

Labour force participation rate

The labour force participation rate shows the proportion (in percentages) of the economically active population, i.e. employed people and those unemployed (expanded definition), of the total population under consideration. In other words, it is the sum of the employed and the unemployed, expressed as a percentage of the total (including the 'not economically active').

Figures from Census '96 show that the labour force participation rate was lowest for African youth (47,8%) followed by Indian (59,0%), white (63,6%) and coloured youth (64,4%).

As seen in Table 5.3, the overall labour force participation rate for the youth is lower than in the 36-65 age group. This discrepancy is particularly apparent in the African group, where the labour participation rate for youth is 47,8% and for older Africans is 65,3%. However the rates for coloured and Indian youth (64,4% and 59,0% respectively) are higher than for their older counterparts (61,4% and 56,6% respectively).

Table 5.3: Labour market rates of those aged 15-35 years, 36-65 years and 15-65 years by population group

	Labour force participation rate			Labour absorption rate			Unemployment rate		
	15-35 yrs	36-65 yrs	15-65 yrs	15-35 yrs	36-65 yrs	15-65 yrs	15-35 yrs	36-65 yrs	15-65 yrs
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
African	47,8	65,3	54,0	23,8	44,2	31,0	50,2	32,3	42,5
Coloured	64,4	61,4	63,2	48,2	52,7	50,0	25,1	14,1	20,9
Indian	59,0	56,6	57,9	50,2	51,7	50,9	14,9	8,6	12,2
White	63,6	65,6	64,6	60,0	63,2	61,7	5,7	3,5	4,6
Total	51,2	64,7	56,3	30,2	48,5	37,2	40,9	25,0	34,0

Table 5.4 gives the breakdowns by province. Northern Province had the lowest labour force participation rate among youth (34,4%) followed by Eastern Cape (39,4%). Western Cape (64,2%) and Gauteng (64,8%) had the highest. As regards people aged 36-65 years, Eastern Cape had the lowest labour force participation rate (53,0%) followed by Northern Province (56,1%).

Table 5.4: Labour market rates of those aged 15-35 years, 36-65 years and 15-65 years by province

	Labour force participation rate			Labour absorption rate			Unemployment rate		
	15-35 yrs	36-65 yrs	15-65 yrs	15-35 yrs	36-65 yrs	15-65 yrs	15-35 yrs	36-65 yrs	15-65 yrs
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
W. Cape	64,2	65,8	64,9	49,8	58,1	53,2	22,5	11,7	18,0
E. Cape	39,4	53,0	44,6	17,5	31,7	22,9	55,7	40,2	48,6
N. Cape	58,4	59,6	58,9	37,6	48,6	42,1	35,8	18,5	28,5
F. State	52,3	71,9	60,0	32,7	56,3	42,0	37,4	21,6	30,0
KZN	48,6	58,3	52,1	25,7	42,1	31,7	47,1	27,7	39,1
N. West	51,2	67,3	57,3	27,6	48,6	35,5	46,0	27,9	38,0
Gauteng	64,8	77,1	69,8	42,0	62,0	50,1	35,2	19,6	28,2
Mpumalanga	48,2	67,6	55,1	28,8	51,7	37,0	40,2	23,5	32,9
N. Prov	34,4	56,1	41,7	16,0	35,3	22,5	53,4	37,0	46,0
S. Africa	51,2	64,7	56,3	30,2	48,5	37,2	40,9	25,0	34,0

The labour absorption rate

The labour absorption rate gives a measurement in percentages of the proportion of employed people out of the total population under consideration.

In Census '96 proportionately fewer African youth indicated that they were employed than youth in other population groups. The labour absorption rate for African youth was (23,8%) followed by coloured (48,2%), Indian (50,2%) and white youth (60,0%).

The labour absorption rate for the youth in all population groups was lower than that of people aged between 36 and 65 years (see Table 5.4). The discrepancy in this regard is widest among Africans (23,8% for the youth as opposed to 44,2% for the older working population).

Comparing the provinces, Northern Province with 16,0% and Eastern Cape with 17,5% had the lowest labour absorption rate among the youth, while Gauteng with 42,0% and Western Cape with 49,8% had the highest. The labour absorption rate for youth in the country as a whole was 30,2%.

Table 5.4 shows that the labour absorption rates for youth was lower than for people in the 36-65 age group in each of the nine provinces.

Youth employment in South Africa by industry

The distribution by industry of employed youth aged 15-35 years and the employed aged 36-65 is shown in Figure 5.3.

The highest proportion of jobs held by both the youth (19,6%) and those aged 36-65 (19,7%) was in community, social and personal services. These included jobs in the civil service.

The second largest proportion of jobs held by employed youth was in trade (15,3%) followed by manufacturing (14,2%) and agriculture (11,0%).

However, for those aged 36-65 years, the private household industry provided the second largest proportion of jobs (15,4%), followed by manufacturing (13,6%) and trade (12,1%).

Figure 5.3: Employed people aged 15 to 35 years and 36 to 65 years in South Africa by industry

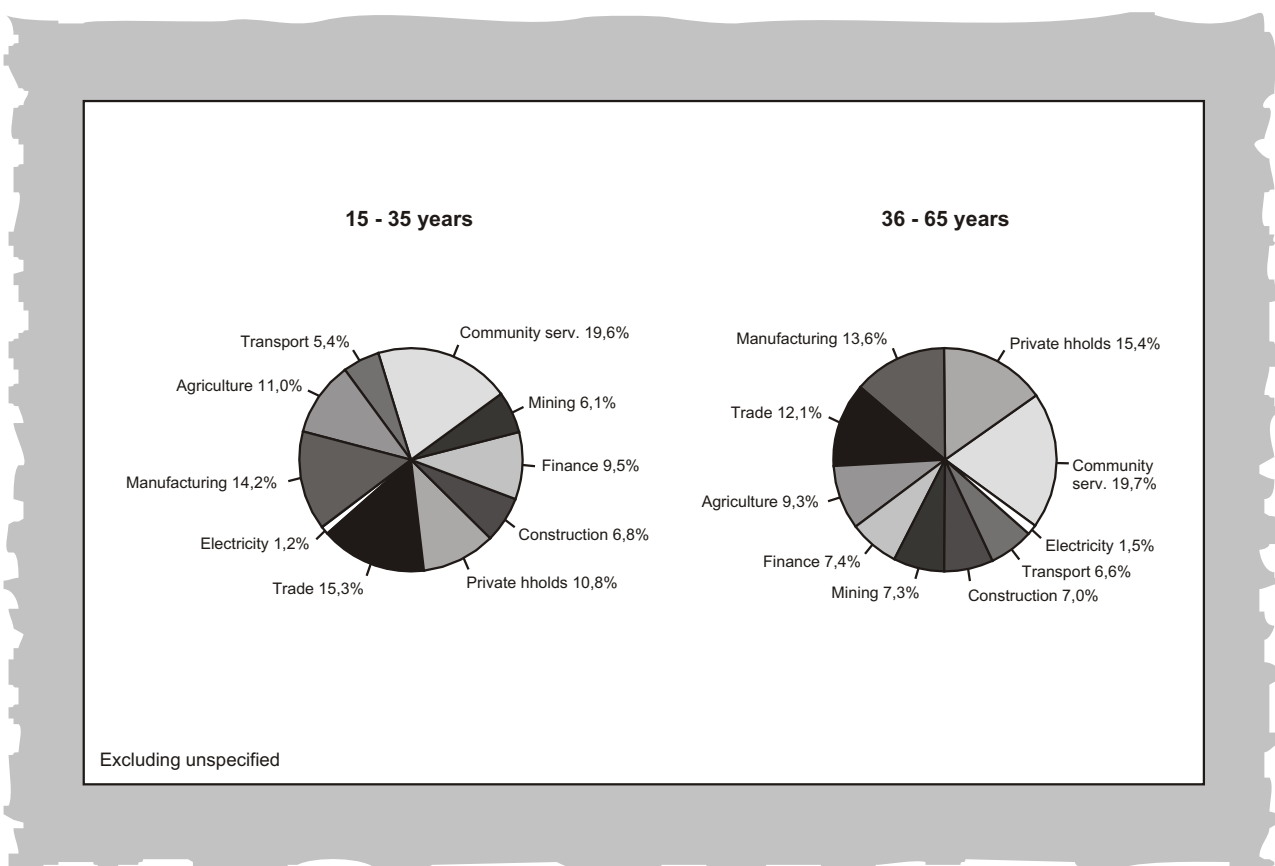
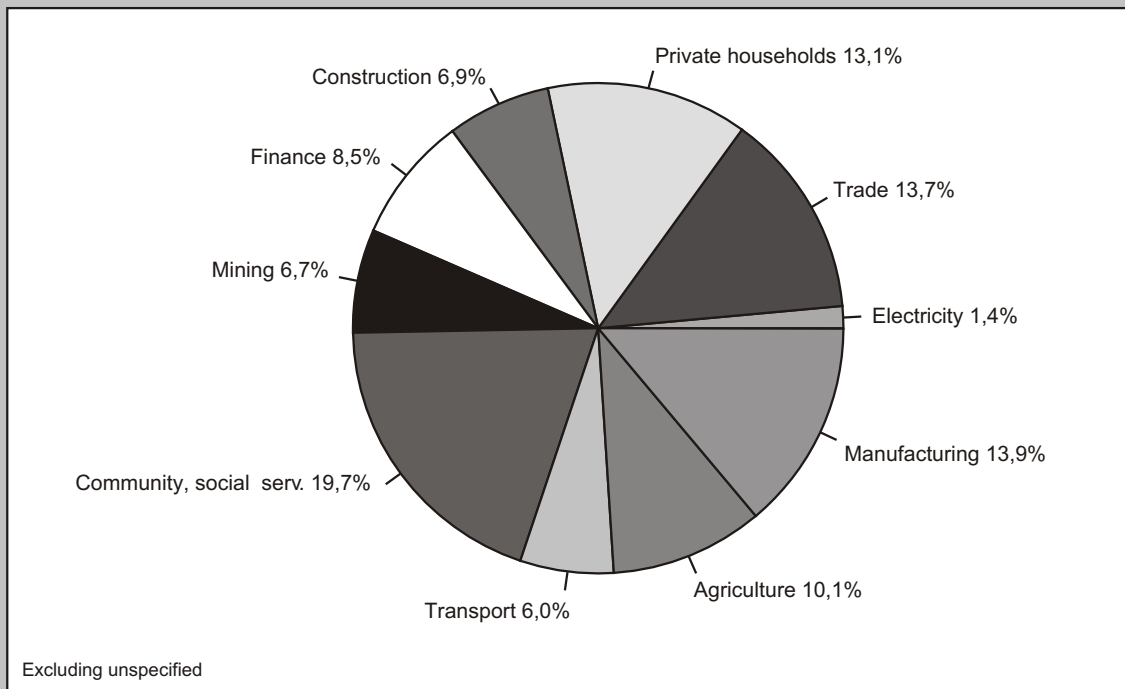


Figure 5.4: All the employed people in South Africa (aged 15-65 years) by industry



The national picture of job distribution by industry for all employed people aged 15-65 years, as shown in Figure 5.4, resembles that of the youth. It can be seen however that the proportion of jobs in manufacturing and trade is on the increase whilst that in private households is on the decrease.

The next two figures reveal the gender bias in job distribution for both groups of the employed – the youth and the older group. Certain types of industries tend to employ proportionately more males, while others employ proportionately more females.

Figure 5.5: The employed youth in South Africa by industry and sex

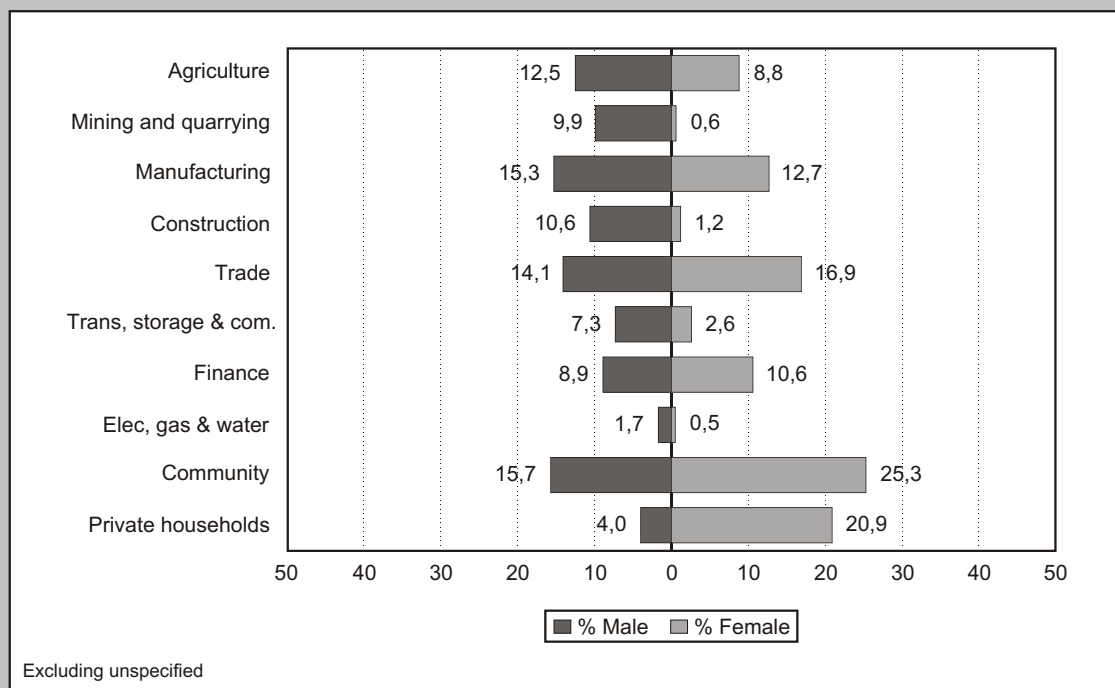


Figure 5.5 shows that the largest group of employed young females (aged 15-35) worked in community, social and personal services (25,3%), followed by private households (20,9%), and trade (16,9%).

Young males were more evenly spread between community, social and personal services (15,7%), manufacturing (15,3%) and trade (14,1%).

When these patterns are compared to those shown for the employed aged 36-65 years (Figure 5.6), however, it can be seen that young females have started to move away from jobs in private households and community, social and personal services in favour of other industries. While in 1996, 31,9% of females aged 36-65 years were working in private households, this proportion decreases to 20,8% among younger females. Jobs in community, social and personal services also decreases from 27,3% among females aged 36-65 years to 25,3% among females aged 15-35 years.

On the other hand, industries that attracted more young females than those aged 36-65 years include trade (16,9% among female youth and 12,6% among the 36-65 age group), finance (10,6% among young females and 7,3% among the 36-65 years age group), and agriculture (8,8% for young females and 6,1% among females aged 36-65 years).