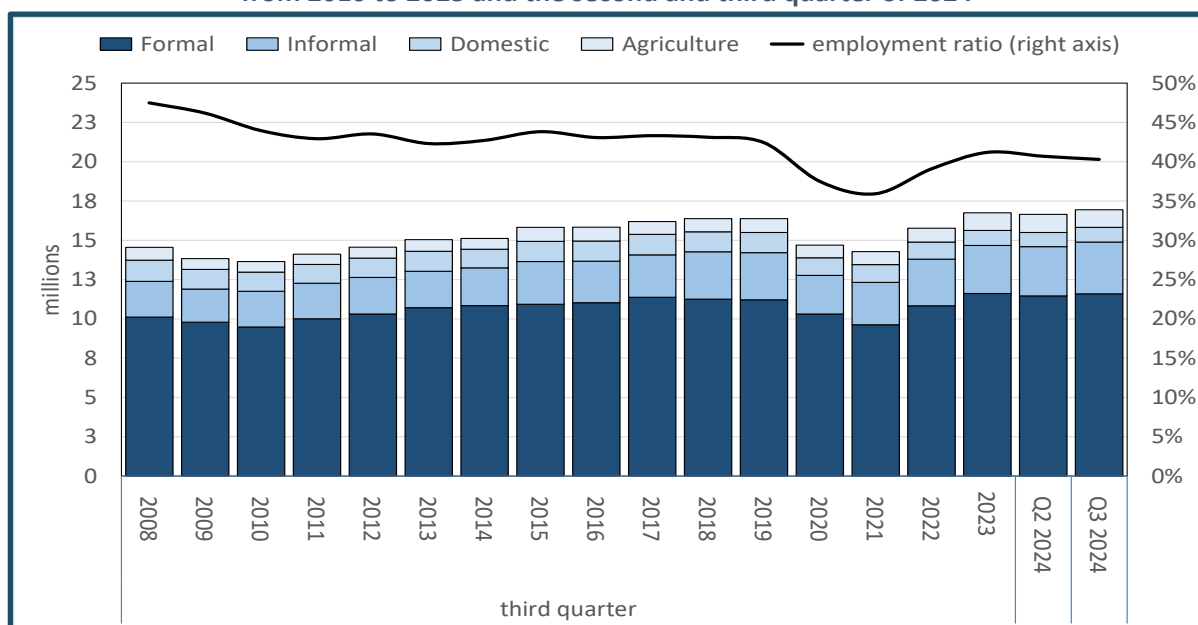


## Employment

In the year to the third quarter of 2024, formal employment was virtually unchanged. In contrast, informal employment reportedly climbed by 7%, with a surge in informal construction jobs. As a result, the Quarterly Labour Force Survey found an increase in total employment of 200 000 for the period, or 1.2%, to almost 17 million jobs. Manufacturing gained 120 000 jobs over the year, climbing to 1.6 million, but remained well below pre-pandemic levels.

In the year to the third quarter of 2024, total employment increased by 200 000 jobs, or 1.2%, to reach a total of 16.9 million (Graph 7). The informal sector accounted for virtually all of the reported employment gains, with small declines in formal and domestic jobs. Even so, total employment growth lagged behind population growth. As a result, the share of adults with income-generating employment dropped to 40%, down from 41% a year earlier. The ratio has fluctuated between 39% and 46% since the transition to democracy, far below the global norm of 60%. The quarterly employment data are not seasonally adjusted, so quarter-on-quarter changes are not necessarily meaningful.

**Graph 7. Employment by type of employer, and the employment ratio (a), for the third quarter from 2010 to 2023 and the second and third quarter of 2024**

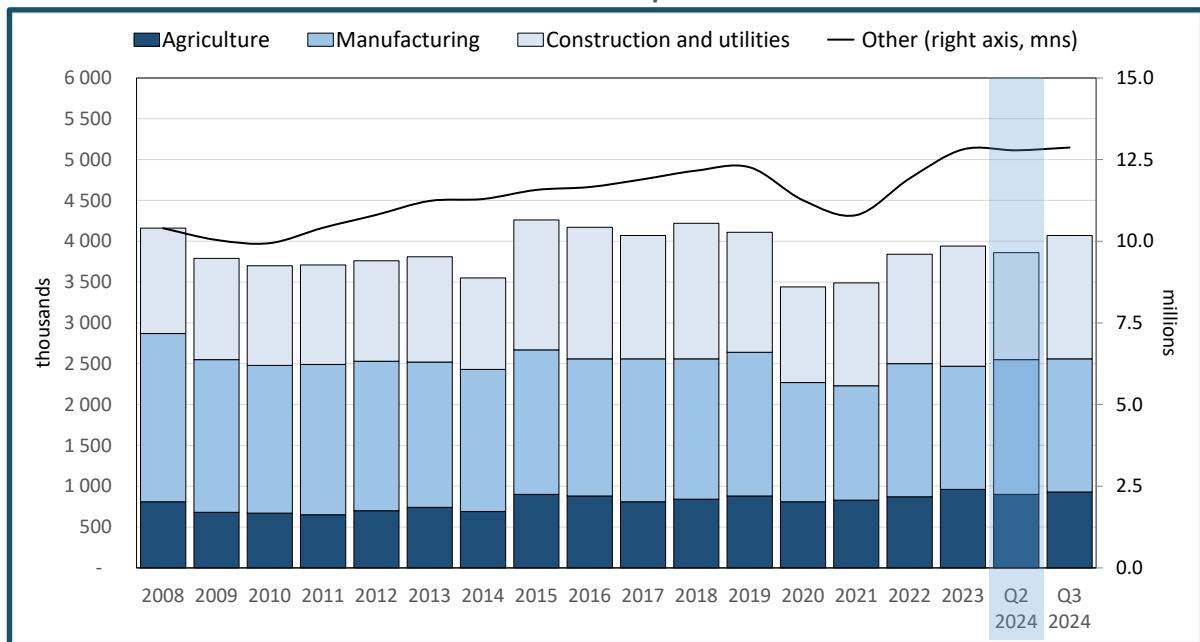


Note: (a) The employment ratio equals employed as percentage of total working aged population

Source: Calculated from Statistics South Africa. QLFS Trends 2008-2024Q3. Excel spreadsheet.

Manufacturing gained some 120 000 jobs, or 8%, in the year to the third quarter of 2024. The rest of the economy, however, showed virtually no jobs growth. The Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) reported that informal construction gained 125 000 jobs, but formal construction lost 100 000. This was the main factor behind the reported jump in informal employment over the past year. It seems possible, however, that this finding is a quirk of the survey rather than showing a real change in employment status.

**Graph 8. Employment in agriculture, manufacturing, and utilities and construction, in thousands, and in the rest of the economy in millions, third quarter 2010 to 2023 and second and third quarter of 2024**

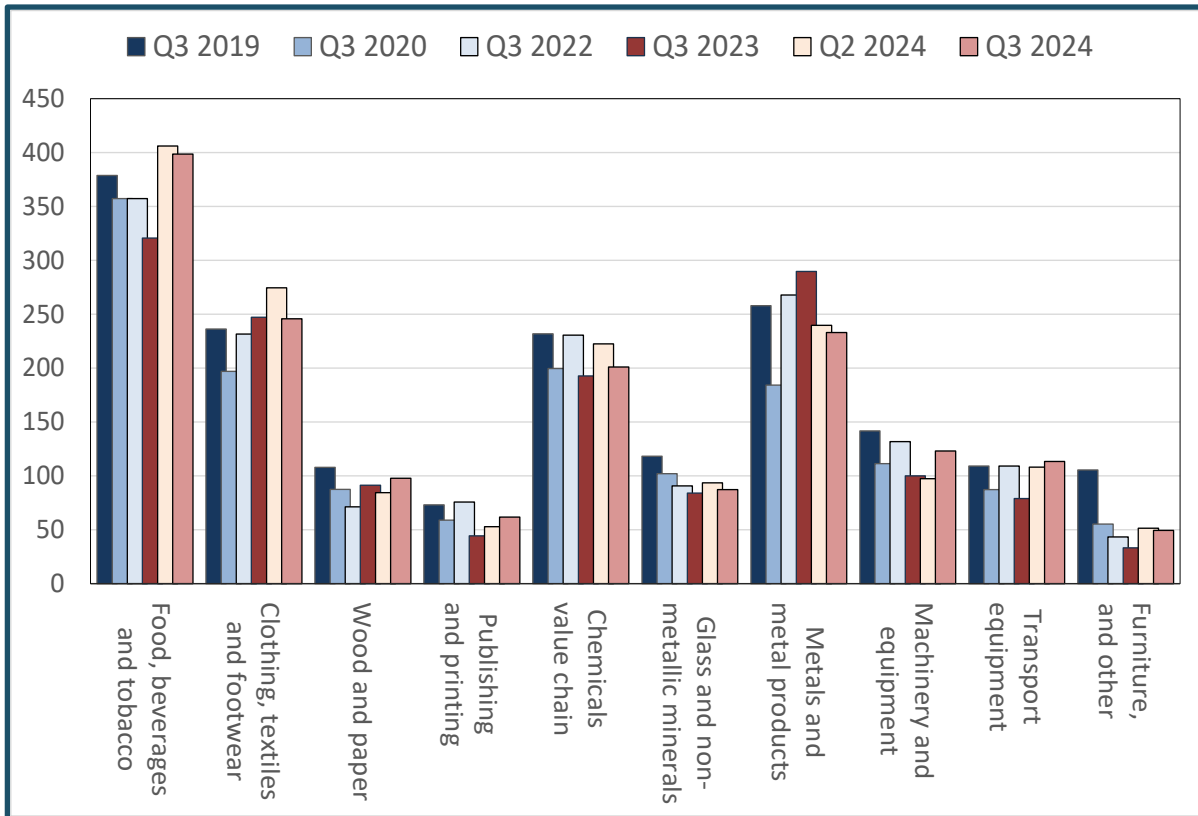


Source: Calculated from Statistics South Africa. QLFS Trends 2008-2024Q3. Excel spreadsheet.

Virtually all of the jobs gained in manufacturing in the year to the third quarter of 2024 were in food processing. The industry reportedly gained 80 000 jobs over the period, for an increase of nearly 25%. As a result, it fully regained losses reported in the third quarter of 2023, and exceeded pre-pandemic production levels.

In contrast, basic metals and metal products reported significant job losses from a high point a year earlier, falling back below 2019 levels. (Graph 9) The QLFS found a jump in auto employment over the year from 2023, despite the step fall in sales.

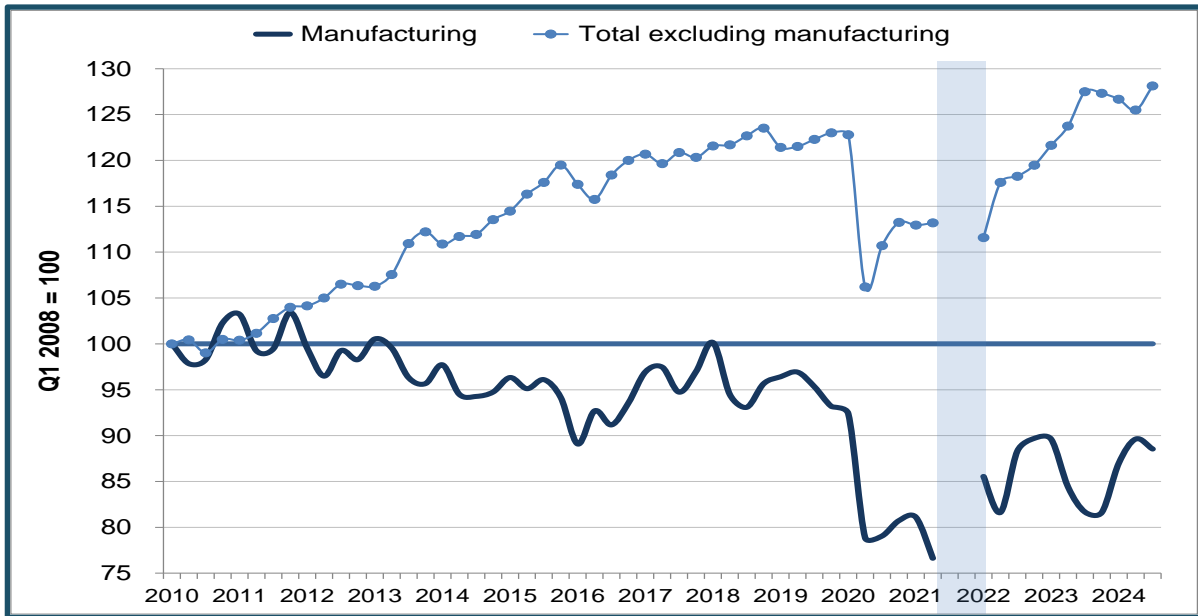
**Graph 9. Employment in manufacturing industries, in thousands, third quarter 2019 to third quarter 2024 (a) and second quarter 2024.**



*Note: (a) The response rate in the second half of 2021 was extremely low, so the third quarter data for that year are excluded. Source: Calculated from Statistics South Africa. Quarterly Labour Force Survey for relevant quarters. Electronic databases.*

Overall, the employment data continue to show significant fluctuations, making it difficult to discern long-term trends. As Graph 10 shows, manufacturing seems to have stabilised in the past two years, following job losses for most of the past 15 years. The rest of the economy has generated limited employment in the past year, apparently ending the relatively rapid gains seen during the recovery from the COVID-19 downturn.

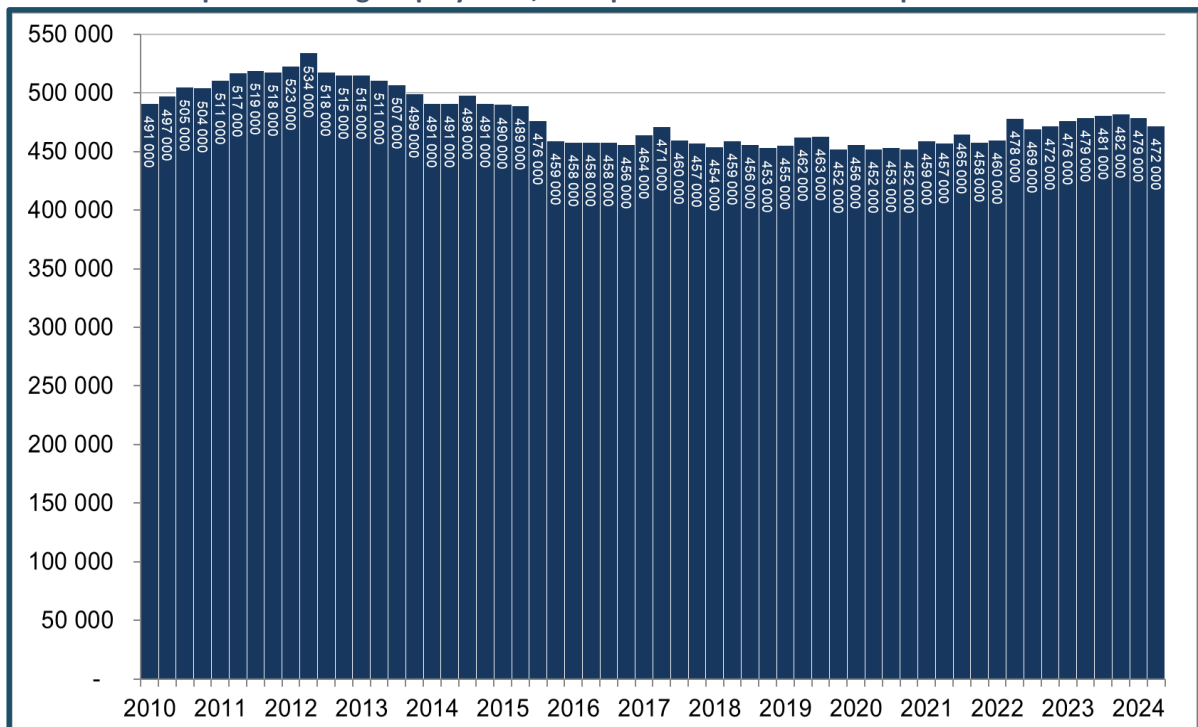
**Graph 10. Index of employment in manufacturing and the rest of the economy, first quarter 2010 to the third quarter of 2024 (first quarter 2010 = 100) (a)**



Note: (a) Response rates for the QLFS were extremely low in the second half of 2021, and the figures for that period are therefore highly unreliable and excluded from the graph. Source: Calculated from Statistics South Africa. QLFS for relevant quarters. Electronic databases.

For data on mining employment, Statistics South Africa recommends the survey of formal businesses, the Quarterly Employment Survey, rather than the QLFS, which samples households. However, the Quarterly Employment Survey is published a quarter behind the QLFS. It found that mining employment declined through the first half of 2024 (Graph 11)

**Graph 11. Mining employment, first quarter 2010 to second quarter 2024**



Source: Statistics South Africa. Quarterly Employment Statistics. Detailed breakdown. Second quarter 2024 Excel spreadsheet.