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Support for social welfare in South Africa: Insights from national attitudinal data

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by

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Declaration

I, Alisha Basdow, declare that

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Abstract

This study contributes to the South African literature on social welfare by providing an assessment of attitudes towards social welfare redistribution and attitudes towards government spending on the poor. The study investigates the individual characteristics that correlate with attitudes towards social welfare and government spending on the poor. The particular characteristics that are of interest in this study are socioeconomic status and religiosity. The data from the 2018 South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) are used in this study.

The study finds that in South Africa, religiosity promotes greater pro-social attitudes. Subjective socioeconomic status does not significantly increase or decrease adults' attitudes towards the provision of social grants. However, adults that subjectively identify as being poor are more likely to support pro-poor spending than adults that identify as being wealthy. The findings of this study are mostly consistent with findings from studies done in other countries.

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Introduction

South Africa is considered to be an upper-middle-income country which has a per capita income comparable to that of Brazil, Mauritius, or Botswana (The World Bank, 2023). Despite this relative prosperity, many of the country's households are either impoverished or at risk of becoming impoverished (Zwane, Biyase, & Rooderick; 2022). When considering the Gini coefficients of consumption per capita, South Africa – which is part of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU¹) – is ranked as the world's most unequal country (The World Bank; 2022 (b)).

Social grants have been used by South Africa, since the country's democratic transition, to combat economic inequality, poverty and to improve the welfare of poor households. Social grants successfully alleviate the burden of poverty: according to the World Bank (2022(a)) when social grants are considered, South Africa achieves the highest absolute reduction in inequality (The World Bank, 2022 (a); The World Bank, 2022 (b); Zwane, Biyase, & Rooderick, 2022; Kollamparambil & Oyenubi, 2022).

Thus, given the importance of social grants, two questions arise: How do adults in South Africa feel about the provision of social grants? Do they feel that the government is spending too much or too little on the poor? Internationally, a substantial amount of research has been conducted to investigate the relationships between preferences/attitudes and welfare redistribution, while limited research has been conducted on South African data for the same theme.

The public's perception of the causes of poverty is typically seen as a crucial component of a nation's welfare culture since it appears to be connected to the creation of and legitimacy of its welfare programs. Understanding attitudes toward social welfare is important because it reveals how individuals and communities perceive and respond to issues of poverty, inequality, and societal well-being, hence assisting in the formulation of successful and focused social welfare policies and initiatives. It also aids in the identification of potential challenges that may impede the execution and effectiveness of such efforts.

This study will serve to fill this gap in the literature, by investigating attitudes towards social welfare redistribution and attitudes towards government spending on the poor. The study will

¹ The SACU is made up of South Africa, Eswatini, Lesotho, Botswana and Namibia.

investigate the individual characteristics that correlate with attitudes towards social welfare and government spending on the poor. The focal characteristics that are of interest in this study are socioeconomic status and religiosity. The data from the 2018 South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) will be used in this study.

The study proceeds as follows. First, the South African context surrounding poverty, unemployment and social grants is presented, followed by a brief review of the existing literature concerning attitudes towards social welfare. The second section of the study explains the data, the various characteristics that may explain support for or against social grants, and the methodology used within the study. The third section of the study covers the data analysis and investigation of attitudes towards social welfare and government spending on the poor. The final section is the discussion and conclusion.

Literature Review

In South Africa, the primary goal of social welfare initiatives is to mitigate the negative effects of poverty and inequality while simultaneously encouraging socioeconomic growth. Most options for reducing poverty and inequality require the South African government to take on larger roles in market regulation and resource redistribution, notably through wealth transfer laws – social welfare policies especially social grants. South Africa's social grants are designed to provide social protection to persons who are physically unable to work: the sick, disabled, elderly and children.

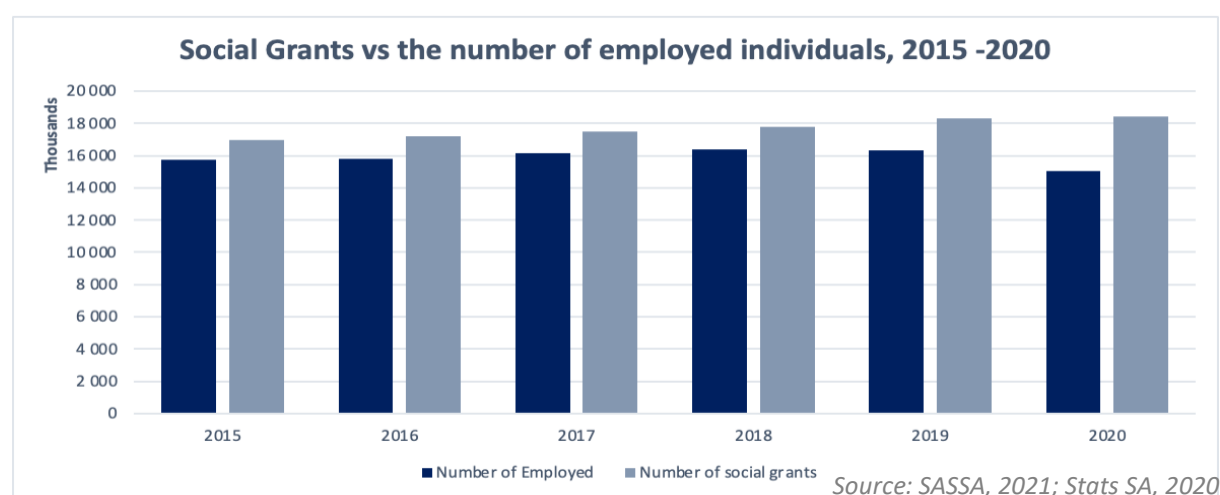
More than 18 million South Africans (nearly 31% of the country's population) had received social grants by the end of March 2021, a huge increase from the 2,9 million recipients in 1994 (Treasury, 2022; SASSA, 2021; Department of Finance, 1994). When accounting for the 6 million recipients of the COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress (SRD) grant, the 2021 figure rises to about 24,4 million (or 41%) South Africans. The number of social grant recipients is predicted to rise from 18 million in 2021 to 19.3 million in 2023/24, accounting for an estimated 95% (R606,9 billion) of the Department of Social Development's budget in the next years; this is a large increase in expenditure compared to the R417,6 million that was made available for social grants in 1994/95 (an approximately 1 340% increase²) (Treasury, 2022; Zwane, Biyase, & Rooderick, 2022; SASSA, 2021; García-Sánchez *et al.*, 2020; Department of Finance, 1994).

² Not considering the inflation rate.

Despite this expansion of social grants, South Africa's poverty rate remains high by historical and worldwide standards. In 2018, approximately 49% of adults within South Africa live below the upper bound poverty line (earn R992 or less per capita per month) (Mdluli & Dunga, 2021). Social grants have the potential of improving a recipients' wellbeing. According to Patel *et al.* (2023) social grants coupled with some form of livelihood activities - such as informal work, formal work, and income generating business activities³ - have a favourable impact on the grant beneficiaries' wellbeing in areas such as reducing food insecurity, developing a sense of personal efficacy and investing in personal and family education and health. However, many low-income households are left behind as a result of the high unemployment rate; there is also growing concern that families without members that fulfil the required age profiles—for example, minors under the age of 18 for the Child Support Grant (CSG) or those 60 years or older for the Old Age Pension (OAP)—may be excluded (SASSA, 2021; Kollamparambil & Oyenubi, 2021; Mackett, 2020).

Social grants have the potential to provide households with better employment opportunities. According to Mackett (2020) households with OAP recipients, in comparison to other grant households, have more favourable labour-market and poverty alleviation outcomes. However, Mackett (2020) goes on to conclude that in the long-term, the efficacy of social grants is jeopardized by excessive unemployment because there are concerns that many households that receive grants are providing assistance to unemployed people.

Figure 1: Number of Social Grants vs Number of Employed, 2015 -2020



³ Examples of income-generating activities include buying and selling goods and providing services to customers such as painting, building, renting accommodation, fafi (a form of gambling), gardening services, traditional healing, and tailoring.

Given the trend of employment and grant recipients in Figure 1, and despite the absence of a grant directed at unemployed adults, there are concerns that a culture of dependency is promoted by other social welfare provisions. There are fears that social welfare provision impairs work motivation in South Africa (Surender *et al.*, 2010; Noble, Ntshongwana and Surender, 2008). These types of views reflect the different attitudes that adults hold towards social grants.

Cozzarelli, Wilkinson, and Tagler (2001: 208) argue that “attitudes are important predictors of the ways in which people behave”. Therefore, support for social welfare programs is heavily influenced by attitudes. According to studies by Bullock (2021) and Gelepithis and Giani (2020) the support for social welfare programmes (especially redistribution) is structured by “the material self-interest⁴ of different socioeconomic classes or individuals”. Bullock (2021) and Gelepithis and Giani (2020), for example go on to explain that an adult’s educational attainment is important when investigating preferences for redistribution as it has an effect on their material self-interest. According to Emilsson (2022) who looked at a sample from Sweden, social welfare policies are supported greatly by individuals that have lower educational attainment, are recipients of a grant, and/or are lower earners.

However, García-Sánchez *et al.* (2020) disagree with the notion that support of redistribution is based solely on a rational economic model focused on self-interest. Instead García-Sánchez *et al.* (2020) attribute redistribution preferences to an individual’s beliefs, perceptions and experiences. Armingeon and Weisstanner (2022) investigate whether political beliefs (‘left’ versus ‘right’ wing beliefs) can explain redistributive preferences, using data from the 2008 to 2018 European Social Surveys. Armingeon and Weisstanner (2022) argue that material self-interest and political ideologies need to be examined in combination. They conclude that political beliefs outweigh the effects of material self-interest: left- wing citizens support redistribution more than non-left citizens at all income levels.

Studies by Arikan and Bloom (2019), Malka *et al.*(2011), Alesina and Giuliano (2009), and Gill and Lundsgaarde (2004) investigate how religiosity (a form or belief) impacts an adult’s attitude towards redistribution. Malka *et al.* (2011) conclude that religion has two opposing effects in the United States of America (USA): the conviction that one should assist others (a

⁴ To be self-interested implies that an individual is motivated by their own loss and gains (Bullock, 2021). Bullock (2021: 1231) argues that “People are hedonists, motivated by pleasures and pains. And they are egotists, caring more about their own pleasures and pains than about the pleasures and pains of others”.

prosocial behaviour) as well as the conviction that one should be a decent conservative. Arikan and Bloom (2019) conclude that welfare generosity is also important when looking at attitudes towards social welfare. For example, religious beliefs promote supportive attitudes towards redistributive policies in countries with low levels of state welfare generosity, such as Indonesia, Pakistan and Morocco.

Stegmueller *et al.* (2012) and Malka *et al.* (2011) investigate religious denomination and attitudes towards redistribution. Stegmueller *et al.* (2012) and Malka *et al.* (2011) argue that religious denomination may have different attitudes towards social welfare because of the different religious messages they receive. Stegmueller *et al.* (2012) concluded that Catholics and Protestants are both strongly opposed to income redistribution.

Apart from beliefs and self-interest, factors such as age, gender and race have an influence on support for redistribution. For example, Ohtake and Tomioka (2004) found that in Japan, married women tend to favour redistribution less than married men, and that more support for redistribution is associated with older people. Alesina and Giuliano (2009) found that (among the USA) younger adults, women and African-Americans have greater support for redistribution. Alesina and Giuliano (2009) also concluded that when looking at cross country data, support for redistribution varied substantially. They go on to explain that these variations could be due to other aspects such as culture and religion. Matthews and Erickson (2008) argue that the structure of social welfare programs produces different patterns of support for redistribution. Matthews and Erickson (2008) found that in Canada, support for benefits that are universal (provide benefits to the entire population, regardless of economic conditions, for example health care and unemployment insurance in Canada) are more consensual compared to support for selective/targeted social benefits (given mainly to the needy).

The South African literature on the factors that influence attitudes towards social welfare is rather scarce. The majority of studies on the topic of social welfare in South Africa focus on the use and benefits of social transfers rather than attitudes toward the spending and provision of social welfare programs. Sithole (2015), Surender *et al.*, (2010), and Noble, Ntshongwana and Surender (2008) are the only three articles found that look at attitudes towards social welfare through a South African lens.

The Noble, Ntshongwana and Surender (2008) study utilised the 2006 South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) to investigate the attitudes held by adults with different

socioeconomic classes (mainly looking at self-perceived socioeconomic status and employment status) on social grants and paid work. The study concluded that approximately 80% of the adults supported the role of social grants and felt that grant recipients needed financial assistance. Furthermore, the majority of respondents were also supportive of the idea of extending the grant system to support unemployed adults, even if it meant an increase in taxation. A shortcoming of the study by Noble, Ntshongwana and Surender (2008), is that it does not look at individual characteristics other than subjective socioeconomic status and employment status.

The study by Surender *et al.* (2010) builds on the Noble, Ntshongwana and Surender (2008) paper. Surender *et al.* (2010) used qualitative data – from 39 focus groups⁵ - to shed some light on attitudes surrounding social grants and paid work. They found that 82% of all groups supported the claim that most people receiving social grants are deserving. They concluded that there was widespread agreement that the government needed to spend more money on existing social programs for the poor, even if it meant raising taxes. They also found that more than 70% of all groups disagree or strongly disagree with the claim that the CSG is too high and inhibits individuals from finding work. Focus group respondents were more supportive of the disability grant and do not agree with the idea that the disability grant inhibits individuals from finding work. Furthermore, Surender *et al.* (2010) asked the groups for opinions on whether they thought income assistance should be made available to all unemployed people. They found that 74% of respondents agreed that social grants should be given to those who are unable to find a job. However, the shortcoming of the paper by Surender *et al.* (2010) (like Noble, Ntshongwana and Surender (2008)), is that they overlooked the potential influence that individual characteristics such as race, geography, and religion may have on the formation of attitudes, as they primarily focused on qualitative responses from Black Africans from the Western and Eastern Cape provinces.

Sithole (2015) investigates the attitudes towards social welfare services that are held by Black African adults in the Limpopo province. Sithole (2015) conducts this investigation by examining the vernacular names given to the different welfare programs. Sithole (2015) cautiously concludes that Black African adults from Limpopo are not supportive of social welfare services. The majority of the negative attitudes are associated with Reconstruction and

⁵ The focus groups consisted of only Black African grant recipients from the Eastern and Western Cape. Each group had male and female participants that were of working age and were formally unemployed.

Development Programme (RDP) housing. The shortcoming of this study is that the results are based on a sample of seven (7) Black African University students that are assumed to be grant recipients (leading to potential bias in the results). Furthermore, the study fails to capture the potential effects of other characteristics such as, among others, educational attainment, race, and region.

This study will add to the limited body of literature in South African on attitudes towards social welfare, by investigating adult's attitudes towards the provision of social grants and spending on the poor. The study will investigate whether attitudes towards redistribution are associated with both religious beliefs and material self-interest. Other demographic factors such as race, gender and region will also be assessed. Within the study the demographic factors, self-interest factors, and region will be grouped and called individual characteristic variables. The section that follows will provide more insight into the data, variables and method used within the study.

Data, Hypotheses and Methods

The focus of the study is to explore what individual attitudes are towards social spending in South Africa (particularly focusing on social grants and government spending on the poor), and what the correlates are of these attitudes. The data that will be used come from the 2018 South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS).

The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) has been conducting the SASAS annually since its beginning in 2003. It is a cross-sectional, nationally representative survey, which in 2018, has a representative sample of 2 885 South African adults, 16 years and older, that are geographically dispersed across the nation's nine provinces. This collection of data is appropriate for the current investigation since it contains a wide range of measurements that can be used to identify the socio-demographic and subjective influences on public opinion.

The fundamental analytical strategy is to test for statistical associations between characteristics and attitudes toward welfare provision and government spending on the poor - that is, to see if there are socio-demographic characteristics that are associated with attitudes toward welfare provision and government spending on the poor. The particular characteristics that are of interest in this study are socioeconomic status and religiosity.

There are two hypotheses relating to how religiosity and economic status are correlated with attitudes to social welfare:

- 1) If religiosity promotes greater prosocial behaviour, there should be a positive correlation between religiosity and people's opinions of social welfare and spending on the poor in South Africa (Malka *et al.*, 2011).
- 2) People who are poorer are anticipated to support social welfare more than those who are affluent because they are more inclined to view the poor as deserving of government assistance. However, they might not be satisfied with how the government actually distributes social grants.

Utilising the 2018 SASAS Questionnaire, there are two attitudinal variables analysed in the study. The first is derived from Question Q31: respondents are asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with the way that the government is handling the provision of social grants (e.g., child support grant, old age pension, etc.) in their neighbourhood? Ordinal response options range from very satisfied (1) to very dissatisfied (5). These responses have been inverted for the study, so that the range goes from very dissatisfied (1) to very satisfied (5). It should be noted that this question reflects not just respondents' support for social grants but also their satisfaction with how social grants are already being provided. These problems may exist separately. Even if one supports the idea of social welfare, people may object to the way the government is implementing it.

The second outcome variable is generated from question 181, which asks respondents: "To what extent do you agree or disagree that the government should spend less on help for the poor?". This question has response options that range from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5). The responses for this question have also been inverted. This question examines support for social welfare in relation to the amount of income spent on benefits for the poor. While people may be in favour of providing social welfare, they may disagree about whether the government is spending too much on the poor.

The study uses a number of distinct variables that are intended to reflect both the subjective statuses and material differences that are often connected to the various attitudes. Of principal interest is religiosity and economic status as correlates of the support for welfare provision and spending.

The first focal correlate concerns the role of religion, which is a subjective measure. This study explores whether being religious correlates with South Africans' attitudes to welfare, both in terms of its provision and spending. Are people who are more religious, more or less supportive of social welfare? To account for the relationship between attitudes and subjective religiosity, the study uses responses to question 246: "Regardless of whether you belong to a particular religion, how religious would you say you are?". The responses range from not at all religious (0) to very religious (10).

In South Africa, religions include Islam, Hinduism, Christianity, Atheism, Buddhism, Bahaism, Judaism, Agnosticism, and Traditional African religion. From Table 1 below, it can be noted that the majority of South African's are Christian (78%). Approximately 11% of people in South Africa reported not having any religious belief.

Table 1: Religion in South Africa (2017/2018)

Religion	Distribution	Percentage
Christianity	43 423 717	78,03%
Islam	892 685	1,60%
Traditional African religion	2 454 887	4,41%
Hinduism	561 268	1,01%
Buddhism	24 808	0,04%
Bahaism	6 881	0,01%
Judaism	49 470	0,09%
Atheism	52 598	0,09%
Agnosticism	32 944	0,06%
No Religious Belief	5 964 892	10,72%
Other	1 482 210	2,66%
Do not know	704 358	1,27%
	55 650 718	100,00%

Source: GCIS (2018)

While the variable that captures religious denomination in the 2018 SASAS is available, it will be excluded from this study as it reduces the sample size of the data and distorts the data.

One significant and enduring factor in welfare redistribution preferences is an adult's place in the economic hierarchy, i.e. their economic status. On average, people in less fortunate economic situations have been found to favour greater government redistribution (Pedulla and Donnelly, 2020; Alesina and Glaeser, 2009; Matthews and Erickson, 2008; Johnson, 2001).

A subjective measure of economic status was included in the study to capture the relationship between economic status and attitudes towards the provision of welfare and government spending on the poor. According to Howe *et al.* (2011), subjective measurements may more

correctly reflect nuanced features of social status. Furthermore, subjective measures do not impose preconceived assumptions about the crucial socioeconomic processes for a particular population, but rather let the study participants control the socioeconomic position measurement process (Howe *et al*, 2011).

The question used to evaluate the relationship between economic status and attitudes towards the provision of welfare and government spending on the poor is question 169, which reads: “Would you say that you and your family are...?”, where the response options range from wealthy (1) to very poor (6). Three dummy variables were developed for economic status namely: poor (responses 5 and 6), middle income level (responses 3 and 4) and high income level (responses 1 and 2), where the high income level variable will be excluded from the regressions. Apart from this subjective measure of economic status, employment status and educational attainment also capture an adult’s economic status. Thus, employment status and educational attainment were included in the study.

As income and wage-earner status influence the individual-level utility of various welfare state provisions, social divisions based on job status may come into play in welfare state assessments. Even if employment considerably lowers the likelihood of poverty, a job and the income it generates may not necessarily guarantee a comfortable standard of living (McKnight *et al.*, 2016; Matthews & Erickson, 2008).

The relationships between employment status and attitudes towards welfare provision and spending, were captured using the responses to question 241: “What is your current employment status? (Which of the following best describes your present work situation?)”. the responses vary from full time employed to student/learner. A dummy variable was created to separate the employed (which includes full time employment and part-time employment) from the not employed (which includes the unemployed, retired, housewives, scholars, etc.) in order to measure this dimension.

In the literature on public opinion, education is likely one of the most reliable indicators of socioeconomic status, and it is also frequently found to be significantly correlated with a range of behavioural and attitudinal characteristics (Pedulla and Donnelly, 2020; Alesina and Glaeser, 2009; Matthews & Erickson, 2008). When evaluating the correlation between socioeconomic status and attitudes to social welfare, it is imperative that education be taken into account as a control variable.

To capture education, the study uses responses to Question 238, which asks respondents: “What is the highest level of education that you have ever completed?”. This question was used to produce a set of dummy variables that captured the respondents' highest level of education. These variables include tertiary (degree holders), matric (completed secondary school), incomplete secondary school, primary school, and no formal education. The no formal education dummy variable will be excluded from the regressions.

Marital status is another variable considered in this study. According to Linos and West (2003) unmarried persons are anticipated to want increased government protection as it offers a source of security. The relationships between marital status and attitudes towards welfare provision and spending, were captured using responses from Question 236: “What is your current marital status?”. The responses vary from married, separated, divorced, widowed, never married but engaged, and never married and not engaged. The responses are grouped to create a dummy variables for adults with a partner, this variable equals 1 for adults that are married or engaged and 0 for all other adults.

In addition to a scalar age variable, the empirical analysis also includes a range of other demographic variables: dummy variables that represent race (Black, Coloured, Indian, and White, where the White variable will be excluded from the regressions); gender (equal to 1 if female and 0 if male); and province (this will be broken down into multiple variables for Limpopo, Gauteng, North West, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, Free State, Western Cape, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal, where Gauteng will be excluded from the regressions).

A variety of statistical analytic techniques are used to conduct the investigation. The first stage in the data analysis is to generate and analyse descriptive statistics of the attitudinal variables and see whether the average characteristics of respondents differ systematically across these attitudes. This will give a summary of the data being studied and will provide insights into the distribution of data and attitudes across respondents.

The responses to the two outcome variables have been grouped together partly for ease of comparison in the descriptive analysis. The responses for the outcome variable that captures the attitudes towards the government spending less on the poor (question 181), were grouped into three outcomes, namely: does not support the idea that less must be spent on benefits for the poor (grouping responses 1 and 2), neither agree nor disagree (response 3), and supports the idea (grouping responses 4 and 5). The second outcome variable (question 31, which

captures attitudes towards the provision of social grants) was grouped in a similar way - dissatisfied with the provision of grants (grouping responses 1 and 2), neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (response 3) and satisfied with the provision of grants (grouping responses 4 and 5).

Once the descriptive statistics have been presented, the next step will be the regression analysis. Ordered logit regression models are used to explore the correlates of attitudes in a multivariate context. According to Grilli & Rampichini (2012) an ordered logit regression model is ideal for ordinal response variables. The model is based on the response variable's cumulative probabilities. In particular, the logit of each cumulative probability is assumed to be a linear function of the covariates with constant regression coefficients across answer categories, (Grilli & Rampichini, 2012). According to Williams (2021), the observed ordinal variable (Y) within an ordered logit model is a function of another continuous latent variable (Y^*). There are several threshold values associated with Y^* . The observed variable Y 's value is determined by whether or not a specified threshold is satisfied. For example, if there are two observed variables for Y , the thresholds (captured by γ in this example) would be as follows:

$$Y_l = 1 \text{ if } Y^* < \gamma$$

$$Y_l = 2 \text{ if } Y^* \geq \gamma$$

Thus, Y^* - in the population - is equal to:

$$Y^*_l = \sum_{k=1}^K \beta_k X_{kl} + \varepsilon_l = Z + \varepsilon_l \quad (a)$$

Note that the equation has an error term (ε_l) which indicates the possibility that essential variables are excluded from the equation or that variables may not be accurately assessed. According to Williams (2021), the ordered logit model may be used to forecast the likelihood that the unobserved variable Y^* falls inside the various threshold limits using the value of Z (as in equation (a) above) and the assumed logistic distribution of the disturbance term. Within this study, the ordered logit equation can be written as follows:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \dots + \beta_K X_K + \varepsilon_l$$

Where Y = Attitudinal variable (mentioned earlier) and X = characteristic variables

Prior to the regression analysis, the parallel lines/regression assumption is assessed to determine whether the grouped responses or original scale responses should be used within the regressions. Posel, Oyenubi and Kollamparamnil (2021) explain that the proportionate odds or parallel regression assumption indicates that all of the ordinal scale categories have a consistent relationship. To evaluate the null hypothesis that there is no difference in the coefficients between the models, the Wald test, Wolfe-Gould test, Likelihood ratio test, Brant test, and Score test are used. An insignificant result means that there is not enough convincing evidence to refute the parallel regression hypothesis (Posel, Oyenubi and Kollamparamnil, 2021).

Both the ordered logit regressions with the outcome variables that have responses that scale from 0 to 5, and ordered logit regressions with the outcome variables that are grouped into three, violate the parallel regression assumption. However, the re-grouping appears to reduce (although not eliminate) the violation of the parallel line assumption. The attitudinal outcome variables with the responses grouped into three are therefore used within the regressions. But a limitation of the study is that the categories of the outcome variables may not be equally spaced across respondents.

Throughout the empirical analysis, the data used will be weighted using the population weights that are provided with the data. These weights allow the sample to be weighted up to represent the national adult population (16 years and older) estimates. The weight variable that will be used is “Ireal1”.

Descriptive Statistics: Attitudes towards social grants and pro-poor spending

This section describes the two attitudinal questions that are analysed in this study, it compares the responses to these questions, and it describes the characteristics of adults according to their responses to the questions.

Table 2: Attitudes to the provision of social grants and pro-poor spending

“How satisfied or dissatisfied are respondents with the way that the government is handling the provision of social grants (e.g., child support grant, old age pension, etc) in their neighbourhood?”			
	Dissatisfied with the provision of grants	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Satisfied with the provision of grants
Percentage	14.93 (1.05)	11.28 (0.94)	73.79 (1.31)
Number of observations (unweighted)	427	330	1 805
“To what extent do respondents agree or disagree that the government should spend less on benefits for the poor?”			
	Disagree/strongly disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree/strongly agree
Percentage	60.39 (1.47)	11.64 (0.86)	27.98 (1.33)
Number of observations (unweighted)	1 487	377	698

Source: 2018 South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) data

Notes: The data have been weighted to represent population statistics; standard errors are included in parentheses.

Table 2 above shows that the clear majority (73.79%) of adults in South Africa reported being satisfied with the provision of social grants in their neighbourhood. In addition, the majority of respondents (approximately 60% of the weighted sample) also do not support the proposal that the government should spend less on benefits for the poor; while roughly 40% are either neutral or support the idea. This finding is similar to that of Swank (2008), which showed that there was disagreement among college students in the USA over the statement "The government is spending too much money on welfare." Swank (2008) concluded that even though the distribution was not entirely symmetrical, there was a narrow gap (41% to 31%) between those who supported and opposed welfare.

The statistics presented in Table 3 below show that responses to the two questions are largely consistent. Firstly, as would be expected, the majority (64%) of adults who reported being satisfied with the provision of social grants disagreed with the view that the government should spend less on benefits for the poor. Secondly, the large majority of adults who are dissatisfied with the provision of grants either disagree or agree that the government should spend less on the poor (and only 17% are indifferent). However, contrary to what would be expected, only a minority of adults (29%) who reported being indifferent about the provision of grants were also indifferent about whether the government should spend less on the poor.

Table 3: The relationship between the two sets of views

Percentage (Standard Error)		Attitudes towards the idea that government should spend less on benefits for the poor			
		Disagree/strongly disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree/strongly agree	Total
Attitudes to the provision of social grants	Dissatisfied with the provision of grants	54.33 (3.71)	17.13 (2.37)	28.54 (3.40)	100
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	46.86 (4.38)	29.20 (3.89)	23.94 (3.69)	100
	Satisfied with the provision of grants	63.68 (1.69)	7.84 (0.85)	28.48 (1.58)	100
	Total	60.39 (1.47)	11.64 (0.86)	27.98 (1.33)	100

Source: 2018 South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) data

Notes: The data have been weighted to represent population statistics; standard errors are included in parentheses.

Table 4 and Table 5 below describe the characteristics of adults according to their responses to the two questions about social welfare that were presented above. Table 4 shows that adults who had different views about the provision of social grants did not differ significantly in the

extent of their religiosity. They also did not differ significantly according to their subjective economic status. i.e. There is no descriptive evidence that adults who are satisfied with the provision of social grants are either more or less religious, or subjectively richer or poorer, than adults who are dissatisfied with the provision of social grants in South Africa. There is also no descriptive evidence to suggest that the characteristics of individuals that are dissatisfied with the provision of social grants differ from the individuals that are indifferent on the matter.

Table 4: Characteristics of individuals, according to their attitudes to the provision of social grants

Variable	Dissatisfied with the provision of grants	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Satisfied with the provision of grants
Averages			
Age	45.61 (1.29)	42.10 (1.58)	42.35 (.62)
Religiosity**	6.51 (.20)	6.02 (.17)	6.53 (.11)
Proportions			
Female	.66 (.03)	.58 (.04)	.59 (.02)
Socio-Economic Status: Poor	.29 (.03)	.25 (.04)	.29 (.02)
Socio-Economic Status: Middle Income Level	.59 (.04)	.62 (.04)	.63 (.02)
Socio-Economic Status: High Income level*	.12 (.03)	.13 (.03)	.08 (.01)
With a partner	.44 (.04)	.39 (.04)	.29 (.02) ^
Without a partner*	.55 (.04)	.61 (.04)	.71 (.02) ^
Black African	.69 (.03)	.61 (.04)	.86 (.01) ^ ∇
Coloured	.11 (.02)	.09 (.02)	.07 (.01)
Indian	.03 (.01)	.04 (.01)	.02 (.01) ∇
White*	.16 (.03)	.26 (.04)	.06 (.01) ^ ∇
Employed	.29 (.03)	.33 (.04)	.22 (.01) ∇
Not employed*	.52 (.04)	.49 (.04)	.61 (.02) ∇
No schooling*	.03 (.01)	.02 (.01)	.05 (.01)
Primary School	.11 (.02)	.08 (.02)	.14 (.01) ∇
Incomplete Secondary School	.41 (.04)	.46 (.04)	.37 (.02)
Matric	.37 (.04)	.34 (.04)	.33 (.02)
Tertiary Education	.08 (.02)	.09 (.02)	.11 (.01)

Source: 2018 South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) data

Notes: The data have been weighted to represent population statistics; standard errors are included in parentheses.

* Variables are omitted categories in the regression analysis.

** The “Religious” variable is a numeric variable that expresses the level of religion, ranging from 0 (Not at all religious) to 10 (Very religious), that each respondent attributes to themselves.

^ Significant difference (at the 95% level) with the first column (Dissatisfied with the provision of grants)

∇ Significant difference (at the 95% level) with the second column (Neutral group)

However, Table 4 does identify a number of other significant differences between adults. In particular, individuals that reported being satisfied with the provision of social grants are significantly more likely not to be employed and to have primary school as their highest education level compared to the individuals that are indifferent to the provision of social grants. Furthermore, adults who reported being satisfied with the provision of social grants are significantly less likely to be partnered than adults who reported being dissatisfied. They are

also significantly more likely to be Black African and less likely to be white than other adults (both those adults who reported being dissatisfied and those who reported being indifferent).

Being without a partner, and being African, are usually associated with lower economic status (McLaughlin & Lichter, 1997; Rector, 2010; Thiede, Kim & Slack, 2017). These comparisons therefore do offer some descriptive support for the hypothesis that people who have lower economic status are more likely to be satisfied with the provision of social grants in South Africa.

Table 5 shows that individuals who had different views about pro-poor government spending did differ significantly with regards to their subjective level of religiosity. They also differ significantly according to their subjective economic status. There is descriptive evidence that adults who do not support the idea that government should spend less on benefits for the poor are more religious, and are subjectively poorer, than adults who are either indifferent or support the idea. Individuals that are indifferent to the idea that government should spend less on benefits for the poor are significantly more likely to be subjectively middle class compared to the adults that do not support the idea. These findings align with findings from a USA study by Alesina and Glaeser (2009), who found that adults in the study tend to be less in favour of redistribution as their wealth increased; they also concluded, on the basis of their empirical study, that a religious upbringing has the impact of boosting redistribution preferences.

Table 5 also identifies a number of other significant differences between individuals in the three different groups of response. What can be noted is that individuals who reported supporting the idea that government should spend either less or more on benefits for the poor are significantly more likely to be Black African (the majority population in South Africa - accounting for 81% of South Africa's population (StatsSA, 2022)), and less likely to be White compared to other adults who reported being indifferent on the matter. This is not completely in line with what would have been expected. According to Alesina and Glaeser (2009) and Johnson (2001), the notion of altruism⁶ does not cross racial and ethnic boundaries frequently, because of the somewhat unpleasant but generally seen truth that people are kinder to those who share their racial, ethnic and other characteristics. It would therefore not have been expected that Black Africans would have been relatively more likely than Whites to be anti-poor spending, as the large majority of the poor in South Africa are Black African. (According

⁶ According to Feng *et al.* (2020: 2), altruism⁶ was initially coined by Auguste Comte in the 19th century as "an unselfish respect for the wellbeing of others".

to StatsSA (2021), approximately 31% of Black African headed-households perceived themselves as poor, compared to approximately 15% of Coloured headed-households, roughly 9% of Indian headed-households, and 3% of White headed-households. Furthermore, approximately 51% of Black African headed-households reported that their total monthly income was less than the amount necessary for the household to survive on, compared to 42% for Coloured headed-households, roughly 16% of Indian headed-households, and approximately 23% of White headed-households.)

Table 5: Characteristics of individuals, according to their attitudes to pro-poor government spending

Variable	Does not support the idea (pro-poor)	Neither supports nor does not support	Supports the idea (anti-poor)
Averages			
Age	43.04 (.69)	43.19 (1.41)	42.13 (.99)
Religious**	6.76 (.12)	5.59 (.20) ^	6.21 (.15) ^
Proportions			
Female	.60 (.02)	.57 (.04)	.62 (.03)
Socio-Economic Status: Poor	.33 (.02)	.16 (.03) ^	.23 (.02) ^
Socio-Economic Status: Middle Income Level	.59 (.02)	.73 (.03) ^	.65 (.03)
Socio-Economic Status: High Income level*	.08 (.01)	.11 (.02)	.12 (.02)
With a partner	.32 (.02)	.40 (.04)	.29 (.02)
Without a partner*	.68 (.02)	.60 (.04)	.71 (.02)
Black African	.81 (.01)	.71 (.04)	.84 (.02) ▽
Coloured	.09 (.01)	.07 (.01)	.06 (.01)
Indian	.02 (.01)	.02 (.01)	.01 (.00)
White*	.08 (.01)	.20 (.03) ^	.09 (.01) ▽
Employed	.23 (.02)	.29 (.04)	.26 (.02)
Not employed*	.59 (.02)	.53 (.04)	.60 (.03)
No schooling*	.05 (.01)	.04 (.02)	.04 (.01)
Primary School	.14 (.01)	.10 (.02)	.12 (.02)
Incomplete Secondary School	.37 (.02)	.38 (.04)	.42 (.03)
Matric	.32 (.02)	.38 (.04)	.36 (.03)
Tertiary Education	.12 (.02)	.10 (.03)	.07 (.01)

Source: 2018 South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) data

Notes: The data have been weighted to represent population statistics; standard errors are included in parentheses.

* Variables are omitted categories in the regression analysis.

** The “Religious” variable is a numeric variable that expresses the individuals subjective level of religion ranging from 0 (Not at all religious) to 10 (Very religious).

^ Significant difference (at the 95% level) with the first column (does not support the idea (pro-poor))

▽ Significant difference (at the 95% level) with the second column (neutral group)

The bivariate analysis conducted above cannot isolate the associations between characteristics and attitudes; some characteristics maybe intertwined – for example, more educated respondents are also likely to have higher socioeconomic status. For this reason, a multivariable analysis will be conducted. The section that follows presents two multivariable regressions. These regressions will provide more insights into the relationship between individual

characteristics and attitudes towards social policy. The findings from the regressions show whether a certain variable is statistically significant or not, but the information needed cannot be fully understood by looking at the estimated coefficients alone. Marginal effects must be computed to completely comprehend the variations between the various ordered response estimates.

Results from the Regression Analysis

Table 6 below, captures the results of the two regressions with different outcome variables, which each have three response options: regression 1's outcome variable captures satisfaction with the provision of grants and regression 2's outcome variable reflects attitudes to pro-government spending on the poor. The outcome variable for regression 1 is increasing in satisfaction, as the responses were recoded as 1 for "Dissatisfied with the Provision of Grants"; 2 for "Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied"; and 3 for "Satisfied with the Provision of Grants". A higher response indicates a higher level of satisfaction with the provision of social grants. The outcome variable for regression 2 is interpreted in the opposite manner. In this instance, a lower response means that the respondent is more pro-poor government spending, as the responses are coded as 1 for "Does not support the idea that less must be spent on benefits for the poor", 2 for "Neither agree or disagree" and 3 for "Supports the idea".

Table 6: Ordered Logit Regression Results

Outcome Variable:	Regression 1			Regression 2		
	Satisfaction with provision of grants			Pro-Government Spending on the poor		
	Coefficient	Standard Error	Sig	Coefficient	Standard Error	Sig
Female	-.372	.145	**	.126	.13	
Age	-.006	.005		.008	.004	*
With a partner	-.349	.147	**	-.075	.137	
Black African	.986	.2	***	-.355	.222	
Coloured	.479	.26	*	-.566	.265	**
Indian	.004	.269		-1.273	.304	***
Religious	.051	.026	*	-.087	.025	***
Employed	-.359	.158	**	.204	.154	
Socio-Economic Status: Poor	-.215	.255		-.828	.244	***
Socio-Economic Status: Middle Income Level	.093	.217		-.323	.212	
Primary School	-.25	.414		.184	.336	
Incomplete Secondary School	-.748	.386	*	.63	.319	**
Matric	-.55	.399		.525	.331	
Tertiary Education	-.035	.444		-.127	.367	
Western Cape	.052	.232		-.059	.242	
Eastern Cape	.301	.244		.901	.217	***
Northern Cape	.366	.274		.646	.23	***
Free State	.064	.275		.73	.247	***
KwaZulu-Natal	.437	.226	*	1.026	.227	***
North West	-.175	.24		1.189	.24	***
Mpumalanga	.495	.246	**	1.031	.232	***
Limpopo	1.409	.344	***	-.416	.252	*

	Regression 1			Regression 2		
Outcome Variable:	Satisfaction with provision of grants			Pro-Government Spending on the poor		
	Coefficient	Standard Error	Sig	Coefficient	Standard Error	Sig
cut1	-1.682	.543		.444	.507	
cut2	-.915	.548		1.022	.504	
Mean dependent var	2.538			1.692		
Number of obs	2562.000			2562.000		
SD dependent var	0.763			0.871		
F-test	6.084			6.855		

Source: 2018 South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) data

Notes: Weighted regression using Ireal1 from SASAS data

*** p<.01, ** p<.05, * p<.1

Regression 1 Results

The estimated coefficients for Regression 1 are reported in Table 6, while the average marginal effects are reported in Table 7 below. The marginal effects identify how the outcome variable (satisfaction with the provision of grants) differs when a specific characteristic variable changes, where characteristic variables are given in terms of gender, race, age, religion, marital status, level of educational attainment, province and socioeconomic status.

It can be seen that several variables are statistically significant, including one of the study's focal variables, the religious variable, although it is only weakly significant at the 10% level. In the multivariate context, the marginal effects at the 10% level of significance illustrate that an increase in subjective religiousness leads to an increase, by 0.9%, in the likelihood that the adult would be satisfied with the provision of social grants. This is different to what was found in Table 4 above, which finds no significant differences in the bivariate analysis with regards to religion.

Both of the variables that evaluated subjective socioeconomic status that were included in the regression were not significantly different from adults that subjectively identified as being within the high socioeconomic status category. This is similar to what was found in Table 4 above. However, this finding is different from Muuri (2010); Muuri found that Finnish individuals in the highest income decile believe that social security benefits are either appropriate or excessive.

Employed adults were more likely to be dissatisfied with the provision of social grants than not employed adults. It should be noted that unemployed and not employed are not the same thing within this study. Everyone who is not employed (where employed consists of full time and part time employment) is considered to be not unemployed – some adults are not economically active (not wanting to work) because they are for example, students, retired, ill, or full-time

homemakers. The marginal effects depict that employed adults, at the 10% level of significance, are more likely to be either neutral (2.1%) or dissatisfied with the provision of social grants (4.2%) compared to not employed adults. Similar results were observed by Muuri (2010) among Finnish adults, Muuri concluded that adults with lower labour market situations (ranging from low income earning employment to being unemployed) or those who are more dependent on the welfare state (such as retirees on pension) have the highest levels of positive feelings about the welfare state.

In general, adults who have more education are less satisfied with the provision of social grants than adults with no schooling, but Regression 1's results indicate that the relationship is only statistically significant for adults with incomplete secondary schooling. In terms of the marginal effects, adults that have an incomplete secondary school level of education are more likely (8.8%) to be dissatisfied with the provision of social grants than adults with no schooling. This is similar to what was found in Table 4 above: at higher levels of education (matric and tertiary level), adults are more likely to be neutral or dissatisfied with the provision of grants. This sentiment differs according to Muuri (2010), who concludes that university-educated adults in Finland are more appreciative of the provision of social welfare services than non-educated adults.

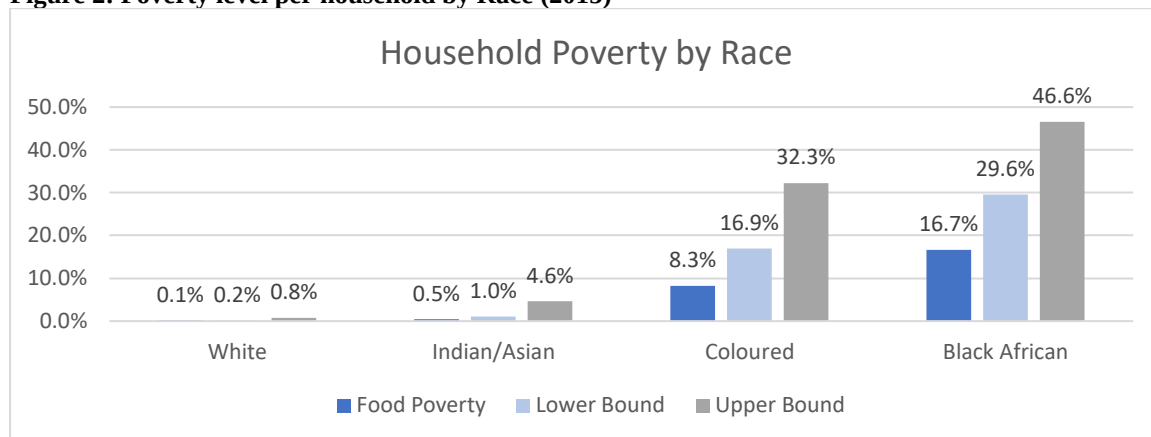
Gender is another important characteristic within the regression. Women are significantly less likely than men to report being satisfied with the provision of social grants. This is in contrast to the bivariate statistics presented in Table 4 above, where there were no significant differences in attitudes between women and men. In the multivariate context, women are 6.5% more likely to be dissatisfied with the provision of social grants than men. This finding is not similar to what was found in studies by Alesina and Glaeser (2009) and Muuri (2010), who argue that women support redistribution more than men do.

Adults without partners are more satisfied with the provision of grants. With regards to marginal effects at the 5% level of significance, adults with partners are 4.1% more likely to be dissatisfied with the provision of social grants compared to adults without partners.

From Table 6 it can be noted that attitudes towards the provision of social grants can be significantly influenced by race. Black African and Coloured adults are significantly more likely (17.2% and 8.4% respectively) to be satisfied with the provision of social grants than White adults. Looking at the national poverty lines by race may provide more insight. From

Figure 2 below, it can be seen that Black African and Coloured households are among the most poor. As a result, it could be that Black Africans and Coloureds are more likely to be recipients of grants and could have better perceptions of grants compared to White adults.

Figure 2: Poverty level per household by Race (2015)



Source: Stats SA (2018)

Notes:

The data used within the 2018 Stats SA report is based on Living Conditions Survey 2014/5 data.

The food poverty line (FPL) captures the adults that earn R441 or less per capita per month

The lower-bound poverty line (LBPL) encompasses adults that earn R647 or less per capita per month.

The upper-bound poverty line (UBPL) accounts for adults that earn R992 or less per capita per month.

Table 6 shows that attitudes towards the provision of social grants differ significantly across the provinces that the adults reside in. According to the marginal effects, adults from the KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and Limpopo provinces are 7.6%, 8.7%, and 24.6% respectively, more likely to be satisfied with the provision of social grants than adults from Gauteng.

Table 7: Attitudes to the provision of social grants: Average Marginal Effects

Delta-method						
	dy/dx	Std.Err.	t	P>t	[95%Conf.	Interval]
Female						
Dissatisfied with the Provision of Grants	0.044	0.017	2.550	0.011	0.010	0.077
Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	0.022	0.008	2.610	0.009	0.005	0.038
Satisfied with the Provision of Grants	-0.065	0.025	-2.600	0.009	-0.114	-0.016
Age						
Dissatisfied with the Provision of Grants	0.001	0.001	1.330	0.183	-0.000	0.002
Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	0.000	0.000	1.350	0.176	-0.000	0.001
Satisfied with the Provision of Grants	-0.001	0.001	-1.340	0.179	-0.003	0.000
With a Partner						
Dissatisfied with the Provision	0.041	0.017	2.340	0.019	0.007	0.075

Delta-method						
	dy/dx	Std.Err.	t	P>t	[95%Conf.	Interval]
of Grants						
Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	0.020	0.008	2.420	0.015	0.004	0.037
Satisfied with the Provision of Grants	-0.061	0.026	-2.390	0.017	-0.111	-0.011
Black African						
Dissatisfied with the Provision of Grants	-0.115	0.022	-5.350	0.000	-0.158	-0.073
Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	-0.057	0.013	-4.490	0.000	-0.082	-0.032
Satisfied with the Provision of Grants	0.172	0.033	5.250	0.000	0.108	0.237
Coloured						
Dissatisfied with the Provision of Grants	-0.056	0.030	-1.870	0.062	-0.115	0.003
Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	-0.028	0.015	-1.790	0.073	-0.058	0.003
Satisfied with the Provision of Grants	0.084	0.045	1.850	0.064	-0.005	0.173
Indian						
Dissatisfied with the Provision of Grants	-0.000	0.032	-0.010	0.989	-0.062	0.061
Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	-0.000	0.016	-0.010	0.989	-0.031	0.030
Satisfied with the Provision of Grants	0.001	0.047	0.010	0.989	-0.092	0.093
Religious						
Dissatisfied with the Provision of Grants	-0.006	0.003	-1.970	0.049	-0.012	-0.000
Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	-0.003	0.002	-1.930	0.054	-0.006	0.000
Satisfied with the Provision of Grants	0.009	0.005	1.970	0.049	0.000	0.018
Employed						
Dissatisfied with the Provision of Grants	0.042	0.018	2.290	0.022	0.006	0.078
Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	0.021	0.009	2.250	0.024	0.003	0.039
Satisfied with the Provision of Grants	-0.063	0.027	-2.300	0.022	-0.116	-0.009
Socio-Economic Status: Poor						
Dissatisfied with the Provision of Grants	0.025	0.030	0.840	0.399	-0.033	0.084
Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	0.012	0.015	0.840	0.401	-0.017	0.041
Satisfied with the Provision of Grants	-0.038	0.045	-0.840	0.399	-0.125	0.050
Socio-Economic Status: Middle Income Level						
Dissatisfied with the Provision of Grants	-0.011	0.025	-0.430	0.670	-0.061	0.039
Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	-0.005	0.013	-0.430	0.669	-0.030	0.019
Satisfied with the Provision of Grants	0.016	0.038	0.430	0.669	-0.058	0.091
Primary School						
Dissatisfied with the Provision of Grants	0.029	0.049	0.600	0.547	-0.066	0.125
Neither Satisfied or	0.014	0.024	0.600	0.546	-0.032	0.061

Delta-method						
	dy/dx	Std.Err.	t	P>t	[95%Conf.	Interval]
Dissatisfied						
Satisfied with the Provision of Grants	-0.044	0.072	-0.600	0.546	-0.186	0.098
Incomplete Secondary School						
Dissatisfied with the Provision of Grants	0.088	0.046	1.920	0.055	-0.002	0.177
Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	0.043	0.022	1.930	0.053	-0.001	0.087
Satisfied with the Provision of Grants	-0.131	0.068	-1.940	0.053	-0.263	0.002
Matric						
Dissatisfied with the Provision of Grants	0.064	0.047	1.360	0.173	-0.028	0.157
Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	0.032	0.023	1.380	0.169	-0.013	0.077
Satisfied with the Provision of Grants	-0.096	0.070	-1.370	0.170	-0.233	0.041
Tertiary Education						
Dissatisfied with the Provision of Grants	0.004	0.052	0.080	0.937	-0.098	0.106
Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	0.002	0.026	0.080	0.937	-0.048	0.052
Satisfied with the Provision of Grants	-0.006	0.078	-0.080	0.937	-0.158	0.146
Western Cape						
Dissatisfied with the Provision of Grants	-0.006	0.027	-0.220	0.822	-0.059	0.047
Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	-0.003	0.013	-0.220	0.822	-0.029	0.023
Satisfied with the Provision of Grants	0.009	0.041	0.220	0.822	-0.070	0.089
Eastern Cape						
Dissatisfied with the Provision of Grants	-0.035	0.029	-1.220	0.221	-0.092	0.021
Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	-0.017	0.014	-1.230	0.218	-0.045	0.010
Satisfied with the Provision of Grants	0.053	0.043	1.230	0.219	-0.031	0.136
Northern Cape						
Dissatisfied with the Provision of Grants	-0.043	0.033	-1.320	0.188	-0.107	0.021
Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	-0.021	0.016	-1.340	0.181	-0.052	0.010
Satisfied with the Provision of Grants	0.064	0.048	1.330	0.184	-0.031	0.159
Free State						
Dissatisfied with the Provision of Grants	-0.007	0.032	-0.230	0.816	-0.071	0.056
Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	-0.004	0.016	-0.230	0.816	-0.035	0.028
Satisfied with the Provision of Grants	0.011	0.048	0.230	0.816	-0.083	0.106
KwaZulu-Natal						
Dissatisfied with the Provision of Grants	-0.051	0.027	-1.920	0.054	-0.103	0.001
Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	-0.025	0.013	-1.910	0.056	-0.051	0.001
Satisfied with the Provision of Grants	0.076	0.040	1.930	0.053	-0.001	0.154

Delta-method						
	dy/dx	Std.Err.	t	P>t	[95%Conf.	Interval]
North West						
Dissatisfied with the Provision of Grants	0.020	0.028	0.730	0.463	-0.034	0.075
Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	0.010	0.014	0.730	0.468	-0.017	0.037
Satisfied with the Provision of Grants	-0.031	0.042	-0.730	0.464	-0.112	0.051
Mpumalanga						
Dissatisfied with the Provision of Grants	-0.058	0.030	-1.950	0.051	-0.116	0.000
Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	-0.029	0.014	-2.020	0.044	-0.056	-0.001
Satisfied with the Provision of Grants	0.087	0.044	1.980	0.047	0.001	0.172
Limpopo						
Dissatisfied with the Provision of Grants	-0.165	0.042	-3.940	0.000	-0.247	-0.083
Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	-0.082	0.021	-3.920	0.000	-0.122	-0.041
Satisfied with the Provision of Grants	0.246	0.061	4.050	0.000	0.127	0.366

Source: 2018 South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) data

Notes:

Number of strata = 1
 Number of PSUs = 2,562
 Population size = 29,758,319
 Model VCE: Linearized
 Design df = 2,561
 Number of obs = 2,562

Regression 2 Results

The previous section looked at the attitudes collected on the satisfaction with the provision of social grants. However, the challenge faced in the interpretation is that people can be dissatisfied with the provision of grants either because they think that the government is spending too much or too little on social grants. The attitudinal variable to be analysed in the following multivariate context is more explicit in capturing the attitudes held by adults towards spending on the poor. The estimated coefficients for Regression 2 are reported in Table 6; while Table 8 below, shows the average marginal effects which identify how the outcome variable (government spending on the poor) differs when a unit of each specific characteristic variable changes.

As subjective religiousness increases, the likelihood of being pro-poor (do not support the idea that less should be spent on the poor) increases significantly. With regards to marginal effects, at the 1% level of significance, a one unit increase in subjective religiousness increases the likelihood that adults will not support the idea that the government should spend less on the poor by 1.9%. As mentioned previously, Alesina and Glaeser (2009) concluded that a religious

upbringing enhances redistribution preferences. In this study, both satisfaction with the provision of social grants in South Africa and support for pro-poor spending are significantly higher among adults who report higher levels of religiousness.

In the multivariate context, adults that subjectively identify as being poor are 17.7% more likely to support pro-poor spending than adults that identify as being wealthy. This result is comparable to studies by Dalen (2021) and Alesina and Glaeser (2009), who concluded that in connection to socioeconomic level, low-status groups were more inclined to favour government responsibility as the provider of basic social welfare than high-status groups. In this study, an adult's socioeconomic status has no significant association with their satisfaction with the provision of social grants, but it is associated with pro-poor spending. This suggests that poorer adults are less concerned by how the grants are provided, as long as they are not reduced or stopped.

Although employed adults were statistically more likely to be dissatisfied with the provision of grants than not employed adults, no significant association was made between employment status and pro-poor government spending.

Table 6 indicates that as an adult's educational attainment increases their support for pro-poor spending declines. According to the marginal effects, adults that have not completed their secondary school education are 11.5% (at a 10% level) more likely to support the idea that the government should spend less on the poor compared to adults with no schooling. In this study, adults that have incomplete secondary school education are significantly less satisfied than those with no schooling, with the provision of grants and are also significantly more likely to not support pro-poor spending.

This finding (of less support for redistribution as education increases) is supported by Alesina and Glaeser (2009) who conclude that redistribution is less popular with people who have higher education. However, Matthews and Erickson (2008) (who look at a sample from Canada), and Muuri (2010) (who looked at a Finnish sample) do not agree that there is less support for redistribution as education increases, Matthews and Erickson conclude that having less than a high school education has little or no impact on the attitudes held with regards to government spending habits. Conversely, Muuri (2010) concludes that university-educated adults are more appreciative of the amount of benefits provided by social security than non-educated adults.

While women report being significantly less satisfied with the provision of grants than men, no statistical association was found between women and pro-poor government spending.

Coloured and Indian adults are 12.1% and 27.2% respectively more likely to be pro-poor government spending than White adults. In this study, Black African and Coloured adults are significantly more satisfied with the provision of grants, while Coloured and Indians are significantly more likely to be pro-poor compared to White adults. Alesina and Glaeser (2009) have similar findings, where they conclude that race has a significant impact on redistribution preferences and support, with Black adults significantly more in favour of redistribution than White adults.

While there was no significant association between age and satisfaction with the provision of social grants, an increase in age is associated with a decrease in the likelihood of being pro-poor. At the 10% level of significance, getting older by one year leads to a decrease (.2%) in the likelihood of an adult being pro-poor, compared to younger adults. According to Van Oorschot (2006), older adults and those with less education may be viewed as being in more precarious social positions and may therefore be more sceptical when allocating support that they themselves may require in the future.

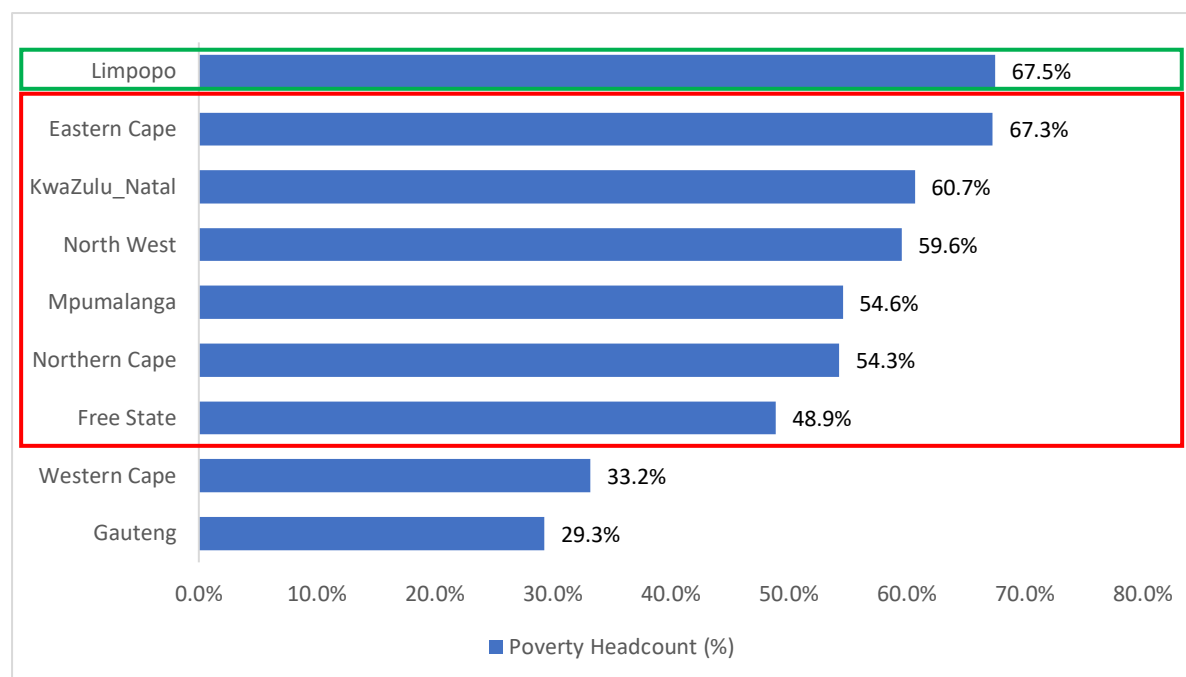
With regards to the marginal effects, adults from Northern Cape, Free State, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and North West are 13.8%, 15.6%, 19.3%, 22%, 22.1% and 25.5% respectively, less likely to support pro-poor spending, compared to adults from Gauteng. In this study, adults from Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal or Mpumalanga are significantly more satisfied with the provision of grants than those that come from Gauteng, while adults from Northern Cape, Free State, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and North West are significantly against pro-poor spending. Bailey *et. al.* (2013), conclude that neighbourhood deprivation/poverty increases support for redistribution; the only province that matches this conclusion is Limpopo, albeit it weakly significant at the 10% level.

Considering the poverty level of the aforementioned provinces, see

Figure 3, the finding that adults from these provinces are more likely to support the idea that less should be spent on the poor does not align with the findings, mentioned previously, from

the study by Alesina and Glaeser (2009), who found that adults tend to be less in favour of redistribution as their wealth increased.

Figure 3: Upper Bound Poverty by Province (2015)



Source: Stats SA (2018)

Notes:

The data used within the 2018 Stats SA report is based on Living Conditions Survey 2014/5 data.

The upper-bound poverty line (UBPL) accounts for adults that earn R992 per capita per month.

Limitation: Only the UBPL statistics was split by province and presented in the StatsSA report.

Table 8: Attitudes towards the idea that government should spend less on benefits for the poor: Average Marginal Effects

Delta-method						
	dy/dx	Std.Err.	t	P>t	[95%Conf.	Interval]
Female						
Doesn't support the idea that less must be spent on benefits for the poor	-0.027	0.028	-0.970	0.333	-0.081	0.028
Neither agree or disagree	0.004	0.004	0.960	0.336	-0.004	0.012
Supports the idea	0.023	0.024	0.970	0.334	-0.024	0.070
Age						
Doesn't support the idea that less must be spent on benefits for the poor	-0.002	0.001	-1.720	0.086	-0.003	0.000
Neither agree or disagree	0.000	0.000	1.670	0.095	-0.000	0.001
Supports the idea	0.001	0.001	1.720	0.086	-0.000	0.003
With a Partner						
Doesn't support the idea that less must be spent on benefits for the poor	0.016	0.029	0.550	0.585	-0.041	0.073
Neither agree or disagree	-0.002	0.004	-0.550	0.584	-0.011	0.006
Supports the idea	-0.014	0.025	-0.550	0.586	-0.063	0.036

Delta-method						
	dy/dx	Std.Err.	t	P>t	[95%Conf.	Interval]
Black African						
Doesn't support the idea that less must be spent on benefits for the poor	0.076	0.047	1.610	0.106	-0.016	0.168
Neither agree or disagree	-0.011	0.007	-1.560	0.119	-0.025	0.003
Supports the idea	-0.065	0.040	-1.620	0.105	-0.144	0.014
Coloured						
Doesn't support the idea that less must be spent on benefits for the poor	0.121	0.056	2.150	0.031	0.011	0.231
Neither agree or disagree	-0.018	0.008	-2.090	0.036	-0.034	-0.001
Supports the idea	-0.104	0.048	-2.150	0.031	-0.198	-0.009
Indian						
Doesn't support the idea that less must be spent on benefits for the poor	0.272	0.064	4.270	0.000	0.147	0.398
Neither agree or disagree	-0.039	0.010	-4.130	0.000	-0.058	-0.021
Supports the idea	-0.233	0.055	-4.200	0.000	-0.342	-0.124
Religious						
Doesn't support the idea that less must be spent on benefits for the poor	0.019	0.005	3.590	0.000	0.008	0.029
Neither agree or disagree	-0.003	0.001	-3.200	0.001	-0.004	-0.001
Supports the idea	-0.016	0.004	-3.620	0.000	-0.024	-0.007
Employed						
Doesn't support the idea that less must be spent on benefits for the poor	-0.044	0.033	-1.330	0.185	-0.108	0.021
Neither agree or disagree	0.006	0.005	1.310	0.192	-0.003	0.016
Supports the idea	0.037	0.028	1.330	0.184	-0.018	0.092
Socio-Economic Status: Poor						
Doesn't support the idea that less must be spent on benefits for the poor	0.177	0.052	3.440	0.001	0.076	0.279
Neither agree or disagree	-0.026	0.008	-3.330	0.001	-0.041	-0.011
Supports the idea	-0.152	0.045	-3.410	0.001	-0.239	-0.064
Socio-Economic Status: Middle Income Level						
Doesn't support the idea that less must be spent on benefits for the poor	0.069	0.045	1.530	0.127	-0.020	0.158
Neither agree or disagree	-0.010	0.007	-1.520	0.128	-0.023	0.003
Supports the idea	-0.059	0.039	-1.520	0.128	-0.135	0.017
Primary School						
Doesn't support the idea that less must be spent on benefits for the poor	-0.039	0.072	-0.550	0.584	-0.180	0.102
Neither agree or disagree	0.006	0.010	0.550	0.583	-0.015	0.026
Supports the idea	0.034	0.062	0.550	0.584	-0.087	0.154
Incomplete Secondary School						
Doesn't support the idea that less must be spent on benefits for the poor	-0.135	0.068	-1.980	0.048	-0.268	-0.001
Neither agree or disagree	0.020	0.010	1.960	0.050	-0.000	0.039
Supports the idea	0.115	0.058	1.970	0.049	0.001	0.230
Matric						
Doesn't support the idea that less must be spent on benefits for the poor	-0.112	0.071	-1.590	0.111	-0.251	0.026

Delta-method						
	dy/dx	Std.Err.	t	P>t	[95%Conf.	Interval]
Neither agree or disagree	0.016	0.010	1.590	0.113	-0.004	0.036
Supports the idea	0.096	0.060	1.590	0.112	-0.022	0.215
Tertiary Education						
Doesn't support the idea that less must be spent on benefits for the poor	0.027	0.079	0.350	0.728	-0.127	0.181
Neither agree or disagree	-0.004	0.011	-0.350	0.728	-0.026	0.018
Supports the idea	-0.023	0.067	-0.350	0.728	-0.155	0.108
Western Cape						
Doesn't support the idea that less must be spent on benefits for the poor	0.013	0.052	0.240	0.807	-0.089	0.115
Neither agree or disagree	-0.002	0.008	-0.250	0.806	-0.017	0.013
Supports the idea	-0.011	0.044	-0.240	0.807	-0.098	0.076
Eastern Cape						
Doesn't support the idea that less must be spent on benefits for the poor	-0.193	0.044	-4.340	0.000	-0.280	-0.106
Neither agree or disagree	0.028	0.007	3.770	0.000	0.013	0.042
Supports the idea	0.165	0.038	4.360	0.000	0.091	0.239
Northern Cape						
Doesn't support the idea that less must be spent on benefits for the poor	-0.138	0.048	-2.880	0.004	-0.233	-0.044
Neither agree or disagree	0.020	0.008	2.590	0.010	0.005	0.035
Supports the idea	0.118	0.041	2.900	0.004	0.038	0.198
Free State						
Doesn't support the idea that less must be spent on benefits for the poor	-0.156	0.052	-3.030	0.002	-0.257	-0.055
Neither agree or disagree	0.023	0.008	2.760	0.006	0.007	0.039
Supports the idea	0.134	0.044	3.050	0.002	0.048	0.220
KwaZulu-Natal						
Doesn't support the idea that less must be spent on benefits for the poor	-0.220	0.046	-4.760	0.000	-0.310	-0.129
Neither agree or disagree	0.032	0.007	4.370	0.000	0.018	0.046
Supports the idea	0.188	0.040	4.710	0.000	0.110	0.266
North West						
Doesn't support the idea that less must be spent on benefits for the poor	-0.255	0.049	-5.230	0.000	-0.350	-0.159
Neither agree or disagree	0.037	0.009	4.310	0.000	0.020	0.054
Supports the idea	0.218	0.041	5.260	0.000	0.137	0.299
Mpumalanga						
Doesn't support the idea that less must be spent on benefits for the poor	-0.221	0.047	-4.660	0.000	-0.314	-0.128
Neither agree or disagree	0.032	0.008	3.980	0.000	0.016	0.048
Supports the idea	0.189	0.040	4.680	0.000	0.110	0.268
Limpopo						
Doesn't support the idea that less must be spent on benefits for the poor	0.089	0.055	1.630	0.103	-0.018	0.196
Neither agree or disagree	-0.013	0.008	-1.670	0.095	-0.028	0.002
Supports the idea	-0.076	0.047	-1.620	0.105	-0.168	0.016

Source: 2018 South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) data

Notes:

Number of strata = 1
 Number of PSUs = 2,562
 Population size = 29,758,319
 Model VCE: Linearized
 Design df = 2,561
 Number of obs = 2,562

Discussion and Conclusion

The South African literature on the factors that influence attitudes towards social welfare is rather scarce. The majority of studies on the topic of social welfare in South Africa focus on the use and benefits of social transfers rather than attitudes toward the spending and provision of social welfare programs. This study aims to fill this gap in literature by providing insight into characteristics that shape attitudes towards redistributive preferences in South Africa. The two focal characteristic variables in the study are religion (how religious a respondent perceives themselves to be) and socioeconomic status (how wealthy or poor a respondent feels they are).

The study has two main hypotheses relating to how religiosity and economic status are correlated with attitudes to social welfare:

- 1) If religiosity promotes greater prosocial behaviour, there should be a positive correlation between religiosity and people's opinions of social welfare and spending on the poor in South Africa (Malka *et al.*, 2011).
- 2) People who are poorer are anticipated to support social welfare more than those who are affluent because they are more inclined to view the poor as deserving of government assistance. However, they might not be satisfied with how the government actually distributes social grants.

Focusing on religiosity, the study found that although this is only weakly significant at the 10% level, religiosity increases the likelihood that an adult would be satisfied with the provision of social grants. Religion also significantly (at the 1% level) increases the likelihood of being pro-poor. Thus, the first hypothesis can be accepted and it can be concluded that in South Africa, religiosity may promote greater pro-social behaviour. This conclusion is very much in line with the literature on religion and attitudes towards social welfare (Arikan and Bloom, 2019; Stegmüller *et al.*, 2012; Malka *et al.*, 2011; Alesina and Glaeser, 2009; Gill and Lundsgaarde 2004).

Looking at subjective socioeconomic status, it was found that it did not significantly increase or decrease adults' attitudes towards the provision of social grants. However, adults that subjectively identify as being poor were more likely to support pro-poor spending than adults that identify as being wealthy.

This finding is very much consistent with what has been found in other literature (Pedulla and Donnelly, 2020; Alesina and Glaeser, 2009; Matthews and Erickson, 2008; Johnson, 2001). Therefore, the second hypothesis can be accepted, and it can be concluded that the poor support social welfare more than those who are affluent in South Africa. However, the poor are no different from those that are affluent when it comes to satisfaction with provision of social grants.

Two other variables that are important in the study are education and employment as they form part of economic status. This study finds that adults that have an incomplete secondary school level of education are more likely to be dissatisfied with the provision of social grants than adults with no schooling. Furthermore, adults that have not completed their secondary school education are more likely to support the idea that the government should spend less on the poor compared to adults with no schooling. This finding is somewhat consistent with Emilsson (2022) and Alesina and Glaeser (2009), who conclude that redistribution is less popular with people who have higher education, but it is only true for adults that have incomplete secondary school education compared to adults with no schooling. The finding is not consistent with Matthews and Erickson (2008) and Muuri (2010). Matthews and Erickson (2008) conclude that having less than a high school education has little or no impact on the attitudes held with regards to government spending habits. Conversely, Muuri (2010) concludes that university-educated adults are more appreciative of the amount of benefits provided by social security than non-educated adults.

This study finds that while employed adults were more likely to be dissatisfied with the provision of social grants than not employed adults, there was no significant association made between employment status and pro-poor government spending. Similar results (increased dissatisfaction with the provision of social welfare among employed adults) were observed by Muuri (2010). Muuri (2010) concluded that adults with lower labour market situations (ranging from low income earning employment to being unemployed) or those who are more dependent on the welfare state (such as retirees on pension) have the highest levels of positive feelings about the welfare state.

Overall, higher levels of satisfaction with the provision of social grants are correlated with Black African and Coloured adults, adults with higher levels of religiousness and adults that reside in Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal or Mpumalanga. Lower levels of satisfaction with the provision of social grants are correlated with adults that have incomplete secondary school education, employed adults, and female adults.

Greater support for pro-poor spending is found among adults that identify as being poor, are either Coloured or Indian, or reside in Limpopo. The study finds that less support for pro-poor spending can be found among adults that have incomplete secondary school education, older adults, or adults that reside in Northern Cape, Free State, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and North West.

Thus, the overlapping findings are that both satisfaction with the provision of social grants and support for pro-poor spending are significantly higher among adults who report higher levels of religiousness and adults that are Coloured. Dissatisfaction with the provision of social grants and less support for pro-poor spending are significantly higher among adults with incomplete secondary school education.

While considering the results of the study, caution needs to be taken as there are a number of limitations associated with the data. Firstly, the taxation data in the SASAS data was not available; thus the impact that taxation has on attitudes towards the provision of social grants and spending on the poor is not considered. This data would have been useful to further explain attitudes towards social welfare. Bullock (2021: 1243) suggests that “perhaps high- and low-education respondents give different answers to questions about redistribution because they make different inferences about the tax implications of redistributive policies”. The study by Surender *et al.* (2010) which used the SASAS 2006 data, found that in South Africa, there was broad agreement that the government should increase spending on existing social assistance programs for the poor, even if it meant raising taxes; and despite the fact that the 'non-poor' group was slightly less willing to endorse the notion, 59% agreed, and around 63% of individuals who were currently working approved. Had the data for taxation been available, it would have been interesting to see if the same attitudes persevere with the latest data.

Secondly, religious denomination is not included in this study. When religious denomination is considered, the data sample is reduced significantly (by over 700) and largely distorts the data.

Lastly, as mentioned previously, the parallel line assumption was violated for both outcome variables – thus, the limitation is that the categories of the outcome variables may not be equally spaced across respondents. These limitations could contribute to the contrasting results found within this study and studies done in other countries on the same outcome variables.

To address the aforementioned limitations, future studies exploring attitudes towards social welfare can benefit from expanding the sample size and incorporating additional data, such as taxation data and religious denominations. Another promising avenue for research involves collecting longitudinal data over multiple years to assess how these attitudes towards social welfare have evolved over time. Furthermore, investigating the impact of different structures of social grants on preferences for redistribution could be an alternative approach, particularly when more recent data becomes available. Social grants can be categorized as either universal grants, like the SRD grant, or selective grants based on needs, such as the Old Age Pension (OAP) and Child Support Grant (CSG). Evaluating the influence of grant structures on attitudes can provide valuable insights into public sentiments regarding redistribution.

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