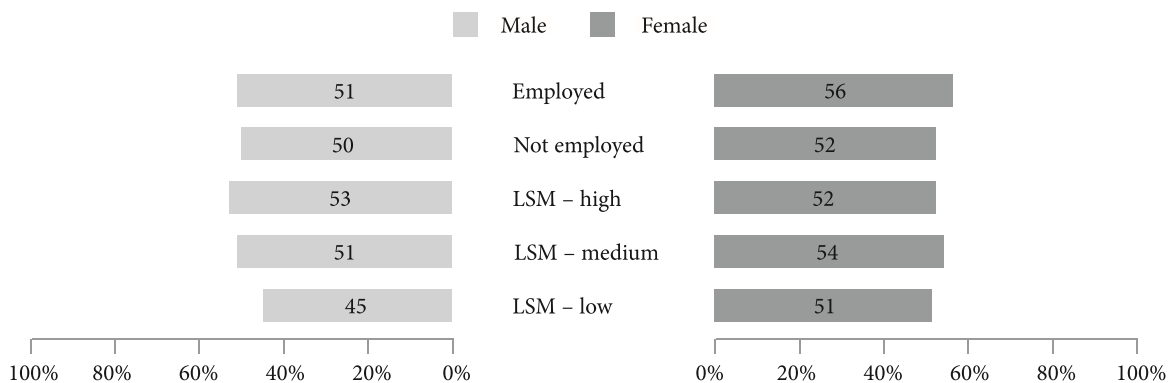
when compared to other race groups within their respective gender groups (Figure 10-7). This means that they are more likely to support women's roles towards contributing financially to the household. Between groups, women who attended religious services often were found to have significantly¹⁴ more progressive attitudes towards the role of women as financial contributors in the household compared to their male counterparts.

For both men¹⁵ and women,¹⁶ more progressive views towards women as providers were observed for those who have had working mothers as children (Figure 10-8). These differences are statistically significant. As noted in relation to the findings about women's role as primary caregivers, women who have never been married hold more positive attitudes toward women's role as providers than women who have ever been married.¹⁷ Women who have never been married¹⁸ and those without children¹⁹ also hold more progressive views towards women's role as financial providers, compared to their respective male counterparts.

Socioeconomic status is associated with significant differences in mean scores for men²⁰ (Figure 10-9). Men in the low socioeconomic status category, compared to those in the higher economic status categories, hold more traditional views of women's instrumental roles. Among women, those who are unemployed reported more traditional views of women's instrumental roles, compared to the views of their employed counterparts.²¹ With regard to gender-based differences, the mean instrumental role score of women with a low socioeconomic status is six points higher than that of their male counterparts. This difference is statistically significant²² and indicative of more progressive attitudes from females of a lower socioeconomic status towards the role of women as financial contributors in the household, compared to men of a similar status.

Thus far, the findings show some clear associations between both individual and social characteristics and views of women's roles in child-rearing and employment. In some cases, males held more progressive views when compared to females. This finding that could be considered counter-intuitive and may allude to female support

Figure 10-9: *Employment and socioeconomic characteristics and attitudes towards women's employment (2012, mean scores based on a 0–100 instrumental roles scale)*



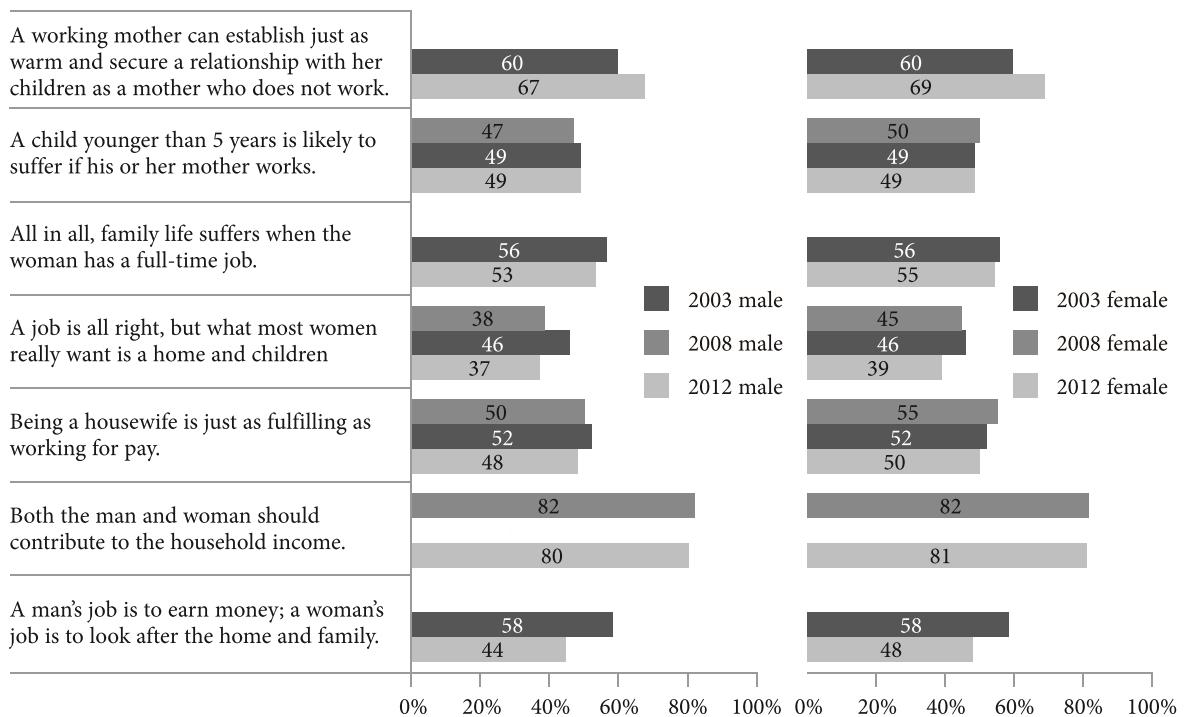
Source: SASAS 2012

for the ideology of intensive mothering as discussed earlier. Overall, there still seems to be strong support for the traditional gendered division of labour within heterosexual families, with some small variations and exceptions noted. We now turn our attention to shifts in gender-role attitudes over time.

Have South African attitudes regarding gender roles shifted over time?

In order to illuminate shifts in support for the gendered division of labour over the past 10 years, we considered longitudinal data available on certain gender-role items. Only certain items were asked in previous SASAS rounds. Figure 10-10 reflects the available data. Once again, higher scores reflect more progressive views, and lower scores more traditional views. There has been a progressive shift in the attitudes of both men and women towards working mothers, with more people considering them as just as able to provide emotional care as mothers who are not employed. The trend of extremely progressive attitudes towards dual-income partnerships continues in the recent data. However, the data suggest that, while dual-income partnerships are favoured, there has been an increase in support for the traditional division of labour in heterosexual families. Between 2008 and 2012, we observed that men and women alike favoured the more traditional female-carer/male-provider model. However, with limited data we are unable to establish a long-term trend.

Figure 10-10: Mean gender-role attitude scores, by gender, South Africa 2003, 2008 and 2012



Source: SASAS 2003, 2008, 2012

Limitations

An important limitation to the findings we have presented is the restriction of the scale items to items related to *women's* role as caregivers, with no mention of men's role outside of paid employment (Scott 2008). This limits the interpretations that can be drawn, since existing measures are focused on the conventional gender-role divide, without also probing for support of a 'de-gendering' of care in which both men and women are regarded as capable and involved caregivers. The findings presented by Makusha and colleagues (Chapter 11, this volume) shed some light on this and seem to support our findings. The authors report that only a small share (20%) of South Africans feel that fathers should have less responsibility for childcare than mothers. Yet, a large proportion (60%) also expressed the view that parental leave should be taken by mothers only. This suggests that, in theory, most South Africans see men as having an equal (or greater) responsibility for child-rearing but, in practice, this is still seen as primarily a women's role.

Discussion

In general, South Africans appear to hold attitudes that are still largely supportive of the gendered division of labour, although we note that they are somewhat more progressive than other 'developing' nations. Probing further, we explored how individual characteristics might influence gender-role attitudes. We observed that women and men generally hold remarkably similar attitudes, although we noted some differences regarding women's employment role in particular. Race and class differences were noted, with black African men and women expressing more progressive views towards women's employment, compared to those in other race groups. This is indicative of support for a more equitable division of household labour and for women's economic participation. Males of a lower socioeconomic status were found to hold, statistically significantly, more traditional views of the instrumental role of women, compared to those men of middle- or upper-class status, suggesting that men in the lower class still subscribe to the male-provider/female-homemaker-and-carer ideology.

Having had a working mother was associated with more progressive views towards women's nurturant and instrumental roles, in both women and men. These findings point to the impact that one's environment and upbringing may have on one's attitudes. This is supported by recent research by McGinn et al., whose analysis of US archival data and nationally representative samples from 24 countries points to 'the potential for non-traditional gender role models to gradually erode gender inequality in homes and labour markets' (McGinn et al. 2015: 1). The findings suggest that both daughters' and sons' attitudes about gender roles are positively affected by having a working mother. Daughters are more likely to be employed in the future and to earn more, while sons are more likely to contribute to domestic and care labour in their families. The positive effect of non-traditional gender roles is also illustrated in research that shows similar benefits for children in two-parent families with gay

or lesbian parents. For example, work by Biblarz and Stacey (2010) and Stacey and Biblarz (2001) indicate that, in such households, labour is not gendered and children are more likely to adopt egalitarian attitudes.

Indeed, when considering changes over time, we noticed some positive attitudinal changes across genders. Notably, we saw growing support for working mothers, with more people supporting the view that working mothers are able to provide emotional care equal to that of stay-at-home mothers. Support for dual-income households also remains strong over time. These positive findings give cause for (cautious) optimism about women's role in the labour market. Nevertheless, while South Africans support women's employment in general, it is clear that this support is not unqualified. The data suggest that female employment is still secondary to women's domestic roles, especially motherhood (Kendall 2007). Our analysis pointed to the influence of concerns about children's wellbeing in supporting this situation. We, therefore, argue that the ideology of intensive mothering, as discussed in the literature review, shapes attitudes about women's roles. According to this ideology, mothers are primarily responsible for children's healthy development and good mothers are those who are intensively involved in their children's upbringing (Hays 1996; Morison & Macleod 2015). This finding is supported by qualitative studies (e.g., Macleod 2001; Morison & Macleod 2015).

In addition to children's developmental 'needs', conservative attitudes are supported by the traditional view of motherhood as fundamental to feminine gender identity and women's social role, but also as desirable and fulfilling for all women (Gillespie 2003), as discussed earlier. Indeed, as we reported, a relatively large (though seemingly declining) proportion of South Africans supports the belief that women *themselves* prefer domesticity over employment. Thus, while work outside the home may be accepted, the ideal situation within such a belief system is for mothers to be full-time caregivers. As we highlighted earlier, support for dual-income households may be endorsed out of economic necessity. Women's paid labour could thus be understood as necessary and fair, particularly in poorer or working-class families who form the majority of the population – but not necessarily desirable.

The data suggest that, like in many other contexts, women's gender roles have stretched to accommodate paid labour under certain conditions, but have not been fundamentally transformed. The ideal that the majority holds appears to be of the middle-class heterosexual nuclear family, in which role sharing occurs according to a contemporary gender script (Kendall 2007). This interpretation is supported by qualitative research findings (e.g., Kendall 2007; Morison & Macleod 2015) that indicate that this contemporary gender script allows mothers to be 'workers' but not 'breadwinners', and fathers to 'help' in the home and with childcare but not be homemakers or co-parents. This more flexible gendered division of labour, relative to earlier gender scripts, 'maintains underlying power structures while "evolving" to incorporate social change' (Riley 2003: 107).

The enduring support for the gendered division of labour has a number of implications for both women and men who are unable to break out of their stereotypical roles. Women who work are likely to experience a double burden of domestic and employment responsibilities. Globally, concern is rising about the impact of this double burden amid growth in women's actual participation in the labour force (Scott 2008). In addition to this double burden, working mothers may experience stigma, with paid employment seen as the antithesis to ideal femininity and motherhood – for example, the stereotype of successful 'career women' being ruthless and unfeminine (Rudman & Glick 2001). Such stigma may be especially severe for those mothers who have young children or who choose to work rather than doing so due to financial need, as well as those who do not prioritise motherhood (for example, prefer to remain childless).

Our findings, therefore, echo a growing global concern around the lack of male participation in care work in relation to increasing female employment (Scott 2008). Though our data do not speak directly to views about male participation, evidence of the actual extent of men's contributions within households indicates that it is inadequate (Budlender 2007). Changes in male roles have not matched those in female roles, despite the growing social desirability of involved fatherhood (Morison & Macleod 2015). Of course, it must be acknowledged that the ideology of intensive motherhood, which casts female caregiving as natural and superior to male care, makes it difficult for men to take up caregiving responsibilities. Heterosexual fathers are often relegated to the role of 'mother's helper' rather than being considered as equally capable parents (Sunderland 2000), while gay fathers experience role strain due to constant questioning of their abilities as parents (Bos 2010).

The specification of economic employment, and the role of breadwinner specifically, as central to the definition of manhood and fatherhood also has negative repercussions for men, as South African fatherhood research has shown. The dominant ideal of provider-masculinity shapes poorer men's decisions about being actively involved in their children's lives (Richter 2009). For instance, Hunter (2006) reports that impoverished Zulu men consider themselves *awekho amandla* [without (social) power] due to their inability to perform the expected sociocultural roles of fatherhood, chiefly centred on economic provision. As a result, they opt out of fatherhood, seemingly abandoning their partners and children.

Indeed, the breadwinner/caregiver model is premised upon outdated middle-class assumptions. The reality for most South African households is that a single income will never be sufficient, though it may still function as an unrealistic aspirational marker of class. Moreover, the two-parent heterosexual norm that is inherent in this model also does not reflect the reality of most South Africans, since only about a third of all families take this form (Budlender & Lund 2011). The breadwinner/homemaker model is thus an unrealistic and detrimental ideal, though it continues to hold traction and shape beliefs about women's domestic and economic participation.

Recommendations

As intimated in our literature review, a central factor shaping positive attitudes toward female employment among women seems to be the extent to which measures are put in place to facilitate changing roles – both in the workplace and in the home. This is especially pertinent to the South African situation where many women bear a double burden of breadwinning and care-giving (Budlender & Lund 2011). Current South African policy has been described as not fully alleviating this burden and, in some respects, maintaining the gendered division of labour (Morison et al. 2016; Sevenhuijsen et al. 2003), and our findings therefore have important policy implications. The current policy landscape contains several contradictory provisions that work against one another. Employment policy strives to promote gender equity in the labour market and family policy recognises the significance of male involvement in households as important to this end. Yet, until the recent passing of the Labour Laws Amendment Act 2018, no substantive policy provisions existed for men's parental leave. Although the 2018 Act extended leave for employees not covered by maternity leave to 10 days when their child is born or an adoption order is granted, questions remain about whether this is an adequate entitlement. Practically speaking, this means that caregiving is likely to remain entrenched as women's responsibility from the beginning of parenthood. Likewise, family diversity is recognised in policy, but the main focus remains on 'family preservation' in line with conventional gender roles (Morison et al. 2016; Vetten 2014). It is clear that there need to be coherent work–family policies that take into account the realities of South African households.

In terms of improving women's position in the labour market and supporting men's greater involvement in shared parenting, we recommend policy development along three lines:

- *Support for women in the workplace.* While women are increasingly involved in paid employment, they simultaneously remain primarily responsible for labour in the domestic sphere, and shifts towards shared parenting between men and women remain slow. In the interim, recognising the undue burden on women, steps must be taken to ameliorate the detrimental effects thereof, and to provide
 - workplace policies that do not penalise women;
 - access to childcare for working women.
- In the longer term, policy frameworks should create *an environment that provides flexibility with regard to childcare.* To this end, policy is needed that
 - makes parental leave available to fathers, regardless of their marital status or sexuality;
 - provides for shared parental leave for men in heterosexual partnerships and offers incentives to use such leave.
- Socioeconomic pressure has increased support for dual-income families. Further to this, changes in family structures have resulted in the two-parent heterosexual norm – upon which the gendered division of labour is based – becoming less common. Policy is needed that *takes the reality of family diversity seriously.* This entails social and economic policies that

- engage meaningfully with family diversity (including differences along generational and marital status, biological kinship, and sexual and gendered diversity, among others);
- support caregiving and economic participation of members across different family structures, not limited to the conventional gendered roles made available in the heterosexual nuclear family, to prioritise family *functioning* instead of narrowly focusing on family *structure* (see Morison et al. 2016).

However, findings show that policies need to be located within a supportive environment. Attitudinal change is required for meaningful progress to be made, but is notoriously difficult. Suggestions towards fostering attitudes that are supportive of more gender equitable participation in paid employment as well as care work include initiatives that:

- promote positive representations of male care (fathers and others, in families and other contexts) to oppose the gender bias in care that restricts men in terms of the roles they can take on in families;
- support interventions that promote male involvement in care as a means to achieving gender equity: for example, Men Engage, an international alliance aimed at fostering social perceptions that support caring masculinities (see menengage.org) and Men in Maternity, an intervention aimed at increasing male participation towards improving couples' reproductive health and postpartum care and support (Mullick et al. 2005);
- promote positive representations of family diversity (e.g., in the media, social marketing campaigns and in school curricula, and targeting young people, as our findings suggest) that focus on the quality of care that children receive, rather than who provides this care.

Our findings show that improving women's position in the labour market can only be achieved if, at the same time, we support male involvement in domestic and care work. These changes have wide-reaching positive implications. As Sheryl Sandberg, herself a business leader, has put it: 'I look forward to the day when half our homes are run by men and half our companies and institutions are run by women. When that happens, it won't just mean happier women and families; it will mean more successful businesses and better lives for us all' (Sandberg 2013: 234).

Notes

- 1 This refers to females who are employed, plus those who are unemployed and actively looking for work.
- 2 In 2005, the Labour Force Survey was published semi-annually.
- 3 The proportion of the female working-age population that is employed.
- 4 Item 1 was omitted from the final scale due to low correlations. The final scale had a moderate alpha of 0.69, and an average inter-item covariance of 0.27.
- 5 Item 8 was omitted from the final scale due to low correlations. The final scale had a moderate alpha of 0.63, and an average inter-item covariance of 0.25.
- 6 Based on attendance at religious services/meetings of at least once a week.

- 7 Low LSM comprised of LSM 1 to 4, Medium LSM comprises of LSM 5 to 7 and High LSM comprises of LSM 8 to 10.
- 8 T-test pvalue 0.06.
- 9 T-test pvalue 0.00.
- 10 T-test pvalue 0.04.
- 11 T-test pvalue 0.00.
- 12 T-test pvalue 0.03.
- 13 T-test pvalue 0.04.
- 14 T-test pvalue 0.08.
- 15 T-test pvalue 0.03.
- 16 T-test pvalue 0.00.
- 17 T-test pvalue 0.01.
- 18 T-test pvalue 0.02.
- 19 T-test pvalue 0.09.
- 20 T-test pvalue 0.00.
- 21 T-test pvalue 0.04.
- 22 T-test pvalue 0.01.

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