Family Structure, Race, Gender and Poverty: The Case of Food Deprivation in South Africa

Acheampong Yaw Amoateng[1]
School of Research and Postgraduate Studies
Faculty of Human and Social Sciences
North-West University, Mafikeng Campus
South Africa (Yaw.Amoateng@nwu.ac.za)
And
Boitumelo Marilyn Patience Setlalentoa
Faculty of Human and Social Sciences
North-West University, Mafikeng Campus.
South Africa (Marilyn.Setlalentoa@nwu.ac.za)

Abstract

This study sought to examine the relationship between race, family structure and gender on one hand, and food deprivation as a measure of poverty on the other hand in South Africa. Main effects were found for race, residence, presence of children and adults, while interaction effect was found for race and family structure. Whites, and to a large extent Indians/Asians, were less likely to experience food deprivation, while black Africans and coloureds were most likely to experience food deprivation. Couple-headed households were the least likely to experience food deprivation, compared to households headed by either male or female. Finally, the presence of children and the elderly in a household was negatively associated with food deprivation, a finding which supports the view that most poor families in the country depend on social grants to children and the elderly for survival.
Keywords: *Households, Social grants, Children, Elderly, Labour migration.*

Resume

Cette étude visait à examiner la relation entre la race , la structure familiale et le sexe d'une part , et la privation de nourriture comme une mesure de la pauvreté d'autre part en Afrique du Sud . Les principaux effets ont été trouvés pour la race, la résidence , la présence d' enfants et les adultes , tandis que l'effet de l'interaction a été trouvé pour la course et la structure familiale . Les Blancs , les Indiens / Asiatiques , étaient moins susceptibles de connaître la privation de nourriture , alors que les Africains noirs et métis étaient plus susceptibles de connaître la privation de nourriture . Les ménages de conjoints jouvoyeurs étaient les moins susceptibles d'éprouver la privation de nourriture , par rapport aux ménages dirigés par un homme ou une femme . Enfin , la présence d'enfants et les personnes âgées dans un ménage était associeé négativement à la privation de nourriture , une constatation qui soutient le point de vue que la plupart des familles pauvres dans le pays dépendant des aides sociales pour les enfants et les personnes âgées pour la survie .
Mots-clés: *les ménages , les subventions sociales, enfants, personnes âgées , la migration*

1 *Corresponding Author*

Introduction

Domestic organisation in Africa has been undergoing transformations ever since the inauguration of the colonial project on the continent in the 19th century. The coordinates of change in household structures in sub-Saharan Africa are multifaceted and include such factors as the HIV/AIDS epidemic, migratory labour, non-marital births, cohabitation, poverty, and unemployment. Within this context of change, some of the family structural changes that have been associated with the above-mentioned processes include size, composition and headship of households. Several studies have noted that household size has declined in countries that have borne the brunt of the HIV/AIDS disease. For example, the World Bank (1997) has noted that in Kagera, Tanzania, the average size of households has declined by less than one person from 6 to 5.7, while in Rakai, Uganda, the mean household size dropped from 6.4 to 4.7 (Menon et al., 1998).

Monasch and Boerma (2004) have noted the increasing prevalence of non-traditional family structure in Africa where children are increasingly living in single-parent households, either headed by the father or the mother. They have noted that in sub-Saharan Africa, 9% of children aged 15 years do not have at least one parent. Lloyd and Blanc (1996) found that in five of the seven countries they studied, 27–28% of youth aged 6–14 were not living with a biological parent while in Kenya and Namibia the corresponding figures were 20% and 51% respectively. These family structures have been shown to be associated with poverty in different ways (Castigla, 1999).

For instance, in the United States, family poverty became more concentrated in mother-child families in the 1960s and early 1970s, less concentrated in these families in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and again more concentrated in single-parent families after the mid-1980s (Bianchi, 1999). Several studies have examined some of these implications in areas such as the educational outcomes of children and psychosocial and economic experiences of members of households. We seek to contribute to the burgeoning literature on the relationship between family structure, race and gender on one hand, and poverty on the other in South Africa in the present study.

Review of empirical literature

The extent of poverty, especially in Africa is not only large, but has also increased both in absolute and relative terms since the 1990s (World Bank, 2001). In South Africa, Leibbrandt, Woolard, Finn, and Argent (2010) analysed survey data on income distribution between 1993 and 2008 and found that the country's high aggregate level of income inequality increased during this period. They also observed an increase in inequality within each of South Africa's four major racial groups. Specifically, while income poverty fell slightly in the aggregate, it persisted at acute levels for the African and coloured racial groups.

Poverty in urban areas has also increased despite the continual improvements in non-monetary well-being (for example, access to piped water, electricity and formal housing) over the entire post-apartheid period up to 2008. According to a study by Statistics South Africa (2009), even though poverty levels in South Africa decreased between 2000 and 2006, it increased between 2006 and 2009. Specifically, the poverty headcount increased from 24.8% to 36.9% based on the food poverty line, a situation which reflected the effects of the global economic recession which coincided with data collection for the LCS.

Several factors have been associated with poverty in the literature including: race (Lichter & Landale, 1995; Budlender, 2005), gender (Strier, 2005; Budlender, 2005; Awumbila, 2006) and family structure (Bianchi, 1999). The discourse on gender and poverty has been very well documented (Kabeer, 1997; Razavi, 2000; World Bank, 2001b; Strier, 2005; Awumbila, 2006). For instance, within this context of gender analysis, it has been argued that the processes by which people become poor and the ways in which they experience poverty are related to their position and situation in society. Since women, especially in the African context, play second fiddle to men in decision making, inheritance, child care among others they are affected the most by poverty. Thus, by any measuring of poverty, women are more likely than men to live in poverty (Elmelech and Lu 2004; Budlender, 2005).

In the United States, Bianchi (1999), in a review of the trends in feminization and juvenilization of poverty, showed that the relative risks of poverty among adult women between 1950 and the mid-to late-1970s, poverty feminized, but it did so as absolute poverty levels declined for women. In the early 1980s, this reversed: Poverty was no longer feminizing, except among the elderly (and perhaps young adults). Nevertheless, recent some studies showed that women still had higher incidence of poverty than men and their poverty was more severe than that of men (Awumbila, 2006).

Some studies have suggested that there may be a trend towards greater poverty among women, especially associated with rising rates of female-headed households. Moreover, studies have shown that countries with the highest levels of poverty also have the greatest levels of gender discrimination (Awumbila, 2006). Gender wage inequality over the years has diminished the ability of single mothers to support their children as poverty rates among children living with both parents are substantially lower than those for children living with a single parent (Lichter & Landale, 1995).

In South Africa, Statistics South Africa (2009) observed that while the rates have decreased, females continue to have higher unemployment rates compared to males. Women in paid employment still earn less than their male counterparts, which further exacerbates their vulnerability to poverty. Duncun (2010) noted that on average, South African women across all races earn 71% of the income of men averaged across all races. And these disparities in income correlate not only with gender, but also with race; African women earn 85% of what African men earn and they earn 71% of what white women earn and 46% of what white men earn (Van Aardt & Coetzee 2010, 2011).

Anderson and Allen (1984) and Budlender (1997) are of the view that economic needs of black families headed by women are greater than those headed by a man. This situation is compounded by limited economic resources and greater susceptibility to economic discrimination. The women therefore, tend to include other extended family members in the household to supplement household income. Budlender (1997) further explains that "in South Africa, in particular, analysis of the data from South Africa's Income and Expenditure Survey October 1995, calculation of mean monthly earned income from wages, salaries and self-employment revealed that households said to be headed by women earned less than a third (R1 178) of the amount earned by those headed by men (R3 767). The disparity is explained by fewer earners per household despite similar household size, a greater proportion of earners in self-employment rather than earning wages or salaries, and the generally lower earnings of those women fortunate enough to have an income.

Many people claim that the 'problem' is on the increase in South Africa. The Bureau of Market Research recorded an increase in the percentage of woman-headed households in the Witwatersrand from 14% in 1962 to 29% in 1985. In 1985, they said, 25% of all children and 20% of adults were living in such households (Buijs & Atherfold, 1995: 2). Though overall, households headed by women are poorer, there is great variation depending on the stage in the life cycle of the woman, and whether rural or urban areas are being considered.

Ardington (1994) describes how African households in former KwaZulu which were headed by younger women in urban areas, for example, had much better all-round indicators for all household members (income, employment, educational levels, among others), than did those of households headed by men or by women in the middle and older age cohorts. Households headed by young women in rural areas were the worst off; households headed by elderly women receiving pensions were among the very poor households, even with the pension income (Lund Report, 1996).

Meanwhile, it has been noted that gender gaps in access to ownership and control over resources make women more vulnerable to poverty than men (Awumbila, 2006; Shapiro & Tambashe, 2001). The bases of poverty can also be traced to gendered preference of child enrolment in school (Shapiro & Tambashe, 2001), gender inequalities in the labour market which puts most women in the non-wage informal sector employment (Awumbila, 2006). Poverty among women can also be attributed to the gendered internal division of family labour. Working mothers continue to bear the major responsibility for child care which impacts their poverty levels (Castigla, 1999).

Worldwide, female-headed families are increasing rapidly and the number of poor female-headed families doubled between 1950 and 1974 (Bianchi, 1999). Based on data in the United States, Pearce (1988) suggested that female-headed families were losing ground compared to families with an adult male present in the household, noting that the ratio of income in female-headed families to other families had declined between

1950 and 1974. He argued that if the trend continued, nearly all the poor would be living in female-headed families by the year 2000 (Pearce, 1988).

The present research

The above review of the empirical literature has shown that it is replete with studies on poverty both globally and in South Africa. However, the bulk of the studies of poverty, especially, in South Africa, have used as measures of poverty indicators like income, unemployment and monthly expenditure of members of households. Moreover, many studies of poverty have tended to focus on the correlates of poverty and have therefore examined factors such as race, gender, residence etc. in isolation.

This approach to the study of the problem renders the existing literature problematic in two major ways. First, in a country like South Africa, with its huge problem of unemployment, inequality and poverty, using a measure like income and or household expenditure is likely to bias the findings towards the few that earn a salary or a wage. In fact, according to the Committee of inquiry for a Comprehensive Social Security System (2002), there were 2.6 million unemployed individuals who lived in households where there was no one employed and where the monthly total expenditure of the households was less than R800 per month.

Access to food is basic and, in fact, in South Africa, a socioeconomic right. It is therefore more likely to reveal the extent of poverty in the general population than income and expenditure. Secondly, the focus on correlates of poverty in the form of the individual factors mentioned above hinders explanation. For example, female-headed households are but one dimension of family structure in the diverse family forms that exist in a multi-cultural society like South Africa. Therefore looking only at this family type does not help to advance the knowledge base as far as family structure's effect on poverty is concerned.

The present study seeks to fill this gap in the existing literature in two ways. Firstly, we use as a measure of poverty, access to food. Secondly, we use other dimensions of family structure such as male, single-headed and couple-headed households besides female, single-headed households. Thirdly, we control for factors such residence, age of the household head, presence of children and adults 60 years old and above in the household. Thus, we seek to contribute to this bourgeoning literature on changing household and family structures in South Africa by examining the implications of these emerging household structures for food security.

Specifically, our aim is to examine how variation in household types engenders food deprivation or otherwise across race and gender groups. The fundamental research question we seek to answer is: How does a household headed by a female, a male or a couple affect the household's access to food across race and gender groups?

Data and Methodsample design

The data for the study come from the 2009 General Household Survey (GHS) by Statistics South Africa. The sample design was based on a master sample (MS) that was originally designed for the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) and was used for the first time for the GHS in 2008 (Statistics South Africa, 2009). The master sample used a two-stage, stratified design with probability proportional to size (PPS) involving the sampling of Primary Sampling Units (PSUs) from within strata, and systematic sampling of dwelling units (DUs) from the sampled primary sampling units (PSUs).

A Randomised Probability Proportional to Size (RPPS) systematic sample of PSUs was drawn in each stratum, with the measure of size being the number of households in the PSU. Altogether approximately 3 080 PSUs were selected. In each selected PSU a systematic sample of dwelling units was drawn. From these Primary Sampling Units, 25 728 households were selected randomly, representing about 94 263 individuals in the selected households.

The number of DUs selected per PSU varies from PSU to PSU and depends on the Inverse Sampling Ratios (ISR) of each PSU. A self-weighting design at provincial level was used and MS stratification was divided into two levels. Primary stratification was defined by metropolitan and non-metropolitan geographic area type. The design weights, which are the inverse sampling rate (ISR) for the province, are assigned to each of the households in a province. Information collected ranged from such individual characteristics as education, marital status, race, residence, gender and household characteristics such as relationship to the designated head of the household, educational attainment of the household, household possessions etc.

Measures

Family Structure: Using the United Nations' recommendation, Statistics South Africa defines a household as consisting of "a person, or a group of persons, who occupy a common dwelling (or a part of it) for at least four days a week and who provide for themselves jointly with food and other essentials for living" (Statistics South Africa 1996: 12). The 2009 General Household Survey defined nine relationship types within the household (head/acting head, spouse of the head, Children of the head, siblings of the head, parents of the head, grandparents/great grandparents of the head, grandchild/ great grandchild of the head, other relative of the head and non-related person). Following this original classification, marital status and gender of the head were used as criteria to distinguish 12 household types. For the purpose of the present study, these types are further grouped into three broad types, female, single-headed, male, single-headed and couple headed.

Poverty: Poverty is not easy to measure in statistical terms because it is a complex phenomenon and takes many forms which make its definition and measurement problematic (Atkinson, 1987; Budlender, 2005). Poverty is multi-dimensional with complex interactive and causal relationships among the dimensions. The definitions of poverty have therefore been broadened to encompass dimensions such as lack of empowerment, opportunity, capacity and security (Awumbila, 2006). Given the multi-dimensional nature of poverty, in this study, we measure this concept by "food deprivation" which is derived from selected items on food security from the survey's section on food security, income and expenditure on food supply. Four items and their sub-items were selected for the creation of a "Food Deprivation Index". The items and their sub-items were "weighted" in order of importance as follows:

Q4.1. Did your Household run out of money to buy food during the past year?
If Yes=4 points.

Q4.1b. Has this happened 5 or more days in the past 30 days?
If Yes=2 points

Q4.2 Did you cut the size of meals during the past year because there was not enough food in the house?
If yes=4 points

Q4.2b. If this happened 5 or more times=2 points

Q4.3 Did you skip any meals during the past year because there was not enough food in the house?
If yes=4 points

Q4.3b. If this happened 5 or more times=2 points

Q4.4 Did you eat a smaller variety of food during the past year than you would have liked to, because there was not enough food in the house?
If Yes=2 points

Q4.4b. If this happened 5 or more times=1 point.

Thus, the total Deprivation Index score range from 0 (if they answered No to all questions) to 21 (if a respondent answered Yes to all questions).

Statistical Approach

The data are first weighted to take into account the complex survey design. To this effect, we employ the Rao-Scott Chi-Square statistics which is appropriate for weighted data to examine all bivariate relationships, while we employ the SURVEYLOGISTIC procedure in SAS for the multivariate analysis to test the study's hypotheses. The dependent variable, *food deprivation*, ranges from 0 to 21. This is dichotomized into 0='No deprivation' and 1='Any deprivation'. Dichotomizing food deprivation (the

dependent variable), makes it amenable to the use of the logistic regression statistical technique for the multivariate analysis as the technique requires the dependent variable to be binary. Since the log odds can be any number between minus and plus infinity, it can be modelled as a linear function of the predictor set. The equation for the logit model of the regression is expressed thus:

$$\log \frac{(\pi)}{1-\pi} = \alpha + \beta 1X1 + \beta 2X2 + \ldots\ldots\ldots + \beta kXk$$

In the present study, the log odds of a family becoming food deprived are regressed on family structure and selected socio-demographic factors. The predictor variables are represented by X1, X2, X3..... Xk. Specifically, the predictors include family structure, age of the household head, race of the head, the presence of children aged 0-17 in the household, the presence of adults aged 60 and above in the household, and type of place of residence.

Results

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for the variables in the model. Seventy-three percent of the households in the sample report that they are not food deprived as opposed to 27% that have any food deprivation. Seventy-eight percent of the household heads are black African, 8% coloured, 3% Indian/Asian and 12% white. In terms of age, only 7% of the heads are aged between 10-24 years old, 21% are between 25 and 34 years old, 22% are aged between 35 and 44 years old, while slightly over one-fifth (20.42%) of the household heads are aged 60 and above years old; the mean age of a household head is 46 years old. Fifty-six percent and 10% of the households are in urban formal and urban informal areas respectively, while 28% and 6% of households are in tribal and rural formal areas respectively. Fifty-five percent of the households have no children in the household compared to 45% with children; the mean number of children in a household is 1.28. Finally, 78% of the households have no adult aged 60 and above, 17% have only one adult, while 6% have two or more adults.

Table 1: Distribution of Sample Characteristics

Variable	Number	Percent
Food Deprivation		
No	10440905	72.51
Yes	3957527	27.49
Race of Head		
Black African	11188327	77.71
Coloured	1155921	8.03
Indian/Asian	361224	2.51
White	1692959	11.76
Age of Head		
10-24	963912	6.69
25-34	2968602	20.62
35-44	3201680	22.24
45-59	4323921	30.03
60+	2940317	20.4211
Residence		
Urban formal	8089832	56.19
Urban informal	1396933	9.70
Tribal areas	4077189	28.32
Rural formal	834478	5.80
Presence of children		
No	7962223	55.30
Yes	6436209	44.70
Presence of Adults 60+		
No	11167944	77.56
1	2385681	16.57
2+	25934	5.87

Figure 1shows the distribution of family structure by race of the household head in the sample of households in the study. Over 40% of households amongst black Africans are headed by females only. This compares with 33%, 25% and 22% amongst coloureds, Indian/Asians and whites respectively. Conversely, because of the relatively higher marriage rates amongst whites and Indians/Asians almost two-thirds (65.45%) of white and 62% of Indian/Asian households respectively are headed by a couple, while 55% and 33% respectively of coloured and black African households are headed by a couple. The

same pattern of household structure is observed in the case of households headed by only males; 26% of black African households are headed by males only compared with 12%, 13% and 12% respectively amongst coloureds, Indians/Asians and whites.

Figure 1: %Distribution of Household Type by Race of Head

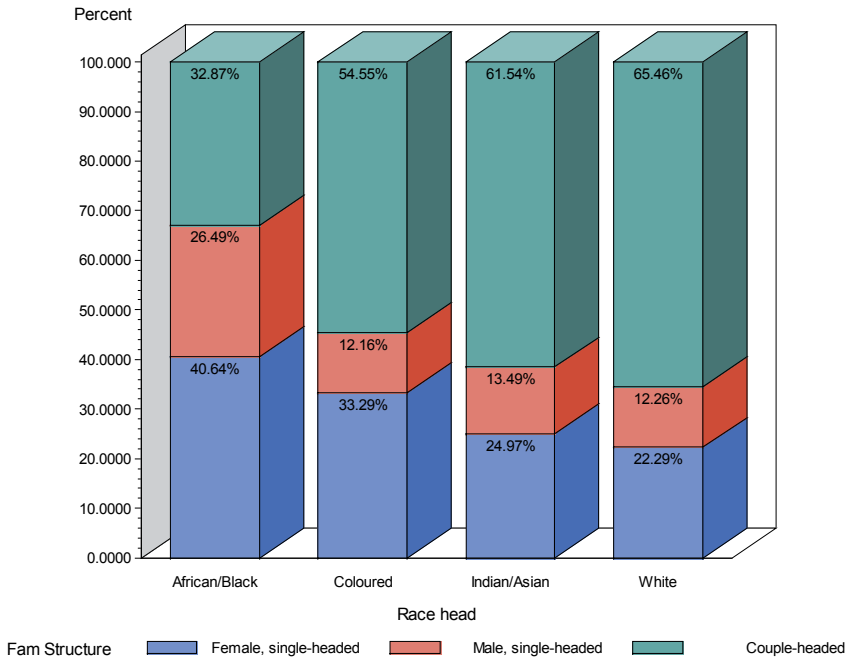


Table 2 shows the relationship between food deprivation and each of the predictor variables in the model, while table 3 shows the global logistic regression results of the multivariate analysis which essentially confirm the bivariate analysis results. The presence of children and adults 60 years and above appears to be negatively associated with food deprivation. In other words, households with children and adults aged 60 years and above are less likely to experience any deprivation and vice versa. For example, 28% of households where there is no adult member report food deprivation compared to only 19% of households with two or more adult members who report any food deprivation. Also, whereas one-third (33%) of households without any child report food deprivation, the same is true of slightly more than one-fifth (21%) of households with at least one child that report food deprivation.

While this finding may appear counterintuitive within the context of the "resource

dilution" theory, in South Africa, it supports the commonly-held belief that because of the widespread unemployment and poverty and the concomitant generous social welfare regime, many poor households depend on the old age and child support grants for survival[2]. Thus, the association between the presence of children and the elderly and the absence of food deprivation in a family is lends an empirical support to the fact that most poor households in South Africa rely on such grants as a major source of household income.

There is a statistically significant association between levels of urbanisation and the likelihood of food deprivation in South Africa. Households in urban formal and rural formal areas are less likely than those in urban informal and tribal areas to experience food deprivation. Thirty-six percent and 35% respectively of urban informal and tribal areas report food deprivation compared to only 22% and 24% respectively of urban formal and rural formal areas.

In terms of age, households headed by persons aged 35-59 years old are more likely to experience food deprivation followed by those headed by youth aged 10-24 years old, while households headed by adults aged 60 and above years and those headed by persons aged between 25 and 34 years old are less likely to experience food deprivation.

Household heads between ages 25 and 34 years old are in the prime working age group and are therefore likely to be gainfully employed, while heads aged 60 and above years old are likely to depend on old age and other types of social grants. On the other hand, the twin problem of lack of skills and unemployment facing the youth in the country is a plausible explanation of the likelihood of households headed by the youth experiencing food deprivation.

2 *In South Africa, social grants in the form of child support grant, care dependency grant, foster child grant, disability, older person's grant, war veteran's grant and grant in aid are the main source of income for about 15% of households and almost one-third (28.3%) of individuals (Statistics South Africa, 2009).*

Table 2: Bivariate Analysis of the Relationship between Deprivation and Predictor Variables

Variable	%Deprived	Rao-Scott X^2	Value
Presence of Adults in Household		35.13	<.0.0001
0	28.25		
1	27.07		
2+	19.00		
Presence of Children in Household		285.09	<.0.0001
No	32.60		
Yes	21.16		
Residence		362.24	<.0.0001
Urban formal	22.21		
Urban informal	35.07		
Tribal areas	36.09		
Rural formal	23.89		
Age of Head		51.46	<0.0001
10-24	25.76		
25-34	25.02		
35-44	28.34		
45-59	30.58		
60+	25.05		
Race of Head		657.12	<0.0001
Black African	31.51		
Coloured	25.11		
Indian/Asia	9.04		
White	6.44		
Household type		136.95	<0.0001
Female, single-headed	32.41		
Male, single-headed	25.98		
Couple-headed	23.67		

Table 3 shows the results of the logistic regression analysis. Table 3's confirmation of the bivariate analysis in table 2 is evidenced by the fact that the main effects of race, presence of children and adults 60 and above, residence and age of the household head persist even after adjusting for the effects of all other factors in the model. The significance of the main effect of race in table 3 is further illustrated by figure 2 which

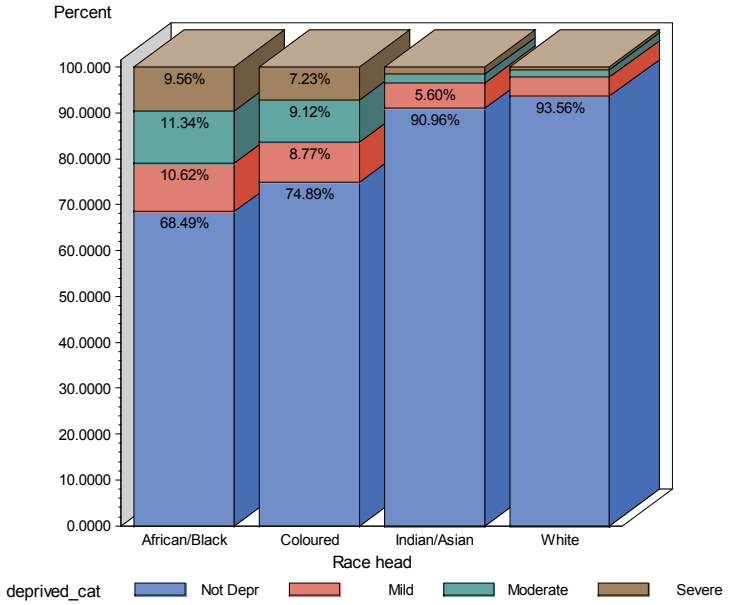
shows the distribution of food deprivation by the race group of the household head. Both table 3 and figure 2 show that regardless of family structure, households headed by black Africans are more likely than any other household to experience food deprivation. For example, while 94% of white household heads report that they have no food deprivation, only 68% of black African household heads report no food deprivation; 91% and 75% of Indian/Asian and coloured household heads respectively report no food deprivation.

But, table 3 also shows that there is a significant interaction effect between family/household structure and race of the head of the household[3].

Table 3: Logistic Regression Analysis Results (Global)

Effect	DF	Wald Chi-Square	p-value
Race	3	45.80	<0.0001
Household Structure	2	0.19	0.9107
Race*Household Structure	6	19.73	0.0031
Residence	2	84.27	<0.0001
Presence of Children	1	122.70	<0.0001
Age of head	4	59.12	<0.0001

Figure 2: %Distribution of Food Deprivation by Race of Head



3 *The non-significant p-value of race and family structure is due to the interaction between the two variables.*

Table 4 on one hand, and figures 3 and 4 on the other show the detailed results of the interaction effect between household structure and race of the household head. The fundamental question that table 3 and figures 3 and 4 seek to answer is: Does household structure affect poverty as measured by food deprivation in the present study? The answer is yes, but it depends on the race group of the head of the household. Table 4 and figures 3 and 4 show that with the exception of whites, family structure affects the likelihood of food deprivation. Specifically, among black Africans, coloureds and to some extent Indians/Asians, the household type that is less likely to experience food deprivation is a couple-headed household, while the household type that is most likely to experience food deprivation is a female-headed household.

Specifically, table 4 shows that among black Africans, the odds of a couple-headed household experiencing food deprivation are 80% less than the odds of a female-headed household experiencing food deprivation. Moreover, the odds of a couple-headed household experiencing food deprivation are 83% less than those of single, male-headed household; there is no significant difference between female-headed and male-headed households among black Africans. The resourcefulness of a couple household is also shown by the fact that amongst coloureds the odds of a couple-headed household experiencing food deprivation are 53% less than the odds of a female-headed household experiencing food deprivation. Moreover amongst coloureds, while there is no significant difference between a couple-headed household and a single male-headed household with regards to food deprivation, the odds of female-headed households experiencing food deprivation are 1.49 times higher than those of their male counterparts.

As far as Indians/Asians are concerned a similar observation is made with regards to couple-headed households and female-headed households. The positive impact of a couple-headed household on access to food is evidenced by the fact that the odds of a couple-headed household experiencing food deprivation are 53% less than the odds of a female-headed household experiencing food deprivation. Also, like coloureds, while there is no significant difference between a couple-headed household and a single male-headed household, the odds of a female-headed household experiencing food deprivation are 5.80 times higher than the odds of a single male-headed household experiencing food deprivation.

Table 4: Logistic Regression Analysis of Food Deprivation (Interaction Terms)

Family Structure	Estimate*	t-value	p-value	Odds Ratio
Couple (RC) vs. Female-African	-0.219(0.041)	-5.33	<.0001	0.8031
Couple (RC) vs Male-African	-0.182(0.056)	-3.25	0.0012	0.8337
Female (RC) vs Male-African	0.0374(0.052)	0.72	0.4687	1.0381
Couple (RC) vs Femal – Coloured	-0.637(0.110)	-5.74	<.0001	0.5291
Couple (RC) vs Male – Coloured	-0.237(0.175)	-1.36	0.1751	0.7889
Female (RC) vs Male – Coloured	0.400(0.179)	2.23	0.0259	1.4911
Couple (RC) vs Female – Asian	-0.630(0.312)	-2.02	0.0436	0.5326
Couple (RC) vs Male – Asian	1.127(0.762)	1.48	0.1388	3.0869
Female (RC) vs Male – Asian	1.757(0.774)	2.27	0.0232	5.7964
Couple (RC) vs Female – White	0.065(0.279)	0.23	0.8168	1.0669
Couple (RC) vs Male – White	-0.097(0.313)	-0.31	0.7571	0.9079
Female (RC) vs Male – White	-0.161(0.374)	-0.43	0.6657	0.8510

**( )=Standard Error of the Estimate*

RC=Reference Category

Figure 3: %Distribution of Food Deprivation by Family Structure

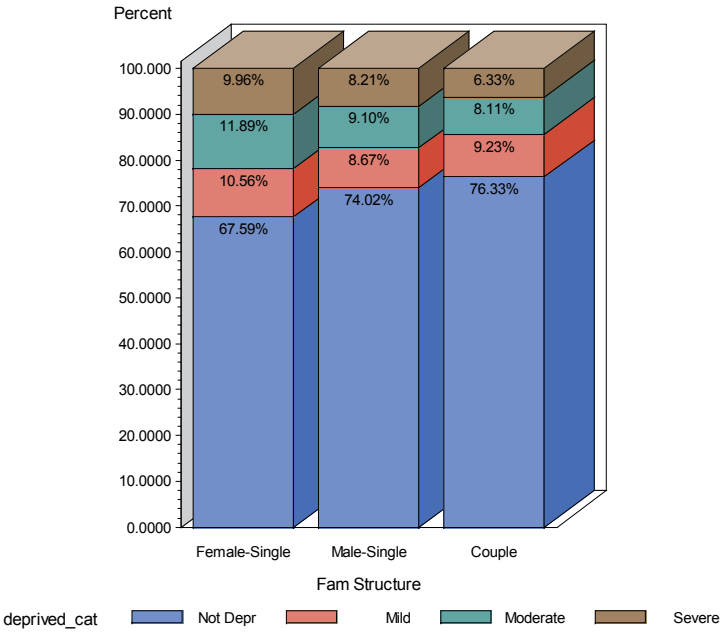
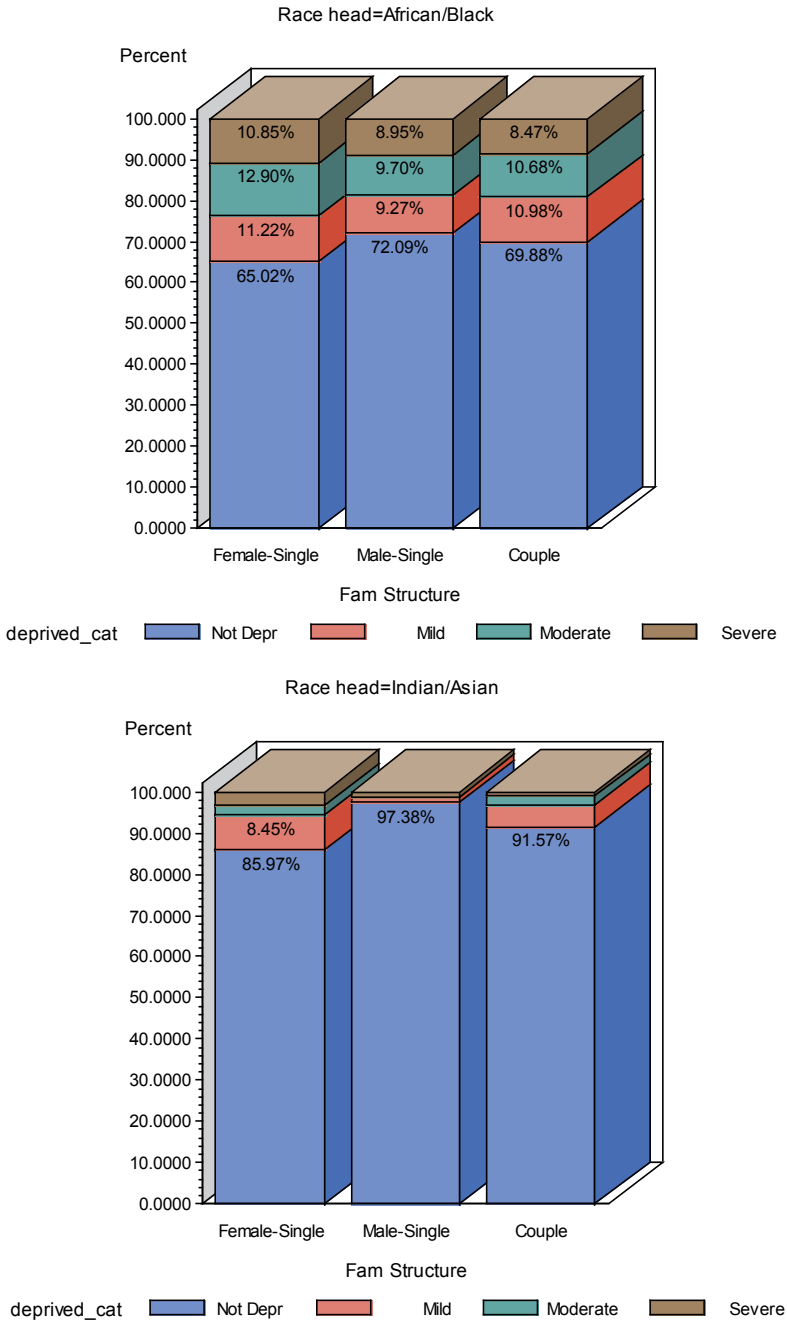
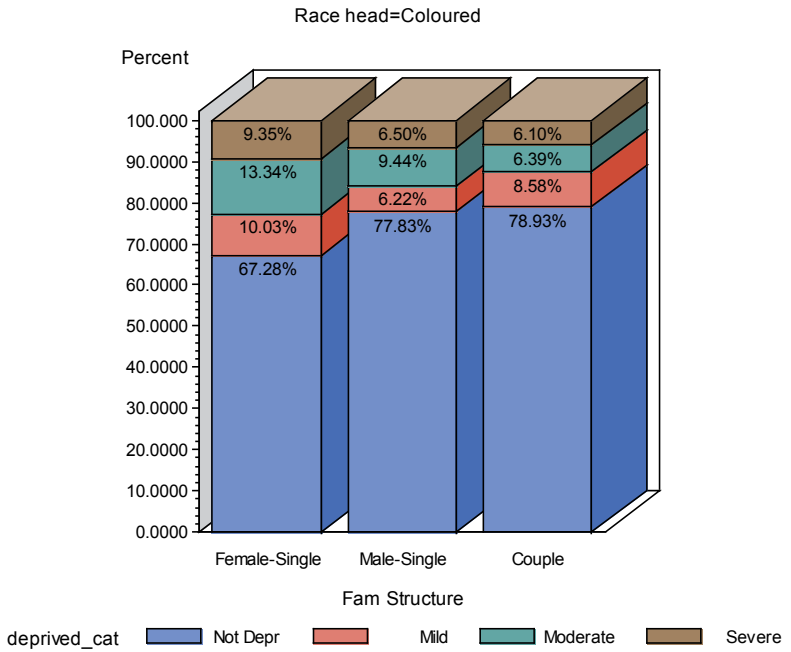
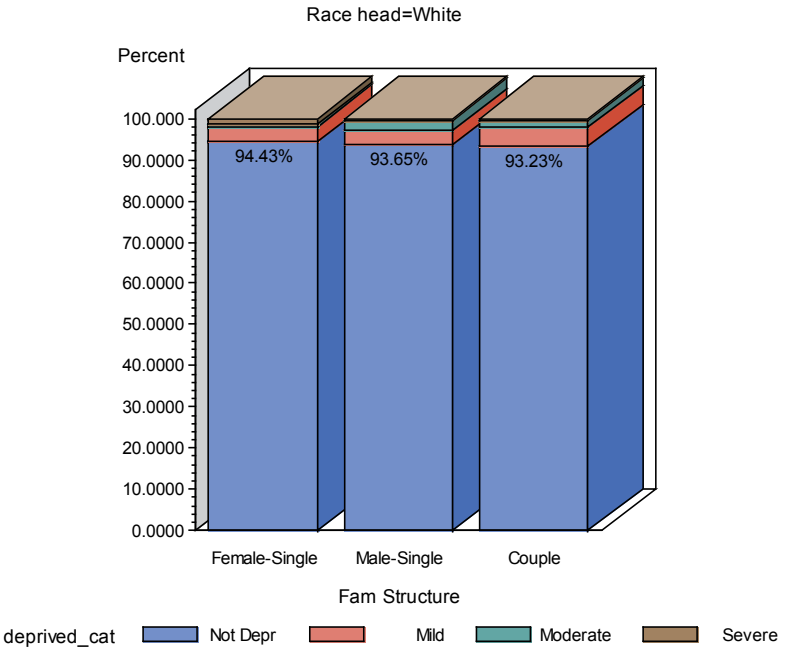


Figure 4: %Distribution of Food Deprivation by Family Structure and Race of Head




Race head=Coloured
Percent
100.000
90.0000
80.0000
70.0000
60.0000
50.0000
40.0000
30.0000
20.0000
10.0000
0.0000
9.35%
13.34%
10.03%
67.28%
6.50%
9.44%
6.22%
77.83%
6.10%
6.39%
8.58%
78.93%
Female-Single
Male-Single
Couple
Fam Structure
deprived_cat
Not Depr
Mild
Moderate
Severe


Race head=White
Percent
100.000
90.0000
80.0000
70.0000
60.0000
50.0000
40.0000
30.0000
20.0000
10.0000
0.0000
94.43%
93.65%
93.23%
Female-Single
Male-Single
Couple
Fam Structure
deprived_cat
Not Depr
Mild
Moderate
Severe

Conclusion

Using the 2009 General Household Survey data by Statistics South Africa, the logistic regression analytical technique was employed to examine the effect of household type and selected background characteristics on poverty as measured on food deprivation in South Africa. Main effects were found for race of the head, gender, residence, age of the household head, the presence of children and adults in the household with regard to food deprivation, while interaction effect was found between race of the head and family structure on food deprivation. The presence of both children and adults aged 60 years and above, being in a couple-headed household, living in an urban formal and rural formal areas, being an elderly head of household and being white decrease the odds of a household being food deprived.

On the other hand, living in urban informal and tribal areas, being a young head of household, being black African or coloured, living in a black African, coloured and Indian/Asian single, female or male-headed household increase the odds of being food deprived in the country.

In South Africa, apartheid-induced processes such as sex and race-selective labour, migration, family formation and dissolution patterns have engendered variations in household structure among the country's race groups such that black Africans are disadvantaged in having higher incidence of female-headed and male-headed households, the two types of families that are least able to ward off poverty. These living arrangements have largely contributed to food deprivation through such markers as low education, income, and unemployment given the institution of the family's interface with these socioeconomic institutions in the society.

In conclusion, the present study has shown that a household or family's ability to respond to such economic issues as access to food depends on its structure. The prevalence of poverty amongst black Africans and coloureds is largely due to their family formation patterns which largely predispose them to family/household structures such as single-parenthood that are least able to ward off poverty.

As far as policy implications are concerned, the findings of the present study have shone the spotlight on the democratic government's glaring failure to implement the National Family Policy in terms of promoting stable and resourceful families especially, amongst the previously disadvantaged racial groups in the society who lack the resources and incentives for such positive family formation patterns as marriage and co-residence with their spouses.

Limitations of the Study

Because of the rapid expansion of such socioeconomic opportunities such as education and social grants in the society, six years seems to be a long time to expect things to remain the same. In fact, this is borne out by the largely anecdotal accounts of the reduction in poverty rates in the country in recent years. Thus, to the extent that this is true, a major limitation of the present study is the fact it uses a six-year old data to estimate the impact of household or family structures on poverty in the country. Thus, future research in this area would do well by using data from some of the more recent data in the General Household Survey series to test these claims about the reduction in the poverty rates. The second limitation of the study is the fact that like many previous studies, the present study used a single indicator-*food deprivation*-as a measure of poverty. Given the multi-dimensional nature of poverty, future research must strive to use a composite index of poverty which would comprise some of the individual indicators such as employment, income, household expenditure and of course food deprivation.

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