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Labour market trends in South Africa in 2009-2019: A lost decade?

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Abstract: South Africa's high unemployment has long been a key challenge for policymakers. Concerns about the social implications of sustained high unemployment are growing. Using the Quarterly Labour Force Survey data, we present evidence on key labour market trends in 2009-2019 – sometimes referred to as 'the lost decade'. Data suggest that patterns in labour market outcomes evident in the first decade of the 21st century have persisted and, in some ways, further deteriorated over the second decade. The unemployed remained largely black Africans and were concentrated amongst the less educated individuals. They remained out of work for longer and, on average, spent more time seeking employment. In accordance with recent literature, the data indicate the presence of hysteresis in unemployment. Key ameliorating policies in this scenario are skills development and structural reform of the labour market. The former is difficult to achieve, even in the long-term, while the latter is politically challenging.

Keywords: Labour market; employment; unemployment; skills mismatch; South Africa

JEL Classification: J20; J64

1 Introduction

Unemployment remains one of South Africa's most pressing economic and social challenges. Over the past two decades it has also proved to be one of the country's most intractable policy challenges. A plethora of policy proposals and interventions have failed to meaningfully reduce the unemployment level and rate over the last two decades. While the initial post-apartheid period saw significant growth in employment, since 2009 employment growth has slowed and unemployment has increased substantially. Much economic policy aims to improve societal welfare by promoting full employment of a given country's human and other resources. Theoretically, a sustained period of resource underutilisation should inevitably result in welfare loss through reduced output. High unemployment rates may also manifest in various social pathologies such as crime, poor health, and, in the extreme, political instability. Put simply, the potential negative consequences of South Africa's unemployment trends are hard to overstate.

A particular feature of South Africa's high unemployment rate is its persistence. The observed stubbornness in the rate of unemployment over time has given rise to the notion that the underlying 'equilibrium unemployment rate' or 'natural rate' may itself be high and possibly increasing – a phenomenon known as 'hysteresis' (Blanchard & Summers, 1987). Taking this notion seriously, negative shocks should portend adverse long-term outcomes in the labour market absent structural changes that 'ratchet down' the theoretical equilibrium unemployment rate. In such a reality, the recent COVID-19 pandemic therefore bodes ill for South African labour outcomes.

While the medium- and longer-term effects of the COVID-19 crisis on unemployment will become clearer over time, the short-run effect of the pandemic was to starkly exacerbate the unemployment problem (Jain, Budlender, Zizzamia & Bassier, 2020). Horn and Donaldson (2021) show that the 'recovery' in employment has lagged income since the start of the pandemic, lending support to the notion that hysteresis in unemployment may be at work in South Africa. Testing this hypothesis, Dadam and Viegli (2021: 14-19) estimated an insider-outsider hysteresis model using South African data and found that unemployment did not respond meaningfully to positive demand shocks, that positive shocks to wages had a significant negative initial impact on unemployment, and that a rise in prices resulted in a persistently higher unemployment rate.

These findings potentially suggest the presence of hysteresis via two mechanisms: the insider-outsider mechanism and human capital mechanism. The former implies that the employed (insiders), given institutional arrangements and power-distributions in wage setting, will negotiate higher wages in post-shock recovery periods at the expense of labour demand for the unemployed (outsiders). The ‘human capital’ mechanism suggests that the unemployed, through loss of skills, ultimately become unemployable perpetuating high unemployment rates (Arora & Ricci, 2006). Further, in a labour market with characteristically high unemployment combined with an underperforming education system, ‘ability signalling’ among the unemployed is distorted, reducing the demand for labour while simultaneously raising wages for those who are employed.

The structural unemployment evident in South Africa is naturally a multi-causal, if not complex, phenomenon. The hysteresis theory suggests two often emphasised policy responses: upgrading skills and liberalising the labour market. Both of these options also appear to be somewhat hard problems in recent history. Despite some improvement over time, South Africa’s primary and secondary educational outcomes have compared unfavourably to peer countries in international tests over the last two decades¹ (Van der Berg & Gustafsson, 2019). On the other side, structural reforms, particularly amendments to labour legislation, are likely to face formidable resistance from unions. Yet, the present circumstances demand a policy response. Confronted with these suppositions, some mix of two possibilities in the policy space may be considered: (i) the underlying causes of unemployment have been accurately identified but countervailing policy proposals have not implemented for various reasons, and (ii) effective interventions that can be implemented are yet to be proposed. In either case, a high-level disaggregation of labour market trends may shed some light on narrower target areas for employment generation.

Burger and Woolard (2005), Oosthuizen (2006), Yu (2008) as well as Festus, Kasongo, Moses and Yu (2016) are the recent local studies that examined the levels and trends in key labour market aggregates since the advent of democracy. The first three studies focused on the first decade in the labour market post-apartheid (1995-2002, 1995-2004 and 1995-2006, respectively), and all of them found that whilst employment increased, unemployment

¹ It should be noted that schooling outcomes are notoriously unequal. Education researchers often distinguish between at least two sub-systems in the education system where one of these is well-functioning and performs in line with peer countries, and the other is largely dysfunctional and exhibits weak performance.

increased more rapidly as not all net entrants to the labour market found work. Much of the rise in unemployment fell on black Africans, particularly females and/or those with low educational attainment. Oosthuizen (2006: 22) ascribed the rise in unemployment to the rapidly increasing labour force participation rate – especially among black females – in the initial post-apartheid period. Sectors with reductions in employment levels included primary sectors and Community, Social and Personal (CSP) services. Geographically, high unemployment rates were especially stark in the Limpopo and North West provinces. Furthermore, Yu (2008) found that the trends in 2000-2006 (by examining all Labour Force Survey data) did not suggest any strong indication of feminisation of labour force taking place.

Festus et al. (2016) repeated the exercise adding 10 years of data to the above in order to document South African labour market trends over the 20-year period 1995-2015. Their findings reflected a continuation of some of the adverse trends reported in the above-mentioned three studies. The authors (2016: 593) found that the declining unemployment rate during the mid-2000's stabilised and unemployment further decreased slightly between 2005 and 2015 (from 26.7 per cent to 25.4 per cent). The burden of high unemployment rates was again largely borne by less educated blacks. Festus et. al. (2016: 595) also found that larger firms were the major employers in South Africa and the number of workers employed in smaller firms (firms with fewer than 10 employees) increased very modestly between 2000 and 2015. These results imply that larger firms not only employed more workers than smaller firms, but were also responsible for most of the job creation that took place over the fifteen years. As with Oosthuizen (2006), Festus et al. (2016) emphasised a skills mismatch as a salient correlate and possible cause of the high unemployment rates.

This study presents the next iteration of decadal analyses of labour market trends. We analyse South African unemployment trends over the 2009-2019 period using data from the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS). By reporting on a range of labour-market indicators disaggregated by demographic and geographic characteristics at the industry level, we indirectly present an accounting of the relative success of any employment increasing strategies/policies implemented over the past decade. We end by offering some perspective on the various policy options to respond to the growing unemployment rate.

2 Methods and Data

2.1 Methodology

This study aims to present a comprehensive descriptive analysis of labour market trends in South Africa over the 2010s. As such, we document trends related to characteristics of the labour force including the age, race, geographic and gender distributions of the labour force and the changes in the labour market outcomes across these sub-groups. We further analyse the trends in sectoral proportions of various labour market outcomes. Changes in the characteristics of unemployed are analysed with consideration to work experience and job-seeking behaviour. These trends are important as they present evidence on the performance of the labour market and, implicitly, the relative success of various labour market policies aimed at reversing South Africa's high unemployment rate.

The analysis takes a long-term perspective, conducted on a decadal timescale. The main analysis relates to the period 2009 quarter four to 2019 quarter four; however, some broader trends will be explored over the two-decade period spanning 1999 quarter four to 2019 quarter four. Throughout the study, unless stated otherwise, the narrow definition of unemployment is implied when discussing labour market status so as to remain consistent with the official definition used by StatsSA. When referring to youth, we again use the official definition of individuals aged 15-34 years.

2.2 Data

All data used in the analyses are drawn from various Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) labour market surveys, including the October Household Survey (OHS), Labour Force Survey (LFS) and Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS). During the main period under consideration (2009Q4-2019Q4) StatsSA utilised the same sampling method for all surveys, obviating any comparability concerns that afflicted earlier periods². When considering long-term trends, however, differences in the sampling methodology – particularly between the OHS and other labour surveys – demand caution when comparing these surveys. In the analysis below we limit reporting on data from the OHS and LFS surveys to the broad labour force characteristics after application of cross-entropy re-weighting so as to ensure comparability when discussing longer-term trends that rely on data from the OHS.

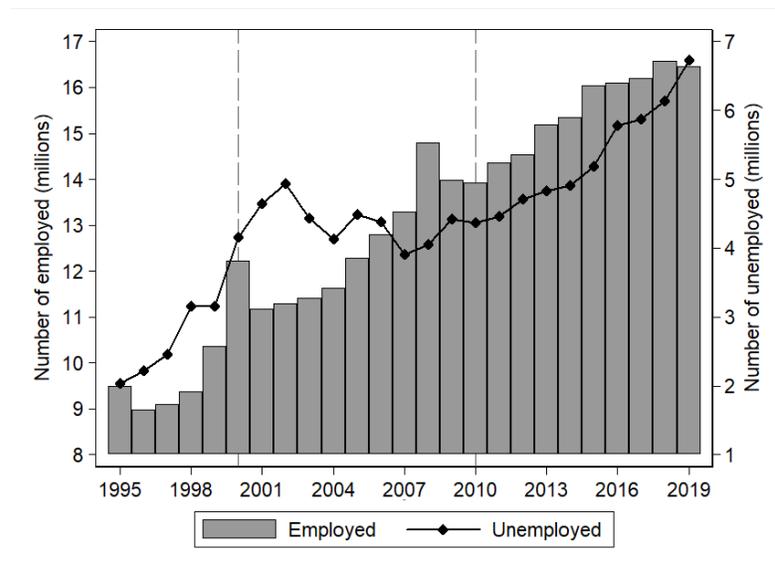
² Refer to Yu (2013: 705-707) for a discussion on some of the changes to the labour surveys across the three survey instruments.

3 Descriptive data

3.1 Employment and unemployment in the 1995-2019 period

The long-term trends in labour market statistics tell a consistent story: employment grew faster during the first decade of the century when compared to the second; and, unemployment started declining from 2003 but started increasing shortly before the great recession of 2008/9. The relatively high-growth period of 2000-2007 saw a reduction in the absolute number of unemployed as shown in Figure 1 below. Unemployment reached its lowest level in the fourth quarter of 2008 before rising steadily for almost the entire decade 2009-2019. The figure also shows a decline in the number of employed following the 2008/9 great recession and subsequent employment growth remained relatively constrained in comparison to the preceding decade.

Figure 1: Number of employed and unemployed (millions), 1995–2019



Source: Author's own calculations using the QLFS 2009Q4 and 2019Q4 data.

Table 1 below compares labour market statistics for three points in time spanning two decades: 1999, 2009 and 2019. The working-age population grew by 6.5 million during the 1999-2009 period and 6.3 million during the 2009-2019 period. Proportionally, the labour force grew more rapidly during the early period (36%) when compared to the past decade (26%). The difference in the proportional growth in the number of individuals employed is larger still: 35% during the earlier decade versus 18% during the more recent decade. In combination with the more rapid expansion in labour force participation rates during the 2009-2019 period, these trends

saw unemployment increase significantly over this period (growth of 52% during 2009-2019 versus 40% during 1999-2009).

Table 1: Key labour market characteristics in the 2000s and 2010s decades

	1999	2009	2019
Working-age population (1 000s)	26 247	32 734	39 050
Labour force (1 000s)	13 510	18 409	23 172
Employed (1 000s)	10 356	13 983	16 445
Unemployed (1 000s)	3 154	4 426	6 726
Labour force participation rate (%)	51.5	56.2	59.3
Unemployment rate (%)	23.3	24.0	29.0
Youth employed (1 000s)	2 967	3 512	3 299
Youth share of total employed (%)	28.6	25.1	20.1
Formal sector employment (1 000s)	7 595	10 392	12 106
Informal sector employment (1 000s)	1 856	2 359	3 049
	1999-2009	2009-2019	
Target growth rate (%)	47.3	34.1	
Actual growth rate (%)	35.0	17.6	
Employment absorption rate (%)	74.0	51.7	
Annualised real GDP growth rate (%)	3.6	1.7	
Annualised employment growth rate (%)	3.0	1.6	
Employment elasticity to economic growth	0.8317	0.9736	

Source: Author's own calculations using the OHS 1999, QLFS 2009Q4, QLFS 2019Q4 and the South African Reserve Bank Quarterly Bulletin data.

Notably, the youth share of the total employed decreased by 8.5 percentage points, from 28.6% to 20.1% over the two decades. In absolute terms the number of youths employed also decreased between 2009 and 2019. While there may be several factors explaining this decline, the rise in the number of youths not in education, employment or training is one of the more concerning factors.

Employment grew faster in the formal sector relative to the informal sector during the first decade of the century, but the trend was reversed during the second decade. Between 1999-2009, employment in the informal sector grew by 27% whereas it grew by 29% between 2009 and 2019. Formal sector employment grew by 37% during 1999-2009 and then by 17% up to 2019.

Another useful labour market performance metric is the target growth rate (TGR) which estimates the employment growth rate needed for the labour market to absorb net entrants between two given periods³. Table 1 shows both the TGR and actual growth rate (AGR) for the two decades under consideration. Notably, the AGR in employment came closer to the TGR during the 1999-2009 period when compared to the 2009-2019 period. As shown by the employment absorption rate (EAR) – which is the ratio of the AGR to TGR – growth in employment was only half what was required to absorb net entrants during the last decade, whereas the EAR was 74% in the preceding decade.

The employment elasticity (given by the ratio between the percentage change of employment and percentage change of real GDP) increased to 0.97 during the last decade when compared to the 1999-2009 period where was estimated at 0.83. However, this change merely reflects a larger drop in the denominator relative to the numerator in the simple elasticity estimate. Employment growth slowed significantly in the latter decade compared to the earlier decade, but the decline in GDP growth was even greater.

3.2 Labour force participation

Turning to characteristics of the labour force, we restrict our analysis to the last decade spanning 2009-2019. Table 2 shows changes in absolute and proportional terms for the various characteristics of the labour market including demographic and geographic distributions. Africans naturally made up the largest share of the labour force and accounted for the bulk of the growth in the labour force. In contrast, the number of whites in the labour force, perhaps owing to emigration⁴, declined by 10% over the 10-year period. Labour force participation among Africans appears to be slowly converging on that of other population groups. Labour

³ The formula for calculating the TGR is given by $TGR = \frac{L_{F_{t+1}} - L_{F_t}}{E_t}$, with the numerator representing change of labour force between the two periods and the denominator indicating employment level in the initial period. See Oosthuizen (2006: 16) for an application of the TGR.

⁴ StatsSA (2020: 3) suggests that over the 2011-2021 period, approximately 207 000 whites emigrated from South Africa. Slower population growth in this ethnic group may also play a role.

force participation remained highest among whites. Females in 2019 made up 45% of the labour force and accounted for half of the growth in the size of labour force of the past decade.

Table 2: Labour force under the narrow definition: 2009 and 2019

		LF Number (1 000s)		Share (%)		Share of change (%)	LFPR (%)	
		2009	2019	2009	2019	2009-2019	2009	2019
All		18 409	23 172	100.0	100.0	100.0	56.2	59.3
Race	African	13 651	18 307	74.2	79.0	97.7	53.6	58.1
	Coloured	1 987	2 238	10.8	9.7	5.3	64.6	63.5
	Indian	516	610	2.8	2.6	2.0	56.8	59.3
	White	2 255	2 017	12.2	8.7	-5.0	68.7	67.5
Gender	Male	10 235	12 644	55.6	54.6	50.6	64.2	65.5
	Female	8 174	10 527	44.4	45.4	49.4	48.7	53.3
Age	15-24 years	2 658	2 690	14.4	11.6	0.7	26.9	26.2
	25-34 years	6 361	7 508	34.6	32.4	24.1	73.3	74.1
	35-44 years	5 001	6 678	27.2	28.8	35.2	76.8	80.2
	45-54 years	3 166	4 479	17.2	19.3	27.6	68.8	75.0
	55-65 years	1 223	1 816	6.6	7.8	12.4	39.8	41.8
	<i>15-29 years</i>	<i>5 887</i>	<i>6 402</i>	<i>32.0</i>	<i>27.6</i>	<i>10.8</i>	<i>40.8</i>	<i>41.3</i>
Province	Western Cape	2 591	3 190	14.1	13.8	12.6	68.2	67.4
	Eastern Cape	1 719	2 291	9.3	9.9	12.0	43.9	52.7
	Northern Cape	396	459	2.2	2.0	1.3	55.4	56.3
	Free State	1 047	1 210	5.7	5.2	3.4	57.9	62.8
	KwaZulu-Natal	2 945	3 555	16.0	15.3	12.8	47.6	49.2
	North West	1 105	1 393	6.0	6.0	6.1	50.1	52.7
	Gauteng	5 934	7 378	32.2	31.8	30.3	70.4	70.0
	Mpumalanga	1 351	1 874	7.3	8.1	11.0	54.7	62.8
Limpopo	1 321	1 823	7.2	7.9	10.5	41.2	47.5	
Education	None	571	333	3.1	1.4	-5.0	39.2	35.9
	Incomplete primary	1 645	1 318	8.9	5.7	-6.9	44.2	46.3
	Incomplete secondary	7 495	9 274	40.7	40.0	37.3	46.5	49.7
	Matric	5 656	7 872	30.7	34.0	46.5	71.7	69.3
	Matric + Cert. /Dip.	1 813	2 043	9.8	8.8	4.8	86.4	84.1
	Degree	1 029	2 135	5.6	9.2	23.2	90.1	87.0
	Other/Not specified	199	197	1.1	0.8	-0.1	66.5	55.1

Source: Author's own calculations using the QLFS 2009Q4 and 2019Q4 data.

The number of young adults aged 15-24 years within the labour force remained nearly the same between 2009 and 2019. The 35-44 years age cohort accounted for 35% of the growth in the labour force while the 45-54 years cohort represented 27% share. Labour force participation was highest within the 25-54 years age cohort.

With respect to the geographic distribution of the labour force, Gauteng remained the dominant province, making up 32% of the total, followed by KwaZulu-Natal (15.3%) and the Western Cape (13.8%). The proportional makeup of the labour force across provinces was quite similar at the end of the decade relative to the start, with marginal decreases in the net in-migration provinces like Gauteng and Western Cape and marginal increases in some net out-migration provinces like Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga. Still, the three largest provinces accounted for 60% of the labour force, which aligned closely to their share of the overall population (57%) (StatsSA, 2019). There was large variation in labour force participation across the provinces, ranging from 47.5% in Limpopo to 70% in Gauteng.

Table 2 also shows that the average education level in the labour force increased over the last decade. Despite this, a majority (53%) of the labour force attained an educational achievement level below Matric. Labour force participants with Matric accounted for a majority share of the growth in the labour force. The number of persons with a degree more than doubled, from just over 1 million to 2.1 million over the period. Lastly, labour force participation increased with educational achievement and was highest (87%) among persons with a degree and lowest (36%) among persons with no education.

3.3 Employment and work activities

Table 3 provides characteristics of employed individuals and breaks down the AGR, TGR and EAR by demographic and geographic factors. The EAR was highest for whites – owing to the decline in the number of whites in the labour force – and was lowest for coloureds (42.5%) despite having a relatively low TGR of 15.9%. Africans had the highest TGR in 2019 (47.5%) and had an EAR of 55%. As proportion of the total, female employment increased slightly (0.5 percentage points) over the 10-year period. Labour absorption was higher among males (55%) than females (49%).

Table 3: Employment: 2009 and 2019

		Employed (1 000s)		Share (%)		Share of change (%)	TGR	AGR	EAR
		2009	2019	2009	2019	2009-2019			
All		13 983	16 445	100.0	100.0	100.0	34.1	17.6	51.7
Race	African	9 803	12 376	70.1	75.3	104.5	47.5	26.3	55.3
	Coloured	1 576	1 683	11.3	10.2	4.3	15.9	6.8	42.5
	Indian	460	525	3.3	3.2	2.7	20.4	14.2	69.7
	White	2 145	1 862	15.3	11.3	-11.5	-11.1	-13.2	119.0
Gender	Male	7 901	9 214	56.5	56.0	53.3	30.5	16.6	54.5
	Female	6 082	7 231	43.5	44.0	46.7	38.7	18.9	48.8
Age	15-24 years	1 368	1 126	9.8	6.8	-9.8	2.4	-17.7	-734.9
	25-34 years	4 526	4 837	32.4	29.4	12.6	25.3	6.9	27.1
	35-44 years	4 137	5 140	29.6	31.3	40.8	40.5	24.3	59.8
	45-54 years	2 809	3 693	20.1	22.5	35.9	46.8	31.5	67.3
	55-65 years	1 143	1 649	8.2	10.0	20.5	51.8	44.2	85.3
	<i>15-29 years</i>	<i>3 512</i>	<i>3 299</i>	<i>25.1</i>	<i>20.1</i>	<i>-8.6</i>	<i>14.7</i>	<i>-6.1</i>	<i>-41.4</i>
Province	Western Cape	2 046	2 524	14.6	15.3	19.4	29.3	23.4	79.8
	Eastern Cape	1 262	1 387	9.0	8.4	5.1	45.3	9.9	21.9
	Northern Cape	299	336	2.1	2.0	1.5	20.9	12.1	58.1
	Free State	787	787	5.6	4.8	0.0	20.6	-0.1	-0.3
	KwaZulu-Natal	2 388	2 666	17.1	16.2	11.3	25.5	11.7	45.6
	North West	808	992	5.8	6.0	7.5	35.7	22.8	63.8
	Gauteng	4 421	5 107	31.6	31.1	27.9	32.7	15.5	47.5
	Mpumalanga	999	1 245	7.1	7.6	10.0	52.4	24.7	47.1
Limpopo	974	1 402	7.0	8.5	17.4	51.5	44.0	85.4	
Education	None	469	274	3.4	1.7	-7.9	-50.7	-41.6	82.0
	Incomplete primary	1 274	968	9.1	5.9	-12.4	-25.7	-24.0	93.7
	Incomplete secondary	5 276	5 913	37.7	36.0	25.9	33.7	12.1	35.8
	Matric	4 206	5 537	30.1	33.7	54.0	52.7	31.6	60.1
	Matric + Cert. / Dip.	1 616	1 660	11.6	10.1	1.8	14.2	2.7	18.9
	Degree	981	1 937	7.0	11.8	38.9	112.8	97.6	86.5
	Other/Not specified	161	156	1.1	1.0	-0.2	-1.7	-2.6	159.2

Source: Author's own calculations using the QLFS 2009Q4 and 2019Q4 data.

EAR increased with age across the age cohorts. Notably, the youngest cohort 15-24 years had a positive TGR but a negative AGR thus resulting in a negative EAR. This implies a net positive entry into the labour market by young adults over the past decade, yet fewer such persons were

employed in 2019 than as the case in 2009. The next cohort up, persons aged 25-34 years, had an EAR of 27.1% suggesting that 73% of net entrants into the labour market aged between 25-34 years were unable to find employment over the 2009-2019 period. The age cohort with the highest EAR is 55-65 years. The 33 percentage-points gap in EAR between the 25-34 and 35-44 years cohorts reflects a substantial divergence between the labour market's capacity to absorb youth workers in contrast to adult workers.

Employment varies significantly across the provinces. Free State is the only province that saw no employment growth over the 10-year period, although it had positive net entrants into the labour market and thus a positive TGR. Limpopo had the highest EAR at 85.4%, even though it had one of the highest TGRs. This outcome should be evaluated with consideration to the base number which was relatively low in Limpopo's case, emphasising the very low LFPR in that province. Among the three provinces with the largest proportion of the labour force, Western Cape had the highest EAR at 79.8%, followed by Gauteng at 47.5% and KwaZulu-Natal at 45.6%. Of these provinces, Western Cape was the only one to increase its share of total employment over the 10 years. The high growth in employment in Limpopo is also notable as it grew at almost double the rate of the next highest-growing province, which was the Western Cape.

Education is often suggested to be one of the most important determinants of employment status. The data in Table 3 bear this out. Degree holders had an EAR of 86.5% while individuals with incomplete secondary school had an EAR of only 35.8%. Persons with incomplete secondary education made up the largest proportion of total employed in 2019 although matriculants and degree holders grew as a proportion of the total. The latter two categories also saw the fastest employment growth compared to other education categories. Furthermore, the data reflected stark differences in the employment chances for groups depending on educational attainment. In particular, these data again underscore the precarious nature of being a youth in the South African labour market. In general, youth with an education level less than Matric were being absorbed by the labour market at much lower rates than highly educated adults.

Table 4: Work activities of employed, 2009 and 2019

		Number (1 000s)		Share (%)		Share of change (%)
		2009	2019	2009	2019	2009-2019
All		13 983	16 445	100.0	100.0	100.0
Occupation	Managers	1 066	1 449	7.6	8.8	15.5
	Professionals	705	972	5.0	5.9	10.9
	Technicians	1 631	1 402	11.7	8.5	-9.3
	Clerks	1 567	1 733	11.2	10.5	6.7
	Service and sales workers	1 978	2 739	14.1	16.7	30.9
	Skilled agriculture	89	79	0.6	0.5	-0.4
	Craft and related trades	1 688	1 909	12.1	11.6	9.0
	Operators and assemblers	1 204	1 376	8.6	8.4	7.0
	Elementary occupations	3 082	3 765	22.0	22.9	27.8
	Domestic workers	974	1 019	7.0	6.2	1.8
	Other	0	3	0.0	0.0	0.1
	<i>High skilled</i>	<i>3 402</i>	<i>3 823</i>	<i>24.3</i>	<i>23.2</i>	<i>17.1</i>
	<i>Semi-skilled</i>	<i>6 526</i>	<i>7 835</i>	<i>46.7</i>	<i>47.6</i>	<i>53.2</i>
	<i>Low skilled</i>	<i>4 055</i>	<i>4 784</i>	<i>29.0</i>	<i>29.1</i>	<i>29.6</i>
Industry	Agriculture	647	886	4.6	5.4	9.7
	Mining	322	430	2.3	2.6	4.4
	Manufacturing	1 888	1 720	13.5	10.5	-6.8
	Utilities	109	120	0.8	0.7	0.4
	Construction	1 178	1 353	8.4	8.2	7.1
	Wholesale & Retail trade	3 080	3 256	22.0	19.8	7.2
	Transport	802	1 013	5.7	6.2	8.5
	Finance	1 912	2 573	13.7	15.6	26.9
	CSP services	2 809	3 795	20.1	23.1	40.1
	Private households	1 232	1 290	8.8	7.8	2.4
	Other	4	9	0.0	0.1	0.2
	<i>Primary sector</i>	<i>969</i>	<i>1 316</i>	<i>6.9</i>	<i>8.0</i>	<i>14.1</i>
	<i>Secondary sector</i>	<i>3 175</i>	<i>3 193</i>	<i>22.7</i>	<i>19.4</i>	<i>0.7</i>
	<i>Tertiary sector</i>	<i>9 835</i>	<i>11 928</i>	<i>70.3</i>	<i>72.5</i>	<i>85.0</i>
Employer	Employee	11 838	13 880	84.7	84.4	82.9
	Employer	733	902	5.2	5.5	6.9
	Own-account worker	1 290	1 598	9.2	9.7	12.5
	Unpaid work in household business	122	65	0.9	0.4	-2.3
Public	Private	12 070	13 948	86.3	84.8	76.3
	Public	1 913	2 497	13.7	15.2	23.7
Sector	Formal sector (excl. agriculture)	9 853	11 346	70.5	69.0	60.6
	Informal sector (excl. agriculture)	2 250	2 923	16.1	17.8	27.3
	Formal sector (agriculture)	538	760	3.8	4.6	9.0
	Informal sector (agriculture)	109	126	0.8	0.8	0.7
	Private households	1 232	1 290	8.8	7.8	2.4

Source: Author's own calculations using the QLFS 2009Q4 and 2019Q4 data.

Table 4 shows that employment increased in most occupation categories with Technicians (14% decline) and Skilled Agriculture (11.6% decline) workers being the only exceptions. The fastest growing occupation categories over the 10-year period were Service and Sales workers (38.5%), Professionals (37.9%) and Managers (35.8%). The latter two categories, however, grew off a very low base and, when combined, comprise less than 15% of the total number employed in 2019 – a two percentage point rise over the 12.6% share of total employed in 2009. Elementary occupations remained the category with the highest share in 2019 and increased its share of the total between 2009 and 2019.

Grouping the occupation categories into skills levels, semi-skilled employment saw the highest growth over the 10-year period (20.1%), followed by low-skilled (18%), with high-skilled employment showing the slowest growth at 12.4%. Between 2009 and 2019, high-skilled employment shrunk marginally (1.1 percentage points) as proportion of all employed.

Table 5 disaggregates employment by skills level and age cohort as well as education level. The proportion of each age cohort across the different occupation skills level did not change significantly over the 10 years up to 2019. There appears to be little variation between age cohorts with respect to the proportion occupying low-skilled employment: this ranged between 27% (27.4%) for the 25-34 years cohort to 31.1% (32.9%) for the 15-24 years cohort in 2009 (2019). The semi-skilled category reflects more variation across the age cohorts. Both the 15-24 years and 25-34 years cohorts had a 52.6% share employed in semi-skilled labour in 2019 while the highest age cohort 55-65 had a 38% share employed as semi-skilled workers. High-skilled employment has an older age skew: the oldest cohort had a 30% share employed as high-skilled in 2019, and the youngest cohort 15-24 years had a 14.4% share employed as high-skilled. Unsurprisingly, high-skilled occupations favour workers with higher educational attainment, though some notable changes between 2009 and 2019 are evident in Table 5. The proportion of Matric holders occupying high-skilled employment contracted from 25% in 2009 to 18.7% in 2019. Similarly, the proportion of degree holders who were in high-skilled employment declined from 85.8% in 2009 to 79.7% in 2019.

Table 5: Total number of workers at the firms where the employees worked, 2009 and 2019

		Number (1 000s)		Share (%)		Share of change (%)
		2009	2019	2009	2009	2009-2019
Firm size	1 worker	1 169	1 215	9.9	8.8	2.3
	2-4 workers	1 091	1 225	9.2	8.8	6.5
	5-9 workers	1 170	1 128	9.9	8.1	-2.1
	10-19 workers	1 723	1 807	14.6	13.0	4.1
	20-49 workers	2 045	2 354	17.3	17.0	15.2
	50+ workers	4 172	5 015	35.2	36.1	41.3
	Don't know	467	1 136	3.9	8.2	32.7
		11 838	13 880	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Author's own calculations using the QLFS 2009Q4 and 2019Q4 data.

At industry level and going back to Table 4, the results show that CSP Services was one of the fastest growing industries (35.1%), adding the highest number of jobs (987 000) when comparing 2019 to 2009. Finance, which grew at a similar rate (34.6%), employed 661 000 more workers in 2019 relative to 2009. Other high growing industries were Agriculture (37%) and Mining (33.6%), although this growth stems from a low base, together employing 347 000 more people in 2019 when compared to 2009. Notably, Private Household employment was nearly the same in 2019 as was the case in 2009. When aggregating up to sector level, the Primary Sector was fastest growing (35.8%) increasing its share of total employment from 6.9% to 8%. Employment in the secondary sector shrunk as a share of total employment from 22.7% to 19.4%. Tertiary Sector employment increased by more than two million over the 10 years.

Disaggregating employment by sector category and age and education level, Table 6 shows a slight age sector gradient in 2019 that was absent in 2009. Across all age cohorts, employment in the tertiary sector industries was dominant. Primary sector employment, as a proportion of total employment, increased for all cohorts except for the oldest cohort of ages 55-65 years. Education categories with lower achievement had a higher proportion of workers in the primary and secondary sectors. Table 6 shows that the proportion of workers in the secondary sector contracted for all education levels except for degree holders. These data again suggest that manufacturing industries have not been a significant contributor to job-creation over the last decade.

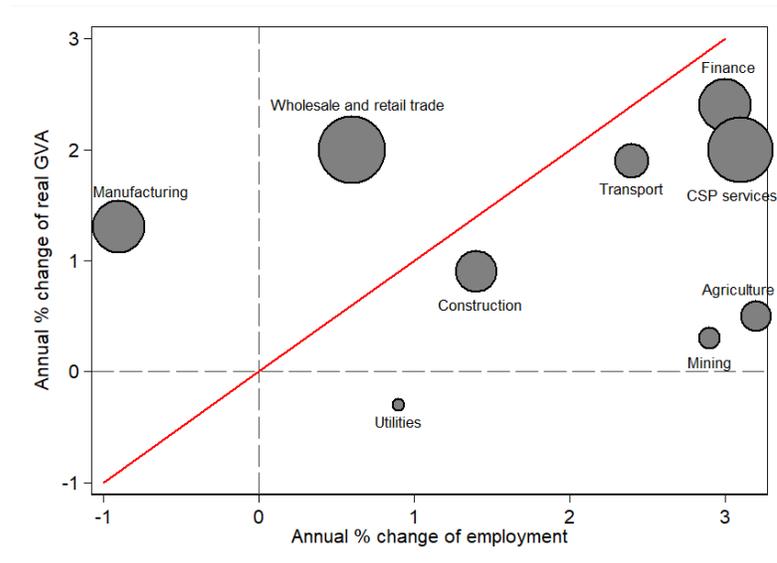
Table 6: Proportion of employed in each skills level of occupation category, by age cohort and educational attainment, 2009 and 2019

		2009			2019		
		High skilled	Semi-skilled	Low skilled	High skilled	Semi-skilled	Low skilled
Age	15-24 years	14.7	54.2	31.1	14.4	52.6	32.9
	25-34 years	20.2	52.8	27.0	20.0	52.6	27.4
	35-44 years	26.8	43.0	30.2	22.4	49.3	28.3
	45-54 years	28.6	42.0	29.4	28.4	41.6	30.0
	55-65 years	32.9	37.9	29.2	30.0	38.0	32.0
Education	None	4.2	33.3	62.5	4.7	27.3	68.0
	Incomplete primary	3.5	36.3	60.2	3.8	36.7	59.5
	Incomplete secondary	8.5	49.0	42.5	5.3	48.8	46.0
	Matric	25.0	59.9	15.1	18.7	61.5	19.8
	Matric + Cert. / Dip.	59.7	36.9	3.3	51.9	41.7	6.3
	Degree	85.8	13.0	1.2	79.7	18.6	1.7

Source: Author's own calculations using the QLFS 2009Q4 and 2019Q4 data.

Figure 2 plots the annual growth in Gross Value Added (GVA) against annual employment growth for each industry over the 10-year period 2009-2019. The figure reinforces the importance of the tertiary sector industries for economic growth and job creation over this period. The finance industry reflected the highest average annual growth over the last twenty years which also translated in high employment growth in that industry. Agriculture and mining, although growing at negligible rates over the two decades, had relatively high average annual employment growth, with agriculture having the highest employment growth of all industries. CSP services, which includes public sector workers, added the most employment over the two decades in absolute numbers and had the second highest average annual growth rate in employment. The trade industry had an employment average growth rate below 1% although the industry averages 2% GVA growth over the 10-year period. The loss of employment in the manufacturing industry perhaps offers some evidence of deindustrialization in South Africa during the 21st century. With negative average annual growth of 1%, manufacturing has shed jobs over the last two decades and has averaged just above 1% in GVA growth.

Figure 2: Annual percentage growth of employment versus annual percentage growth of real gross value added (2010 prices) by industry, 2009–2019



Source: Author’s own calculations using the QLFS 2009Q4, QLFS 2019Q4 and the South African Reserve Bank Quarterly Bulletin data.

Note: The size of the circle represents the percentage share of the industry category in 2009.

Table 4 shows that public sector employment increased by 584 000 over the 10 years, while private sector employment increased by 1.9 million. Public sector employment as proportion of total employment increased by 1.5 percentage points. Informal sector employment increased marginally by 1.5 percentage points over the 10 years. Formal sector agricultural employment grew by 41.3% over this period, adding 222 000 workers.

Within the private sector, larger firms accounted for most employment. As Table 7 shows, larger firms (with 50 or more workers) also accounted for the highest growth in employment between 2009 and 2019. Notably, employment in all firm size categories below 50 workers shrunk as a share of total employment between 2009 and 2019.

Table 7: Proportion of employed in each industry sector category, by age cohort and educational attainment, 2009 and 2019

		2009			2019		
		Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Age	15-24yrs	7.7	22.9	69.4	9.7	20.2	69.8
	25-34yrs	6.7	23.7	69.6	8.2	20.1	71.8
	35-44yrs	6.5	21.5	71.9	7.9	19.8	72.2
	45-54yrs	7.3	22.5	70.2	7.8	17.9	74.2
	55-65yrs	7.6	23.5	68.9	6.9	19.1	73.9
Education	None	19.3	23.8	56.9	23.2	18.7	58.1
	Incomplete primary	15.6	26.5	57.9	18.5	21.4	60.1
	Incomplete secondary	8.0	25.6	66.3	10.9	22.1	67.0
	Matric	4.0	22.7	73.3	5.6	19.9	74.4
	Matric + Cert/Dip	2.9	16.2	80.9	3.8	15.4	80.8
	Degree	2.2	10.3	87.2	2.6	12.0	85.2

Source: Author's own calculations using the QLFS 2009Q4 and 2019Q4 data.

The importance of temporary work has received greater policy focus over the last two decades. The related notion of 'under-employment' has also received some attention in the labour research literature. Table 8 shows the changes in employment by sector, skills level and tenure status. Around 80% of the total employed were in full-time employment in 2009 as well as 2019. The listed category in which employment grew fastest was informal non-full-time employers. Such persons, however, accounted for only 3.7% of the total employed in 2019. In absolute terms, most of the growth in employment occurred in formal, full-time employment – particularly in semi-skilled work.

Table 8: Employment by sector, skills level and full-time/part-time status, 2009 and 2019

	Number		Share %		Share of change (%)	Annualised growth rate (%)
	2009	2019	2009	2019	2009-2019	
Formal employees, full-time skilled	2 182	2 512	15.6	15.3	13.4	1.4
Formal employees, full-time semi-skilled	4 835	5 555	34.6	33.8	29.3	1.4
Formal employees, full-time unskilled	1 789	2 152	12.8	13.1	14.8	1.9
Formal employers, full-time skilled	449	496	3.2	3.0	1.9	1.0
Formal employers, full-time semi-skilled	159	150	1.1	0.9	-0.4	-0.6
Formal employers, full-time unskilled	14	15	0.1	0.1	0.1	1.0

Formal employees, not full-time	880	1 117	6.3	6.8	9.6	2.4
Formal employers, not full-time	85	108	0.6	0.7	1.0	2.5
Informal employees, full-time	757	1 031	5.4	6.3	11.2	3.1
Informal employees, not full-time	171	233	1.2	1.4	2.5	3.2
Informal employers, full-time	1 056	1 178	7.5	7.2	5.0	1.1
Informal employers, not full-time	376	606	2.7	3.7	9.3	4.9
Private households	1 232	1 290	8.8	7.8	2.4	0.5
	13 983	16 445	100.0	100.0	100.0	1.6

Source: Author's own calculations using the QLFS 2009Q4 and 2019Q4 data.

3.4 Unemployment

Table 9 shows that the unemployment rate increased by five percentage points over the 2009-2019 period. In absolute terms this amounted to an increase of 2.3 million people. Africans accounted for 90.5% of the change in the total number of unemployed. The unemployment rate increased over the last decade for all population groups. Africans and coloureds remain much more likely to be unemployed than their white and Indian counterparts. Females also had a higher unemployment rate relative to males, a gap that has increased over the 2009-2019 period, which is consistent with the increased participation rate by females.

The youngest age cohort, ages 15-24 years, suffered a significantly higher unemployment rate (58.1%) when compared to the 25-34 years age cohort (35.6%). Unemployment rates decreased across older age-cohorts, though it is noteworthy that for the two oldest cohorts, unemployment more than doubled in absolute terms between 2009 and 2019. The number of unemployed in the 35-44 cohort increased by 80% or 673 000 over this period. In 2019, the 25-34 years cohort had the largest absolute number of unemployed persons, at 2.67 million, which reflects an increase of 836 000, or 46%, over the 2009 total for this cohort.

Provinces again reflect high variability in unemployment rates, ranging between 21% (Western Cape) and 39.5% (Eastern Cape). Gauteng, the most populous province, accounts for one-third of the total number of unemployed South Africans and saw a 50% increase in the number of unemployed over the last decade. The province with the second highest proportional share of the unemployed is the Eastern Cape, which saw a near doubling of unemployed persons (446 000 additional unemployed) in the 2009-2019 period. In juxtaposition to the 125 000 additional employed added over the same period, this presents a stark figure for labour market dynamics in the Eastern Cape province.

Table 9: Unemployed under the narrow definition: 2009 and 2019

		Unemployed number (1 000s)		Share (%)		Share of change (%)	Unemployment rate (%)	
		2009	2019	2009	2019	2009-2019	2009	2019
All		4 426	6 726	100.0	100.0	100.0	24.0	29.0
Race	African	3 849	5 931	87.0	88.2	90.5	28.2	32.4
	Coloured	411	555	9.3	8.3	6.3	20.7	24.8
	Indian	56	85	1.3	1.3	1.2	10.9	13.9
	White	110	155	2.5	2.3	2.0	4.9	7.7
Gender	Male	2 334	3 430	52.7	51.0	47.7	22.8	27.1
	Female	2 092	3 296	47.3	49.0	52.3	25.6	31.3
Age	15-24 years	1 289	1 564	29.1	23.3	11.9	48.5	58.1
	25-34 years	1 836	2 672	41.5	39.7	36.3	28.9	35.6
	35-44 years	864	1 538	19.5	22.9	29.3	17.3	23.0
	45-54 years	357	786	8.1	11.7	18.7	11.3	17.5
	55-65 years	80	167	1.8	2.5	3.8	6.6	9.2
	<i>15-29 years</i>	<i>2 375</i>	<i>3 103</i>	<i>53.7</i>	<i>46.1</i>	<i>31.6</i>	<i>40.3</i>	<i>48.5</i>
Province	Western Cape	545	666	12.3	9.9	5.3	21.0	20.9
	Eastern Cape	457	904	10.3	13.4	19.4	26.6	39.5
	Northern Cape	97	123	2.2	1.8	1.1	24.5	26.8
	Free State	260	423	5.9	6.3	7.1	24.8	35.0
	KwaZulu-Natal	558	889	12.6	13.2	14.4	18.9	25.0
	North West	296	401	6.7	6.0	4.5	26.8	28.8
	Gauteng	1 513	2 272	34.2	33.8	33.0	25.5	30.8
	Mpumalanga	352	628	7.9	9.3	12.0	26.0	33.5
Limpopo	348	421	7.9	6.3	3.2	26.3	23.1	
Education	None	102	59	2.3	0.9	-1.9	17.9	17.8
	Incomplete primary	371	350	8.4	5.2	-0.9	22.6	26.6
	Incomplete secondary	2 219	3 361	50.1	50.0	49.6	29.6	36.2
	Matric	1 450	2 335	32.8	34.7	38.5	25.6	29.7
	Matric + Cert. / Dip.	196	383	4.4	5.7	8.1	10.8	18.7
	Degree	48	197	1.1	2.9	6.5	4.7	9.2
	Other/Not specified	39	40	0.9	0.6	0.1	19.5	20.5

Source: Author's own calculations using the QLFS 2009Q4 and 2019Q4 data.

Matching employees and employers in practice takes place in myriad ways. Inefficiencies in this process could have significant implications for the functioning of the labour market. The QLFS asks respondents about their work seeking activities. Table 10 shows that across age

cohorts, a minority of the unemployed utilised employment agencies when seeking employment. The table also shows the importance of networks in seeking employment: ‘assistance from relatives and friends’ is the only option chosen by a majority of respondents across all age cohorts. Educational attainment seems to mitigate the importance of networks as only 31.4% of degree holders relied on this method of job-seeking whereas for job-seekers with less than Matric, the proportion was closer to 60%. The data in Table 10 do show some generational differences in behaviour when it comes to seeking employment. Younger job-seekers were more likely to search for work by looking at advertisements when compared to older job-seekers. In addition, a high proportion of degree holders used job advertisements as a means of seeking employment in contrast to individuals with low educational attainment.

Table 10: Proportion of unemployed involved in each job-seeking action by age cohort and educational attainment, 2019

		[A]	[B]	[C]	[D]	[E]	[F]	[G]	[H]
All		13.7	46.6	42.2	33.7	53.1	4.0	5.1	2.1
Age	15-24 years	11.9	44.4	45.2	35.7	50.3	3.9	4.0	1.8
	25-34 years	13.4	45.6	44.5	35.8	53.1	3.5	5.4	1.5
	35-44 years	16.1	48.3	42.8	33.9	54.1	4.0	5.0	3.3
	45-54 years	13.9	49.7	29.7	24.8	55.7	5.8	6.2	2.4
	55-65 years	10.4	50.5	31.4	21.8	56.7	4.0	4.8	3.4
Education	None	14.9	55.7	16.5	19.2	56.8	2.4	4.9	3.6
	Incomplete primary	10.4	47.3	16.6	14.7	57.9	5.9	9.8	1.9
	Incomplete secondary	13.6	51.3	30.4	22.7	58.6	4.3	6.2	1.8
	Matric	13.7	42.8	57.2	46.1	49.0	3.7	3.6	2.0
	Matric + Cert/Dip	15.0	32.3	68.7	58.4	34.8	2.3	2.2	3.8
	Degree	18.3	33.6	73.0	68.3	31.4	3.7	0.0	6.1

Source: Author’s own calculations using the QLFS 2019Q4 data.

[A]: Waited/Registered at employment agency

[B]: Enquired at workplaces

[C]: Placed/Answered advertisement

[D]: Searched through job advertisement/internet

[E]: Sought assistance from relatives/friends

[F]: Looked for opportunity to start own business

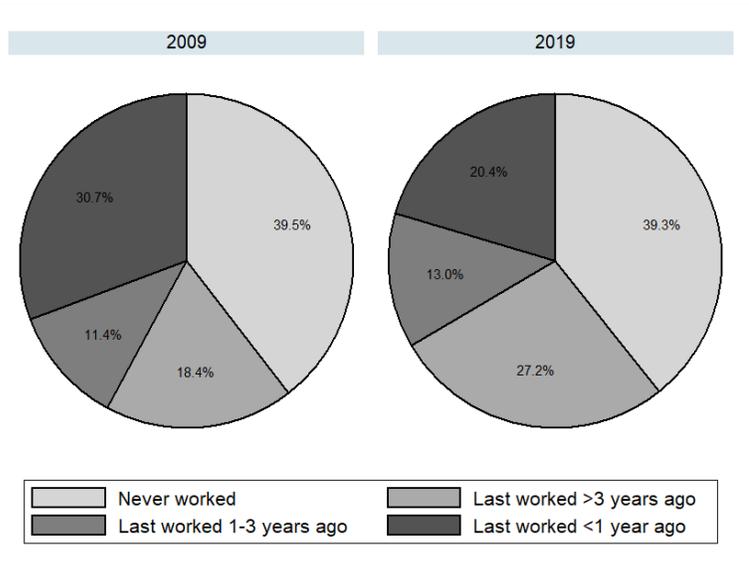
[G]: Waited at street side for casual work

[H]: Sought financial assistance to look for work

Churn is not necessarily an undesirable feature of the labour market. Structural unemployment, on the other hand, demands a policy response as it is associated with longer term

unemployment and attendant social pathologies. Figure 3 shows the duration of unemployment among the unemployed for 2009 and 2019. The proportion of unemployed who have never worked remained roughly the same over the decade. However, the graph shows a trend towards longer spells of unemployment among those without work. The proportion of individuals who last worked more than three years ago increased from 18.4% to 27.2% while the proportion of individuals who worked within the last year decreased from 30.7% to 20.4%.

Figure 3: Past work experience of unemployed, 2009 and 2019

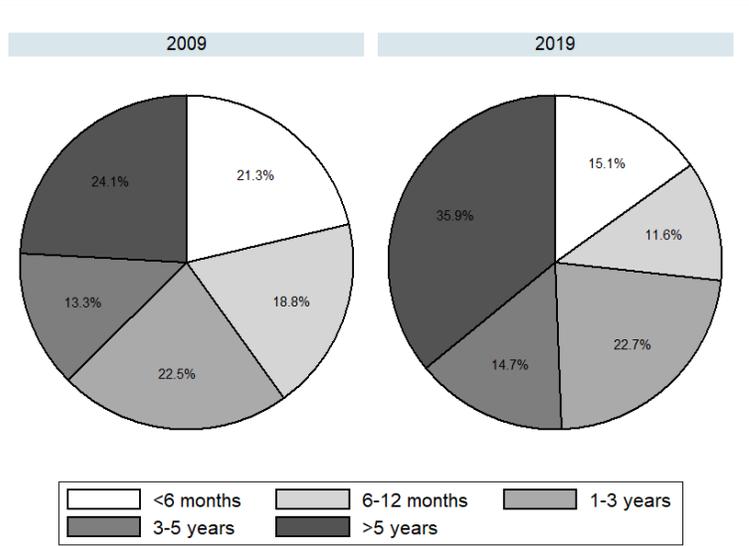


Source: Author’s own calculations using the QLFS 2009Q4 and 2019Q4 data.

Figure 4 shows the periods that unemployed individuals spent seeking employment. The proportion who spent more than five years seeking employment increased from 24.1% to 35.9% over the 2009-2019 period while the proportion of individuals who spent fewer than six months seeking employment decreased from 21.3% to 15.1%. Table A1 in the Appendix disaggregates these data by various demographic characteristics. Unemployed Africans (41.6%) were much more likely to have never worked than other population groups. The proportion of unemployed Africans who worked within the previous three years was also significantly lower than was the case for other population groups and declined substantially between 2009 (19.3%) and 2019 (7.4%). Unemployed females appear to remain unemployed for longer periods than males. Geographically, the Western Cape appears to be an outlier in the table, as it was the only province in which the largest proportion of unemployed individuals have worked within the previous three years. Nonetheless, this proportion decreased by 10

percentage points over the decade for the Western Cape and has worsened, on average, across the provinces. Strikingly, higher education levels do not seem to offer immunity to long-term unemployment. Unemployed individuals with degrees have the highest proportion of their respective cohort (49.7 per cent) who have never worked.

Figure 4: Unemployed individuals’ duration of seeking work, 2009 and 2019



Source: Author’s own calculations using the QLFS 2009Q4 and 2019Q4 data.

4 Discussion

The empirical findings provide some descriptive support for the notion of hysteresis in unemployment in South Africa. The more likely candidates for hysteresis mechanisms are the human capital theory and insider-outsider framework of labour markets. Both these possible causes are hard to ameliorate. Skills development has proven to be a challenge for policymakers, while the prospect of labour market reform remains a contentious political-economy matter. It would be tempting to suggest that disproportional union power is a significant factor in explaining the labour market outcomes presented above, particularly if advancing the insider-outsider framework for analysing South Africa’s labour market. The capacity for insiders to negotiate higher wages for themselves is often done at the expense of the unemployed, who have a more difficult transition to employment as a result of the relatively high wages coupled with limited capacity to signal skills or ability. This seems descriptive of South Africa’s labour market. Borat, Naidoo & Yu (2015: 659) argued that the impact of South Africa’s labour unions on the economy has been ‘relatively benign’. They nevertheless

conclude that “political economy of wage formation and economic activity in South Africa, ..., are central to appreciating the economy’s current domestic labour market disequilibria”.

De Lanoy et al. (2020) focused on factors explaining the persistence of youth unemployment. The dislocation between training and employment opportunities is one area where policy may gain some traction. The problem they foreground is the poor signaling value of educational attainment as a proxy for productivity. The suggestion that training programmes may have some merit as a policy response seems reasonable in theory. Such responses have, in practice, not resulted in meaningful improvements as measured by employment growth. A logical next step is to understand which training practices may better serve to both prepare youth for the labour market and signal productivity to employers.

An often-discussed intervention is small business development – as a focus of policymakers, this is instantiated in the Department of Small Business Development, established in 2014. However, Kerr, Wittenberg and Arrow (2014) found that it is mainly large firms that have been responsible for employment growth in South Africa. The relative low level of entrepreneurial activity is also manifested in the comparatively small informal sector in South Africa (Kingdon & Knight, 2004).

Although the current fiscal position in South Africa precludes the imminent rollout of a universal basic income, the emergency introduction of incomes to unemployed individuals during COVID-19 evidences its feasibility, at least administratively. It has been suggested that the structural impediments to low-skilled employment growth are, perhaps for the foreseeable future, insurmountable. Taking seriously this prospect means entertaining policies that mitigate against a reality in which labour markets are unable to absorb supply, as argued by Marais (2020). Despite its lack of popular or political support (Seekings, 2020), the obvious candidate policy, in theory, is a universal basic income grant. While the case for a universal basic income grant implementation has been presented on grounds of anti-poverty, the practical feasibility of this grant has not been rigorously tested in the economics literature – perhaps due to it being viewed as patently infeasible.

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Appendix

Table A1: Proportion of unemployed who never worked or last worked more than three years ago: 2009 and 2019

		Never worked before		Last worked >3 years ago		Last worked <3 years ago	
		2009	2019	2009	2019	2009	2019
All		39.5	39.3	37.3	50.3	23.2	10.4
Race	African	41.6	41.0	39.0	51.6	19.3	7.4
	Coloured	23.7	27.7	25.3	40.8	51.0	31.5
	Indian	32.1	22.9	35.8	49.4	32.2	27.6
	White	26.9	24.8	22.7	35.7	50.4	39.4
Gender	Male	34.7	35.7	33.7	46.9	31.6	17.4
	Female	44.9	43.1	41.3	53.8	13.8	3.1
Age	15-24 years	67.6	73.9	22.5	31.1	9.9	-5.0
	25-34 years	39.0	41.8	41.0	52.7	20.0	5.6
	35-44 years	15.9	18.8	47.4	59.6	36.7	21.6
	45-54 years	4.3	9.2	46.2	60.4	49.5	30.4
	55-65 years	9.3	6.8	42.5	59.3	48.2	33.9
	15-29 years	57.5	62.8	29.9	41.2	12.6	-4.0
Province	Western Cape	22.7	23.6	25.5	36.2	51.8	40.2
	Eastern Cape	38.9	49.1	32.1	50.6	29.0	0.3
	Northern Cape	38.1	28.3	36.7	36.6	25.2	35.2
	Free State	32.1	33.1	31.1	47.6	36.8	19.3
	KwaZulu-Natal	38.9	40.3	31.6	48.6	29.5	11.1
	North West	50.5	41.4	46.6	51.4	2.8	7.2
	Gauteng	43.0	37.4	47.2	59.3	9.8	3.2
	Mpumalanga	44.2	44.8	37.8	47.6	18.0	7.5
	Limpopo	44.0	50.5	25.4	36.6	30.6	12.9
Education	None	16.0	27.0	53.6	58.8	30.4	14.2
	Incomplete primary	29.7	27.0	41.5	48.7	28.8	24.2
	Incomplete secondary	35.7	35.3	38.0	53.1	26.2	11.6
	Matric	48.7	46.1	35.6	49.1	15.7	4.8
	Matric + Cert. / Dip.	43.8	43.3	25.6	39.9	30.6	16.7
	Degree	48.5	49.7	41.4	39.0	10.1	11.3
	Other/Not specified	34.8	15.2	30.6	45.8	34.6	39.0

Source: Author's own calculations using the QLFS 2009Q4 and 2019Q4 data.