

Project: Promoting Democracy and an Equitable Society

Project Series: GBV and Misogyny

Labour Force Equality: Perspectives & Stereotypes

Social Media Analytics Report

Date Range: 1 January - 31 March 2024
Release date: May 2024

This publication was funded by the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of CABC and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.



**Funded by
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Introduction

This report aims to generate a deeper understanding of individual attitudes and perceptions toward gender stereotypes, and determinants around labour in the South African context. This is done through an analysis of public social media. This report is the 9th in a series of reports which seek to capacitate the CABC's heCareZA intervention¹

It provides an overview of research into the online conversation around all types of labour such as, formal, informal, emerging or care-based. The findings discussed in this report are shared with other researchers, practitioners, digital activists, civil society, governmental institutions and the general public to inform policy and practice. This focus is hereafter referred to as 'Labour Force Equality'.

In the South African context, the latest statistics collected by Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) indicate that the unemployment rate was 32.1% in the fourth quarter of 2023². It is estimated that the number of unemployed persons increased by 46,000 to 7.9 million in the aforementioned quarter. Breaking it down by sex, the national unemployment rate was higher than the national average for women. 34.4% of women were unemployed as compared to a rate of 30.1% for men. Black African women fare the worst, with an unemployment rate of 39.8% in the second quarter of 2023. In terms of the labour force participation rate, utilising the expanded unemployment definition, the proportion of economically active women was 65% compared to 73.5% for men. This means that men have a significant advantage over women in the country with regards to financial and economic control.

Furthermore, when women are employed, they are more likely to work in low-paying jobs and/or encounter gender pay gaps. A study conducted by Southern Africa – Towards Inclusive Economic Development (SA-TIED), over the period from 2008-2021, found that the gender pay gap has increased for women, in 2021, earning 78 cents for every rand earned by men compared to 89 cents in 2008.³ The rationale put forward to explain this disparity in wages and labour force participation is gender segregation of the labour market, motherhood penalties and expanded unpaid care work predominantly conducted by women on the basis of gender stereotypes particularly related to socially constructed gender roles⁴. In terms of employment, 2 out of 3 workers in high-paying management positions are men.⁵

With reference to the above, this research report seeks to utilise social media data to highlight and expand understandings of the perceptions, attitudes and stereotypes which may reinforce lessened participation in the labour force for women.

The research process includes the creation, testing and refinement of an online research query (see Appendix A). Relying on quantitative and qualitative research findings, this report is the

¹ <https://hecareza.co.za/>

² <https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0211/P02114thQuarter2023.pdf>

³ <https://sa-tied.wider.unu.edu/article/the-gender-wage-gap-in-south-africa>

⁴ Casale et al., 2021

⁵ <https://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=14606>.

latest instalment in a series of reports produced by the CABC with a focus on gender. In it, data metrics are used to provide a high-level overview of the broad conversation, thereafter, thematic analysis is employed to provide a deeper understanding of the foundations supporting attitudes, perspectives and stereotypes. Opportunities to engage are also identified and a summary of findings is presented.

The primary source of data for this report was sourced from the social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter. Recent estimates drawn from X's advertisement reports in early 2023 indicate that 3.65 million South Africans are active on the social media platform⁶. This represents around 6.1% of the population, so it is important to keep in mind that the results are not indicative of the sentiment and thought of the population at large. It is further important to note that the consideration of active X accounts does not cater for individuals who access the platform through other means, such as through the opening of links shared by individuals in their social sphere. Limiting our understanding of X's active user base in the country. With that in mind, the opportunity for narratives to break out from social media platforms like X toward other platforms more widely used such as Whatsapp, and to influence traditional media and policy decisions has been reported on frequently in South Africa and beyond⁷.

1. Key Terms

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) defines a Labour Force as, "the sum of all persons of working age who are employed and those who are unemployed". They further define the labour force participation rate as, "the number of persons in the labour force as a percentage of the working-age population". A definition expanded upon by Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) as, "the percentage of the working age population which is economically active (the employed and the unemployed)⁸". These terms are added at this point in the report as they will be used in the key findings immediately below.

For the purposes of this report, we take our lead on the definition of terms from various ILO and StatsSA definitions, reproduced verbatim and referenced, namely:

Employment: Employment comprises all persons of working age who during a specified brief period, such as one week or one day, were in the following categories: a) paid employment (whether at work or with a job but not at work); or b) self-employment (whether at work or with an enterprise but not at work)⁹.

Unemployment: The unemployed comprise all persons of working age who were: a) without work during the reference period, i.e. were not in paid employment or self-employment; b) currently available for work, i.e. were available for paid employment or self-employment during

⁶ <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-south-africa>

⁷ Bosch, 2017 ; Mpofu, 2019

⁸ <https://apps.statssa.gov.za>

⁹ <https://ilostat ilo.org/resources/concepts-and-definitions/description-labour-force-statistics/>

the reference period; and c) seeking work, i.e. had taken specific steps in a specified recent period to seek paid employment or self-employment¹⁰.

Working Age: all those aged between 15 and 65 years¹¹.

Gender Gap: In the context of economic inequality, gender gap refers to the systemic differences in the social and economic roles and wages of women and men. There is a debate about how much of this is the result of gender differences, lifestyle choices, or discrimination¹².

Informal employment: Work that lacks social and legal protections and employment benefits. These jobs may be found in the formal sector, the informal sector or in households¹³.

Unpaid Care Work: A category of labour inclusive of: (1) Providing unpaid domestic services for own final use within households ; (2) Providing unpaid caregiving services to household members ; (3) Providing community services and help to other households¹⁴.

2. Findings Summary

- Overall: The conversation around women in the labour force more generally is polarised. Proponents for and against issues of the definition of work, progressive legislation in the workplace and labour force equality seem to align broadly within two camps. A religious-moral traditionalism juxtaposed to a perspective rooted in progressivism and gender equality. This mirrors an ongoing polarisation globally in relation to gender which identifies these two perspectives as antithetical, unable to be reconciled.
 - Intervention in this space should seek to first build a broader understanding of this proposed dichotomy as it is present in the South African context, while holding space for a strong international and comparative perspective which can assist in further understanding and analysing conversations of this nature.
- Under the theme of Labour Force Equality: The CABC noted stereotypes about the competency of women in traditionally male industries
 - We furthermore noted Manosphere¹⁵ type content which sought to make the case that women were being psychologically manipulated to enter the workforce for the purposes of higher tax revenue and disrupting family structures.

¹⁰ *Ibid* at 4

¹¹ *Ibid* at 3

¹² https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_policy/documents/publication/wcms_334921.pdf

¹³ *Ibid* at 8

¹⁴ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_732791.pdf

¹⁵ The manosphere refers to an online collection of men's communities promoting masculinity, misogyny and opposition to feminism.

- There was pushback against the above perspectives on the basis of women being as capable as men, as well as the emancipatory nature of employment which provides independence.
- Under the Defining Work theme: Conversation around the decriminalisation of sex work and unpaid care work are similarly polarized. Perspectives for differing viewpoints are split along a traditional and religious outlook, and a forward, progressive outlook on gender roles, household labour and sex work.
 - Conversation around regulating the sex industry diverged from the core tenet of labour protection and the reduction of stigma, toward the belief that any formalisation of the sex industry would tacitly encourage individuals to engage in sex work.
 - Conversation around unpaid care work engaged with themes such as Lobola as well as conspiracy theories around the 'destruction' of the family unit - narratives advanced under this sub-theme resembled those found in manosphere discourse online, as noted in the Labour Force Equality summary.
- Under the Regulatory Frameworks theme: Data gathered suggests that individuals consider the South African legislative framework sufficient to address gender inequality.
 - Concern was expressed regarding the lack of action from the Government in implementing the policies and laws required for equality.
 - With regards to redress policies and laws, gathered data indicates support for these policies and laws but some noted that it impacts on the previously advantaged groups (i.e. men) negatively.
 - Sex markers in the workplace centred largely around maternity and menstruation. We noted that some considered the South African business sector as too conservative regarding the implementation of progressive policies such as paid maternity and menstrual leave.
 - The Gender Pay Gap remains a contested topic with strong views being expressed on both ends of the debate.

3. Supporting Project Outputs and Opportunities for Engagement

In this section, we have identified three constructs and associated vectors which can be used to enter and engage in conversations around Labour Force Equality online.

Construct 1: Changing, Shifting and Deconstructing Traditional Gender Roles

- **Vector 1a:** Traditional and Religious Ideas around Gender Roles
 - We've noted that conversation around labour force equality is polarised. The 'divide' seems to relate more so to considerations of gender roles stemming from traditional viewpoints and religious ideas. Conversation starters may include an expression of interest into individuals' ideas of traditional and religious roles and where the point of tension is stemming from. Designs may centre around positive

messaging and conversation around what these roles represented at the times that they were commonplace and how they may be understood in a more equitable context.

- **Vector 1b:** Disruption of the Family and Family Values
 - Conspiracy and externalisation to ‘forces’ was commonplace. Conversation here may seek to engage individuals on the veracity of the claims they make in relation to an unseen other i.e. the ‘New World Order’ or ‘Feminism’. Designs may seek to promote conversation around women’s independence and equality as well as diverse understandings of the concept of ‘family’.

Construct 2: Changing Ideas around what constitutes ‘Work’

- **Vector 2a:** Stigma around Sex Work(ers)
 - Arguments in relation to sex work drew from moral or religious ideas, as well as expressed fears of ‘normalisation’ of the sex work industry should the industry be regulated. Conversation starters and designs in relation to sex work should seek to draw the conversation away from individual moral and ethical concerns to a point of understanding around how best to protect and give agency to sex workers. Here, concerns around trafficking and drug abuse among others can be highlighted as symptoms of problems related to sex work being unregulated, which could be stemmed should labour protections be put in place.
- **Vector 2b:** Unpaid Care Work is Not ‘Work’
 - Conversations in relation to unpaid care work drew heavily on traditional gender roles explored under Vector 1a. Conversation in this domain should seek to better understand the distribution of household labour. Entry points here may include relating that in a dual income household, both partners are equally exhausted from working during the day and that this does not depend on how much each partner earns. Designs should seek to start conversation on the various tasks that constitute unpaid care work e.g. picking children up from school, cleaning the dishes, doing the laundry etc. There are a variety of tasks which could be equitably split between partners depending on each partner’s preferences.

Construct 3: Women in the Workplace

- **Vector 3a:** Progressive Legislation - Menstrual and Maternity Leave
 - Conversations around progressive legislation were similarly polarised with some standing in support and others raising objections. Efforts may be directed towards better understanding the rejection of menstrual and maternity leave, as well as sensitising individuals towards such policies and why they are important.
- **Vector 3b:** Women are not as Good, Strong or Intelligent as Men

- Conversations here should focus on why individuals perceive women to be less competent and intelligent than men while research indicates the exact opposite. An entry point to the conversation may be around intelligence as this frequently appears on the timeline. Dialogue and designs should provide factual information while deconstructing harmful, negative perceptions.
- **Vector 3c: Intersectional Pay Gaps - Where, When, How**
 - Conversation on X seemed quite aware of the intersectional nature of discrimination but, it seems largely driven by those who have experienced it. This, however, is polarised and politicised debate and as such, dialogue and designs must be carefully considered and seek to bring in a logical approach to explaining the complexities around marginalised communities.

4. Thematic Areas

4.1 Labour Force Equality

This section of the report is considered predominantly with underlying perceptions and narratives that contribute to inequitable labour force participation. South Africa is rated 81st in terms of the overall gender gap in economic participation in the 2023 World Bank Global Gender Gap Report which compared and reported on gender parity statistics for 146 nations¹⁶. This is broken down further such that the Labour Force Participation Rate between genders ranks 66th, wage equality for similar work ranks 111th, and the distribution of legislators, managers and senior officials ranks 88th.

More positively, South Africa is ranked 42nd in the world in terms of earned income parity and shares 1st place in terms of gender parity related to professional and technical workers. Globally considering all indicators: (1) Economic Participation and Opportunity, (2) Educational Attainment, (3) Health and Survival, and (4) Political Empowerment, South Africa is ranked 20th in the world in terms of progress toward achieving gender parity. While these are promising indicators, the rank of 81st on the basis of gendered economic participation indicates that there remains more work to be done.

Noting that gender roles and norms may play a part in labour force disparity, it is necessary to define and explore this concept in further detail. Norms are defined as rules or expectations that are socially enforced. These may be prescriptive by encouraging certain behaviour or proscriptive by discouraging negative behaviour. More aptly put, they are situated at the interplay between behaviour, beliefs and expectations.¹⁷ Modern norms may emerge formally or informally. Informal norms emerge gradually and become generally accepted and widely sanctioned routines that individuals follow daily. Formal norms emerge through conscious

¹⁶ <https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-gender-gap-report-2023/economy-profiles-5932ef6d39/>

¹⁷ [Sood et al., The Act Framework Package](#)

design by outlining and implementing behavioural expectations. Just as these norms guide everyday life, so too, do they guide workplace environments and how they are shaped.

Women often assume more household and care responsibilities inhibiting their opportunity to participate in the labour market fully. These responsibilities limit the opportunities for women to climb the job ladder, develop and improve their skills and accumulate assets.¹⁸ This, coupled with the fact that most of their work continues in the informal sector and part time work, and can be described as the four C's: caring, cleaning, catering and cash registers.¹⁹ According to Stats SA, in 2022, accounting for those who ran their own businesses employing at least one person and own account workers who work solely for themselves in the informal sector, women were more likely to run a business or be self-employed, at 77,5% compared to men at 69%. In 2019, only 8,3% of women worked in the formal sector while 17.2% of men were employed in the formal sector. When considering the informal sector alone, which Stats SA defines as precarious employment, men constituted a greater proportion of the informally employed. Buffering this with the consideration of employment within private households (e.g. Domestic Work), women were noted to be employed in precarious work at a higher proportion than men.²⁰

This section of the report seeks to narrowly focus on the normative framework that South Africans situate themselves in relation to the difference between men and women. Similar to above, the report reviews the top 100 tweets with the highest responses and isolated the most relevant tweets. The narratives uncovered can be broadly divided into 3 subsections: (1) Traditional Gender Roles, (2) Work-Life Balance Expectations, and (3) Bias/Stereotypes.

Research suggests that South Africans may still maintain or support traditional gender roles within and outside their households.²¹ These perceptions range from cooking and providing in the home, as well as men being the primary breadwinners in the household. As Figure 1 illustrates, X users explain that women cannot lead a household as the man will lose his masculinity and further, that the man should be the provider for the women in the different contexts that such provision may arise. On the other hand, there are those that hold views going counter to the traditional context. For instance, one individual states that she disagrees with a marriage where both parties go to work yet the majority of unpaid labour still falls on the women when she gets back to work.

¹⁸ Ferrant et al., 2014.

¹⁹ Nishimwe-Niymanira, 2019.

²⁰ www.statssa.gov.za/publications/Report-03-10-23/Report-03-10-232019.pdf

²¹ <https://www.wider.unu.edu/publication/persistent-gender-roles-south-africa-deprive-women-leisure-time>





Go back home to your own mother if you have to when times are tough. She's the only woman who will love you unconditionally. There are women who can genuinely assist you when you hit rock bottom but your masculinity will slowly fade.	A Husband must: 1) Be older than his Wife 2) Be more or equally as educated as his Wife 3) Feed & Care for his Wife 4) Knack his Wife well 5) Not live in his Wife's house 6) Pay back his debt to his Wife 7) Will his assets to her, if she's a good Wife 8) Earn his Wife End. Husband is relaxing in the house, wife is washing a mountain of clothes outside under this sun. After this, she'll go and cook. They do this every Saturday and they both go to work from Monday to Friday. You see this kind of marriage? I reject it for all my female friends
Men should always pay for a girlfriend allowance, especially if the girl is unemployed.	
50/50 is for deadbeats and men who lack pride.	
A man is a provider in a family setting. It doesn't matter whether the woman is working or not.	
Imagine asking a woman to contribute to groceries so you can raise your family. Sies!	
 Mmusi Maimane  @MmusiMaimane	
No woman should support a party that treats new mothers like this. No workplace should force mothers to cut short their maternity leave.	
 Fighter  @NalediChirwa · Mar 4 Public Apology on failure to attend Budget Speech in Parliament on the 21st of February 2024 🙏🇿🇦	

Figure 1: Perceptions on women-led households and norms

Another impediment to full participation in the workplace is bias and stereotyping of women. As Figure 2 illustrates, women in senior positions are often targeted and their credentials questioned. A statement that garnered strong engagement, receiving 155 comments and 459 likes, indicated that from their perspective marriages between uneducated couples lasted longer than those between educated couples. A few responses to this stated that educated women leave relationships quicker than uneducated women, as educated women have options while others noted that uneducated women are able to 'humble' themselves.

Regarding educational outcomes, my view is that the "new dawn" of women empowerment is going to eventually be to our detriment as society. We need to keep men as the primary leaders in all spheres because woah, kusazoba wessa and wessa. (My opinion)
Let's give a big round of applause to the women who are working in male-dominated industries, unlike Uthandokazi, who is performing wife duties for her boyfriend.
The problem with this Thabi Leoka issue is that there are those who say she's being targeted because she's a successful black woman & must have touched the establishment. It would have been so simple to simply produce her qualification but would rather go the legal route.
Some of us work extremely hard from 4am until 10pm Sunday to Sunday and public holidays. Hairstyles and long nails does not mean that women don't work.

Figure 2: Perceptions on competence of women

4.2 Defining Work

'Work' is a broad concept, traditional perspectives equate 'work' with the concept of 'employment', yet employment is not a broad enough term to encompass all that is 'work'. Seeking to broaden the scope of this definition, a recent paper puts forth a holistic and multidimensional definition, such that work can be thought of as:

"An innate human function which inherently informs the individual's life purpose and role; work is relational and is manifest through various socialisation processes comprising interactions with the contexts of work, deriving meaning from conscious thought and activity and/or efforts, and is driven by personal and societal codes of ethos and praxis which in turn is manifest in the expression of one's work and social service, while influencing one's well-being."²²

This broadened definition creates space for discussion of unpaid work and sex work, creating an opportunity to delve into what individuals on social media define as 'work', how they value 'work', and which perspectives and attitudes underlie these definitions.

Unpaid Care work as per the ILO definition is understood as: "A category of labour inclusive of: (1) Providing unpaid domestic services for own final use within households ; (2) Providing unpaid caregiving services to household members ; (3) Providing community services and help to other households²³." Sex work meanwhile has been defined in a recent literature review as, "the exchange of sexual services, performances, or products for material compensation and can refer to direct physical contact between buyers and sellers as well as indirect sexual stimulation"²⁴

As such and pursuant to the definitions above, we constructed a category which sought to draw in content related to unpaid care work and sex work. Our findings are presented in the respective section within this report. Questions we seek to explore are: (1) What perceptions exist in relation to unpaid care work as 'work' and (2) What perceptions exist in relation to sex work?

4.3 Regulatory Frameworks, Sex Markers and Gaps

This section of the report considers the regulatory frameworks for equal participation in the workforce and considers issues related to gender markers and pay gaps between the men and women. Regulatory frameworks include, but are not limited to, the Constitution and legislation as well as the policy direction of the South African government. Sex markers, in the context of the report, are defined as biological processes such as menstruation, pregnancy and bodily attributes that may intersect with work.

²² [Van der Laan et al., 2023](#)

²³ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_732791.pdf

²⁴ [Gerassi, 2015](#)

As noted above, South Africa still has some way to go in terms of achieving gender equality. The South African Government has been quite responsive to the plight faced by women in the country and have launched several policy and legal initiatives in the hopes of achieving the goal of gender equality. In terms of representation at state level, women make up 46% of Members of Parliament in the National Assembly and women constitute roughly around 48% of Ministers in the cabinet which places South Africa quite high in terms of female representation.²⁵ Government takes its cue from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa which states, in section 1, that our state is founded on the values of human dignity and non-sexism, amongst others.²⁶ Furthermore, in section 9, the right to equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms is firmly established. The Constitution, therefore, provides the framework for the enactment of legislation that ensures equality will be advanced in addition to the empowerment of women.

Since 1994, Parliament has approached the issue of gender equality as all encompassing and passed laws recognizing that issues of equality stem beyond equal opportunity in the workplace and extend to safety at home and in public spaces. The core legislation include Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, the Domestic Violence Act, the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act. In addition, there are institutions such as the Commission on Gender Equality, the Department of Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities and the Ministry of Women within the Presidency.

An analysis of the regulatory framework in the context of social media allows us to determine whether laws have a normative effect on perceptions of equality online. In addition, and as noted above, gender pay gaps remain a topic which garners significant engagement and perceptions of salaries is an important aspect to cover. Finally, sex markers in the workplace and discussion around it gives insight into how the particular features of females may impact on discourse in the workplace in addition to their participation in the workforce.

5. Research Overview

From 1 January 2024 - 1 April 2024, our query identified 160,000+ mentions related to Labour and Gender (see Figure 3). Of these, 145,000+ or 91% of all mentions were classified as retweets. Indicating that the conversation was predominantly made up of retweets of existing content, as opposed to the posting of original content. 52,587 accounts took part in the conversation, representing an average mention volume of 3 mentions per account.

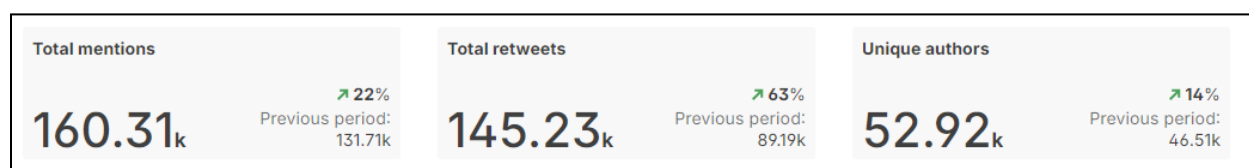


Figure 3: Mention Volume Statistics from 1 January to 1 April 2024

²⁵

<https://pmg.org.za/blog/Representation%20and%20Participation%20of%20Women%20in%20Parliament>, see also <https://www.parliament.gov.za/ministers>

²⁶ Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, s 9.

Four peaks of increased activity were detected, on 23 February, 27 February, 5 March and 13 March (see Figure 4).

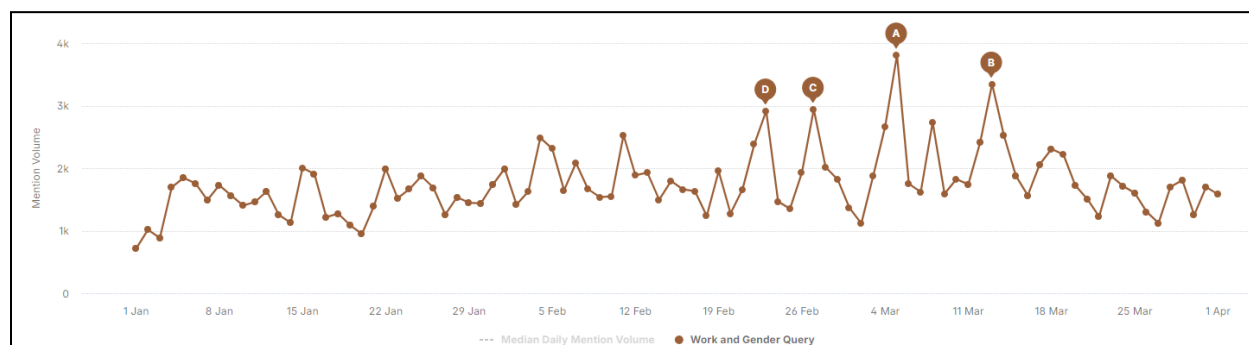


Figure 4: Mention Volume over time from 1 January to 1 April 2024

Peak A on 5 March held the largest spike in conversation within the dataset. This can be attributed to conversation around Economic Freedom Fighter (EFF) Member of Parliament, Naledi Chirwa, releasing a public apology on the basis of having failed to attend the 2024 budget speech (see Figure 5). The apology letter included reference to the fact that Chirwa had missed the speech due to her child being ill. Alongside this, Chirwa indicated that she had only taken maternity leave a day prior to giving birth and had returned from maternity leave earlier than needed to serve the party. Narratives surrounding this event are explored further underneath the 'Regulatory Frameworks, Sex Markers and Gender Gaps' section of this report.

Fighter @NalediChirwa

Public Apology on failure to attend Budget Speech in Parliament on the 21st of February 2024 🙏🇷🇸

Public Apology - Absence from Budget Speech

Fellow fighters and South Africans. Please note this as my sincere apology for my absence in Parliament on the 21st of February 2024.

I am regretful for failing to attend Parliament. My 4 month old daughter was sick and so I went home. My daughter is currently with my mother until post elections; this to allow me the opportunity to be completely engaged in organisational work during this period and to form part of the collective that will usher an EFF government post 29 May 2024.

I reported my absence from organisational duties to the organisation and not the designated whip in our caucus in Parliament, and am particularly regretful for this.

I attended the PC for Higher Education in Parliament on the virtual platform on the same day, and contributed to the business of the day. Unfortunately for the Budget Speech, there was no hybrid facility that could allow me to be present online (only physical attendance for the budget speech) thus my inability to be present.

This has no bearing on my commitment and dedication to my beloved organisation and South Africans. I do not doubt my commitment to the movement of the people and the responsibility we have been entrusted with in the Parliament of South Africa. This is the primary reason why I went on maternity leave a day before I gave birth and returned 2 months prior to the lapse of my maternity leave.

I will duly fulfil the reprimand set by the organisation for my absence on the day to purchase 2 gazebos before the 28th of March, and second to that, to publicise this apology as I have done.

Ke isa seatla metsing...

Figure 5: Content related to Peak A

Peak B on 13 March was driven by conversation around men's worth in relation to employment and receiving an income, with a post that received 1.9 Million views stating that "being broke as a man is very degrading and frustrating (see Figure 6).

being broke as a man is very degrading and frustrating, to every man who's putting in the work to change his financial status for the better, i hope you win soon bro, i hope things get better for you real soon

5:14 PM · Mar 13, 2024 · 1.9M Views

299 15K 66K 5.4K

A man can stay with you unemployed and not make you feel worthless but is women when the tables are turned we mock them, make them feel worthless and worst part we count everything we do for them. But y'all aren't ready for this conversation.

7:19 AM · Mar 13, 2024 · 179.5K Views

195 1K 3.4K 441

Figure 6: Content related to Peak B

Conversation in Peak C on 27 Feb was driven by Banyana Banyana's win over Nigeria in the Confederation of African Football qualifiers for the 2024 Olympics and a case of impersonation of a medical practitioner in Gauteng (see Figure 7).



Figure 7: Content related to Peak C

Peak D on 23 Feb was related to content not entirely relevant to the purposes of the report, including bible verses and conversations around the 2024 National General Election in South Africa.

Categories built to segment the conversation accounted for a combined 51% of the overall mention volume. This was further divided such that Labour Force Equality (Roles, Norms and Stereotypes) accounted for 42% of the conversation. Regulatory Frameworks, Sex Markers and Gaps at 6% and Defining Work at 3% (see Figure 8).

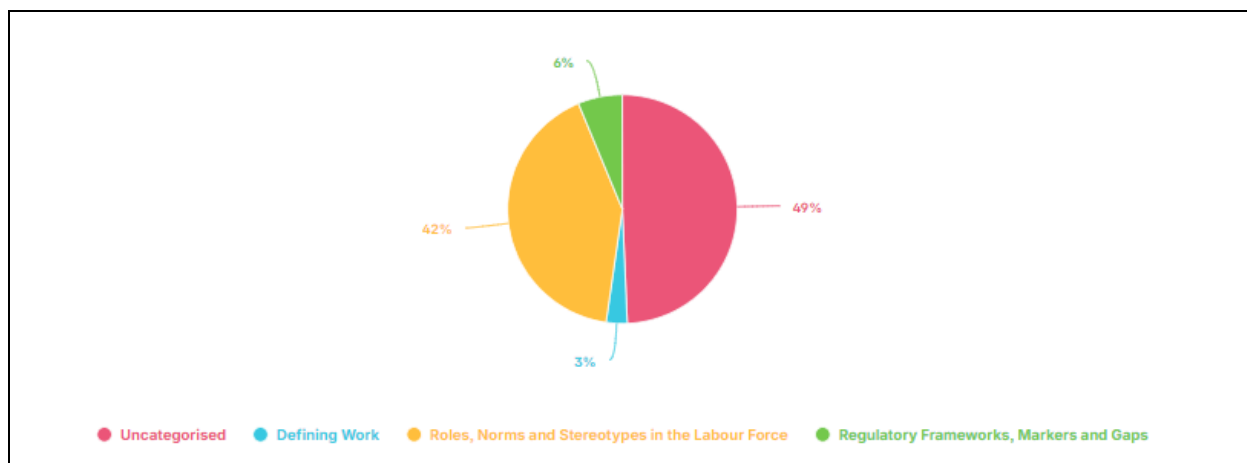


Figure 8: Distribution of categories to overall conversation

6. Labour Force Equality

Under the theme of Labour Force Equality, we noted posts which spoke to perspectives of women in the workforce, women working in male dominated industries, conversation around women pursuing higher education and discriminatory treatment in the workplace.

One highly engaged post we detected, asserted that “women are psychologically manipulated into believing that they want to work.” This was attached to a 10-minute TikTok video (see Figure 9). In the video, a man states that most women don’t actually want to work, that women are not equally intelligent to men and that women’s entrance to the workforce is the result of feminist propaganda designed to ‘trick’ women into believing that working is empowering²⁷. The man in the video further describes that women prefer patriarchy and to live within male dominated households and societies in which they don’t work but engage in household labour. The speaker further states that women in the workforce expend their energy and time for the advantage of authoritarian organisations as opposed to their husband and family and that this was unhealthy for women because it acts against their natural urges to be domestic. Alongside this, a woman watches and reacts to the video in agreement with what the man in the video says, stating that “females are highly susceptible to propaganda”. Studies on individual differences in relation to gender and mis- and disinformation suggest that no significant differences are found in the belief, consumption or resharing of false information or propaganda²⁸. The video makes use of manosphere tropes, such as being a ‘wage slave’ and ‘debt slave’ and that feminism and ‘the matrix’ is corrupting modern women and seeking to destroy masculinity²⁹.

²⁷

https://www.tiktok.com/@demidelanuit/video/7268079378569973034?is_from_webapp=1&sender_device=pc&web_id=7301303504671540742

²⁸ Schmidt et al., 2021 ; Mansoori et al., 2023 ; Almenar et al., 2021

²⁹ <https://www.newstatesman.com/the-weekend-report/2023/05/adventures-manosphere-andrew-tate> ; For academic work on this topic see: Lilly, 2016 ; Kay, 2022 ; Jones, 2020

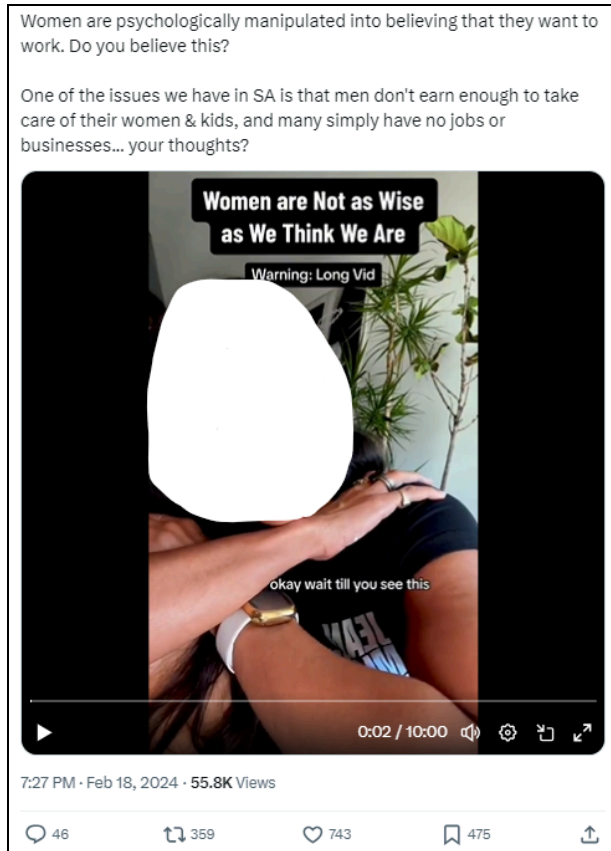


Figure 9: A post drawing on a TikTok video which states that women are manipulated into working

58 replies and quote replies were made in relation to the post. These replies have been characterised through the use of a python algorithm to determine sentiment attached to the mentions. Broadly, our results indicate that 11.9% of the replies were positive, 37.3% were neutral and 50.7% were negative. An example of a reply deemed positive is, “LOL wow, interesting take 🤔 It's not about manipulation, it's about empowerment and independence 🌟 Besides, women deserve opportunities to thrive too 💪 #girlpower”. An example of a neutral response is, “Apparently, if you are married, your paycheck is different from the unmarried person? With the same JD n same experience”. An example of a negative response is, “Men aren't making enough because the system made sure that women become cheap laborers and deliberately empowered them so that men accept peanuts or be unemployed as they can easily get replaced by women. It is all propaganda and intentional”.

Responses to the post varied with some expressing agreement with the premise presented in the video (see Figure 10). These posts drew on biological essentialism and ideas around the manipulation of the world population to destroy family structures and increase tax revenue.

Us men need to step up too... women are as manipulated & sold junk just like men are
Ever noticed how watching soccer is associated with alcohol consumption? Us men have fallen for that crap... so it's not only women who've been sold the lifestyle of being wage slaves
The problem is inherent in the wording 'stay' at home mom/wife as if the prestige is in leaving. Then it's the TV programming them with lavish life of celebrities that sold themselves to the highest bidder and politicians who are bribed to not regulate advertisements accordingly
It was the "anything men can do we can also do" crew that started. Imo most women hate their jobs and would rather be at home doing what we're genetically designed to do. Take care of the kids and the home...But inflation 🤔 & keeping up with the Jones'...& father's who are AWOL
I think opportunities are weaponized in SA. Gender discriminatory campaigns by both Gov and Corporate. Sidelineing men on opportunities. Meaning they won't be seen as suitable mates and thus not marry. Attack on BLK families.
When the masters realized that they can't tax half the population of the world they then started pushing feminism agenda so women can also pay tax. They convince women that going to work and paying tax is more empowering than staying at home and raising the next generation.

Figure 10: Responses to Figure 9

Responses which opposed the content in the video were minimal (see Figure 11). These responses drew on questions of independence and unequal power dynamics in relationships where one partner is the sole financial stakeholder.

I want to understand if i don't work and i rely on a relationship that is not guaranteed to last what happens to me when the relationship ends or something happens to the man? i'm glad no one listen to your barbaric thoughts

Even if women had a choice not to work, it becomes hard to fully depend on a man because it compromises her in the first place & gives him too much power as money tends to give people a false sense of power & some men bcome abusive & controlling in relationships because of money

The other day you said marriage no longer works but now you want women to be dependent on men who can leave them anytime they choose? If you're teaching men that marriage is useless then which men are women supposed to be dependent on?? So all of us should become slay queens??

LOL wow, interesting take 🤔 It's not about manipulation, it's about empowerment and independence 🌟 Besides, women deserve opportunities to thrive too 💪 #girlpower

Figure 11: Responses to Figure 9

Conversation around women in the workforce was also spoken about in relation to perspectives shared outside of social media, one post engaged with a perspective that had been shared on radio by a representative of the Al Jama-ah party referred to as “Al Jamal” [sic] in the post. The representative stated that there was a crisis of fatherhood in the country, urging men to take up the financial responsibility of providing for their families so that their partners may take care of the household³⁰(see Figure 12).

Al Jamal leader was on safm this morning. He says women shouldn't work, they should just chill at home and men must provide.

When did I die and wake up in the 1800s?

This housewife thingy should be a choice not mandatory..

E.g. I wouldn't mind being a housewife to a wealthy man 🤔

7:57 AM · Mar 12, 2024 · 24.8K Views

87 45 205 4

Figure 12: A post relays an interview which speaks to gender roles and employment

30

<https://www.sn124.com/dailysun/news/al-jama-ah-leader-ganief-hendricks-calls-for-women-to-stay-at-home-20240312> ;
<https://www.yfm.co.za/2024/03/14/al-jamah-ah-leader-urges-men-to-take-up-responsibility-in-families/>

Responses to the post which highlighted this statement varied in a similar way to those expressed for the TikTok video explored above (see Figure 13).

The modern woman's obsession with wealth is a serious problem... nobody just wants to be normal anymore , simple basic life is seen as a curse... why
Look up Rockefeller and suffrage.
2 taxpayers is better than 1 in a household. And then you have to get someone else to raise your kids.
Don't think "housewife" because you can hire help. Think "professional parent".
Or you can sit in traffic to pay tax.
Women would be happier if they couldn't vote or have jobs.

Figure 13: Replies to Figure 12

Alongside this, we noted a post which sought to highlight women working in male-dominated industries; the post was further derogatory to a female influencer (see Figure 14).



Figure 14: A post targeted at an influencer which ostensibly seeks to celebrate women in male-dominated industries

While a large proportion of the replies to the post focused on the reference to an influencer, replies did engage with gender parity in fields such as mining and construction. Replies in opposition drew from narratives of gender quotas, the destruction of the South African family and beliefs that women do not work as hard as men and thus decrease productivity and increase distraction in male dominated fields. These perspectives were predominantly aimed toward denying the competency of women and stemmed from normal everyday accounts (see Figure 15).

If they got there using their private parts we can applaud them for going beyond the call of skills. But if they working there coz of their education & skills why should we applaud coz are doing exactly what qualified people should do 🧑
To be honest, most women wouldn't survive in these jobs if it wasn't for men. They are not built for this, it's just gender quotas to make the company look good
The more women you have in male jobs the less productivity you get
Lmao most of these people do absolutely nothing bro, the mines hire them just for numbers... when they have to do serious fittings or serious mechanical work they call their male co workers or hire a sub contractor all together 😂😂
You should see them doing nothing every day in those industries and over working their male colleagues because really other jobs are meant for men.
South African men we allowed this nonsense western concept that's why there is no progress in our industries. Women will never be men at work
A women must be at home looking after kids, working is for Man, no applause, she is a slave to the system instead of being a backbone of a family. Destruction of a family is a destruction of the society, capitalism will finish all of u, Mother, Father and children will b slaves!

Figure 15: Replies to Figure 14

Our dataset further returned content related to the competency and intelligence of women in their professional capacity. An oft-repeated statement by a misogynistic influencer trended, where he states that a drunk man is more intelligent than 3 women with PhDs. Another notes that men tend not to consider women as potential role models because they do not perceive them to be the absolute best at their craft (see Figure 16a and 16b).

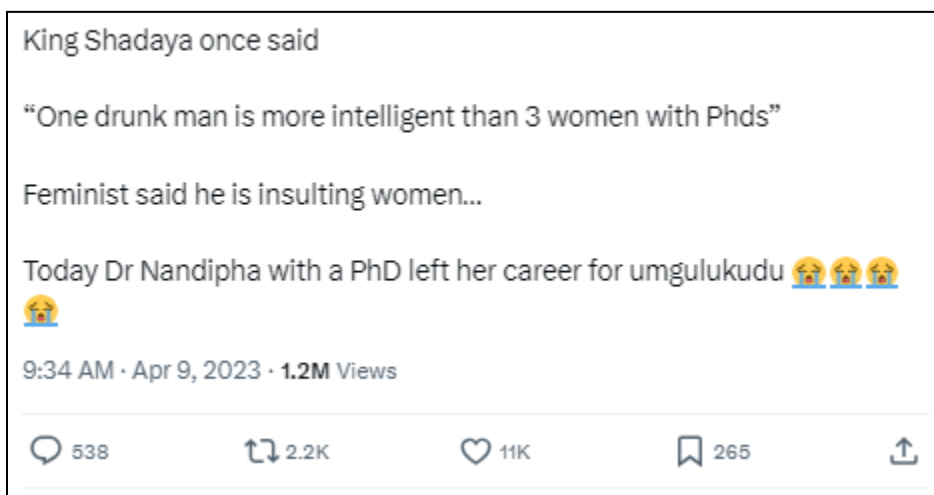


Figure 16a: A post speaking to women's intelligence

Men are so incredibly stupidly misogynistic that their first instinct is to find it incredulous that a man can be inspired to work harder by a woman who is better at her craft than any man or woman alive. This is why men struggle to read female authors or learn from women.

Figure 16b: A post speaking to women's competence

In relation to the Shadaya post, responses largely piled on the initial statement in a largely supportive manner (see Figure 17). Responses to the latter post were largely supportive of the statement with many noting that men do not value women or their work highly enough, to see their work as valuable or able to impact on their lives. It was also further noted that you do not need to be in the same field or same gender, to be inspired by others to work harder.

For those not yet anointed by the only true prophet in our time
Here is the handle
May your souls be replenished
@ShadayaKnight

@ShadayaKnight is a legend. He deserves a TV show

Some men don't see women as people and don't value our work or contributions at all

we should normalize men getting inspired by women and vice versa 🙌

I had 1 of the most successful service riders at my dealership tell me how he's making close to 130k (writing people up for car service etc) and he mentioned how his wife still makes more than him but she pushes him and he's learned so much from HER. His own words. (And he's FINE)

Figure 17: Replies to figure 16a and 16b

Relatedly, individuals expressed dissatisfaction at the fact that they may get lauded for their hard work but do not get paid, or paid equally for their efforts (see Figure 18). Here, we observe an intersectional perspective drawing on gender and race, where a claim was made that black women earn significantly less than their white counterparts (see Figure 19).



Figure 18: Post speaking to women's lack of recognition



Figure 19: A post referring to racial discrimination in jobs

Responses to the initial post were by and large women coming out in agreement or noting that the same thing happens to them (Figure 20). Responses to the latter were more varied with some standing in agreement, while others asked for proof of this phenomenon. Interestingly, it was stated that white women benefit from policies that were supposed to uplift black women.

Women don't get paid sana you just get a round of applause and a firm handshake
I share the same experience with you and I can confirm they just clap hands and high five us, no salary
Black women are at the bottom of the food chain, followed by black men. White women earn more than both black women and men, regardless of how qualified they are.
White women benefit more on policies that supposed to uplift black women
The same job and company that require someone to speak Afrikaans pays 15k but with the same requirements excluding Afrikaans including more than 3 SA languages the salary was 6k I was shocked
Please show us proof or talking nonsense? Why will a company employ expensive labour if they can pay R4000
What utter crap.
Unless you have actual facts and can name the companies which are doing this
Or share actual instances where this has occurred stop spreading rumors to try and race-bait

Figure 20: Responses to figures 18 and 19

7. Defining Work

7.1 Sex Work

Our 'Defining Work' category returned just over 4,000 mentions. Content in relation to the EFF and sex work was particularly popular, with the president of the party, Julius Malema, having indicated that the party would seek to legalise and regulate the sex work industry (see Figure 21).



Figure 21: EFF Statement on the Legalisation of Sex Work

Replies to this position varied. With individuals opposed to decriminalisation equating regulation of the sex industry with a tacit encouragement for individuals to participate in the sex industry (see Figure 22).

<p>Are you calling this job creation or what? Instead of discouraging young girls to enter that market you turning them into making their body a devil sacrifice. O Moloi mpsa ke wena</p> <p>2:21 PM · Feb 29, 2024 · 939 Views</p>
<p>The same dude who oppose Sassa children grants promote prostitution, instead of creating enough jobs to ensure prostitutes get employed, sex workers are desperate parents and sisters they are not proud of their job, unless he's referring to drug addicts</p> <p>7:25 PM · Feb 29, 2024 · 117 Views</p>
<p>Lol instead of saying let's create jobs so that our sisters find better jobs and stop selling their bodies, nah we legalize sex workers 🤔🤔🤔, encourage more girls to go into that market, nah South Africa need serious leaders</p> <p>12:37 PM · Feb 29, 2024 · 2,338 Views</p>
<p>Do you think there's women in prostitution who in their high-school years aspired to go into prostitution? Personally I doubt. Plans to legalize women using their bodies to make an income? That's endorsing prostitution and saying to young girls prostitution is a career option</p> <p>1:36 PM · Feb 29, 2024 · 663 Views</p>

Figure 22: Replies to Figure 21

On the other hand, individuals who perceived decriminalisation positively noted that the regulation of the industry would protect individuals currently engaged in sex work by extending labour rights and protections to them³¹ (see Figure 23). This is a perspective supported by the literature which has sought to examine the effects of regulation on sex work. Among these - the reduction of stigma and violence, increased access to healthcare and the provision of labour rights taking power away from 'pimps' and traffickers and providing agency, legal protection and formalisation for sex workers³²

³¹

<https://www.derebus.org.za/the-decriminalising-of-sex-work-in-south-africa-a-brief-trajectory-overview-of-the-criminal-law-sexual-offences-and-related-matters-amendment-bill-of-2022/>

³² https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1588&context=faculty_scholarship

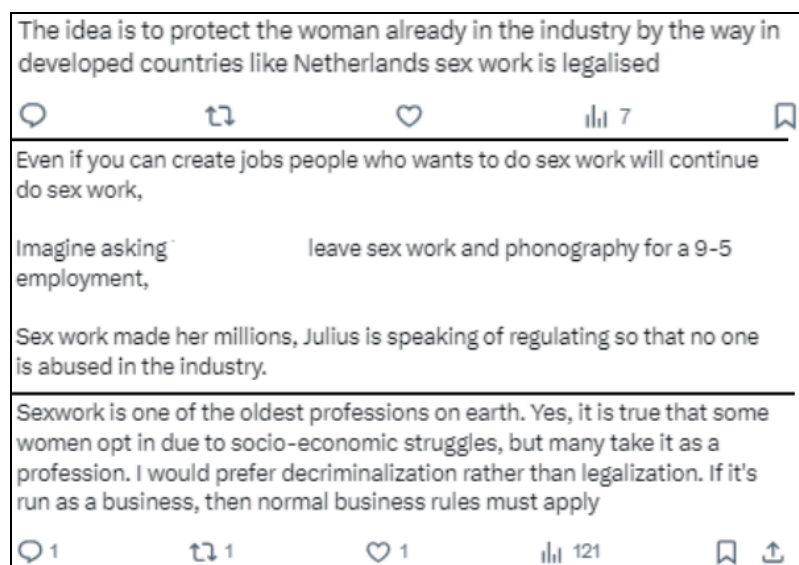


Figure 23: Replies to Figure 21

Other tweets in relation to sex work did not receive high engagement but related more so to the perspectives expressed above (see Figure 24a and 24b).

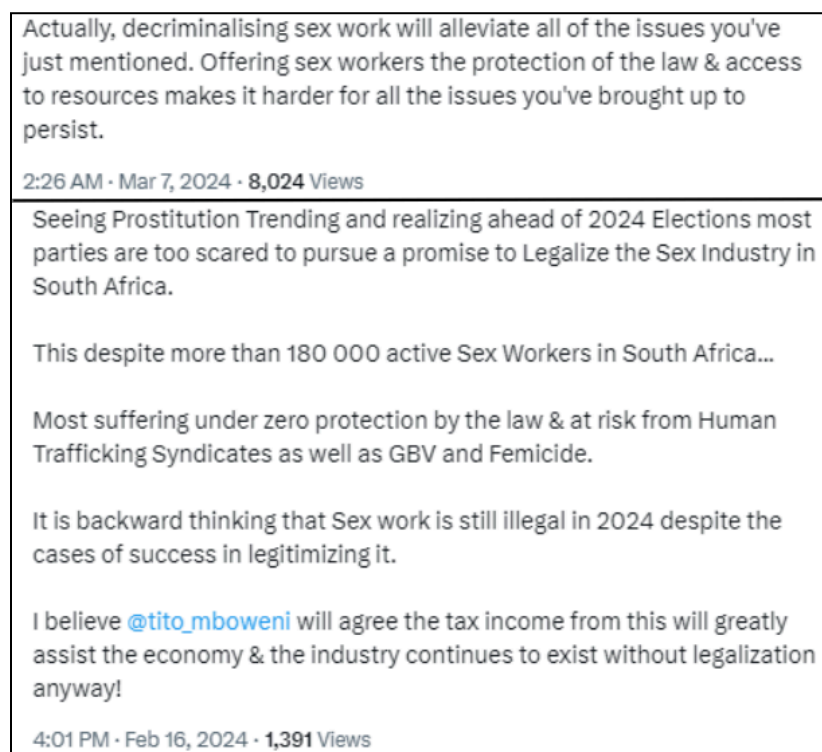


Figure 24a: A collection of other tweets related to sex work



Figure 24b: A collection of tweets related to sex work

From the limited content we were able to detect around sex work, the conversation reads as polarised. While perspectives around the benefits of decriminalisation and regulation were noted, perspectives against the regulation of sex work drew on narratives of morality and alleged normalisation. This represents a disconnect such that arguments against regulation do not engage with the underlying questions of how to protect individuals engaged in sex work, but rather view engagement in the industry as a moral issue to be resolved.

7.2 Unpaid Care Work

We noted engagement farming³³, the act of reposting popular or controversial tweets for likes and retweets, in relation to a conversation which is about unpaid care work and home labour. Four examples of the same post with slight editing are presented below (see Figure 25). While the posts themselves are not genuine, having been copied and reposted to garner engagement by highlighting content known to be 'controversial', reactions and perceptions in relation to the post content may be and as such will be reported on.

³³ <https://skinnedcartree.com/engagement-farming-on-social-media>



Figure 25: Engagement Farming in relation to unpaid care work

In reply, some accounts sought to make the case that gendered tasks are present in the working world. A shared perspective was noted that in the context of marriage, traditional gender roles require that a woman submit to her husband and become the caretaker of the home while the husband develops their career (see Figure 26).

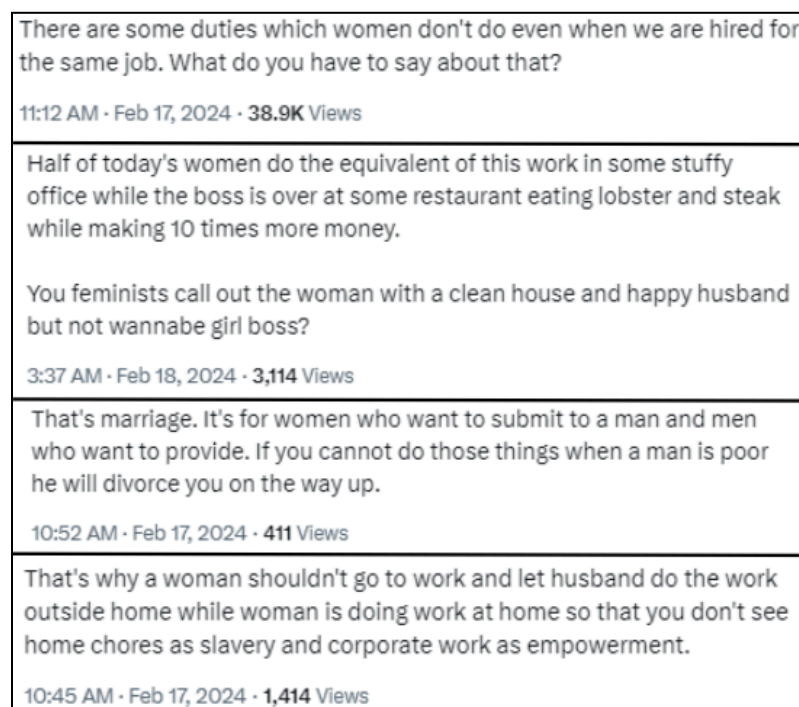


Figure 26: Replies to Figure 25

While some tweets agreed that unequal division of household labour was exploitative and unfair, it is interesting to note that we were unable to find replies from individuals under these posts which referenced household labour as a form of work (see Figure 26). This may indicate that the conversation around household labour remains focused on traditional gender roles. As such, it

raises the question of how aware individuals are of the concept of unpaid care work and if an awareness campaign around household work constituting work may be able to shift sentiments or deepen understanding around household labour.



Figure 27: Replies to Figure 25

We noted another highly engaged mention that touched on the concept of unpaid care work and inequitable division of household labour in dual income households (see Figure 27).

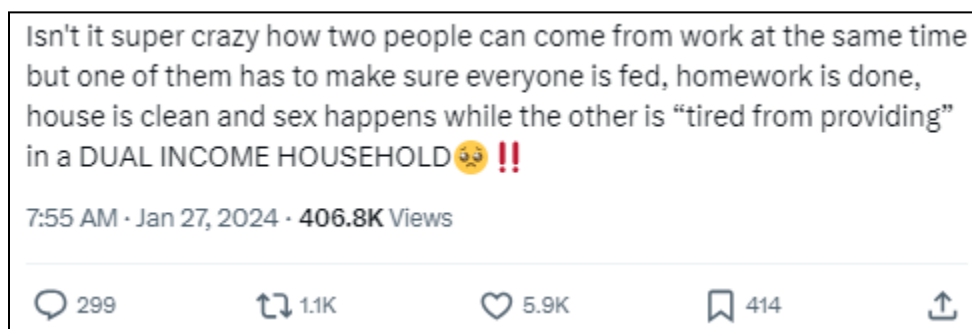


Figure 28: A high engagement mention touching on unpaid care work

Responses in opposition which sought to justify the inequitable distribution of unpaid care work reverted to the concept of traditional gender roles - a theme previously noted in this section (see Figure 29). These roles centred on the ideas of 'masculine' tasks such as protecting the household, handy work and paying for assets, and 'feminine' tasks such as household chores alongside stereotypes such as the use of income for self-care purposes. Alongside this reference was made to Lobola, where an individual implied that equal opportunity was incompatible with the practice of lobola.

<p>It's your job.... Isn't crazy that both you earn a salary but somebody must pay the bills... Bond, cars, fees while you only buy weaves😓</p> <p>12:53 PM · Jan 27, 2024 · 3,442 Views</p>
<p>Feminism ya lapisa aowa. Who takes care of cleaning the yard, fixing the car, fixing leaking pipes of any, broken cupboards,</p> <p>1:36 PM · Jan 27, 2024 · 7,330 Views</p>
<p>Crazy huh? How lobola was paid by the other when we're in an equal opportunity era</p> <p>10:58 PM · Jan 27, 2024 · 17.7K Views</p>
<p>It is. It is actually more interesting that when both adults are sleeping and a thug breaks in, one of them must risk his life. Shocking, isn't it?</p> <p>2:29 AM · Jan 28, 2024 · 660 Views</p>
<p>That man has to carry the burden of making sure that home is safe and everyone there feels safe. You don't have to worry about that burden. The fact that you don't have to worry about that, gives you peace of mind to carry out your house chores in peace.</p> <p>11:52 PM · Jan 27, 2024 · 2,639 Views</p>

Figure 29: Replies to Figure 28

Lobola featured prominently within the replies as a justification for gendered household labour - albeit that these mentions received little to no engagement and as such may represent an unpopular opinion (see Figure 30). A subtext of traditional roles imposed through religion was further noted. What was particularly interesting in the replies which connected religion and household labour was reference to the perspective that women who work 'provide' labour for a boss, rather than for their husband.

The other one has to pay the other's parents 🧑🏾
It all starts by lobola being paid only to one family. That's unfair.
You were bought through lobola. So don't complain.
If you wanna complain, start from where it all began in the lobola negotiations. You were just an object that was sold at an auction
Why do women frown when being told that they're created to be a man's helper. What's worse is some of these women claim to be Christians. It's literally in the bible. The craziest part is women are already a man's helper, AT WORK helping their boss get more richer.
Khona ya, women are not supposed to be working. They do a lot at home. In fact, almost everything. The man is supposed to work, earn the money to buy the home and all the needs of the family, and the woman takes care of the home.
It's a double 'burden' for women.

Figure 30: Replies to Figure 28

On the other hand we noted replies supportive of the content within the mention (see Figure 31). These replies drew on narratives of equal responsibility for household labour. Which was further bracketed in relation to differing tasks which could be carried out by each member of a family unit.



Figure 31: Replies to Figure 28

We noted a post which drew parallels between careers focused on care and unpaid care work (see Figure 32). The post in question drew a comparison between these careers and the act of rearing children, ending off with the perspective from the poster that they wish mothers were able to focus on rearing children while being remunerated fairly for all they do.

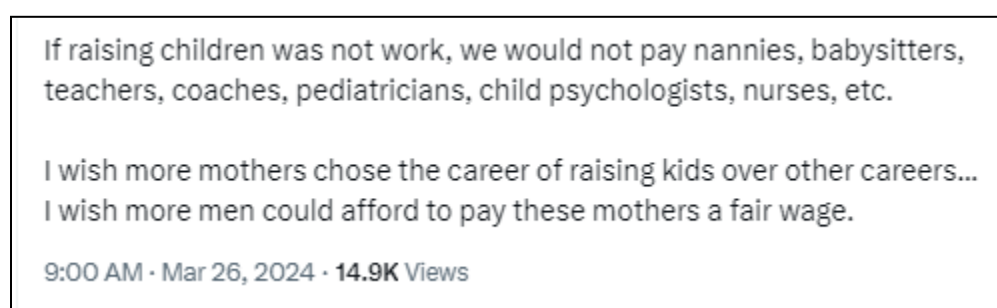


Figure 32: A post draws parallels between paid care work and child rearing

Posts in response varied, with a cohort of individuals noting the relationship between unpaid care work and engagement in the labour force. Replies of this nature did not necessarily agree with the idea that more women should focus on raising children as opposed to building a career - these posts saw to critique the idea that it was solely women who should leave their workforce to focus on raising children (see Figure 33).

Even more importantly, women's disproportionate responsibility for unpaid domestic and care work reflects and reproduces gender stereotypes and inequalities, and is the main reason why many women are outside the labour force or marginalized or adversely incorporated within it.
You do realize that men can and should also actively presume those roles themselves right? I'm wondering why you think it's a woman's responsibility to "raise" a child. I see "child psychologists" , and think... it's the absence of fathers in a child's life that creates such need
Men have undervalued and disrespected this role so much that women are only respected when they take on your role and their role at the same time.

Figure 33: Replies to Figure 32

Other perspectives were noted which trended toward more traditional beliefs. Mentions under this theme derided the idea of remunerating unpaid care work, as, in their perspective, women had been conducting unpaid care work for most of human history and that feminism and social media had corrupted traditional gender roles. What was further interesting to note was the view that children were solely a responsibility of the mother (see Figure 34).

Mothers have always been working since antiquity, raising kids is great but is limited work
Unfortunately government is the enemy of tradition and business are the enemy of culture. Going back to a single provider with dependents working on the land and using nature for food, medicine, exercise, entertainment is my dream. Politics is surplus to requirement
Technically that's Her child or children... ♦♦ ... It's against the Law if she doesn't do any of that... Hiring someone to look after an egg you decided to keep as a Pet, is a whole different ball game... The nanny wasn't in the bedroom cheering on, when that rascal was made...
This was the case 40 years back. But the people that controls the world devalued the currency so that they could get more control over the family.
Uze nayo kahle wayimosha ekugcineni because of your fear of feminists. This formula has worked wonders for humanity for centuries without men paying women wages to women for raising their own kids as if being a mother is a favour you do for a man. A woman makes a choice to become
Why should the fathers be paying mothers to raise kids? Nobody forced them to have kids

Figure 34: Replies to Figure 32

As noted in this section, conversation around unpaid care work is polarised. Narratives which are drawn upon to counter conversations around the equal distribution or remunerated nature of household labour centre on traditional gender roles and aspects of religion. What is furthermore notable, is the perspectives shared which equate women who work with the deprivation of labour which some believe should be provided to men and the household. Importantly, these were a minority of opinions expressed under each tweet and do not wholly represent perspectives toward unpaid care work or women in the labour force. It is our recommendation that constructive and critical conversation be held on gender roles in relation to the household and work.

8. Regulatory Frameworks, Sex Markers and Gender Gaps

Conversation around laws, policy and regulations were significantly lower than sex markers and gender pay gaps. Individuals have taken aim at the ANC-led Government accusing them of wilful blindness to rape, GBV, killing of women and children and other aspects impacting on our focus areas. It was also noted that women are ostracised in workplaces due to companies offering unpaid maternity leave (Figure 35). In South Africa, it is not mandatory to pay employees on maternity leave, instead they may be eligible for benefits under the Unemployment Insurance Fund.³⁴

For 30 years the @MYANC led government has exhibited wilful blindness to the wholesale massacre of people in townships, crime, rape, gender based violence, killing of women and children, high unemployment, loadshedding, corruption, maladministration, gangsterism and drugs.
But fact of the matter is women do a lot of carework which is unpaid. Maternity leave in SA is unfair. Women are being discriminated against esp when employers know that they want to be mothers because of time lost when looking after children...
Women are ostracised in the workplace with many South African companies offering unpaid maternity leave. I stand with this policy, this is great stuff from the DA. Btw, Govt don't create jobs. Their job is to create a well run SA that will produce jobs

Figure 35: Concerns around treatment of women

Our dataset also collected conversations around redress policies such as affirmative action, black economic empowerment and legislative reforms (see Figure 36). Redress policies remain contested concepts within South Africa and range from outright rejection, moderate views and agreement. Two individuals noted that redress policies affect white South Africans negatively, whether male or female. It was also stated that the Government should not focus on getting women employed. It was also noted that men and women can never have equal rights due to two sexes being different and further, that the rights accorded to each should be tailored for each. On the other hand, it was noted that legislation such as the Employment Equity Act is directly responsible for a significant number of women participating in the workforce.

³⁴

<https://www.gawielerox.co.za/blog/law-regarding-maternity-leave-south-africa#:~:text=Duration%20of%20maternity%20leave,they%20choose%20to%20do%20so.>

<p>The female medical doctor is TOO WHITE to work in a hospital in South Africa. The @MYANC government of @CyrilRamaphosa issued an instruction not to employ white doctors.</p> <p>If you ask me, this is most probably the case in private hospitals as well in South Africa.</p>
<p>While acknowledging the challenges, EE has played a pivotal role in dismantling discriminatory hiring practices and fostering a more equitable workplace environment for women, regardless of their racial background.</p>
<p>Broad Black Economic Empowerment (BBEE), Level 1 means the majority owner is a black person/s, even better if it is a women, unemployed, young and coming from a underdeveloped neighborhood.</p> <p>However these mostly count, in the tendering process points.</p>
<p>The reasons our policy intervention is focused on single mothers</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 90% of children raised by single parents are raised by single mothers. 2. Women are paid between 23% and 35% less than men for the same job. 3. The burden of care for single mothers can also include elderly

Figure 36: Conversation around redress policies and law

8.1 Sex Markers

Inclusive of Sex Markers and the Gender Pay Gap, our query recorded 10,000 mentions with 6490 unique authors. Content related to maternity leave dominated the conversation, with EFF's Naledi Chirwa's statement garnering significant engagement over the reporting period. Julius Malema, the Party Leader, responded to the letter and stated that it forces the party into a defensive stance, and that they need to prioritise the organisation. Chirwa also cleared the air stating that her apology was not for being a mom but for her failure to send an apology through proper channels (see Figure 37).

 <p>Julius Sello Malema ✓ @Julius_S_Malema</p> <p>The letter's inappropriate insinuations have forced our movement into a defensive stance, detracting our members from the immediate task of doing door-to-door because they must now defend their movement from rubbish. In situations where we must choose between an individual and the organization, we must always prioritize the organization @EFFSouthAfrica.</p>
 <p>Fighter 🇿🇦 @NalediChirwa</p> <p>No. The apology is not begging for forgiveness for being a mom. You must not know the EFF clearly. The apology is for failing to send an apology through proper channels for absence.</p> <p>It would be great to hear your opinion on the Speaker being accused of corruption though, Karen.</p>

Figure 37: Malema and Chirwa responses to backlash

Despite these statements, varying opinions were expressed on the matter. Many called out the EFF for “punishing” women employees for being mothers despite being a party for the so-called “worker class”. In response to the backlash the EFF received, individuals clarified that it was Naledi’s choice to take leave one day before giving birth and coming back 2 months later (see Figure 38).

Naledi and OTHERS missed parliament and didn't inform the whips. THEY were asked by the organisation to explain themselves, THEY did. And then asked to issue a public apology as public representatives. Naledi just happened to be the first one to, it's not an isolated case.
English is not our mother tongue but there is really no excuse to lack basic comprehension. Naledi clearly states the personal choices she made yet all you fools want to push the narrative that she was forced to cut her maternity leave short. Le a nyela!
What kind of worker's party, with a commitment to gender empowerment, and lets a mother return for work 2 months before her maternity leave is up.
Remember this when you cast that vote and DONT take this lightly. There's something extremely off about a woman being PUNISHED for being a mom. There's something off about a woman going on maternity leave the day BEFORE giving birth. The signs are there...

Figure 38: Backlash to Chirwa and EFF maternity debacle

This also raised other related issues such as mothering, pregnancy and menstrual issues that may occur at work. An individual notes that these biological functions are frowned upon, as they disturb work flow and yet, women have the same sick days as men. It was further suggested that women should get menstrual leave. In response to these comments, questions were raised around productivity and the impact on the company that such initiatives may have (see Figure 39).

Here is a trick though, work places are generally centred around a male species being a standard gender, anything that deviates from that is an anomaly. Mothering, 🍌 pregnancy, menstrual periods issues are frowned upon, more so as they disturb normal work flow.
We know there is no monthly period a man gets. Yet, her sick leave days are equal to a man's. Also, compared to a man she will have to pay for more Dr visits.
Can't we have a work laws/act that acknowledges phenomenal?
A work place is a men's world.
I think bosses need to revise their policies and give girls at least 4 days menstrual leave every month..
In which business that must go on a stand still for four days, unless this would make them improprieties in the long run in the job world
Truth is maternity leave should be a year and should be fully paid.
You will think so until its your company and you have to pay 3 female employees at home for a year and pay their replacement
This will only result in females not being employed

Figure 39: Posts and Responses around maternity and menstruation

8.2 Gender Pay Gap

The topic of Gender Pay Gaps, while not extensively discussed, surfaced in our research along two general themes: (i) that it exists and (ii) that it does not exist. The Gender Pay Gap is a hotly contested issue and what follows, reports on the differing views held by individuals.

Those who claim that the pay gap exists used videos or popular news stories to support their claims such as a video on software engineers' salaries based on their experience, where a woman with 3 years experience was earning significantly less than men with the same experience (see Figure 40). Another high traction conversation concerned Gagasi FM, where it was alleged that Penny Ntuli, a host on the show, was earning significantly less than her male colleagues. The research also highlighted intersectional narratives, with observations that the gender pay gap is more pronounced for black women.

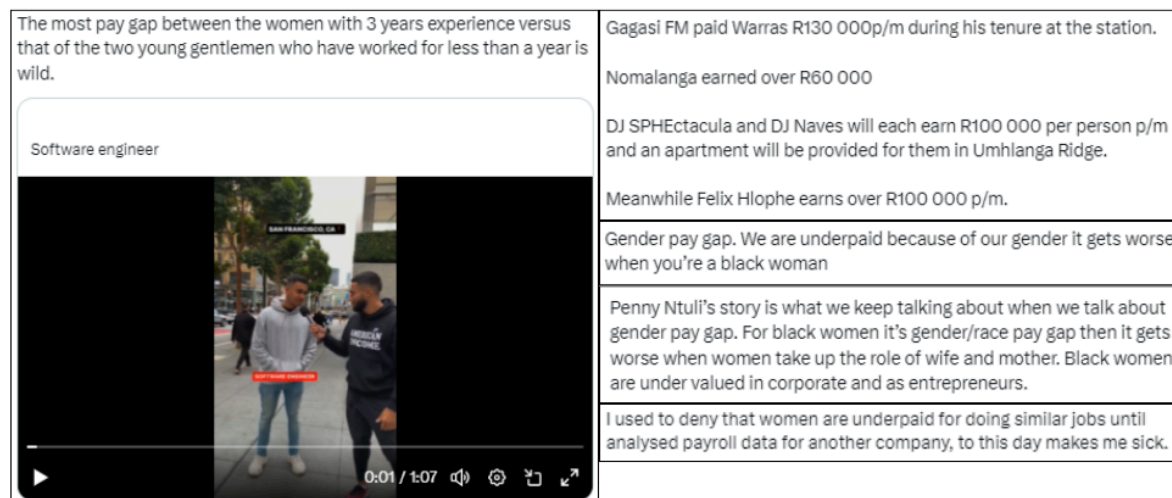


Figure 40: Posts Agreeing with Gender Pay Gap

Critics of the gender pay gap argue that these studies (and experiences) fail to consider factors such as differences in occupations, experience and hours worked. It has also been suggested that factors like maternity leave, employment in non-essential jobs, and taking more leave can influence salary disparities. Similar arguments were made in response to the Engineers and Penny Ntuli saga, with some claiming that the discrepancies may be based on location, as well as hours worked and experience (Figure 41).

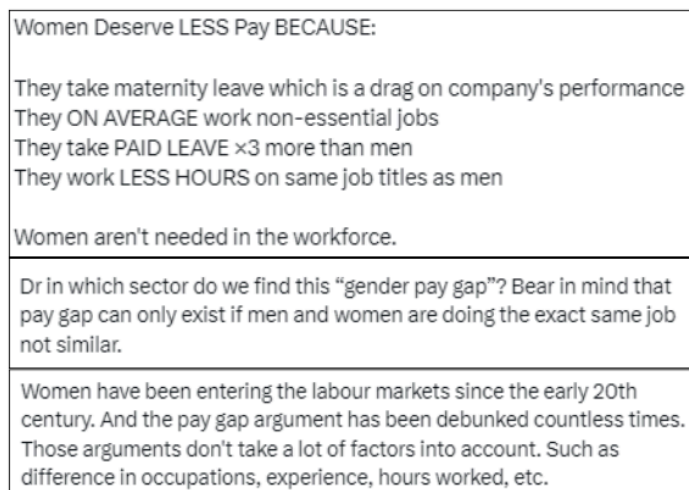


Figure 41: Replies to Gender Pay Gap Posts

9. Concluding Remarks

Our analysis of the conversation concerning labour force equality reveals a deeply polarised conversation which appears to be predicated on differing values in relation to traditional and religious assumptions around gender roles. Examples of these debates include issues of stereotyping around women's competency in male-dominated industries, countered by

arguments for women's capability and the liberating nature of employment. The themes of work definition and sex work decriminalization reveal a clash between traditional/religious and progressive views. South Africa's legislative framework is seen as adequate for addressing gender inequality, but concerns exist about the government's implementation of necessary policies. Redress policies are generally supported, though some argue they disadvantage previously advantaged groups, particularly men. Lastly, the gender pay gap remains a contentious issue, reflecting the ongoing struggle for gender equality in the workforce.

Future research in this vein should seek to build an understanding of employment in relation to the 'Gig' economy. Gig work is defined through the following core features: irregular work schedules; self-provision of equipment used for work; the provision or definition of one's own working environment; payment based on piecework i.e. in relation to completed tasks; and organisation around digital platforms³⁵. Examples being on-demand services, such as Uber, SweepSouth, Mr. D, Checkers Sixty/60 etc. A deeper analysis of conversation related to precarious employment, which is defined as unprotected and insecure work or low paying work is also needed.

³⁵ [Steward & Stanford \(2017\)](#)

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Appendix

A - Methodology



Using a query designed to capture the broad conversation about interactions between men and women, this report covers February 2023. Stieglitz and colleagues (2018) identified four distinct phases in social media data analysis: (1) discovery, (2) collection, (3) preparation, and (4) analysis. Below, we describe how these phases guided our research project.

Step 1: Data Discovery

- The first step in data discovery was to draw up a list of keywords designed to isolate the broad conversation about interactions between men and women in South Africa on social media. The research and dialogue facilitation teams contributed to this list collaboratively through a shared spreadsheet. The research team focuses on quantitative analysis while the dialogue team focuses on qualitative analysis of the conversation(s).
- To create this list, the research team drew on existing knowledge combined with desktop research, a literature review and a quantitative, analytic review of social media.
- Our preliminary keyword list comprised

Step 2: Data Collection

- We “collected” the resulting data using our social media analytics platform.

Step 3: Data Preparation³⁶

- We 'prepared' the data for analysis by refining the query. Query refinement entails sifting through the data set while looking for posts that are not relevant to interactions between men and women in South Africa. At this stage we also look at relevant posts that have not been included.
- If and when our team finds that some words could be added or removed, they are resolved by introducing additional keywords and/or exclusionary terms to the query.
- With the goal of delivering the most useful insights possible in this report, we created libraries of categories and tags to focus on the parts of online conversation that were most relevant for this project. This development of the categories and tags was based on two factors:
 1. *Prominence* - this is assessed quantitatively, using a dashboard that allows us to visualise data points, and qualitatively, using researchers' expertise, desktop research and dashboard work.
 2. *Relevance* - a qualitative assessment of whether a focus area is important enough to the strategic goals of the heCareZA project to be included. Our team makes this determination based on subject matter expertise in South African social media dynamics and whether or not further research into the focus area is likely to provide valuable information for the ongoing heCareZA Programme.

Step 4: Data analysis

- We built a dashboard in our social media analytics platform to support our data analysis. This tool produces metrics according to volume, trending topics, news stories, and unique authors in relation to the keyword list.
- Thematic analysis involves studying the emerging patterns in the data and exploring how units of meaning connect to form themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis can highlight individuals' perspectives, ideas and experiences, and can be used to generate fresh insight into the social dynamics behind human behaviour. Accordingly, we analysed the collected data thematically to interpret the data and to gain insight into dominant themes and trends.

³⁶ New keywords and exclusions are identified both at the query and tag level on an ongoing basis.

- The goal of this analysis is to better understand what was said during the reporting period. Thematic analysis was conducted both at the query level and the tag (focus area) level.

B - Query

<<<Keywords>>>

((Job OR employment OR employed OR manager OR management OR entrepreneur* OR unemployed OR unemployment OR occupation* OR profession* OR vocation* OR Career OR Work* OR Labour OR Labor) AND (M?n OR Wom?n OR Male OR Female OR Masculine OR Feminine OR Gender OR Discriminat*))

OR

(Care AND Work) OR (Formal AND (Sector OR Job OR Work)) OR (Informal AND (Sector OR Job OR Work)) OR (Domestic AND Work) OR (Unpaid AND (Work OR Job OR Intern*)) OR (Sex AND Work*) OR (Maternity AND Leave) OR (Menstrua* AND (Leave OR Work)) OR (Period AND (Leave OR Work)) OR "Period Poverty" OR ((Pay OR Income OR Salary OR Wage) AND Gender) OR (Paternity AND Leave)

<<<Exclusions>>>

NOT

(BOSA* OR Calvin OR British OR BuildOneSA OR Disney OR "Thina Mathupha" OR dog OR America* OR Ward OR lonel* OR "Copa America" OR EURO OR Israel* OR Palestine OR Zionism OR bbmzansi OR gaza OR Ukraine OR Russia OR Hack* OR "Closing Date" OR WhatsApp OR "Kaizer Chiefs" OR "Social Media" OR CV OR God OR Jesus OR Affiliate OR Scam OR "Man City" OR "Manchester City" OR continent:"ASIA" OR continent:"EUROPE" OR continent:"OCEANIA" OR continent:"North America" OR continent:"South America" OR Diddy OR Investment OR Crypto* OR Whatsapp OR author:@ZamakonkeK OR #JobSeekersSA OR CV OR "Missing Person" OR "Mr Price" OR (Mr AND Price) OR "Pravin Gordhan" OR Foreign* OR Local OR Critical OR Tax* OR "Trade Union" OR Ramaphosa OR ANC OR Uganda OR Settlement OR Lesufi OR #GrowingGautengTogether OR Hostel OR Biden OR Senate OR Congress OR Democrat OR Republican OR Trump OR Zuma OR Athlete OR Sport OR WWE)