

THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF EMPLOYMENT FLEXIBILITY AMONG ARTISANS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN ECONOMY

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Introduction

Studies on the nature and extent of employment flexibility, in response to global competitive pressures, often focus on the more marginalised and vulnerable groups in the labour market, including lower skilled workers, women and youth. However, this paper seeks to assess trends in the nature and extent of employment flexibility among more skilled workers, specifically skilled artisans in the South African economy. This happens against a background where the effects of globalisation on the world of work and a drive for increased labour market flexibility have become more endemic and the notion of a 'job for life' is being challenged, as more workers are subject to atypical or non-standard forms of employment (NSFE).

An analysis of the extent to which labour market segmentation is evident further up the skills ladder is becoming more important, as firms seek increased competitiveness through cost-cutting, technology and other measures. This study is based on a descriptive analysis of employment statistics for 2002 – 2013 in the South African economy. This paper starts off with an overview of the key literature on employment flexibility, the methodological approach, the main research findings, a discussion of the findings and the main conclusions.

Methodology

A descriptive analysis of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) for 2002-2007 and the Quarterly Labour Force (QLFS) survey for 2008-2013 was conducted, based on third-quarter (September) results. These are official statistics collected by the official statistical agency for South Africa, Statistics South Africa (StatsSA).

Scope and limitation of the data

The LFS is a rotating panel household survey and was conducted on a bi-annual basis for 2000-2007. The QLFS is also a rotating panel household survey, but conducted every quarter from 2008 onwards. Borat *et al* (2013), in their analysis of labour market trends over a similar period, note that the LFS and QLFS were also significantly different from each other in “methodological and definitional terms”. Budlender (2011:1) in assessing informal employment trends argues that the QLFS questionnaire was ‘re-engineered’, as previous questions were taken out, others were added and other questions were “[re-]formulated”. These changes in definitional terms also affected the current analysis of work status, based on changes from the LFS to the QLFS.

There was a redefinition of the question on the nature of the contract between employers and employees over the two (2) surveys. Thus, in the LFS (2002-2007), the nature of work was framed as follows:

“4.6 Is[respondent’s] work

1=Permanent

2=a fixed period contract

3=Temporary

4=Casual

5=Seasonal

6=Don’t know”

In contrast, the QLFS (2008 – 2013) reframed the same question to read as follows:

“4.12 Is the contract/agreement of a

1= Limited duration

2= Permanent nature

3= Unspecified duration”

Clarification was sought from StatsSA as to how these questions were interpreted in the field, as a number of anomalies appeared in the results (see StatsSA, personal communication, 2015).

Firstly, the number of answer categories was reduced from six (6) to three (3). Secondly, whereas the LFS asked a disaggregated question on non-standard or non-permanent forms of employment, the QLFS tended to aggregate answers on non-permanent forms of employment. Thirdly, in its explanatory notes to fieldworkers, StatsSA advised that under the QLFS, “unspecified duration” may include “a contract/agreement that does not specify the duration for which he/she will be employed”. However, this interpretation is confusing, and as argued by Budlender (2013:22) the “unspecified” option is similar to that of an open-ended or permanent contract/agreement. In fact, the StatsSA definition of contracts of a “permanent nature” is defined as a “contract/agreement for the rest of their life or until the company closes’. In practice though, a contract of a permanent nature is one where no end-date is specified. Also, the ILO defines a permanent job as one with an “indefinite contract” or where the standard employment relationship applies (2015: 4).

A comparison of the data showed that the “unspecified duration” category under QLFS showed significant increases from 2007 onwards, compared to previous years. Thus, prior to 2007, the numbers in this category were insignificant, but in the years since 2007, the number of “unspecified duration” approximated that for those who were on contracts of a limited duration. On further analysis, and as suggested by Budlender (2013:22), most of the respondents under the “unspecified duration” category reported having verbal agreements, and not have written contracts, as required by law. Thus, about 72.3 per cent of these artisans reported that they had verbal agreements.

Given these dilemmas related to the “nature of work status” variable, it was impossible to combine the “unspecified duration” category with either the “permanent” or “limited duration”

categories. It was decided that for this analysis, and to attain a degree of comparison between the LFS and QLFS, to use the main categories of “limited duration” and “permanent nature”. For comparative purposes, all results for 2002-2007 for the categories (a fixed period contract, temporary, casual and seasonal) were interpreted as “contracts of limited duration” as per the QLFS, 2008-2013. Thus, the results for the “unspecified duration” categories for both surveys were not included in the analysis. Based on this approach, this comparative analysis is preliminary in nature, but may be indicative of trends in the work status of artisans in the South African economy.

While there are many challenges with regard to the quality of the data, it is hoped that this study will be a contribution to ongoing work to aid the development of more comprehensive and consistent data, thus bringing more clarity on the nature and extent of non-standard forms of employment in the South African economy.

Literature Review

The notion of a “job for life” has long become questionable, as non-standard forms of employment (NSFE) or non-permanent work have grown by leaps and bounds in both developed and developing economies (ILO, 2015). The ILO (2015:1) in a report by its Director-General states that

‘..the classic stereotype of a full-time permanent job, with fixed hours, and a defined benefit pension on the completion of a largely predictable and secure career path with a single employer, however desirable it might appear, is an increasingly infrequent reality’.

Thus, the nature and underlying assumptions of the standard employment relationship have changed significantly over the years. Interestingly though, permanent employment or an employment contract of unlimited duration remains the dominant form of employment

relationship across the world, especially in formal employment. Thus, about 70 per cent of employment in Europe and United States are permanent , as were most jobs created in the 2000s in Brazil and Argentina (Maurizio, 2014 in ILO: 2015).

However, there has been a shift away from the standard employment relationship and growth in non-standard forms of employment, including increased casualization and externalization of employment and employment contracts. Locally, research on shifts away from the standard form of employment, through increased informalisation and casualization of work, has tended to focus on the effects on lower skilled workers in the formal economy, or more vulnerable workers in the informal sector, which often constitute the bulk of the marginalized workforce in the South African economy (Webster and von Holdt, 2005).

However, the extent to which the shift away from the standard employment relationship has affected higher or mid-level skilled workers are often not studied. This is partly because these employee categories do not necessarily constitute the largest proportion of the workforce; they are often regarded as less vulnerable in the employment relationship; or assumed to be less affected by changes in the economy due to skills scarcity; or more likely to enjoy some form of employment security through the availability of employment benefits, higher levels of salary and so forth. Thus, an overview of non-standard forms of employment shows that it tends to be associated with “women, young people, the less-skilled and migrant” (ILO, 2015:53). Given the rise of the tertiary sector, there is now also a research focus on the conditions of employment of service workers, often more skilled, but often equally as vulnerable as low-skilled workers in the traditional manufacturing sectors of the economy. Further, anecdotal evidence also points towards increased NSFE arrangements for higher –skilled professional workers, especially with the proliferation of management consultants, who tend to conduct work that is predominantly project-or task-based.

Definition of non-standard forms of employment

The ILO (2015:1) identifies three forms of non-standard employment, including temporary employment, temporary agency work (including multiple employers) and finally, ambiguous employment relationships. This paper focuses largely on temporary employment, which is defined as employment for a defined period, including fixed-term, project or task-based contracts, as well as seasonal or casual work (ILO: 2015:2). Casual and seasonal work is defined as employment on an “occasional or intermittent” and/or seasonal basis, and is often a feature of informal employment, especially in the agricultural sector, or services sector. In South Africa, artisans fall within the mid-way category, as they often constitute medium-skilled workers, and may be subject to the vagaries of project-based work in declining manufacturing sectors, and the increased seasonality of construction work.

Rationale for employment of non-standard forms of employment

Non-standard forms of employment are part of the historical development of certain sectors, such as agriculture and construction. However, there are now many other economic sectors that employ non-permanent workers. Companies often argue that a combination of cost-advantages, flexibility and technological changes drive such decisions (ILO, 2015:3). Contract workers are often cheaper to employ, especially if there are fewer non-wage costs associated with their employment including retirement benefits and so forth. Also, contracted workers provide a level of flexibility, in that the size of the workforce may be varied depending upon expansion or reduction in market demand. In this paper, we consider two (2) types of flexibility, numerical and functional to a lesser extent. Numerical or employment flexibility may be attained in terms of seasonal demand, or shorter product cycles as a result of just-in-time production which may require workers for a shorter period, and thus change employment levels (Standing, 2011: 6; ILO, 2015). Functional flexibility refers to the ability to acquire specialized skills for short-term period, when those skills are not available in the workplace itself. Functional flexibility typically applies when non-

permanent workers are employed on a project or a specific task, such as the building of the World Cup stadiums in the period up to 2010. In recent years, South Africa has engaged in a range of massive social and economic infrastructure projects, such as the building of schools, clinics, power stations, roads and dams, which has shaped the nature of work in the construction sector, as well as those manufacturing sub-sectors that provide input products, including pipes, valves, cement and so forth.

While this analysis does not focus on employment trends through temporary employment services /agencies (or labour brokers, as known in South Africa), fixed-term contract employees are often employed via these intermediaries. In South Africa, it is estimated that approximately 2.2 million employees are temporary agency workers as reported by members of the International Confederation of Private Employment Agencies [Ciett] (ILO, 2015:2015). The National Association of Bargaining Council estimates that employment through labour broking constituted about 6.5 per cent of total employment in 2010 (ILO, 2015:14).

Potential impact of non-standard forms of employment

The global literature points to evidence suggesting that the transition from NSFE to standard employment may manifest itself in either 'stepping-stone' jobs or 'dead-end' jobs. In some European economies there is evidence of the former, more upwardly mobile trend, especially for youth who requires some level of work experience through NSFE. However, over the long-term it appears that there is evidence of increased "churning" between NSFE and unemployment, instead of a transition into permanent employment (ILO, 2015:21). In developing economies, there is much less evidence on this transition. However, in countries with high unemployment such as South Africa, NSFE may end up being "dead end" jobs, given low levels of job creation. Further, the notion of "voluntary" contract employment to achieve a better "work-life" balance, as may be argued in some advanced economies, may

really be relegated to mostly high-skilled workers in developing economies. Among the latter, this may apply only to those with highly sought after or scarce skills, which may be utilized as leverage. It may therefore be argued that in the majority of cases, in developing economies, contract employment tends to be involuntary. Further, the evidence shows that in terms of wages, contract workers are more likely to face a wage penalty of 30-60 per cent of wages of permanent workers in developing economies, and 1-34 per cent in developed economies (ILO, 2015: 26). Other employment related benefits such as retirement and health-related benefits may not apply either. Also, given the intermittent or short-term nature of employment, workers who are on contracts are less likely to receive training, as there is evidence to suggest that employers have less of an incentive to train. Thus, temporary workers are less likely to receive training, and thus exhibit lower levels of productivity.

Effects of NSFE on the labour market

Employment insecurity is evidence of increased labour market segmentation, as different conditions (and often inferior conditions) apply to different parts of the labour market, and well as poor internal transitions. Thus, the employment of temporary workers is often tied to the ups and downs of the economic cycle, as firms attempt to attain greater numerical flexibility by downsizing their workforce. It is estimated that during the recent global economic crisis, increases in unemployment in Spain and Japan were driven by the non-renewal of fixed-term contracts (ILO, 2015:32). Thus, during an economic downturn, permanent workers often experience less unemployment as opposed to fixed-term contract or non-permanent workers who often experience higher rates of unemployment. For instance, in Spain a significantly higher proportion of fixed-term workers (15%) lost their jobs compared to permanent workers (2.5%). These workers tend to have longer periods of unemployment, which may impact adversely on lifelong earnings (ILO, 2015: 32).

Legal interventions on fixed term contracts

Given the proliferation of NSFE, and in order to address the abuse of fixed-term contracts, the following approaches are often adopted. Firstly, fixed-term contracts cannot be adopted where permanent work is available; often a limitation on the number of successive fixed-term contracts; finally, there may be limitations placed on the cumulative duration of fixed-term contracts. Where countries adopt this approach, the common remedy or sanction for non-compliance is the conversion of the fixed-term contract to a contract of unlimited duration or a permanent contract (ILO, 2015:40). The recent amendments to the labour laws in South Africa, also applies to those employed on a fixed-term contract. Thus, fixed-term contracts are also limited to three (3) months, and any contract longer than this will be deemed as permanent, that is employed on an “indefinite basis” (ILO, 2015:49). The only exceptions apply to small or new companies. In this manner, an attempt was made to standardise the employment outcomes for workers irrespective of work status, and reduce the incentive to employers to cut costs, and thereby reduce income and employment insecurity for affected workers. While some of these measures now formalise pre-existing practices established through firm or industry-level collective bargaining arrangements in parts of the economy, the full effects have yet to be felt.

Findings

The section provides a description of the main findings on the nature and extent of work status across the main skills categories in the workforce, followed by a more detailed analysis of trends among employed artisans.

Employment by work status and skill category

Table 1 provides a contextual overview of the distribution of permanent and limited duration contracts by skills categories across the South African economy. High skills include managers and professionals; middle-level skills include artisans, operators and sales

workers; low skills include elementary occupations. While middle-level skilled workers constituted the largest proportion of the employed, there were some important trends observables over the period. In line with globalising trends and the drive towards more knowledge-intensive work, the share of high skilled workers increased, irrespective of work status. Significantly, there was a doubling of high-skilled contract workers over the period. Middle-level skills still constituted the largest proportion of the workforce, irrespective of work status, around 50 per cent of the employed. The small declines in size are not significant relative to other groups. On the other hand, there was a noticeable decline in the share of low-skilled workers, irrespective of work status. The relatively small proportion of low-skilled workers with permanent status, and their share of limited duration contracts emphasise their continued vulnerability in regard to employment flexibility. However, Table 1 also illustrates that by 2013, middle-level skilled workers (46%) constituted the largest proportion of workers with a limited duration contract, thus replacing low-skilled workers (38%). This finding situates this study in illustrating the importance of understanding the nature of work status, and the potential impact of employment flexibility among artisans, a key middle-skills sub-category of the workforce.

Table 1: Trends in the share of permanent and limited duration contracts among the employed (%) (2002, 2008, 2013)

Permanent (%)			
	2002	2008	2013
High Skills	26	31	33
Middle Skills	51	51	49
Low Skills	23	19	18
Total	100	100	100
Limited duration/contract (%)			
	2002	2008	2013
High Skills	7	15	16
Middle Skills	47	49	46
Low Skills	45	36	38
Total	100	100	100

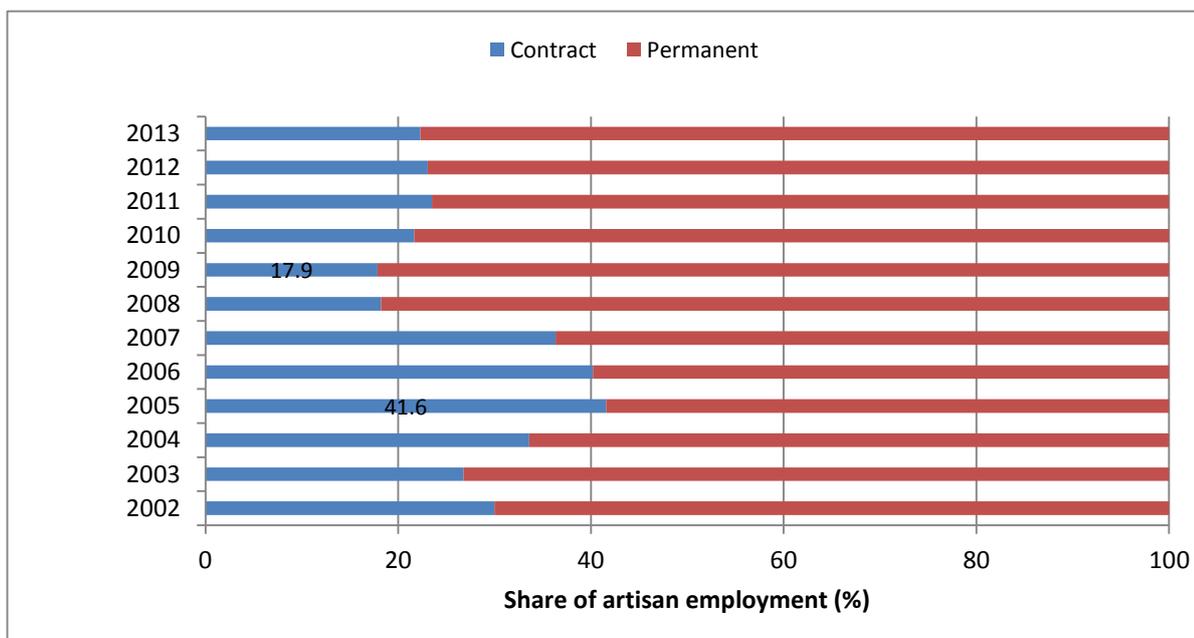
Source: StatsSA, LFS and QLS (authors' calculations)

Work status of employed artisans

The analysis in Figure 1 shows that most artisans were employed on a permanent basis over the period of analysis. At the broader economy, the same trend was observed, in line with global experience as noted in the literature review. Over time however, the relative share of contract employment (contract of limited duration) declined from 30% to 22%, whereas permanent employment (contract with no end date) increased from 70% to 77%. This may imply that contract employment became less prevalent over time.

However, what is also evident is that there was a significant degree of volatility in the share of contract artisans, noticeable over certain points in the economic cycle. Thus, while there was very little or no growth in overall artisan employment over the period, the relative share of contract artisans varied greatly. For instance, the relative share of contract artisan employment reached its peak in the period, 2005-2006 at 41.6 % and 40.2% respectively. At its lowest, contract artisan employment was at around 18% in 2008 and 2009. Thus, in the prior period, many more contract artisans were employed than in the latter period.

Figure 1: Trends in the share of artisan employment by work status (%) (2002-2013)



Source: StatsSA, LFS, QLFS. Authors' calculations.

The international literature suggests that volatility in the economic cycle may influence the demand for non-standard forms of employment. Thus, a comparison of changes in the annual growth rate of artisan employment to changes in overall gross domestic product (GDP) and employment was conducted. Thus, it was important to assess the extent which trends in artisan employment may be underpinned by trends in the South African economy pre– crisis (2001-2007) and post- crisis (2008-2012) as analysed by Bhorat *et al* (2013:5).

Table 2: Average annual growth trends in the South African economy (2001-2013)(%)

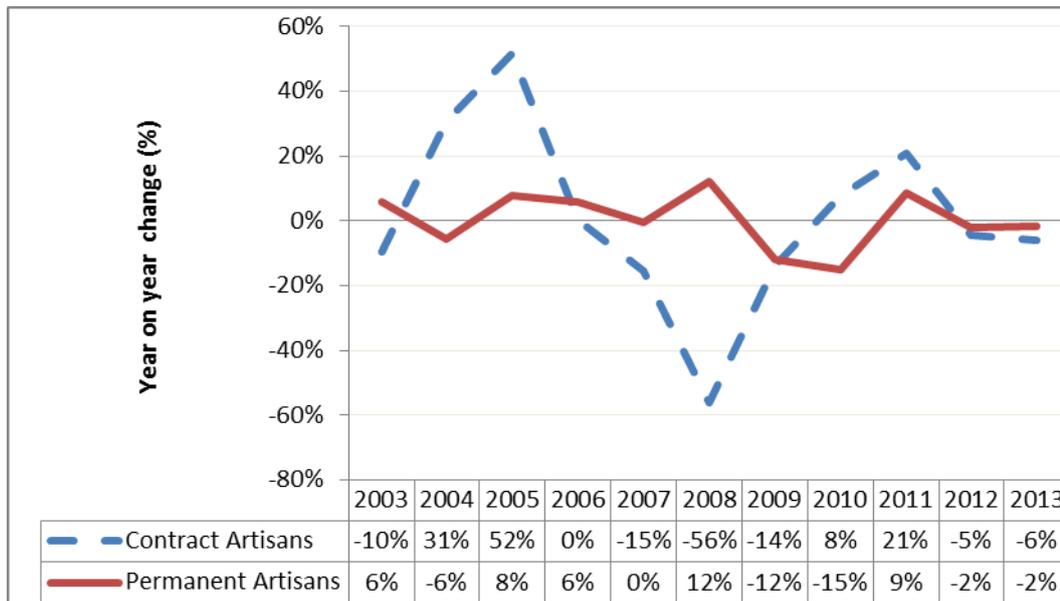
Average Annual Growth(%)		
	Employment	GDP
Pre-crisis (2001-2007)	2.9	4.6
Post-crisis (2008-2012)	-0.3	1.9

Source: Bhorat *et al* (2013).

Table 2 provides a summary overview of GDP and employment trends pre-and post-crisis in South Africa. The period prior to the global crisis was characterised by positive and higher growth in both GDP and employment. During this period, while employment tended to be lower than the rate of growth in GDP, it was relatively high (2.9%) when compared to the post-crisis (-0.3%) period. Thus, the post-crisis period was characterised by low GDP growth (1.9%) and negative growth in employment, illustrated by the loss of one-million jobs. It was only by about 2013 that these job losses were reversed.

Figure 2 provides an overview of annual growth trends among employed artisans by contract status. These trends suggest a pattern of numerical flexibility that may be linked to the economic cycle. Thus, while annual growth rates among permanently employed artisans remained static over the period (see Figure 2) there were significant differences in annual employment growth rates for contract artisans.

Figure 2: Annual growth trends in artisan employment by contract status (%) (2003-2014)



Source: StatsSA: LFS, QLFS. Authors' calculations.

Firstly, annual growth rates among contract artisans were very volatile, against the relative stability among permanently employed artisans, except a significant dip in 2009-2010. The demand for contract artisans increased significantly in the period prior to 2007; followed by a significant decline in the post-2007 period; after which another major uptick was observable post-2008. By 2012, contract and permanent employment were virtually on par with each other.

Secondly, the volatility in contract employment volatility may be closely associated with the exigencies of the general economic cycle. Thus, during periods of general economic growth, contracted artisans were in demand, experiencing relatively higher rates of annual growth, ranging from 31% to 52%, for 2004 and 2005. On the other hand, annual growth rates among permanently employed artisans were much lower at -6% and 8% for the same period. Finally, during periods of economic downturn, employment declines among contract artisans were significantly larger. Thus, as the global economic recession deepened,

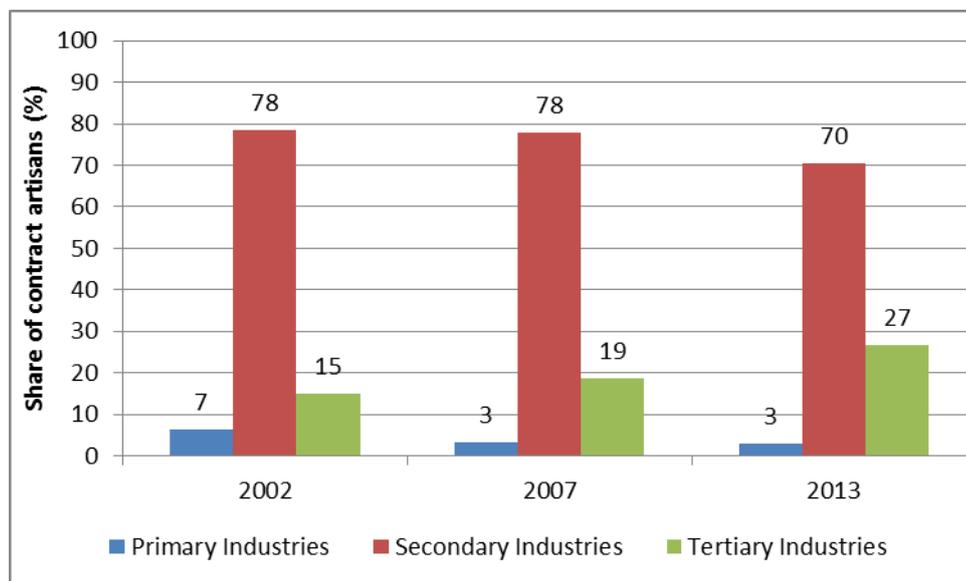
annual growth rates among contracted artisans were at -15% and -56% for 2008 and 2009 respectively. For the same period, annual growth trends among permanently employed artisans were 12% and -12%. Thus, contracted artisans were more likely to suffer more significant job losses compared to those permanently employed. Also, during the slow economic recovery post - 2009, employment among contracted artisans grew faster compared to permanently employed artisans, as evidenced by the wide gap between the two (2) categories of artisans.

Work status of artisans by main industry

As a small, open economy subject to the effects of globalisation, there has been a substantial re-composition of the South African economy away from the primary sector towards the tertiary sector. Over time as well, the share of the secondary sector and manufacturing specifically, has fallen significantly. Historically, the main employers of artisans were the secondary sector, followed by the primary sector. The analysis in Figure 3 shows that while there has been some continuity, there have also been significant changes in the sector employment trends of contracted artisans. The secondary industries (including utilities, manufacturing and construction) remained the largest employer of artisans with limited duration contracts. Thus, over the period, until the global crisis in 2007, of all limited duration contracts, 78% were employed in this sector, relative to the others. Most contracted artisans were employed in the construction sector. On the other hand, the primary sector (mining and agriculture) remained the smallest employer of limited duration contracts, and insignificantly so. Interestingly, albeit from a low base, the relative share of limited duration contracts in the tertiary sector increased significantly over the period, close to doubling from 15 per cent to 27 per cent in 2002 and 2013 respectively. Further, during the downward-cycle post 2008 onwards, the tertiary sector was the only one to experience an increase in the employment of contract artisans, whereas the other two (2) main sectors

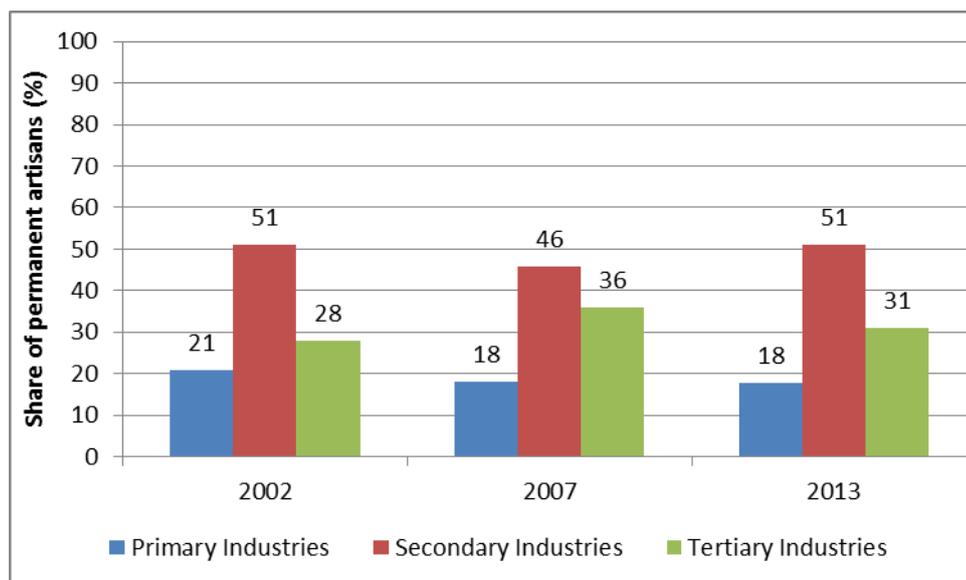
experienced declines in this regard. Even in the post-2010 recovery the tertiary sector recovered faster relative to the primary and secondary industries.

Figure 3: Employment trends of artisans on limited duration contracts by main industry (2002, 2007, 2013) (%)



Source: StatsSA, LFS and QLS (authors' calculations)

Figure 4: Employment trends of permanent artisans by main industry (2002, 2007, 2013) (%)



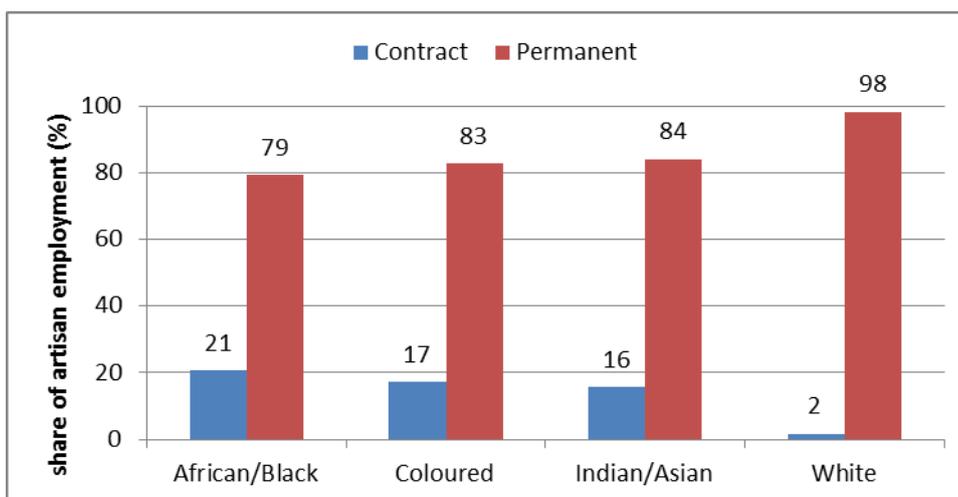
Source: StatsSA, LFS and QLS (authors' calculations)

Figure 4 shows that the relative share of permanently employed artisans by main industries was relatively stable, when compared to previous results on contracted artisans (Figure 3). As expected the secondary industry remains the main employer, and despite the slight decline in 2007, just around 50% of all permanent artisans were in this sector. Overall, permanent employment shares remained relatively stable over time. The combined findings suggest that the employment of contracted artisans allow employers to ensure increased numerical flexibility, by shifting the composition of their workforce at will.

Work status of artisans by population group

In the last decade there has been a renewed focus on growing the number of Black artisans, including Africans, Coloureds, Indians. Figure 5 shows that in manufacturing, almost all (98%) White artisans are permanently employed, whereas most contracted artisans are Black (98%). This analysis is based on very small numbers, and the result should not be regarded as conclusive. However, continued vulnerability as a result of continued labour market segmentation based on population group remains a feature of the South African labour market landscape.

Figure 5: Work status of contract artisans by population group in manufacturing (%) (2013)



Source: StatsSA, QLFS (2013) (authors' calculations)

Discussion of findings

Volatility in employment trends among contracted artisans relative to permanently employed artisans suggests that employment or numerical flexibility may be a real phenomenon at the middle-skill level in the South African economy. The depth of the recent global economic crisis and the slow and uneven recovery in South Africa has accentuated the rise of employment flexibility, further up the skills ladder. Thus, whereas employment flexibility is often more observable among the obviously marginalised and vulnerable groups, including women, youth and low-skilled workers, a segmented labour market is also evident in a male-dominated occupation (artisans), who generally receive relatively higher wages.

The recent economic cycle illustrated that employers may adjust the composition of their artisan workforce, largely linked to the volatility of market demand. Given that the contracts of non-permanent artisans may be cancelled more easily, they are likely to suffer greater job losses compared to permanent workers. Thus, the findings suggest that there may be greater employment vulnerability among contracted artisans, perhaps through shorter periods of employment. This is despite claims of a shortage of artisans in the economy, and increased efforts to increase the supply of artisans into the economy. During economic upturns, firms may find it easier to employ more contract artisans until there is significant deepening in the upturn, and thus greater security in terms of market demand. On the other hand, permanently employed artisans are less affected by the exigencies of the economic cycle, except during extreme times as was shown during the recent recession in South Africa.

Significant shifts in the composition of the economy, such as the relative decline of the manufacturing sector and the rise of the tertiary sector have also been a contributory factor in increased employment flexibility among artisans. Thus, the near doubling of the employment of artisans on limited duration contracts may relate closely to the dominance of

temporary employment services' companies in this sector. There are currently a number of attempts to measure and analyse the extent to agency workers (employed on either a permanent or non-permanent basis) by temporary employment service agencies, more commonly known as labour brokers in South Africa. The study by Borat *et al* (2013) uses the financial intermediation and business service sector as a proxy for TES to analyse the extent and nature of labour broking employment. It is not the purpose of this paper to analyse agency work employment, but this is clearly an area for further research to bring greater certainty as to the scope and nature of this type of employment thorough labour broking. This will provide a clearer picture of the scope of NSFE in the South African context.

The rise of project-based work in South Africa, especially in regard to the massive infrastructure projects pre-and post-World Cup, is also a contributory factor to employment flexibility, as artisans may be deployed from one engineering or construction project to another. Also, subsequent to the World Cup, a decline in construction work was observed leading many local companies to seek work elsewhere in the world, thus requiring a relatively flexible and mobile workforce, or downsizing of the local workforce. Finally, insertion of South African-based companies into global production networks imposes an international division of labour, often mirrored in local workforces with narrow specialisations, not necessarily of a high end nature.

This point leads on to the prevalence of functional flexibility in the artisan workforce, where companies "in-source" specialised skills not available in-house. While this paper does not analyse the extent of functional flexibility in the artisan workforce, there is evidence to suggest that the impact of information and communication technologies (ICT) have changed the nature of the production process as related to artisan trades in South Africa as well (Wildschut *et al*, 2013). That study suggested that, in line with global trends, artisan

work is also becoming more “analytic[al]” requiring more holistic skill sets, given the incidence of high-level technologies employed in manufacturing for instance. On the other hand, the same study also noted that given the short-term nature of artisan contracts, many artisans do not display the same depth of skill acquired through years of experience and training. Thus, while the evidence is still out in South Africa in regard the universality of the so-called “21st century knowledge-driven artisan”, it is clear that the traditional blue-collar, manual labour characterisation is up for challenge. At the same time, there may be a subset of artisans who are highly skilled, well-experienced and deployed for their high levels of specialisation, but on a contract basis.

Further work in regard to the other aspects of NSFEE among skilled workers is required, especially in regard to income security and job security, including access to training and so forth. However, it is evident from the recent labour law amendments in South Africa, aimed at reducing the vulnerability of non-permanent workers from increased employment and income insecurity, that NSFEE may deepen labour market segmentation.

Conclusions

Volatility in employment trends among contracted artisans relative to permanently employed artisans suggest that employment or numerical flexibility may be a real phenomenon among artisans in the South African economy. The depth of the recent global economic crisis has revealed that in developing economies, there is increased employment vulnerability higher up the skills ladder, as the shift away from the standard employment relationship now begins to apply to mid-level skilled workers as well.

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