

Continuities and discontinuities in repertoires of strike violence in post-apartheid South Africa: Cases from Rustenburg platinum mines.

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Strike actions during apartheid were characterised by severe violence. This was explained by a repressive regime and lack of institutionalisation of industrial conflict. However, violence remains a significant phenomenon in strikes in post-apartheid South Africa. The focus of this paper is to explore the variation and the meaning attached to violence in strikes post the transition. It examines the repertoires of contention in strike violence and justifies how and why they have shifted. This is based on a qualitative study drawing from a triangulation of in-depth interviews and participant observation of case studies from platinum mines in Rustenburg. The paper argues that the change in the structure of the state is connected to the fragmentation of workers organisation and the waning of collective solidarity. This is associated with violence in strikes and the shift in repertoires. In addition, the admission of women into the masculine dominated mining industry has shifted the repertoires of violence to adopt covert and overt gendered dimensions. The violence in strikes is linked to the broader subaltern collective action within South Africa as reflected by similarities and differences in the claims, repertoires, targets and the levels of violence.