
The changing nature of work: understanding precarity and the gendered individualisation of risk in post-apartheid South Africa

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Résumé

Against the backdrop of workplace restructuring globally, post-apartheid South Africa is experiencing increasing levels of unemployment, the deterioration of employment security, and limited improvements in earnings. This trend in the proliferation of low-paid, unstable and otherwise insecure employment has given rise to a segment of the literature which is centred on the growing precariousness of work in a number of different contexts. This paper reviews empirical work on the changing nature of labour-intensive production in the past two decades, with particular focus on the trends in non-standard, informal and precarious employment. Further, the paper illustrates the shift in the gender structure of South Africa's manufacturing industry and how it affects the share in the benefits of employment, particularly with regard to social reproduction. In so doing, the paper expands the critical theoretical narrative about the challenges of labour under neoliberalism by providing an intersectional perspective of precarious work in post-apartheid South Africa.

Mots-Clés: labour market restructuring, informal sector, precarity, social exclusion, gender, post, Apartheid, South Africa

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