
Flexibility in Workplaces:

*Effects on Workers, Work Environment
and the Unions*

Isik Urla Zeytinoglu, Editor



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Chapter 1

Introduction, Overview of the Chapters in Flexibility in Workplaces, and Emerging Research Issues

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Flexibility in workplace takes a variety of forms. This book focuses on numerical, functional and working time flexibility issues in workplaces with specific emphasis on the effects of such flexibility strategies on workers, the work environment and trade unions. As flexible work arrangements in newly created jobs are increasing in many countries, the topic is creating continued interest, and some concern, for researchers, policy makers, employers, unions, and the public at large. The purpose of this book is to present research results of the IIRA Flexible Work Patterns Study Group's members. Their research focuses on flexibility strategies in workplaces and their effects on individual workers and their families, the work environment, and the unions. Earlier version of these chapters were presented and discussed at the International Industrial Relations Association World Congress in Berlin, Germany in September 2003. Study Group members reviewed the work submitted for this web-based book, and gave invaluable comments and suggestions to improve the quality of the book. We are indebted to their support of our work. We are also grateful to International Industrial Relations Association and the International Labour Office for hosting our book on their web site. We hope that, with the increased access to the Internet, our research results will be available globally to all those interested in flexibility issues in workplaces. Our book, as a whole or its individual chapters, can be downloaded for academic and research purposes. However, we request acknowledgement of the authors in all types and forms of dissemination to protect the authors' intellectual property rights.

The analytical scope of the book includes conceptual and theoretical examination of the topic as well as empirical analysis of workplace level country-specific experiences. In terms of the geographical scope, the book focuses on Canada, Finland, the Netherlands, Spain, the UK and the USA. These countries now have a well-developed experience with flexibility in the workplace dating back at least two decades. In terms of the coverage of flexibility strategies, the scope includes articles on functional flexibility, numerical flexibility, and working time flexibility. With the continued interest in the topic at the national level in most industrialized countries, and at international organizations such as the European Union (EU), International Labour Organisation (ILO), and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), it is important and timely to continue examining this phenomenon to contribute to our knowledge.

Contents

The book consists of two sections: an introduction, overview and conclusions section, and the empirical studies section. **Section I** consists of the introduction and overview chapter (Chapter 1) written by the Editor, I. U. Zeytinoglu and her co-author and assistant manager,

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W. Lillevik. The authors discuss the conclusions from empirical research of the contributors and provide a summary of research issues emerging from these studies.

Section II focuses on empirical studies on flexibility in workplaces. This section starts with two workplace level studies discussing whether temporary employment is a trap for workers or a bridge for better jobs. The first of these articles is Chapter 2, co-authored by A. Saloniemi & P. Virtanen, and focuses on municipal employees in Finland. The next article, co-authored by M.G. Rendon, M.A. Castro & I.F. Saborido, examines the same topic for Spain using the Spanish Labor Force Survey (Chapter 3).

Then we continue with the next paper, by L. Golden, providing an empirical analysis of the need for flexibility for workers in the US. He examines the flexibility issue focusing on work schedules and demographic characteristics of workers (Chapter 4).

The emphasis on the effects of flexibility in workplaces on individual workers continues with the next two chapters. In his article, in Chapter 5, M. van Velzen provides a comparative analysis of training arrangements for flexible workers in the Dutch and US construction sector. In the next Chapter (Chapter 6), I. U. Zeytinoglu, W. Lillevik, B. Seaton, & J. Moruz discuss how flexibility in retail trade workplaces create stress for non-standard workers, and how the stress results in physical and emotional health problems, and affects the workplace.

In the next article, C. Kelliher and T. Desombre, examine the impact of introducing functional flexibility on employees' perceptions of their occupational identity by focusing on health care work environment (Chapter 7). In **section III**, which contains the last chapter of this volume, I. U. Zeytinoglu provides conclusions and research issues emerging from the studies included in this volume.

Description of the Chapters

In Chapter 2, Saloniemi and Virtanen discuss whether temporary employment is a springboard for a steady career, or whether it leads to being stuck in a perpetual string of dead-end jobs within the peripheral labour market. This bridge-or-trap question has merited increasing attention as newer forms of employment emerge. Based on data drawn from a follow-up study conducted under a research programme on Finnish municipal wage and salary earners. The study analyses the determinants predicting the careers of fixed-term employees. In 1998, these employees responded to a survey. Socio-demographic background (gender, age, occupational status and education), characteristics of psychosocial work environment (job control, job demand, supervisor support and co-worker support) and mental well-being (psychological distress) were analyzed as predictors for permanent employment in 2002. In addition, data on potential change in occupation during the follow-up were drawn from the 2002 survey. Ageing, higher than basic-level education and staying in the same occupation, were found to increase the "risk" of getting a permanent job, and low job control was connected with lower chances for permanent employment. After four years, less than one in ten participants had ended up unemployed, while almost a half had a permanent post, supporting the bridge metaphor for temporary employment. The outcomes stressed the nature of temporary employment mainly as a waiting area. The recent population-based register studies from Finland and from other Scandinavian countries have arrived at similar conclusions.

Manuel-Rendon, Alcaide-Castro and Florez-Saborido follow the same theme by discussing the transitions of workers between segments in the Spanish labour market in chapter 3. Spain has a highly segmented dual labour market, within which approximately one third of the salaried workforce is employed under fixed-term contracts (the most common

form of nonstandard employment in Spain). Building on previous research, their study addressed the question of whether temporary employment is a dead-end that traps workers indefinitely, or just a stepping-stone towards more stable forms of employment. The authors found that while most temporary workers (70%) transitioned from temporary to permanent employment after 6 years, certain individual characteristics, occupations and economic sectors, have a negative influence on the probability of transitioning from a temporary to a permanent job. For women, older and lower-skilled workers, exiting temporary employment is very difficult, almost a dead-end scenario. Temporary employment is therefore not a homogenous group in Spain being that certain workers are trapped indefinitely in this kind of employment, while others are in transit towards a permanent job.

Golden describes some trends that he has observed about flexible work in the United States in chapter 4. Flexible daily work scheduling increased dramatically from the 1980s to 1997, but appears to have recently stalled in the U.S. There remains a persistent “flexibility gap” in access to the ability to vary one’s own daily starting and ending times of the workday. In particular, women and African American workers have less access to this flexibility in scheduling, while such arrangements are more available for parents with pre-school children. Flexible schedules, however, are not made more available to married workers. Workers with part-time hours or long weekly hours get greater access to flexible schedules, while workers employed in the traditional ‘nine-to-five’ jobs are not offered this access as frequently. Those who work in most managerial, professional and sales positions have more flexibility than others, with notable exceptions such as teachers and retail trade employees. Workers in health-related professional, technical and service positions, and most blue-collar type service, craft and labourer jobs were found to have considerably less schedule flexibility. Golden recommends that policies aimed at increasing flexibility in scheduling should target workers and jobs that currently lack flexible work schedules.

In chapter 5, van Velzen examines the degree to which temporary agency workers and others employed on flexible, short-term employment contracts receive training. The paper consists of a qualitative, descriptive comparison between the construction industries in the Netherlands and the United States. His findings show that recent legislative changes geared toward all flexible workers in the Netherlands have created incentives for temporary work agencies in the construction industry to provide training; however, such legal incentives are largely nonexistent for labour market intermediaries in the United States, leaving especially low-skilled flexible workers in a training limbo. The predicament of these workers is exacerbated by the fact that unions, the traditional providers of training in the U.S construction industry, do not sufficiently reach out to flexible workers; thus flexible workers have no one they can lean on to pressure institutions to provide them with training to enhance their skills and careers within the American construction industry.

The purpose of chapter 6 is to examine the effects of working conditions in part-time and casual work on the stress of women in the retail trade in Canada, and the outcomes of such stress within their workplaces. Zeytinoglu, Lillevik, Seaton and Moruz analysed data that were collected through interviews with occupational health and safety representatives, and focus groups and interviews with workers in retail trade. The analysis focused on gender as a determinant of occupational health and as a contributor to the non-standard employment status for many women. Other factors, such as working conditions, gendered work environments and demographic factors, as well as how these factors work together, were analyzed as contributors to stress. Results show that job insecurity, short- and split-shifts, the unpredictability of hours, low wages and benefits in part-time and casual jobs in retail sector, commonly contributed to musculoskeletal disorders, migraines and headaches for these women. The need to juggle multiple jobs to earn a living wage, gendered work

environments and work-personal life conflicts further contributed to stress and workplace problems of absenteeism, high turnover and workplace conflicts.

In chapter 7, Kelliher and Desombre examine the impact of introducing functional flexibility in the workplace on employees' perceptions of their occupational identity in the United Kingdom. Notions of occupational identity have traditionally been strong in the health care sector and demarcations have often been protected by the professional associations covering health care workers. In the UK there have been a number of recent initiatives in the National Health Service (NHS) designed to breakdown occupational boundaries, resulting in staff performing functions across a wider range of tasks. Data are presented from two case studies where functional flexibility was introduced for different groups of health care workers. Results show that where functional flexibility involved crossing traditional job boundaries, the employees' notions of identity were challenged. However, for qualified health care workers, their identity was less challenged by intra-occupational moves, even where this was not the professional norm.

Research Issues Emerging from these Contributions

As the studies included in this book show, the research on flexible work patterns issues has now expanded beyond the exploratory analysis of 'who' the flexible workers are, 'what' they earn, 'where' they work, and 'which' industries have the largest percent of workers in flexible work arrangements. Emerging research is focusing on long-term implications of these jobs on the workers, their families, workplaces, unions, and the society at-large. A number of research issues emerge from the studies presented here.

First, as the research of Saloniemi & Virtanen, and Gonzalez-Rendon and his colleagues show there is a debate, and concern, on whether temporary jobs are a bridge for workers to get employment in better quality jobs or whether those jobs are trapping workers in temporary jobs with no hope of getting into better jobs. Even what we mean by good jobs is debatable but, for most workers, continuous employment with decent income to support self- and family is what they consider as good jobs. Research is showing that while some workers are able to use the temporary job as a bridge, many others are feeling trapped in these jobs. Certain characteristics of trapped workers are emerging from research: older workers, female workers, lower skilled, which is, in most cases, synonymous with lower education, and being employed in the job for a number of years (having job tenure). In addition, workers trapped in temporary jobs are also the ones who have low control over their job. We suggest future research to focus on workers with these characteristics and jobs where workers have low job control, to understand which other factors create the temporariness and 'trap' effect of the job.

Second, the flexibility debate is now focusing more and more on the question of 'flexibility for whom?' As Golden shows there is a flexibility gap with some workers having flexibility and others not. While flexible scheduling is touted as a measure to attract and keep female workers, with presumably child-care and household responsibilities, research is showing that it is the same group workers, i.e. women, workers who have less access to flexibility in scheduling (with the exception of those with pre-school children). African American workers are in the same situation as women workers with less flexibility in scheduling. And, it is the managerial and professional workers who tend to have more access to scheduling flexibility. These results suggest that future research should focus on the type of jobs that women and African American and other minority groups in the US and in other countries hold. We recommend the research to inquire into whether these are, overall, 'bad quality jobs', and examine why workers in managerial and professional occupations, who are

already privileged in our society, tend to benefit from access to schedule flexibility, while others, who are already –in many aspects - in bad quality jobs, continue to be employed in undesirable working conditions with inflexible work schedules. More importantly, we suggest future research to focus on why employers are creating different levels of scheduling flexibilities for workers in different occupations, or with certain personal characteristics (such as gender and race).

The chapters by van Velzen, Zeytinoglu et al., and Kelliher and Desombre show that industry and/or occupation focused research can provide rich information on flexibility issues in workplaces and lead to new research questions. Three topics emerge from these studies suggesting future research to focus on: training for flexible workers, stress and other occupational health problems among flexible workers, and implementing functional flexibility in occupations with established (traditional) boundaries.

Research, by van Velzen, shows a great need and desire for continuous training among flexible workers and how two countries approach this need differently, with one – in this case, the Netherlands – fulfilling the training need of workers through legislated incentives, and the other – the US – leaving workers mostly on their own to find resources to receive training. Involvement of unions seems to play a crucial role in the training of construction workers in the Dutch example, while the same cannot be said for the US workers. This research suggests that work culture, not only of workers, but also of employers, unions and the society, might be affecting the training opportunities for flexible workers, and thus, third, we suggest these issues to be examined within the work, workplace culture, and societal expectations from employers context.

Occupational health concerns for flexible workers have started to emerge in the literature. There is now some accumulated research showing increased accident and injury risk among subcontractors. The research by Zeytinoglu and her colleagues, however, focus on an emerging health problem – work-related stress – and show its effects on workers, their families and workplaces. Their research focus on retail sector and most participants were unionized workers. Still, the unionization did not provide sufficient means to reduce negative effects of the marginalized part-time and temporary work, and the resultant stress and personal and workplace problems. Future research can build on this study to see whether the findings from retail trade sector can apply to other sectors, or whether these findings can be similar to retail trade workers' occupational health problems in other countries. Thus, we suggest the fourth research issue to focus on the occupational health and safety of workers in peripheral, marginalized jobs.

Fifth emerging research issue from this book is to examine functional flexibility topic with emphasis on specific sectors and occupations. Kelliher and her colleague's research is suggesting how in traditional work environments functional flexibility can be used as a tool for change in workplaces and that is easier to implement flexibility which crosses occupational boundaries within professions, rather than between different professions. Their study also suggest that future research might want to examine whether flexibility can be achieved when professional boundaries are crossed over to other professionals' task domain. In addition, psychosocial effects of such changes in terms of stress and anxiety, and work intensification issues deserve to be studied in future research.

Overall, the research presented here shows that with the accumulated experience in flexible work patterns, new issues are emerging to strike a balance between employers' and workers' needs and interests in flexibility. Despite coming from different countries, though all from industrialized economies, studies presented here show many similar issues and concerns to be considered in future research. The contributors to this research volume hope

that future research can build on their experiences to create better working environments for both employers and workers, and a decent work for all workers.

Chapter 2

Bad Jobs or Not? – A Follow-Up Perspective on Temporary Employment: Does the Rise in Non-Standard Employment Mean a Decline in the Quality of Work?

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Introduction

The extensive rise in non-standard employment since the early 1990s has prompted a series of studies on new types of employment. In recent years questions dealing with the future of wage work and its quality have become especially prominent. Two well-established discussion traditions – the flexibility and segmentation of labour markets – have formed the basis of debates about the consequences of these new forms of employment. Within this framework the most typical concern is whether the division between traditional permanent employment and increasing non-standard employment forms a new two-tier system in the labour market. In other words, are non-standard jobs *bad jobs*? Contributions to this discussion have been both theoretical and empirical. In summarizing these discussions, McGovern and his colleagues (McGovern et al. 2004) formulate an interesting (although debatable) generalization: while theoretical reasoning has been mainly typical for Europeans, scholars from North America tend to favour empirical analysis. For European thinkers like Beck (e.g. 1999) and Gorz (1999) the new destandardization of labour represents firm evidence of an emerging new risk society and of the commodification of labour.

To develop these theoretical concepts with a view to deepening our understanding of the new trends in modern societies is valuable. However, as McGovern points out, theoretical reasoning has its limits since it tends “to assume rather than demonstrate” (McGovern et al. 2004) the nature of non-standard employment. Attempts to establish discussion on the empirical evidence is regularly less spectacular, although hardly less laborious. If the empirical hypothesis is that, non-standard jobs are also *bad jobs*, the first step is to define the basic concepts. Non-standard work (or fixed-term employment) covers a wide range of phenomena from part-time work to self-employment. For the present we will concentrate on only one form of non-standard work, temporary employment¹, here referred to as TE.

If the definition of non-standard work, or TE, is by no means simple, the definition of a bad job is even more complicated. There is no general and all-covering definition for *bad job*. In terms of labour market theories, it most often refers to work and working conditions typical of secondary or peripheral segments of labour markets. In their analysis Kalleberg and his research group (Kalleberg et al. 2000) explicitly confront the relationship between *bad jobs* and non-standard work. Low pay and no access to health insurance or pension benefits

¹ In this presentation we will use a broad and widely used definition of TE: work under a contract which has an explicit expiry date, in contrast to an open-ended contract.

were used as key indicators for *bad jobs*. In the light of these ‘bread and butter’ issues, non-standard employment ran a clear risk of being equated with *bad jobs*.

However, emphasis on income is not the only way to describe and to operationalize *bad jobs*. While examining *bad jobs* in Britain McGovren enlarged the scale of the markers to include more work characteristics, with a special emphasis on promotion opportunities. Following the original basic statements of labour market theorists, McGovren and his colleagues insists that the existence of job ladders or internal labour markets was one of the defining differences between the primary (good) and secondary (bad) segments of the labour market. Analyses which included both “bread and butter” issues and promotion opportunities confirmed, in most respects, the hypothesis regarding the link between non-standard employment and *bad jobs*: Even after controlling for a range of possible confounding factors, the risk for bad work characteristics was increased within the group of non-standard employees. (McGovren et al. 2004.)

In this study we continue the discussion about the (possible) *bad job* nature of TE. We start with an overview of trends in TE, with special attention to the Finnish labour market, where our data comes from. After that we review the *bad job* characteristics of TE from the perspective of the work environment. In the empirical analyses we concentrate on one viewpoint only: whether TE means dead-end jobs or ladders to a more secure career. This study is based on a follow-up study among the Finnish municipal workers.

Temporary Employment in Finland

Ever since the 1980s the proportion of TE has steadily increased in Finland. In 1985 the proportion was only 10 %; by 1998 almost every fifth employee (18 %) was working on a temporary basis. This trend in TE is in accordance with the general development in EU countries. However, within the EU context, the incidence of TE in Finland is high – only Spain has utilized TE more massively (33% in 1998). (Booth et al. 2002.) The high rate of TE allies Finland, somewhat uncommonly, more closely with Southern European countries, than with its Scandinavian neighbours².

Under no circumstances does the proportion of TE in a country give adequate information about the state of working life in that country. In itself, the rate of TE is only the tip of the iceberg: behind the numbers there are huge structural, economic and even legal differences which make comparisons difficult. Even the basic nature of TE varies essentially between countries. For example, until recently, agency contracts have been marginal in Finland, whereas in Spain

16 % of all temporary contracts are managed by agencies (Garzia-Perez and Munoz-Bullon 2001). With good reason, the effects of Employment Protection Legislation (EPL) have also merited attention when differences in TE rates have been a focus: in the UK, for example, the rate has remained relatively low (7% in 1998). This does not, however, indicate stability and security in labour markets but a low level of EPL in general. Correspondingly, EPL has frequently been cited as a reason for the high rate of TE in Spain (e.g. Gonzales-Rendon et al. 2004). In contrast, rigid EPL cannot explain the high TE rate in Finland, where comparisons between OECD countries show Finland to be between the most strictly and least strictly regulated countries (Kosonen & Vänskä 2003).

Why the rise in temporary employment?

² In 1998 the rate was 15% in Sweden and 10% in Denmark (Booth et al. 2002). Holmlund and Storey (2002) stress the difference between the Nordic countries: contrary to trends in Sweden and in Finland, neither Norway nor Denmark has experienced any significant rise in fixed-term contracts.

The general need for flexibility is hardly a satisfactory explanation for the causes behind the growth of TE. Previous analyses have provided and tested diverse explanations for this growth ranging from changes in legislation to changes in the supply and in demand of employees. In broad terms, the former explanation refers to demographical changes in the labour force, and the latter to changes in employers' hiring strategies and in the relative bargaining power employees. Reflecting on the situation in the USA, Golden and Appelbaum (1992, 488) stress the demand factor as the main cause behind the rise of TE. According to them it is simply "... intensified competition in product markets, volatility in product demand, and the decline in the relative bargaining power of labour that have led firms to take advantage of short-run labor cost savings.

In their analysis of Sweden, Holmlund and Storrie (2002) come to more or less similar conclusions. It is not possible to explain the growth in TE with the intensive expansion of the branches of work characterized by intensive use of TE. As the demographical structure of the labour force has also remained basically constant, changes in the supply side of labour is an inadequate explanation for the growth of TE. Neither can changes in legislation explain the rise. Holmlund and Storrie stress the deep recession in the early 1990s as an important factor behind the escalation of TE in Sweden: recession created a new period of uncertainty, and in the labour market it resulted in relatively more hiring on a temporary basis. However, the new practice of favouring TE also continued during the boom period following the recession.

The recession in Finland in the early 1990s profoundly reshaped both labour markets and the whole of Finnish society (see e.g. Aho & Lehtonen 2003). The employment crisis in Finland was even deeper than in neighbouring Sweden. In this respect it is not surprising that explanations for the rise in TE basically parallel those outlined above. Kauhanen (2003) in her analysis also stresses the importance of the fallout from the recession: the economic crisis established a new level of TE while the boom period of the late 1990s did not profoundly change hiring practices. In other words, the wish among Finnish employers to keep their personnel highly flexible by hiring staff only for short periods has also become an essential reason for the extensive use of TE (Kosonen & Vänskä 2003).

Temporary Employees

Studies have identified some common and widespread features characterizing TE. Young age, female gender, low occupational status, belonging to ethnic minorities, a low level of education and a fragmentary work history tend to increase the probability of TE (e.g. Bielenski. & Ebenhard 1999, Campbell & Burgess 2001, Hipple, 1998, Kalleberg et al. 2000, Zeytinoglu & Muteshi 2000). The features above reflect the general features of labour market segmentation (e.g. Brosnan 1996, Hudson 2001).

In many ways the basic characteristics of temporary employees in Finland are consistent with the mainstream in industrialized Western economies. In the Finnish context, however, there are some aspects that merit special attention: employees with a level of education above that of a basic level have a higher probability of TE. This is almost contrary to the majority of studies, which tend to stress the connection between low education and TE³. Another feature worth noting is ethnicity: In the Finnish labour markets, immigrant workers have been, until recently, an almost non-existent phenomenon; as a consequence, ethnic background has not been a relevant issue in analyses of TE.

³ Interestingly Hipple (2001) in a very different context – the situation in the US – also finds signs of a similar structure: TE was typical for both ends of the educational scale.

In terms of sectors, TE in Finland is characteristically a public sector issue. In the public sector, the proportion of employees working on a temporary basis is about 23 %; the proportion is remarkably lower (13-14 %) in the private sector. As Table 1 indicates, public services and construction are the industries most eager to utilize TE.

Table 1. Proportion of fixed-term employees by industry in Finland in 1997 (Saloniemi et al. 2002)

Industry	%
Manufacturing	9.7
Construction	23.0
Transport	10.8
Trade	14.0
Public Services	26.8
Agriculture	19.0

The table also reveals the fact that TE is by no means a characteristic of manufacturing (Employment in Europe 2001, Kauhanen 2002, Saloniemi et al. 2002, Sutela et al.).

Temporary Employment and Working Conditions

Both theoretical statements and empirical results have given reason to equate TE with *bad jobs* from the point of work environment. Low commitment, low autonomy, lack of opportunities to develop skills and so forth tend to be typical attributes for positions in the secondary segments of the labour markets – and therefore in TE (e.g. Carre et al. 2000, Kalleberg & Smidt 1996, Parker 1994). However, according to studies which explicitly compare permanent and temporary employees, the empirical evidence for *bad jobs* is not as indisputable as it is with “bread and butter” issues. While assessing the situation in England, Booth (et al. 2002) did not find an overall and firm difference in levels of job satisfaction between permanent and fixed-term employees. However, some dimensions of job satisfaction indicated expected differences; problems regarding promotion prospects and job security were concentrated in TE. Studies monitoring the whole EU area tend to give analogous results. To some degree, adverse working conditions and TE go together, although the link is by no means fixed. TE tends to mean less autonomy at work more often in 'passive' jobs. Temporary employees also worked more often over weekends and had less control over working time. On the other hand, they suffered less from the constraints of tight deadlines and experienced lower levels of stress than employees with permanent contracts. Neither was the hypothesis that dangerous work situations are transferred to temporary employees confirmed. (Bebavides et al. 2000, Goudswaard & Andries 2002, Paoli 1997, Paoli and Merillie 2001, Letourneux 1998.)

Studies based on European Surveys of Working Conditions do not systematically put to the test the effect of national differences; in other words, the whole EU is treated as one unit. Still, political geography might be a promising way to understand the connection (see e.g. Campbell & Burgess 2001). For example, in Scandinavian countries, the consequences of the new wave of non-standardization of working life have, on the whole, been less dramatic compared to many Western societies (see e.g. Aronsson et al. 2002, Furåker & Berglund 2001, Isaksson & Bellaagh 1999, Sverke et al. 2000). The traditional structural features of Scandinavian labour markets, above all the relatively low degree of labour market

segmentation together with a strong tradition of collective bargaining, might explain the fact that changes in the types of employment contract have not led to an overall decline in the quality of working life.

The Finnish situation is principally in line with the other Nordic countries; the results of investigations into work environment and TE tend to stress the multifaceted connections. As a general rule, the type of employment does not predict the quality of working life very well. When the psycho-social work environment⁴ was taken as a focus, task autonomy was, in fact, the only dimension where TE appeared as a risk for a low quality of work (Saloniemi et al. 2002). However, among the oldest age groups, working as a temporary employee was linked to a risk for jobs with low control and low demands (Saloniemi et al. 2004a). In terms of physical working conditions, the link to the employment type was, as a general rule, weak or non-existent. However, the construction industry was pointed up as an area where TE turned out to have a clear risk for adverse working conditions. (Saloniemi et al. 2004b).

Temporary Employment: a Bridge or a Trap?

As mentioned above, paying attention only to the daily conditions of work – either in terms of work environment or income – is not a satisfactory way to evaluate the connection between TE and *bad jobs*. Future prospects should play an essential role in these judgments. The question of whether TE is a bridge to more secure employment or a trap which condemns employees to *bad jobs* in the peripheral segments of the labour market, is often expressed in these discussions.

According to Booth (et al. 2002) there is some evidence that TE is a stepping-stone to permanent work. However, the time taken to get a permanent job varies remarkably according to the type of TE: fixed-term employment forms a much more direct route to permanent jobs than seasonal work. In addition gender turned out to play a key role: for men, starting a career as a temporary includes more risk than for women. Experiences from France (Blanchard & Landier 2002) cast even more doubt on rising levels of TE: the status of young employees has become more insecure in the wake of reforms allowing more widespread use of TE.

In his follow-up study on transitions from TE to more permanent positions, Gonzales-Rendon (et al. 2004) ended up stressing the fact that temporary employees cannot be treated as a homogenous group, not even in the highly segmented labour market of Spain. After six years 70 % of temporary employees managed to obtain a permanent job. The result contradicts to some degree the argument that mobility between the labour market segments is highly restricted. Still, there are specific groups for whom TE is more like a trap leading to *bad job*: low education, female gender, working in the public sector and being over 30 years of age, for example, all had a negative influence on the probability of getting a permanent job. Also the type of TE had an important role: for casual workers permanent employment is most difficult. Reflecting on the situation in Sweden, in totally different labour market conditions, Håkansson (2001) ends up with basically parallel results: temporary employees are not a homogenous group. Even though the basic situation of TE in Sweden is that it is a stepping-stone towards to a permanent job, the variation between types of TE was remarkable. Gender division also proved to be important; in Sweden the prospects of a more stable career were more common among women.

⁴ In the studies referred to here, psycho-social work environment was operationalised as *task autonomy, time autonomy, work community support and supervisor support* in Saloniemi et al. 2002 and as *job demand, control, supervisor support and co-worker support* in Saloniemi et al. 2004a.

The Research Question

The aim of this paper is to continue the discussion about the relationship between *bad jobs* and TE. For the moment, we will concentrate on one particular aspect: the future prospects involved in TE. Our starting point is more or less traditional: does TE mean *dead-end jobs* or *ladders* towards more secure working status?

The question has already been touched on in a Finnish context. In her follow-up study based on register data describing the whole eligible population, Kauhanen (2002) traced the careers of Finnish temporary employees. According to the study's conclusions, TE in Finland more resembles a *ladder* than a *dead-end*; the most common direction of status transition was towards a permanent position, although the median duration of TE before moving to permanent status was 3.2 years. Gender and age did not affect the transition to permanent employment; however, working in the public sector diminished the possibility of moving away from TE.

All in all, even if previous studies of TE in Finland have found certain problems in the area, there seems to be no firm connection between *bad jobs* and TE. Taking this as our starting point, we frame the question:

For whom is temporary employment a dead-end and for whom it is a ladder to a more secure position?

In the course of the analysis, special attention is paid to the effects of socio-economic status, work characteristics and personal well-being as possible predictors for the transition from TE to more secure positions.

The design of the study also gives us an opportunity to test the hypothesis that the new risks connected with the non-standard nature of employment have replaced the traditional (for example class-based) risks. Logically, the validity of this statement demands that the risk for *bad jobs* – arising from TE – should be equal regardless of traditional background factors. Thus, the other question, closely connected to the first one, is:

Has the non-standardization process in the labour markets abolished the importance of traditional labour market risks?

Methodology and Data

This contribution is based on data drawn from a follow-up study, the 'Temporaries in Municipal Jobs' study, which explored the relationships between behavioural and psychosocial factors and health among the non-permanent personnel of eight Finnish municipalities. The baseline sample (n= 2194) from the year 1998 consists of employees who had a contract, which would expire at a given point in time because of substitution or 'for some other reason'. Their labour market status in 2002 was investigated in a follow-up survey with a response rate of 71% (n= 1563).

The participants' labour market status in 2002 formed the starting point of our analysis. According to the follow-up study, 45 % of the participants had managed to obtain a permanent contract, every third (34%) employee still worked on a fixed-term basis, and 6 % were unemployed. The remaining 15 % were not among the employed population in 2002, most often due to maternity or nursing leave.

In the analysis, we dichotomized the final employment status into two groups: those who in 2002 had an open-end contract, in other words permanent employment (45%), and

participants with some other status (55%). In the analysis this division was used as a dependent variable.

Three sets of variables were defined for the analysis regarding predictors (i.e. independent variables) for permanent employment in 2002. We started the analysis by going over the independent variables with their relations to the dependent variable. At this first stage the outcomes were displayed as percentage shares drawn from the cross-tables. In the second phase of the analysis, logistic regression was utilized.

Results

Employment status, age, gender, occupation, staying in the same job and employment status

Five age classes (16-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54 and 55-64) were used in the analysis. In the classification of occupational status, the International Standard Classification of Occupations (Classification... 1997) was utilized, and the original ISCO classes were drawn from nine to four: professionals (ISCO-88 titles 1-2), associate professionals (3), clerks (4), and manual workers (titles 5-9).

In the 2002 follow-up survey participants were asked if their occupation had remained the same from the year 1998 (yes/no). Table 2 displays the results. According to the result, the transition from fixed-term to permanent jobs was most difficult for manual workers and employees belonging to the youngest (-24) or to the oldest (55-) age groups.

Table 2. Participants (per cent) who managed to obtain a permanent contract during the four year follow-up period according to socio-demographic features. The p-value indicates statistical significance of the difference in the percentages.

	Permanently employed at the end of the follow-up		p-value
Gender			NS
Men	(n= 241)	48%	
Women	(n= 1236)	45%	
Age			<0.001
-24	(n= 164)	29%	
25-34	(n= 641)	46%	
35-44	(n= 375)	52%	
45-54	(n= 261)	44%	
55-	(n= 36)	19%	
Occupational status			<0.001
Manual workers	(n= 346)	33%	
Clerks	(n= 140)	46%	
Associate professionals	(n= 316)	46%	
Professionals	(n= 628)	51%	
Staying in the same occupation			<0.001
Yes	(n=367)	49%	
No	(n=1098)	35%	

Changes in occupation during the follow-up period also made the shift less probable. However, gender did not predict the employment status in 2002.

Work characteristics predicting employment status

We continued the analysis by asking how the work characteristics are linked with the possibilities of getting a permanent job. Is there a relationship between the perceived job characteristics in 1988 and the employment status in 2002? In this case the characteristics of work refer to the psycho-social work environment, to the dimensions of control and demand and to social support at work.

The dimensions of work characteristics were defined as follows: *job control* (nine items) and *job demands* (10 items) which were measured using Karasek's (1985) Job Content Questionnaire. The job control scale assesses two aspects of control: skill discretion and decision authority. The measure was the sum of the 9 items. The scale was normally distributed and had a high internal consistency. The job demands scale measures workload, work pace and conflicting demands. The measure was a mean of ten items. Social support at work was assessed with questionnaires (modified from Lehto & Sutela 1999) which focused on *supervisor support* (7 items) and *co-worker support* (11 items). The variables describing work were divided in quartiles. The lowest and highest quartiles were used as cut-off points. The connections between these variables and the employment status in 2002 can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Participants (per cent) who managed to obtain a permanent contract according to work characteristics in the beginning the four year follow-up period. The p-value indicates statistical significance of the difference in the percentages.

	Permanently employed at the end of the of follow-up		p-value
Job control			<0.001
High	(n= 322)	53%	
Average	(n= 743)	47%	
Low	(n= 407)	36%	
Job demands			NS
High	(n= 336)	50%	
Average	(n= 773)	45%	
Low	(n= 361)	43%	
Supervisor support			NS
High	(n=367)	47%	
Average	(n=679)	46%	
Low	(n=418)	43%	
Co-worker support			0.013
High	(n=393)	50%	
Average	(n=697)	48%	
Low	(n=373)	39%	

Results demonstrate connections between two dimensions: the possibilities of getting a permanent job were better if the previous fixed-term job was characterized by high job control and high or average co-worker support.

Personal well-being and opportunities for permanent employment

The last set of variables examines the connections between employees' personal well-being and the chances of getting a permanent job. In the other words, did personal characteristics explain differences in the employment status at the end of follow-up period?

Personal well-being was investigated by two widely used measures, the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) (Goldberg 1972) and the Sense of Coherence (SOC, Antonovsky 1987).

GHQ assesses recent experiences of various aspects of mental health, for example anxiety, social dysfunction and depression. The 12-item version of the questionnaire was applied, and a dichotomous variable indicating poor mental health, or psychological distress, was used in the analysis. In contrast to GHQ, which is quite sensitive to psycho-social strains, SOC is a person's way of relating to the world, or of experiencing it as comprehensible, manageable and meaningful, and it is relatively stable, although by no means static. A high SOC is a 'strain resistance resource', which supports an individual in maintaining good health in the midst of stressors. The 13-item version of the questionnaire was used, and the respondents were classified into those with high, average and low SOC.

Table 4. Participants (per cent) who managed to obtain a permanent contract according to psychological distress (GHQ) and Sense of Coherence (SOC) and in the beginning the four year follow-up period. The p-value indicates statistical significance of the difference in the percentages.

	Permanently employed at the end of the follow-up		p-value
GHQ			NS
Normal	(n= 1063)	46%	
Low	(n= 408)	43%	
SOC			0.001
High	(n= 377)	50%	
Average	(n= 740)	47%	
Low	(n= 353)	37%	

Table 4 indicates that a low sense of coherence will reduce the chances of getting a permanent job.

The results above portray the connections between the background variables and the employment status outcome only one-dimensionally, without taking into account the possible co-effects of the variables. To make the figure more precise, the analysis was continued using logistic regression models.

During the first stage (not shown here), the employment status in 2002 was modelled using logistic regression analysis in all three blocks. Variables emerging as significant ($p < 0.05$) in the sub-models were selected for the final analysis. The variables selected from the three blocks were as follows:

Socio-demographic background:

age,
occupational status and
change in occupation during the follow-up time.

Job characteristics:

job control.

Personal well-being:
sense of coherence.

All in all, the final model consisted of five variables. The variables and their odds ratios (with 95% CI) are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Odds ratios (95 per cent confidence intervals) for permanent employment according to independent variables.

	N	OR	95% CI
Age			
16 – 24	160	ref.	
25 – 34	604	1.61	1.07-2.40
35 – 44	355	2.04	1.34-3.11
45 – 54	243	1.87	1.20-2.92
55 -	34	0.52	0.21-1.31
Occupational status			
Manual workers	338	ref.	
Clerks	140	1.57	1.03-2.37
Associate professionals	313	1.47	1.06-2.04
Professionals	605	1.60	1.18-2.15
Staying in the same occupation			
No	347	ref.	
Yes	1049	1.56	1.19-2.03
Job control			
Average	712	ref.	
Low	381	0.65	0.50-0.86
High	303	1.19	0.90-1.57
Sense of coherence			
Average	700	ref.	
Low	336	0.76	0.58-1.00
High	360	1.06	0.81-1.37

Even if all the independent variables are taken account, the transition to permanent employment is most of all dependent on socio-demographic factors. In this group of background variables gender was the only factor not predicting future labour market status. Compared to other occupational groups, getting a permanent job was regularly more difficult for manual workers.

Age also had a precise role: when the youngest age group was taken as a reference group, getting permanent employment was most probable for those who belonged to the 35-44 age group. At the end of the follow-up period, employees in that age group were permanent employees twice as often as those in the youngest group. For the oldest age group (over 55) the chances of permanent employment were lowest.

Also staying in the same occupation significantly predicted the chances of getting a permanent job. Compared to those who moved, staying in the same occupation increased the chances of getting a permanent job 1.5 times.

In the final model, *control* was the only job characteristic connected with permanent employment: limited opportunities for control at work increased the risk of remaining outside

permanent employment. Neither social support at work nor personal well-being (in terms of sense of coherence), had an independent effect with regard to permanent employment.

Concluding Remarks

This study continued the analyses of the relationship between the type of employment contract and the quality of work. We focused on the dynamic behind the transition from temporary to permanent employment. A broader question behind the actual research design concerned the nature of temporary employment: To what degree can we identify temporary employment with working in the peripheral or secondary segments of labour markets? The lack of promotion opportunities has regularly been defined as an essential character of these *bad jobs*. However, recent studies from Finland which concentrate on the general nature of temporary employment, as well as other follow-up studies (xxx) have indicated that there is no reason to strictly link *bad jobs* and temporary employment. In the light of these findings we first asked: *for whom* is temporary employment a dead-end and for whom is it a stepping-stone to a more secure career?

The analysis was based on four-year follow-up data drawn from Finnish municipal workers. Basically the results confirm (Kauhanen 2003, Nätti 1993) the nature of temporary employment as a waiting area for a permanent job. During the follow-up period 45 % of the participants got a permanent job, after four years only 6 % of temporary employees were unemployed. In contrast to the register-based inspections, the data to hand included not only basic structural features of labour market positions, but also employees' evaluation of the characteristics of their work and personal well-being. However, structural features turned out to be the most effective indicators: for a blue-collar worker the transition from a temporary to a permanent job is much more difficult than for a white- or pink-collar worker. The difficulties were also concentrated among the oldest and to the youngest age groups. Gender did not significantly predict the chances of getting a permanent job.

To change occupation during the follow up period was devastating to the career: the chance of getting a permanent job was 1.5 times higher among those who decided to stay put rather than change. The results stress the nature of temporary employment as a waiting area, although it can also be interpreted as a need for flexibility: for an employee it was a rational choice to accept a period of unstable status rather than trying to resolve the situation by seeking another type of work.

In terms of other work characteristics, opportunities for control over one's own work was the dimension which most clearly predicted the employee's future position; in situations where the opportunities for control were limited, the path to a permanent job was harder. The lack of co-workers' support had, to some extent, a similar effect. However, the characteristics of personal well-being did not predict transition significantly if all the background variables were taken into account simultaneously.

If we sum up the set of answers to our first questions, one conclusion is clear: the structural features which predict success in the transition from temporary to permanent employment follow traditional divisions in working life in general. The division between blue- and white-collar workers has not disappeared; moreover, belonging to the age groups in the middle is associated with the best positions in labour markets.

Our second question was about the possible decline of the old labour market risks during a new era of uncertainty. In fact, the previous chapter offers the answer: empirical analysis found little evidence for the idea that the new commodification of labour has changed the logic of how risks in the labour market are distributed. The result is by no means

unique, with results from Sweden (Håkansson 2001, Aronsson 2002) and Spain (Gonzales-Rendon et al. 2004) also reflecting this finding.

Because the data used in this study were limited to municipal employees, the findings do not represent the whole eligible population in Finland. For example, it was not possible to draw far-reaching conclusions about the role of gender because the huge majority of municipal employees are women, despite the type of employment contract. A similar kind of problem occurred with the level of education: in general, employees in the public sector are more highly educated than in the private sector. It is not plausible that the employment sector itself could explain the basic nature of the results; according to Kauhanen (2003), transition from temporary to permanent employment was more difficult in the public sector than in the private sector.

By and large, the results are in accordance with previous Finnish cross-studies (Saloniemi et al. 2002, 2004a, 2004b), with the previous Finnish follow-up studies (Jolkkonen & Koistinen 2002, Kauhanen 2003) and with the results from the other Nordic countries (Holmlund & Storrie 2002, Håkansson 2001, Nätti 1993, Korpi & Levin 2000). Temporary employment is a non-voluntary status and is associated with numerous problems in life outside work. Still, in the case of Finland, temporary employment – in the forms we know it – neither totally ruins the quality of working life nor places employees in completely dead-end situations. The gap between winners and losers does not entirely follow the permanent/temporary dichotomy; the division is embodied inside both groups. In other words, temporary employment can put employees at risk of a *bad job*; but it would be misleading to equate these two concepts unconditionally.

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Chapter 3

Is it Difficult for Temporary Workers to get a Permanent Job? Empirical Evidence from Spain.¹

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Introduction

Nonstandard forms of employment² have been the subject of much research during the last few years as a direct consequence of its continuous expansion in most developed countries, especially in Europe and North America (Vosko, 1998). It is the increase of this kind of employment -now representing a significant share of the total labour force- that has specifically attracted the interest of labour market analysts, given that nonstandard work forms are definitively not new (Zeytinoglu & Muteshi, 2000; Summers, 1997). Certainly, they have been around for many years before they became a matter of research.

Empirical data show that there does not exist a unique model of nonstandard work across countries. In Spain, due to specific circumstances discussed in our paper, nonstandard work is mainly based on the hiring of workers under temporary contracts³. At present, more than one third of the total salaried workforce is employed under these arrangements. The marked dualistic nature of the Spanish labour force makes Spain an interesting case for the analysis of the transitions between segments in the labour market, which is one of the areas of interest in recent academic literature. In the context of the Dual Labour Market theory, we

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² Despite the interest generated by nonstandard work and the amount of research done until now, there does not exist a unique terminology to refer to this kind of employment nor have clear boundaries been established to delimit the types of employment that can be included in this concept. This concept include work practices in which the ties between workers and employers are not as strong as in the case of a ‘standard’, ‘regular’ or ‘traditional’ employment relationship, which could be characterized, by contrast, as one held by a permanent salaried or wage worker with a full-time job (Polivka and Nardone, 1989).

³ There is no standard international definition of temporary work, in part reflecting the range of work and contractual arrangements included under temporary employment across countries (Martin & Stancanelli, 2002). In this study, we define temporary employment as any wage or salary work arrangement in which the end-date of the contract is objectively determined by a specific condition such as the expiration of a time period, the completion of a specific task or the occurrence of a specific event.

address in this paper the question of whether temporary employment is a dead-end, offering no prospects of transitions towards a permanent job, or just a transitory stage that will sooner or later lead into permanency. Additionally, we analyze the specific factors that determine the time needed for such transitions.

Our study pursues these issues by drawing data from the *Encuesta de Población Activa* (the Spanish Labour Force Survey), which allows for the analysis of the transitions of salary workers from a temporary to a permanent job within a period of 18 months. Based on this data, we offer a more detailed analysis than that contained in previous work through the application of a Cox proportional hazards regression model to a more complete sample, which was obtained by pooling panel data integrated by seven cohorts of individuals who were followed up for a 18 month period between the years 2000 and 2002.

Background

Theoretical background to the segmentation of labour markets

The dualistic character of the Spanish labour market seems to be consistent with the provisions of the Labour Market Segmentation (LMS) theory. In its original form, this theory –also known as the Dual Labour Market theory– stated that two segments could be identified in the labour market (Doeringer & Piore, 1971). On the one hand, the primary sector, integrated by the ‘good’ jobs, *i.e.* those characterized by an above-equilibrium efficiency wage, good working conditions, the supply of specific training, employment stability and prospects for career advancement. On the other hand, the secondary sector, integrated by jobs –the ‘bad’ jobs– characterized by low wages, inferior working conditions, a high degree of employment insecurity, and virtually no promotion or training. Apart from these features, LMS theory considers that mobility between both segments is highly restricted and employment in the primary sector is rationed, being workers relegated to the secondary sector involuntarily. Spanish temporary employment holds many of the characteristics of the ‘bad’ jobs: Firstly, because it is an involuntary option for more than 80 percent of temporary workers according to data from the Spanish Labour Force Survey (EPA, 2001). Secondly, because there are empirical evidences that temporary jobs offer lower salaries, little training, and worse working conditions than permanent jobs (Bentolila et al., 1994; Purcell et al., 1999; Booth et al., 2002; Amuedo-Dorantes, 2002). However, in order to characterize temporary employment as part of the secondary sector, it is necessary to analyze whether it is a dead-end or just a transitory stage toward more stable forms of employment, what is one of the questions addressed in this study.

Contrary to the neo-classical and human capital theory view of the labour market, the separation between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ jobs is not based on supply side circumstances – basically individual differences in productivity–, but on demand side factors (Leontaridi, 1998). It is the firms that are responsible for the fragmentation of the labour market through decisions that affect the way they organize their workforces. Doeringer and Piore (1971) justified the existence of a primary sector as being composed of a series of well-developed Internal Labour Markets (ILMs). ILMs refer to human resource practices in which organizations shelter their workforces from competitive pressures in the labour market. Pricing and allocation of employees is done within firms, being governed by administrative rules and procedures instead of the market. From an organizational point of view, ILMs are characterized by limited ports of entry for recruitment, regulated job ladders for each group of workers, internal training and rules regarding job security (Grimshaw & Rubery, 1998).

During the last twenty years, the traditional model of ILMs has been questioned in the

academic literature. As it has been mentioned above, many studies have pointed towards the existence of dual employment structures within firms as a labour utilization strategy to combine both numerical and functional flexibility. Among these studies, it is core-periphery model (Atkinson, 1984, 1987) the best known. More recently, as a result of the debate generated around the assumptions of the core-periphery model, other researchers have tried to go beyond this model conceptualizing other labour utilization strategies firms use to combine both functional and numerical flexibility (Tsui et al., 1995; Way, 1992). Additionally, other authors have considered the creation of organizational networks as another possible strategy to obtain a higher degree of flexibility. This strategy is implemented through the formation of external relations with other firms instead of adopting internally different types of labour utilization strategies (Kalleberg, 2001). However, independently from the specific strategies used by firms to obtain more flexibility, they are considered to be at the basis of the labour market segmentation at the macro level.

The Spanish model of nonstandard work

There is mounting empirical evidence on the increase of nonstandard employment – and the subsequent decrease of steady long term employment– during the last two or three decades in most advanced economies. For example, Zeytinoglu and Muteshi (2000) reported that, for Canada, since 1976, 44 percent of total employment growth was due to growth in nonstandard jobs⁴. Similarly, Matusik and Hill (1998) cited a 250 percent increase in US contingent employment⁵ between 1982 and 1992, compared to a 20 percent increase in overall employment during the same period. For the European Union (EU), De Grip, Hoevenberg and Willems (1997) recounted a 15 percent increase in ‘flexible’ employment (self-employed, part-time workers and workers with a temporary contract) in the period 1985-95, what justified the emergence of atypical employment as a central issue for labour market policy in the EU. Several other studies have reported similar trends in recent years across countries with respect to specific forms of nonstandard work such as temporary agency work, part-time employment, temporary employment, etc.

Spain is not an exception to this general trend, although, as it has occurred in other countries, not all forms of atypical employment have experienced a similar evolution, which basically depends on specific national circumstances (institutional, legal or economic factors, among others). According to the EPA, since 1987 to 2001, workers under temporary contracts, both full and part-time, experienced a 148 percent increase in contrast to an approximate 34 percent increase in total employment. Similarly, salaried or wage part-time work, both under temporary and open-ended contracts, grew about 195 percent during the same period. However, self-employed and independent workers experienced an 11 percent decrease between those years.

Workers hired under temporary contracts represent the biggest share of nonstandard work in Spain, comprising about 25 percent of total employment and 32 percent of the salaried workforce in 2001. These are the highest figures in the EU, where the average, according to Eurostat (EU Bureau of Statistics) was about 13.3 percent of the salaried workforce in 2001. Other EU countries where the share of temporary work is particularly

⁴ In this article, Zeytinoglu and Muteshi (2000) classify nonstandard work according to three broad categories: part-time work, temporary work and home-based work.

⁵ The contingent work definition used by Matusik and Hill (1998) is the same as the US Bureau of Labor Statistics’ definition of alternative work arrangements. The contingent workforce consists of ‘independent contractors; individuals brought in through employment agencies; on-call or day labor; and workers on site whose services are provided by contract firms; such as outsourced information technology workers’.

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high –although far below the figures for Spain– are Portugal (20 percent), Finland (18 percent), France (15 percent), Sweden and the Netherlands (14 percent both). By contrast, the lowest percentages are found in Ireland (3.4 percent), Luxembourg (4 percent) and the UK (6.6 percent).

Part-time work, on the contrary, is not as widely used in Spain as temporary employment. This type of employment represents about 8 percent of the total workforce, the second lowest figure in the EU, just behind Greece (4.1 percent) and far below the EU average, 18 percent in 2001. This situation contrasts with that in other EU countries, especially the Netherlands, the UK and Sweden, where part-time work represents a high proportion of total employment (29.8, 24.8 and 22.3 percent respectively).

These data show that there does not exist a unique model of nonstandard work across Europe, being the Spanish model mainly based on the hiring of workers under temporary contracts⁶. The preponderance of temporary employment over other forms of flexible work, makes Spain a unique and interesting case for the analysis of the consequences of this type of employment in the labour market, as shown by the growing number of studies focused on this country in recent years (Sánchez & Toharia, 2000; Dolado, García and Jimeno, 2002; Ruiz & Claes, 1996; Amuedo, 2000, 2002; Ferreiro & Serrano, 2001; Alba, 1998).

The growth of temporary employment in Spain

Since 1987, first year in which official data on temporary employment was available in Spain, the proportion of temporary workers in the total salaried workforce increased from 15.3 percent to a peak of 35.16 percent in the third quarter of 1995. Since that date this proportion has slightly diminished, stabilizing itself around 32 percent. The rapid increase in temporary employment –which occurred mainly in the second half of the eighties– and its high incidence in the Spanish labour market have immediately raised the question of why this situation has occurred. To this respect, part of the explanation rests on the same economic reasons usually offered to justify the increase in nonstandard work in other countries. However, other local circumstances can also be mentioned as being at the basis of the high proportion of temporary employment and its predominance over other forms of nonstandard work.

The economic reasons behind the global increase in nonstandard work –and specifically behind the increase in temporary employment in Spain– are not simple. The most frequent reason cited is the need for a more flexible workforce by employers derived from the changes that occurred in the business environment since the beginning of the eighties. The magnitude and continuity of these changes have meant that, in order to survive, businesses have to become more flexible to adapt to their environment. Adaptability has then turned into one of the most important competitive advantages firms can have in order to operate in the markets.

Different circumstances are usually mentioned by analysts in order to explain the higher demand for flexibility by firms across countries. Among these, the globalization of the economy, the rapid technological change, and the expansion of the service sector, are the most commonly cited, all of which have particularly affected the Spanish economy as a whole. The key event in the globalization of the Spanish economy was the entry of Spain into the European Community in 1986. This fact, which occurred soon after the end of a long and deep economic crisis, brought about a strong increase in competition, as markets, which have been highly protected until then, were progressively deregulated while opening up to other

⁶ This idea is also supported by the fact that, according to the EPA, at least 55 percent of part-time workers are hired under temporary contracts.

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European and international competitors. At the same time, the rapid rate of technological change, which also started in the eighties with the computer revolution, followed in the nineties by the IT revolution, made possible the transformation of many work processes in all economic sectors, making the business environment more dynamic and highly competitive. These two developments, taken together, have offered firms many opportunities as well as challenges, as they translated into more intense competition, the fragmentation of markets into smaller niches, shorter product life cycles, rapid product obsolescence and higher fluctuations in output demand (Matusik & Hill, 1998 Kochan et al., 1994).

The shift to the service sector that has occurred in all advanced economies during the last twenty years has also had direct consequences in the higher demand for labour flexibility by firms at the macro level. Given that services cannot be stored as other goods, they have to be produced on request, making firms operating in this sector more sensitive to fluctuations in consumer demand. Spain poses a good example of this shift given that, according to the EPA, of the 5.3 million newly created jobs between 1985 and 2001, approximately 90 percent were in the service sector. In the EU⁷, according to data from Eurostat, between 1992 and 2001 all job creation could be exclusively explained by the growth of the service sector. During this period, this sector of activity created more than 15 million jobs, while total employment increased in only about 11 million, due to job destruction in other sectors.

Therefore, both the growth of the service sector and the dualistic employment structures found in an increasing number of firms are at the basis of the growth of nonstandard employment in most developed countries, as it has been the case in Spain. However, as mentioned above, these reasons do not directly explain the overwhelming use of temporary employment over other forms of nonstandard work in Spain. Local conditions must be taken into account to offer a tentative explanation.

At the beginning of the eighties, Spain had one of the most rigid labour legislations in Europe, basically characterized by: (a) the existence of stringent limits on the use of overtime, (b) excessively high lay-off payments on both fair and unfair dismissals, (c) the prohibition on the use of temporary help agencies, (d) restrictions on the hiring of part-time and temporary workers and (e) finally, limits to the functional and geographical mobility of workers. In addition, the high pressures exercised by unions, especially during the first half of the eighties, created wage rigidity through the reduction of the variable components of remuneration. Certainly, these conditions were not the most adequate for Spanish firms to face the deep changes in the business environment that occurred in those years, nor to reduce the high unemployment figures. To this respect, since the early seventies to the mid-eighties unemployment grew steadily in Spain from approximately 4 percent to more than 20 percent of the active population. These figures, together with the need to improve the international competitiveness of the productive sector, raised the concern of policy makers and employers alike about the need to reform the employment legislation in order to achieve a higher degree of flexibility in the labour market. This was finally done in 1984 with the reform of the Workers' Statute. However, in order to obtain the consent of unions, the reform did not touch the levels of employment protection enjoyed by employees with open-ended contracts, but it greatly liberalized the terms under which workers could be hired temporarily. Other forms of labour flexibility remained also untouched. Basically, this reform allowed employers to use a wider array of temporary contracts, some of which could be use to perform regular or permanent activities, entailing much lower dismissal costs (Dolado, Garcia-Serrano & Jimeno, 2002; Ferreiro & Serrano, 2001). Therefore, Spain poses a good example of partial deregulation of the labour market in which a stringent employment protection legislation for permanent workers has coexisted for many years with a flexible legislation for temporary

⁷ Data are referred to all countries of the European Union except Austria, Sweden and Finland.

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contracts. This is what has been defined as a two-tier selective labour market policy: deregulation for some workers but not for others.

1985 marked the beginning of an economic upturn in Spain, which occurred immediately after the reform of the labour legislation. For the first time since 1974 new jobs were created. Given that employers could freely choose between temporary or open-ended contracts, they massively selected the first option for the newly-hired employees. Little incentive existed to hire a new employee as permanent and, as Alba (1998) pointed out, recruiting policies were adapted to the new provision for fixed-term contracts. In a few years, temporary hiring affected more than one third of the total salaried workforce, remaining near 32 percent at present. Thus, the immediate consequence of the 1984 labour reform, together with an increasing demand for flexibility by firms and the shift of employment to the service sector, was the generation of dualistic labour market, with a high proportion of the working population employed under temporary contracts.

Consequences of the high proportion of temporary employment in Spain

After temporary employment, as a percentage of the total salaried workforce, reached in Spain a maximum in 1995, there were continuous calls for the adoption of immediate measures to increase employment security. As a response to these demands, two legal reforms were passed in order to achieve this objective: One in 1997, which was agreed upon by the social partners and the Government, and the other in 2001, undertaken unilaterally by the Government. These reforms were basically characterized by the introduction of restrictions to the use of fixed-term contracts and by the creation of a new permanent labour contract with lower dismissal costs. However, despite these new legal provisions, the percentage of temporary employment decreased only marginally, still remaining at a high level, near 32 percent in 2002, although there are important differences among demographic groups, sectors or regions within Spain (Table 1).

Table 1. Percentage of temporary employment

Variable	Category	Percentage
Age	16-29	52.49
	30-44	26.56
	45 and on	15.10
Gender	Male	28.97
	Female	34.18
Activity	Agriculture	58.34
	Industry	23.66
	Construction	56.43
	Service	27.50
Public/private sector	Public	21.87
	Private	33.27
Region	South	44.97
	Canary Islands	39.08
	Madrid	19.59
	Center (except Madrid)	32.79
	East	28.83
	Northwest	32.10
	Northeast	27.21

Source: *Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas (2002)*

The high proportion of temporary workers in Spain has raised great concern among policy makers, the social agents and labour market researchers alike, about the social and economic consequences of this type of employment. The debate generated in Spain is similar to that occurred in other countries derived from the increase in nonstandard forms of employment. Consistently with SLM literature, temporary workers, who can be situated in the secondary segment of the labour market (De Grip, Hoevenberg & Willens, 1997), are thought to receive lower salaries, have worse career prospects and suffer worse working conditions than permanent employees. Different empirical analyses based on Spanish data support these ideas, as it is the case of the study by Sanchez and Toharia (2000), who found how the introduction of temporary contracts in Spain had an impact on wage formation reducing the real wage cost. Dolado et al. (2002) also report the unexpected negative consequences derived from the increase in temporary employment in Spain such as lower investment in human capital, higher wage pressure, among others. This negative view of temporary employment is the reason why it is often considered as a form of precarious employment. However, as it is stated in the academic literature, in certain cases, temporary jobs, as other forms of nonstandard work, might entail opportunities for those workers who do not want to be linked permanently to a single organization. In Spain, this cannot be considered a valid argument as the majority of temporary employment is involuntary, what suggests that there is a great mismatch between employer and employee preferences for temporary contracts.

One of the problems around the debate on labour flexibility is that, traditionally, discussion around this subject has tended to rely more on perceptions rather than systematic analysis (Booth et al., 2002). To solve this problem, empirical research has recently been conducted to test for the assumption that nonstandard employees are worse off than 'regular' or 'standard' workers. With respect to temporary employment, there is sufficient empirical evidence from different countries that support the idea that workers under fixed-term contracts, do receive *ceteris paribus* lower salaries than permanent employees (Booth et al., 2002; Bentolila et al., 1994), are less motivated and satisfied (Purcell et al., 1999) and receive less training (Booth et al., 2002). Some researchers have also tried to analyze the link between nonstandard employment and the risk of a work accident, although empirical findings are in this case more mixed (see Amuedo-Dorantes, 2002; Rousseau & Libuser, 1997).

The polarization of the Spanish labour market between permanent and temporary employees, together with the adverse consequences mentioned above, might produce income inequality as well as other social negative impacts derived from the lack of job security, all of which is a matter of much political concern. However, these negative effects are lessened if temporary employment is not a dead-end where workers are trapped indefinitely, but rather a transitory situation that would sooner or later lead to a permanent position. The transition from temporary to permanent employment is a subject that has recently attracted the interest of labour market researchers, as it is the case of the empirical analyses carried out by Alba (1998) and Amuedo-Dorantes (2000), both using data on Spain, as well as by Booth et al. (2002), with data from the UK. However, it is also possible to identify other studies that analyze different transitions between segments in the labour market, such as from a regular to a temporary job (Wiens-Tuers and Hill, 2002), or from unemployment to a permanent job (Chalmers and Kalb, 2001), among others.

Our study builds on previous knowledge on nonstandard forms of employment and the segmentation of the labour market, trying to offer an in-depth analysis of the transitions from temporary to permanent employment in Spain. Using a more extended sample of data

from the EPA, we address two research questions: Firstly, the identification of the factors that have the strongest influence on this process and, secondly, whether temporary employment is a dead-end or just a transitory stage towards a permanent job.

Methodology

Data

Data for empirical analysis are obtained from the EPA, the Spanish Labour Force Survey, which is conducted by the National Institute of Statistics (INE). This is the most complete source of information on the Spanish labour market. The survey is administered every quarter by interviewing the residents in a sample of about 64,000 households throughout Spain, which translates into 200,000 people approximately. Once a household has been selected for inclusion in the sample, their occupants are interviewed for a maximum of six consecutive quarters, obtaining from them a wide range of personal and professional data. Among these data, it is possible to know whether a particular individual is employed or not, her employment status (salaried, self-employed, unemployed, etc.), and, in case of a salaried worker, whether her labour contract is temporary or open-ended. This information allows for the analysis of the transition of salaried workers from a temporary to a permanent labour relationship within a period of 18 months. However, given that one-sixth of the households are dropped from the sample every quarter, the number of temporary workers that can be followed up during the 18-month period falls drastically. On average, only about 2,700 temporary workers in a given quarter remain in the sample during that period. From a statistical point of view, this reduction might be detrimental to the representativeness of the sample. To solve this problem, the sample used in our research results from the pooling of seven cohorts of temporary workers, corresponding to seven consecutive quarters, that can be followed during the above mentioned 18-month period. The first cohort is constituted by those temporary workers who entered the EPA sample the first quarter of 2000, remaining in it until the second quarter of 2001. Similarly, the seventh cohort is integrated with those individuals who were first interviewed the third quarter of 2001, and were dropped from the sample the fourth quarter of 2002. Therefore, it has been necessary to integrate a total of 12 quarters, covering the years 2000, 2001 and 2002. The resulting sample is composed of 16,060 individuals who held a temporary contract the first time they were interviewed, and were followed during six consecutive quarters.

The model

Given the nature of the sample and the objectives of our research, we have considered a survival model as the most appropriate approach to carry out the empirical analysis. Among the different techniques for this type of analysis, we have selected the Cox proportional hazards regression model for two reasons: Firstly, because it requires fewer assumptions than other survival models and, secondly, because a number of observations in the sample are right censored. Censored cases in our study refer to those temporary workers who do not change their labour status during the whole period they have been followed up, as well as those individuals who change to another labour status, other than holding a permanent salaried job, at any time during that period.

Cox regression is a method for modeling time-to-event data in the presence of censored cases. In our analysis, the event, often called a 'failure' in the terminology of survival models, is the obtaining of a permanent salaried job by those workers who have been

followed during the six-quarter period. Time-to-event is the number of months a specific worker has been employed in a given firm under a temporary contract before she gets a permanent job in the same or a different firm. Cox's model tries to determine the influence of a set of variables on the risk of occurrence of a certain event (risk of failure), adopting the following general expression:

$$\Phi(t,z) = \Phi_0(t) \cdot e^{(\beta z)} \quad (1)$$

Where $\Phi(t,z)$ is the hazard function, a ratio that represents the relative risk of occurrence of an event given that the case has 'survived' until a certain moment t , and given the values of a set of covariates represented by the vector z . Additionally, β represents the vector of regression coefficients, and $\Phi_0(t)$ is the so-called baseline hazard function, which is the value that the hazard function takes when all the covariates are set to zero. Equation (1) can also be expressed in terms of the log relative hazard, $\ln(\Phi(t,z)/\Phi_0(t)) = \beta z$, which resembles a linear regression model. The parameters in the vector β reflect the change in the log hazard for a unit change in each of the predictors, what in our model informs about how a specific variable influences the relative chances of getting a permanent employment. Coefficients in Cox regression are estimated by maximizing the partial likelihood function.

Results

A total of nineteen variables were initially selected as explicative of the transitions from a temporary to a permanent employment. These variables referred to personal and professional characteristics of the workers, as well as to other characteristics of the firms and jobs held by them. Cyclical factors were also considered through the introduction of a dummy variable referring to the specific cohort the worker belonged to.

In order to select the best-fitting model, a forward stepwise regression procedure was chosen. This method of constructing the regression model has the advantage that directly informs us about the most influential variables in explaining the transition from a temporary to a permanent job, as well as about the direction of their influence. Results of the regression are shown in table 2. From the nineteen covariates initially selected, seven were excluded from the model -given that they did not turn out to be statistically significant and did not affect the parameters associated to the other variables- as a way to comply with the principle of parsimony⁸.

Results of the Cox regression show how age is negatively related to the chances of getting a permanent employment for temporary workers, being that younger workers, with ages between 16 and 29 years, are more likely to transit to a permanent position. This finding contradicts the results obtained by Alba (1998) for Spain, and is more congruent with the results of Booth et al. (2002) for the UK, who found that, at least for men, being younger than 35 years of age has a positive impact on an exit to a permanent job. This is quite an interesting result as younger workers have a higher probability of being employed under temporary arrangements than older workers. However, this being a true fact, they have fewer difficulties than older workers to progress into permanency *ceteris paribus*. Using the same set of covariates, separate Cox regressions for men and women were run to know about how age affected transitions into a permanent employment for these two demographic groups. Results showed that our initial conclusions were also valid for each group separately.

⁸ The variables initially considered, being dropped from the model afterwards, refer to: marital status, lack of choice of temporary employment, seasonality of the economic activity, number of workers of the firm, participation in training activities, employment by a temporary help agency, and a control variable referring to the specific cohort to which the worker belongs.

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Table 2. Cox Proportional Hazards Regression Model

Independent variable	Coeff.	Std. error	Sig.	Exp(B)
Age			0.000	
16-29 years		(omitted)		
30-44 years	-0.211	0.048	0.000	0.810
45 and on	-0.457	0.073	0.000	0.633
Male	0.123	0.046	0.007	1.130
Head of the household (yes=1)	0.115	0.052	0.027	1.122
Education			0.008	
Illiterate	-0.357	0.311	0.251	0.700
Primary	-0.237	0.072	0.001	0.789
Secondary	-0.151	0.054	0.005	0.860
University		(omitted)		
Occupation			0.001	
Non-qualified		(omitted)		
Low/medium level of qualification	0.192	0.053	0.000	1.212
High level of qualification	0.184	0.076	0.016	1.202
Managers and Administrators	0.357	0.209	0.089	1.429
Armed forces	-0.487	0.330	0.140	0.614
Activity			0.000	
Agriculture		(omitted)		
Industry	0.430	0.134	0.001	1.537
Construction	-0.273	0.136	0.045	0.761
Service	0.527	0.132	0.000	1.693
Public sector	-0.973	0.075	0.000	0.378
Non-causal temporary contract	0.233	0.045	0.000	1.262
Hours worked per week	0.011	0.002	0.000	1.011
Home-based employment	-0.703	0.208	0.001	0.495
Region			0.000	
South		(omitted)		
Canary Islands	0.197	0.094	0.035	1.218
Madrid	0.412	0.102	0.000	1.510
Center (except Madrid)	0.569	0.060	0.000	1.766
East	0.004	0.081	0.962	1.004
Northwest	0.378	0.073	0.000	1.460
Northeast	0.567	0.065	0.000	1.763
Search for another job	-0.222	0.064	0.000	0.801
N	16,060			
-2 log likelihood	48,769.44			
Chi-Square (25)	877.08	$p=0.000$		

In line with previous findings, our research confirms that women, everything else equal, are disadvantaged to men with respect to the chances of stabilizing their employment relationship. This fact reflects that they suffer a certain degree of discrimination as in other areas of the labour market. Women do not only have a higher probability than men of being employed under fixed-term contracts, as shown by previous research, but they also have less opportunities to exit to a permanent job.

Education is another factor that influences the chances of consolidating the employment relationship, with highly-educated workers –those with a university degree– having more opportunities, *ceteris paribus*, to transit to a permanent job than those with lower levels of education. Similarly, both the occupation of the worker and the economic activity of the employer play a role in determining the transition from one kind of

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employment to another, as these variables turned out to be statistically significant in our model. Thus, jobs in construction and agriculture offer temporary workers less chances of transition, what might be explained by the more seasonal character of these activities in comparison to industry and services. Coefficients for occupations show how workers in non-qualified jobs have the lowest likelihood of becoming employed on a permanent basis.

Interestingly, temporary workers in the public sector show more problems to consolidate their jobs than their counterparts in the private sector. This is surprising as public workers are in general less likely to be employed under temporary arrangements than workers in the private sector. This circumstance could be explained in part by the existence of stringent administrative rules in Spain that regulate access to permanent employment in Public Administration. Another possible explanation could be found in the fact that a high proportion of temporary employment in the public sector is directly linked to specific projects financed by the Government and/or the European Union in a wide range of areas (health, training, R&D, *etc.*). Workers who are employed under fixed-term contracts in these projects usually have little prospects to obtain an open-ended contract.

Being the head of the household contributes to increase the likelihood of transition to a permanent employment. If for any reason a member of a household takes on a position of leadership within the family group, it is then possible to establish the hypothesis that this position will motivate the worker to expend the effort required to achieve job stability as soon as possible. In this case, the household's effort could be considered a supply side factor in explaining the transition into a permanent job.

Regional factors, such as customs, shared values, local institutions, economic structure and other circumstances -not directly controlled for in our model- seem to play a role in determining transitions from temporary to permanent employment. This is illustrated in our model by the fact that dummy variables representing different Spanish regions turned out to be statistically significant. In general, temporary workers in southern and eastern Spain have the lowest likelihood of obtaining a permanent job, contrary to what occurs in the northeastern and central regions.

The type of temporary contract held by the worker also has a significant effect on the transition to a permanent job. In general, holders of non-causal fixed term labour contracts⁹ have more chances of obtaining permanent employment than workers with causal contracts. This is a perfectly logical result as non-causal contracts are not justified by temporary needs of firms such as the substitution of workers on leave, an unexpected increase in sales, the completion of a specific project, etc. Non-causal temporary contracts are used instead of permanent contracts as a way to reduce labour costs, obtain a higher degree of labour flexibility and, in certain cases, as a screening device. In general, non-causal contracts have been traditionally regulated in Spain as an instrument of labour policy to reduce the high levels of unemployment.

Finally, the number of hours worked per week is positively correlated to the likelihood of transition to a permanent job, contrary to what occurs with the variable associated to home-based employment. Part-time and home-based workers, together with temporary workers, are usually considered to be part of the peripheral workforce. Therefore, when in a specific worker coincides two or more forms of atypical employment, the opportunities of transition from the secondary to the primary labour market, through an open-ended contract, are diminished. Various circumstances might explain the positive coefficient

⁹ In Spain, temporary contracts can be classified into two broad categories: causal and non-causal contracts. The first one comprises those temporary contracts that require by law the existence of a specific cause or condition in order to be agreed upon. Non-causal contracts, by contrary, do not require the existence of such a cause or condition, although the labor relationship has a specific deadline.

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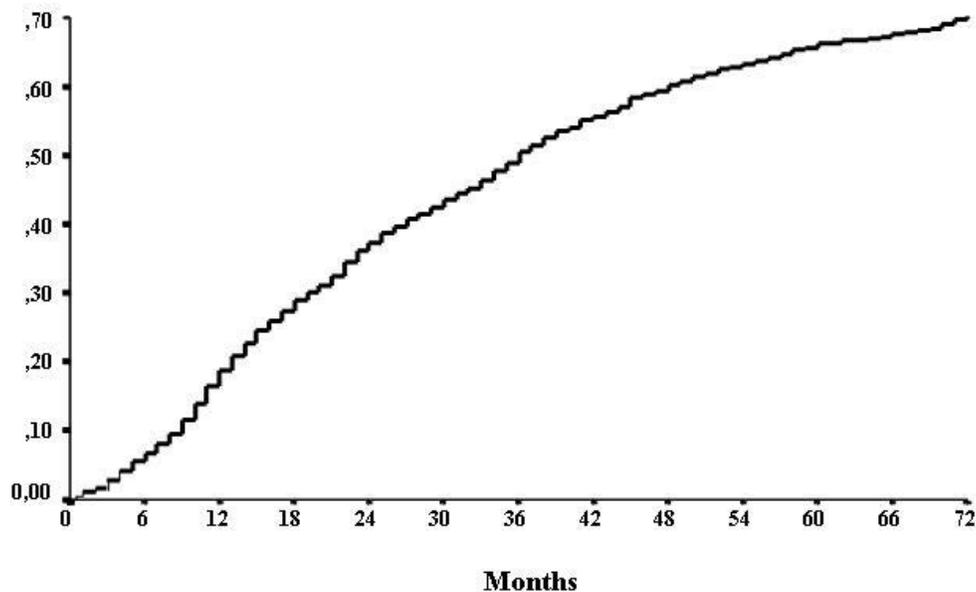
on the hours variable. On the one hand, it is possible to argue that when workers can decide the amount of hours they dedicate to work, working longer hours can be interpreted by employers as a signal of commitment. Thus, open-ended contracts will be awarded to those who display a stronger commitment through hours. On the hand, when the amount of hours is decided by the employer –a common situation in Spain–, it may be that part-time jobs are usually offered to workers who are in a weaker position in the labour market, precisely those who have more difficulties in getting a permanent job due to their personal or professional characteristics (low-educated workers, women, young persons, etc).

Survival analysis

Estimated coefficients in our regression allow us to know about the type of influence and the degree of significance each of the covariates has on the log relative hazard. If the coefficient takes on a positive value and is statistically significant, it means that the variable associated to that coefficient does contribute to the occurrence of the event ('failure'), *i.e.* the transition from a temporary to a permanent employment. However, if we want to know whether temporary employment is a dead-end for workers, with no prospects of obtaining an open-ended contract, or a stepping-stone into permanency, we must base our analysis on the survival function.

Figure 1

Survival analysis. Probability of obtaining a permanent employment by temporary workers



The survival function $\zeta(t)$ is an estimate of the probability of surviving (not obtaining a permanent contract) longer than a specified time, given a specific set of covariates. In our case, and for the sake of clarity, we use the complementary of the survival function, $\Psi(t)=1-\zeta(t)$, which represents the probability that a temporary worker gets permanent employment

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after a specified time, and given a set of personal and professional characteristics of the worker, as well as other job-related variables. Given that the probability of transitioning from one state to another depends on a specific set of covariates, in order to evaluate whether temporary employment is a dead-end or not, we take an individual of reference to base our analysis. This individual is defined by the mean or modal values of each of the covariates, depending on whether they are numerical or categorical¹⁰.

Figure 1 illustrates the evolution of the probability of transitioning from a temporary to a permanent job for this particular case. As shown in this figure, the probability of obtaining an open-ended contract by a temporary worker increases constantly with time. After three years, about 50 percent of the reference individuals will be employed permanently, reaching the 70 percent level at the sixth year. Survival analysis shows that, for an average worker, exiting temporary employment is a matter of time, although the number of months necessary for this transition could be considered long. This proves that, at least for Spain, temporary employment has turned into a common way to enter the labour market, and a transitory situation for a high proportion of the labour force. However, if we change the characteristics of the reference worker, considering instead less favorable conditions¹¹, results are drastically different. In these circumstances, the estimated probability of obtaining a permanent job after 72 months is reduced to less than 2 percent, which clearly illustrates the great difficulties certain workers have to access stable employment. In this case, temporary employment is definitively a trap and not a stepping-stone towards permanent employment.

Conclusions

As it has occurred in other countries, there has been a sharp increase in non standard forms of employment in Spain since the mid-eighties. However, as shown in our study, the Spanish model of atypical or contingent employment is mainly based on the hiring of workers under temporary contracts. At present, about 32 percent of the salaried workforce is employed under this kind of contracts. The existence of a two-tier labour legislation, together with other economic reasons, are often cited as the reasons of the sharp increase in temporary employment in Spain. The high rate of temporary employment existing in Spain has created a highly segmented labour market, which has raised great concern among the social agents, policy makers and labour market researchers alike, due to the poor working conditions usually associated to this kind of employment. To this respect, the polarization of the Spanish labour market is considered to be at the basis of income inequality as well as other negative social impacts, derived from the lack of employment stability. As a response to this situation, two legal reforms were undertaken in order to promote the use of permanent contracts by employers: One in 1997, the other in 2001. However, they have not produced the desired outcomes as temporary employment still affects more than one third of the total salaried workforce.

Building on previous knowledge, our study has dealt with the question of transitions from the temporary to permanent employment, trying to know whether temporary employment is a dead-end or a transitory stage towards a permanent job. Empirical results using a Cox proportional hazards regression model show that, at least for Spain, exiting

¹⁰ The reference individual is defined by the following characteristics: 16-29 years of age, not the head of the household, male, secondary level of education, has an occupation that requires a medium-low level of qualification, service sector, employed in the private sector, non causal labor contract, no home-based work, not searching for another job, and 37.27 weekly hours of work.

¹¹ In this case the independent variables take on the following values: 45+ years of age, not head of the household, female, illiterate, non-qualified occupation, agriculture, public sector, causal labor contract, no home-based work, searching for another job, and 37.27 weekly hours of work.

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temporary employment for an average worker is a matter of time, which contradicts previous research carried out by Amuedo (2000) for Spain. After six years, more than 70 percent of these workers would be employed permanently. However, Cox regression estimates indicate that certain individual characteristics, occupations and economic sectors, have a negative influence on the probability of transitioning from a temporary to a permanent job. For certain groups of workers (women, older and less-educated workers) exiting temporary employment turns out to be a difficult task, and almost impossible if their jobs have other additional features. In these cases, temporary employment is in fact a dead-end. Temporary employment is therefore not a homogenous group in Spain being that certain workers are trapped indefinitely in this kind of employment, while others are in transit towards a permanent job. The existence of a high proportion of temporary workers in this second group reflects the common employment practice in Spain of using temporary contracts almost exclusively for newly-hired workers, while at the same time delaying the transformation of their fixed-term contracts into permanent ones as long as possible.

Our results have important policy implications. Given that the levels of employment protection of permanent workers are difficult to change in Spain due to social and political pressures, there are two possible groups of measures that can be implemented in order to reduce the incidence of temporary employment. Firstly, the promotion of permanent contracts for those specific segments of the labour market that are trapped indefinitely in temporary employment relationships, either through direct subsidies or through the promotion of specific ‘temp-to-perm’ contracts. Secondly, the shortening of the transition time from a temporary to a permanent job for the rest of workers.

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Chapter 4

The Flexibility Gap: Employee Access to Flexibility in Work Schedules¹

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Introduction

It is widely agreed that having the flexibility to alter one's starting and ending times of work on a daily basis can make great inroads toward helping employees balance or integrate their work and family responsibilities. Flexible scheduling performs a potentially dual function for employers as both an employee benefit and productivity-enhancing tool. Workers across most countries express a need for more individualized working time, to set or influence their own work schedules according to their own natural work rhythms and constraints. More flexible scheduling of work addresses workers more as whole persons seeking work-life balance and satisfaction through their multiple roles (Bailyn, Drago & Kochan, 2001; Fenwick & Tausig, 2001; Lewis, 2003; Golden, 2003; Berg & Appelbaum, 2003). Employee morale, commitment and productivity may be improved in the long run, making them worthwhile for any organization to adopt for almost any job. Thus, it is not surprising that such flexible scheduling opportunities have been increasing over the last two decades.

This primary purpose of this research is to ascertain whether certain workers who are presumed to have greater access to flexibility in daily scheduling of work such as women, married and part-time workers, actually have it. It analyzes a recent Current Population Survey (CPS) Supplement, May 2001, with a sample of over 51 thousand employed workers. It is by far the largest sample available regarding the issue of flexible work schedules, thus sufficient in size to test hypotheses regarding whether certain personal and job characteristics yield either greater or lesser access to flexibility in starting or ending times. Supplement questions query employed workers regarding the typical starting and ending times of their workday and whether they have the flexibility to vary these. The specific question asked is whether a household member has, "flexible work hours that allow (you/him/her) to vary or make changes in the time (you/he/she) begin and end work?" (The frequency or "take up" of using available flexibility is not asked and thus not known.) This updates previous analyses using the last Supplement in May 1997 (Beers, 2000; Golden, 2001; Sharpe, Hermsen & Billings, 2002) and May 1991 (Hamermesh, 1999; Presser, 1999). The results may be contrasted with findings using similar samples estimating the distribution of flexible schedules (such as McCrate, 2002; Stainback & Donato, 1999; Galinsky & Bond, 1998).

This first of four parts explores the descriptive statistics derived from the CPS Supplement. The crux of the research appears in the second and third parts. It investigates whether certain workers, presumed to have greater access to flexibility in daily scheduling

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and location of work, respectively, such as women, married and part-time workers, actually have it. Empirical analyses uncover disparities in access to flexible work schedules, considered to be either an important employee benefit or a productivity tool for employers. In the final section, the empirical results regarding the observed pattern of access to flexible schedule are interpreted in light of whether they lend support to the often identified theoretical causes of rising flexibility in work. Implications for further empirical and theoretical research needed are then discussed.

Literature Review: The Extent and Distribution of Flexible Work Schedules.

Previous surveys find a fairly broad range of estimates of the extent to which flexible work schedule arrangements. Large proportions of employers claim to offer flexible work schedules. For example, 56 percent of employers surveyed by Hewitt and Associates indicate they have implemented flexitime or plan to do so in the next two years (Hewitt Associates, 2002). The latest Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) estimate was that at least 43 percent of employers offer some form of flexible schedule to (at least some) employees.¹ However, these are typically much larger than the proportion of employees reporting having them (see Kush and Stroh, 1994; Glass, 1995; Hein, 1999; McShulskis 1997; Greenwald, 1998). Despite this growth, there is ample evidence that it still falls well short of worker demand for such schedules. Workers in the US do not yet face a full continuum of work schedule options they prefer (Clarkberg, 2000). In particular, working parents and dual income householders desire even greater schedule flexibility (HRFocus, 1998; Kate, 1998). Among women polled, 15 percent rate "more flexible work hours and schedules" as a key factor that would make their "life better" (Gallup Organization for Women, 2000). A recent poll cites "inflexible work schedule," second only to "work hours," as the leading reason why people do not have enough time to spend with family (Penn, 2000). One study found flexitime was the first choice for 26 percent of employees, among several scheduling options, while only 12 percent chose the standard workweek (Ahmadi, et al, 1986). To attain more flexibility in the timing of their daily work hours, as much as 25 percent of the work force would be willing to sacrifice career prospects (Galinsky & Bond, 1998). This despite the fact that many employees often are uncomfortable using or asking for flexitime, fearing they will damage their career prospects (Galinsky & Bond, 1998; US Department of Labor, 1999).

Sample and Descriptive Data

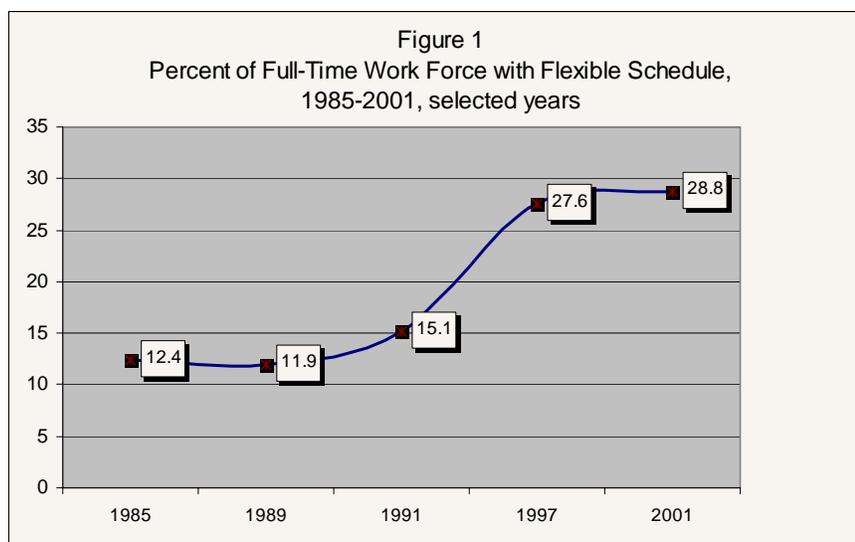
The Current Population Survey (CPS) May 2001 Supplement on Work Schedules and Work at Home is probably the single most reliable instrument to describe the current distribution of work schedules, flexible times and location among various sets of workers. The CPS contains a sample of 118,323 household members from over 50,000 households. It includes 57,857 employed workers, 51,358 of whom are asked Supplement questions regarding whether they have the flexibility to vary the starting or ending times of their work day.

The level of flexible schedules among workers

There has been only a negligible increase in the availability of flexible schedules between the May 1997 and 2001. The percent of full-time wage and salary workers with flexible work schedules on their principal job increased from 15.1% in 1991 to 27.6% in 1997. However, the proportion of such workers reporting an ability to alter their daily starting and ending times of work increased to 28.8 percent of the work force in 2001.² However, this

is barely over 1 percent more than in 1997 (see U.S. BLS, 2002). As Figure 1 shows, the proportion of all wage and salary workers with flexible schedules increased on an average annual basis by only 0.3% of the work force between 1997 and 2001. In contrast, every year between 1991 and 1997 brought flexible schedules to an additional 2.1 % of the work force on average (from 15.1% to 27.6%).

While almost 37 million of the employed now have flexible work schedules, including all wage and salary, self-employed and both full-time and part-time workers, progress toward greater workplace flexibility for all employees is disappointingly slow. It is also surprising that the stagnation occurred during a time of tightening labour markets, at least through 2000.



The distribution of flexible schedules among workers and changes since 1997

Previous studies of the 1997 CPS Supplement and other data sets with similar survey questions indeed found that flexible schedules are not extended to everyone equally. There tended to be considerable variation by gender, age and marital status (e.g., Galinsky and Bond, 1998; Stainback and Donato, 1999; Sharpe, Hermsen and Billings, 2002; McCrate, 2002) as well as by occupation and job status (Hamermesh, 1999; Presser, 1999; Beers, 2000; Golden, 2001). Differences by demographic group are not large, but do exist. Men appear to have greater access to flexible schedules than women, except among teens (McCrate, 2002). The lower access to flexibility among women was largely attributable to being concentrated in specific types of industries that tend to provide less such flexibility. Married workers, on the other hand, had more access to flexible schedules, but this is also due to their being employed disproportionately in industries where jobs provide more flexibility. There was also slightly greater flexible scheduling among the married and those with young children, but this is also greater among men than women. Non-whites had significantly less access than do whites. Those enrolled in college get somewhat greater access, but generally age is positively associated with being granted schedule flexibility (Golden, 2001). For workers with children 5 years of age or younger, the percent with flexible schedules doubled, from 14.8% to 30.2% between 1991 and 1997 (BLS, 1999).

Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the level and change in the distribution by demographic features among only the full-time employed, wage and salary workers since May 1997. (Including the self-employed and part-time work force raises somewhat the overall incidence of having a flexible work schedule.) Figure 2 shows that in May 2001, the proportion of these

full-time wage/salary employees with children 5 years of age or younger barely nudged upward, after doubling between 1991 and 1997, rising by no more than about 1 percent total since then, to 31.3 percent. The growth was almost entirely the result of gains for men with young children. Indeed, men with young children are now leading the pack among full-time workers in terms of getting schedule flexibility, with greater access than comparable women, 32.1 % versus 29.6%. Singles appear to be gaining ground, although not yet up to the level for married workers. This all suggests that flexible scheduling has been spreading only slowly, and is not being targeted to those demographic presumably in most need of flexibility.

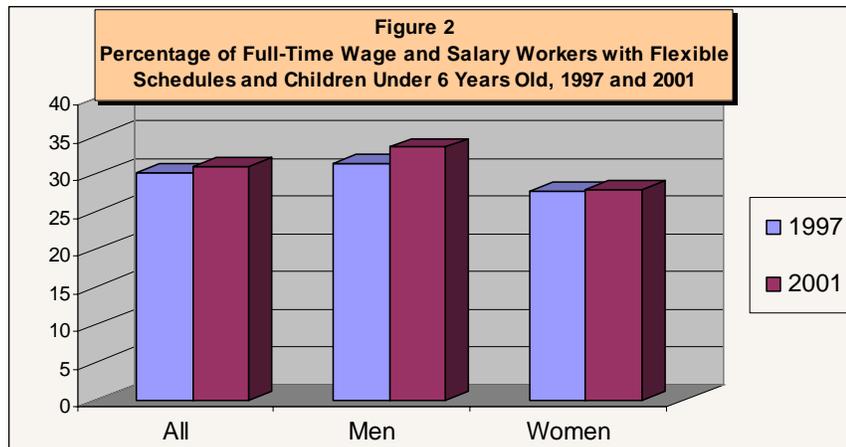
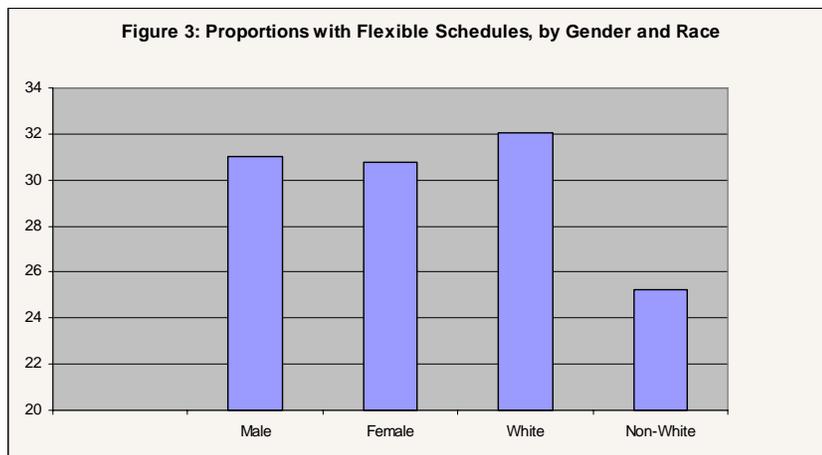


Figure 3 displays the discrepancies by gender and race. Men have a slight advantage over women, contrary to common perceptions, and whites appear to have a significant edge over non-whites. Figure 4 illustrates the U-shaped distribution according to weekly hours worked. This is consistent with the pattern observed in the 1997 data that full-time workers with flexible daily schedules work, on average, over 3 hours more per week than their counterparts without schedule flexibility (Golden, 2001).



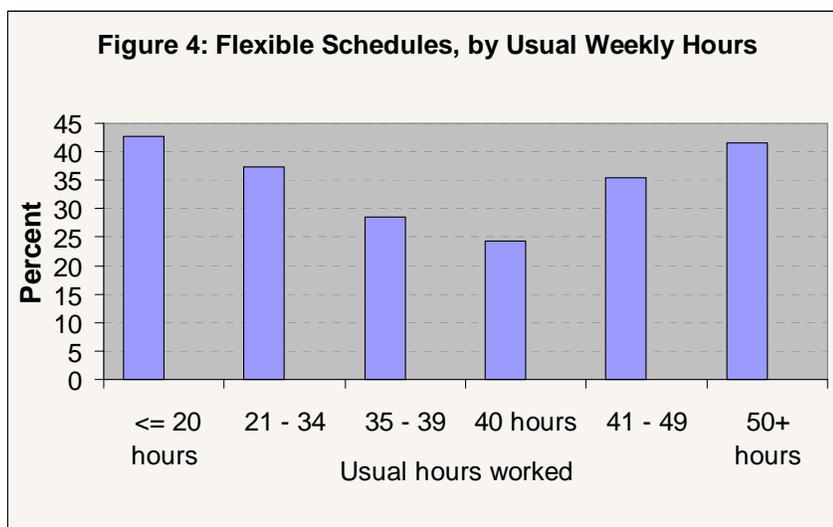


Table 1 ranks the detailed occupational classifications in the CPS May 2001 Supplement. The (weighted) percentage of workers with a flexible schedule ranges widely, from every two out of three lawyers or judges down to only one out of ten Kindergarten-12th grade teachers and machine operators. Professional and sales job classifications top the list, while several blue-collar type production, craft and service jobs round out the bottom.

**Table1:
Flexible Schedules, by Occupational Classification, Ranked**

Occupational Classification	%
Lawyers and judges	65.9
Mathematical and computer scientists	59.3
Sales reps, commodities, exc. retail	57.1
Teachers, college and university	57.0
Engineers	54.9
Sales reps, finance and business serv.	53.5
Natural scientists	53.5
Officials & administrators, pub. admin.	48.1
Other professional specialty occs.	47.8
Other executive, admin. & managerial	47.3
Technicians, exc. health, engin.& science	47.2
Management related occupations	44.9
Private household service occs	44.0
Supervisors and proprietors, sales occs	40.4
Forestry and fishing occs	39.6
Sales related occs	39.4
Financial records processing	38.6
Farm operators and managers	38.0
Personal service	37.2
Supervisors, admin. support	36.4
Health diagnosing occs.	33.7
Engineering and science technicians	33.4

Occupational Classification	%
Sales workers, retail & personal serv.	33.3
Secretaries, stenographers, and typists	29.9
Other admin support, inc. clerical	27.0
Health assessment and treatment occs.	26.6
Food service	26.6
Computer equipment operators	25.8
Farm workers and related occupations	23.8
Motor vehicle operators	23.3
Health service	21.7
Mechanics and repairers	21.6
Cleaning and building service	21.3
Health technologists and technicians	20.7
Freight, stock & materials handlers	20.3
Construction labourers	19.3
Other precision prod., craft, & repair	18.7
Protective service	18.6
Construction trades	18.6
Mail and message distributing	15.4
Oth handlrs, equip. cleaners, helpers, labrrs	13.0
Fabricatrs, assemblrs, inspectrs, samplrs	12.2
Other transp. & material moving occs	11.6
Machine opertrs and tenders, exc precis.	10.6
Teachers, except college and university	10.5

However, some of the top occupations appear to be at risk of falling out of the top 10 in the future, in light of the decline since 1997 in proportions with flexibility. This includes college level teachers, natural scientists and financial/business sales reps. (The first might reflect the growing use of adjunct faculty among colleges, who tend to have less control over their schedules than permanent faculty.) On the other hand, attorneys, managers and public administrators gained in flexibility. At the other end of the spectrum, Kindergarten-12th teaching jobs and machine operators and assemblers, are not only low but are declining in flexibility since 1997. Service jobs such as protective (mainly police and fire), cleaning and building, and health also exhibit somewhat less flexible schedules than in 1997. Health care, which faces looming shortages in many job categories, has made notably slow progress in providing full-time employees in these occupations with flexible schedules. About 29 percent of workers in (mainly male) health diagnosing occupations and 23 percent of those in (mainly female) health assessment and treating occupations had flexible schedules in 2001. Only 17.6 percent of health technologists and technicians had flexible schedules compared with 31.4 percent of all technicians. Health service workers fared even more poorly than service occupations generally; only 16.6 percent had flexible schedules. Finally, for virtually all occupations, there is considerably greater schedule flexibility among part-timers. This suggests that part-time jobs have less rigid starting and ending times, and that workers seeking schedule flexibility often resort to taking part-time positions to improve their chances of getting flexible schedules, despite its often lower status and compensation (see Ferber & Waldfogel, 2000).

Empirical Estimation Methods of Analysis

Linear probit models are devised and estimated to observe the impact of each personal and job characteristic on the likelihood of having schedule flexibility. Specifically, the analysis seeks to uncover the characteristics of workers that have greater or lesser access to flexibility, by altering the likelihood that a given worker has schedule flexibility. The estimation starts with the most basic model, workers' personal characteristics. It then expands the model to include other demographic characteristics such as marital and parental status. It then add work status variables such as usual work hours and shifts, job status such as part-time, union contract coverage and self-employment. Finally, the full array of occupational classifications of their primary job is added. The dependent variable is a (0, 1) bi-variate. The coefficients are the derivatives of the likelihood functions, capturing the discrete change of the variable from 0 to 1. Thus, the reported coefficient estimates reflect the marginal probability of having flexibility, evaluated at the sample mean of the independent variable. The reported z-statistic is the standard test statistic for judging whether the coefficient is significantly different from zero.

Empirical Estimation Results

What influences the extent to which an employed individual has schedule flexibility? The probit models are used to identify the influence of demographic and job factors on the likelihood of answering affirmatively that one has the ability to vary the starting or ending times of their workday. The sample includes only those who are employed and who answered supplement questions, amounting to over 51 thousand individuals. We examine each determinant individually. Table 2 contains the results regarding the probability a workers has a flexible daily schedule. Models are additive in the sense that they start with the most basic model, with demographic characteristics, adding in other sets of variables progressively. The advantage of this technique is that it allows us to observe the impact of job characteristics on what might have been considered without these to be attributable simply to individuals' demographic features. Since the estimated coefficients are derivatives of the probits, they may be interpreted as the marginal (additional) probabilities.

Table 2:
Probit Regressions, Likelihood of having Flexible Schedules

Flex	dF/dx	z	dF/dx	z	dF/dx	z	dF/dx	z	dF/dx	z
Age	-0.002**	-2.55	-0.003**	-2.82	0.004**	3.80	0.003**	2.70	0.004**	3.800
Age2	0.0001**	4.72	0.0001**	5.28	-0.00002+	-1.75	-0.00001	-0.99	-0.00002+	-1.850
Female	-0.018**	-4.16	-0.018**	-4.28	-0.025**	-5.68	-0.032**	-7.08	-0.021**	-4.710
African American	-0.107**	-16.00	-0.109**	-16.23	-0.090**	-13.11	-0.082**	-11.96	-0.078**	-11.280
Married	0.020**	3.23	0.005	0.75	0.006	0.92	0.003	0.39	0.004	0.520
Divorced/Separated/Widowed	-0.008	-0.96	-0.016*	-2.00	-0.008	-1.01	-0.007	-0.80	-0.010	-1.160
Child 0-5			0.038**	4.48	0.039**	4.55	0.038**	4.42	0.037**	4.260
Child 6 -17			0.020**	3.50	0.010+	1.86	0.010+	1.69	0.009	1.550
Usually Part-time					0.044**	5.61	0.055**	6.89	0.055**	6.900
Work hours 40/week					-0.158**	-24.79	-0.158**	-24.45	-0.160**	-24.680
41-49					-0.051**	-5.32	-0.052**	-5.49	-0.057**	-6.000
50+					0.033**	4.03	0.023**	2.81	0.018**	2.200
Shift work Day							0.146**	17.11	0.152**	17.900
Night							-0.092**	-5.62	-0.094**	-5.780
Other							0.178**	14.80	0.183**	15.170
Self employed							0.023*	2.41	0.002	0.160
Union Coverage							-0.184	-13.97	-0.150**	-10.780
Fed' Govt									0.023	1.620
State Gov't									-0.030**	-2.850
Local Gov't									-0.211**	-26.420
N					51358		51358		51358	
Log likelihood					-31915.2		-31805.2		-31417.8	
Pseudo R2					0.044		0.047		0.059	

** denotes significant at the .01 level of significance, * denotes significant at the .05 level of significance,
 + denotes significant at the .10 level of significance

Table 3 parts b. and c. examine the independent impact of occupations of employment of the probability of having a flexible schedule. Adding controls for a worker's occupation not only illustrates the extent to which their sector of employment contributes to or diminishes their access to flexible scheduling, but reveals whether the effect of other personal or job attributes are actually more the result of their specific job type.

Table 3a:
Flexible Schedules, by Occupational Category

Category	dF/dx	z	P> z
Age	0.000	0.03	0.97
Age Squared	0.00002	1.46	0.15
Female	-0.017	-3.69	0.00
African American	-0.073	-10.44	0.00
Married	0.002	0.33	0.74
Divorced/Separated/Widowed	0.001	0.07	0.94
Child 0-5	0.033	3.77	0.00
Child 6 -17	0.016	2.74	0.01
Usually Part-time	0.061	7.63	0.00
Work hours 40/week	-0.169	-25.82	0.00
41-49	-0.075	-7.83	0.00
50+	-0.017	-2.12	0.03
Day Shift	0.130	15.07	0.00
Night Shift	-0.078	-4.73	0.00
Other Shift	0.172	14.24	0.00
Self employment	0.008	0.83	0.41

Category	dF/dx	z	P> z
Union Coverage	-0.148	-10.53	0.00
Officials & administrators, pub. admin.	0.198	7.23	0.00
Other executive, admin. & managerial	0.187	25.28	0.00
Management related occupations	0.197	16.96	0.00
Engineers	0.264	15.24	0.00
Mathematical and computer scientists	0.329	18.62	0.00
Natural Scientists	0.275	7.80	0.00
Health diagnosing occs.	0.068	2.82	0.01
Health assessment and treatment occs.	-0.024	-1.65	0.10
Teachers, college and university	0.209	8.18	0.00
Teachers, except college and university	-0.209	-18.85	0.00
Lawyers and judges	0.362	13.14	0.00
Other professional specialty occs.	0.217	18.70	0.00
Log likelihood	-30626.5		
Pseudo R2	0.082		

Table 3b

Category	dF/dx	z	P> z
Age	0.003	2.50	0.01
Age Squared	-0.00001	-0.93	0.36
Female	-0.026	-5.55	0.00
African American	-0.076	-10.90	0.00
Married	0.002	0.26	0.80
Divorced/Separated/Widowed	-0.006	-0.77	0.44
Child 0-5	0.035	4.10	0.00
Child 6 -17	0.009	1.62	0.11
Usually Part-time	0.060	7.49	0.00
Work hours 40/week	-0.158	-24.36	0.00
41-49	-0.058	-6.02	0.00
50+	0.013	1.66	0.10
Day Shift	0.141	16.41	0.00
Night Shift	-0.084	-5.08	0.00
Other Shift	0.170	14.10	0.00
Self employment	0.036	3.68	0.00
Union Coverage	-0.173	-12.91	0.00
Health technologists and technicians	-0.113	-5.84	0.00
Engineering and science technicians	0.022	0.98	0.33
Technicians, exc. health,engin.&science	0.155	7.21	0.00
Supervisors and proprietors, sales occs	0.096	8.07	0.00
Sales reps, finance and business serv.	0.250	15.92	0.00
Sales reps, commodities, exc. retail	0.231	11.28	0.00
Sales workers, retail & personal serv.	-0.0004	-0.04	0.97
Sales related occs	0.025	0.30	0.77
Supervisors and proprietors, sales occ.	0.067	2.23	0.03
Computer equipment operators	-0.038	-0.90	0.37
Secretaries, stenographers, and typists	-0.013	-0.86	0.39
Financial records processing	0.095	5.40	0.00
Mail and message distributing	-0.155	-5.67	0.00
Other admin support, inc. clerical	-0.051	-6.31	0.00
Log likelihood	-31480.5		
Pseudo R2	0.057		

Table 3c

Category	dF/dx	z	P> z
Age	0.002	1.90	0.06
Age Squared	-0.00001	-0.68	0.50
Female	-0.084	-17.05	0.00
African American	-0.066	-9.35	0.00
Married	0.001	0.15	0.88
Divorced/Separated/Widowed	0.007	0.81	0.42
Child 0-5	0.030	3.52	0.00
Child 6 -17	0.011	1.89	0.06
Usually Part-time	0.061	7.62	0.00
Work hours 40/week	-0.148	-22.61	0.00
41-49	-0.056	-5.76	0.00
50+	-0.003	-0.42	0.68
Day Shift	0.109	12.23	0.00
Night Shift	-0.070	-4.14	0.00
Other Shift	0.158	12.97	0.00
Self employment	-0.002	-0.23	0.82
Union Coverage	-0.161	-11.78	0.00
Private Household Service	0.004	0.13	0.89
Protective service	-0.193	-12.80	0.00
Food service	-0.141	-14.15	0.00
Health service	-0.145	-9.73	0.00
Cleaning and building service	-0.140	-10.13	0.00
Personal service	0.000	-0.03	0.97
Mechanics and repairers	-0.145	-13.16	0.00
Construction trades	-0.110	-10.81	0.00
Other precision prod., craft, & repair	-0.175	-14.69	0.00
Machine opertrs and tenders,exc precis.	-0.245	-20.36	0.00
Fabricatrs,assemblrs,inspectrs,samplrs	-0.215	-14.08	0.00
Motor vehicle operators	-0.158	-14.22	0.00
Other transp. & material moving occs	-0.253	-12.82	0.00
Construction labourers	-0.217	-9.24	0.00
Freight, stock & materials handlers	-0.190	-11.49	0.00
Oth handlrs,equip. cleanrs, helprs, labrorers	-0.234	-14.68	0.00
Farm operators and managers	0.209	7.99	0.00
Farm workers and related occupations	-0.118	-7.71	0.00
Forestry and fishing occupations	0.083	1.24	0.21
Log likelihood	-30848.1		
Pseudo R2	0.076		

Demographic Status

Age

Age is positively related to having greater access to flexibility. When the age exponential is added, the effect of age reveals itself to be non-linear. The effect of age depends almost entirely on whether being employed part-time is controlled for. When it is, the effect of age is that growing older enhances access to flexible schedules, but at a diminishing rate. It suggests that experience in the work force provides greater access to flexibility, but this effect subsides as age progresses. The deceleration of the age effect, however, is not present for managerial and professional employees. The less than dramatic

effect of age supports the descriptive finding that relatively younger-aged employed women and men, aged 25-34, both have flexible schedule coverage at rates not much different than the rest of the work force (DiNatalie & Boraas, 2002).

Female

Women clearly are hampered by their gender status toward getting flexible schedules. This supports the finding that women's access is lower than men's, using the 1997 National Study of the Changing Work Force sample (Swanberg et al, 2003). The order of magnitude found here is not huge, but it is consistently negative when controlling for all other possible factors. All else constant, being female reduces the probability of having a flexible schedule by about 2 to 3 percent. The negative effect of being female is actually enhanced for women in blue-collar and service type occupations. In contrast, the disadvantage for being female is reduced for women in white-collar occupations. A sizable fraction of the general female disadvantage, however, can be traced to the industries in which they are employed.

African American

Being a member of the African-American population strongly reduces access to flexibility, regardless of all other factors. The order of magnitude is about 10 percent reduced probability. (In results not reported in the Tables, being of Asian, Native American or Hispanic descent has no discernable impact, positive or negative, while being White significantly raises the probability of having schedule flexibility.) The African American disadvantage holds even when controlling for their occupational segregation, being on the order of about 7 to 8 percent.

Marital and parental status

Being married appears at first blush to exert a positive effect on access to flexible schedules. However, this appears to be attributable almost entirely to their greater chance of having children present in the household (since being married becomes insignificantly positive when children variables are added). Thus, it is their parental not marital status having a positive effect on flexibility. Even when occupations such as white-collar jobs are controlled for, the effect of marriage remains insignificant. Being divorced, widowed or separated, however, does nothing to improve access to (slightly negative actually when having children added). (In unreported results, being never married has a negative impact).

Ages of children

Having children aged 5 or less appears to yield greater access to flexible schedules, but on the order of only about 3 to 4 percent. Having children present aged 6 to 17 creates a small and perhaps weakly greater likelihood, about 1 percent. Interaction effects of being both female and a mother of young pre-school children (in unreported results) produce a slight but weak positive influence on having flexibility.³

Educational status

Relative to workers not finishing high school, the effect of education is positive and progressively greater as educational status increases. Finishing high school, some college, a college degree, a masters and Ph.D or professional degree adds considerably to the likelihood

of getting a flexible work schedule, from about 17 percent to almost 90 percent, respectively. (The education level variables are then omitted in the analyses, so that human capital factors do not interfere with the personal and job characteristics of focus here.)

Hours status

There are three salient effects of hours on access to flexible schedules. First, whether using “usual” or “actual” (which is adjusted for absences or unexpected overtime work during the reference week in the CPS), the results show that as hours climb, access to flexibility grows. The isolated effect of working 50 or more hours enhances the probability of getting flexibility on the order of about 12 to 17 percent (using the CPS’s 49-59 and 60 plus ranges and an unreported result). Relative to the (omitted) reference group of those working 35 to 39 hours per week, working 50 or more hours per week generates an additional 5 percent greater likelihood of having flexibility, when included with other ranges of hours worked. This magnitude is roughly symmetrical with the effect of working part-time, being about 18 percent relatively more likely to have flexible schedules. In stark contrast, working the traditional, standard 40 hours per week unequivocally reduces one’s chances for having flexibility in their daily schedules. Indeed, even working 41 to 49 usual weekly hours yields relatively less chance of getting flexibility. Thus, it is only workers willing to put in an average of 10 hours per day, or go to part-time job status, whose hours afford them greater access to adjusting their daily start and end times.

Indeed, the raw number of usual hours has an exponentially increasing effect. The longer one works the greater is the chance of having flexibility. Indeed, the gain in flexibility for long hours workers is negated when controlling for occupation, signaling that it is occupations with long hours requirements, more than long hours themselves, which deliver the flexible starting and ending times as a trade-off or compensation for the inherent, required time commitment.

Because long hours are associated with the risks of overwork, such as stress, fatigue, burnout, injury and illness (e.g., Sparks et al, 2001; Hill et al, 2001), long hour workers appear to receive some sort of either “compensation” or prevention in the form of autonomy to influence one’s own work day timing.⁴ A similar association of long hours with more flexible schedules is found among Canadian workers (Statistics Canada, 2003). This positive association between having a flexible schedule and workers’ usual workweek length is not likely to be a statistical artifact produced by workers on flexible times tending to systematically exaggerate their own reported average work time (see Jacobs, 1998). Similarly, since part-time work is associated with relatively lower wage rates, benefit coverage and earnings trajectory (Ferber & Waldfogel, 2000; Belman & Golden, 2002), part-timers are compensated in the form of more flexible start and end times. Indeed, the allure of flexibility might lead workers who might otherwise prefer an 8 or 9-hour day to work 10 or more to improve their access to flexibility.⁵

Shift work

With the evening shift as the reference, it appears that working a daytime shift and on either an irregular, rotating or split shift are all more likely to deliver more flexible start and end times. On the other hand, working the night shift yields the least flexibility. Inflexible starting and ending times thus may be added to the list of “dis-amenities” for night shift work, including an elevated risk of injury (Hamermesh, 2001). The effects of shiftwork suggest that evening shift and particularly night shift work are not as amenable as regular day shift work, from the standpoint of influence over daily scheduling, for balancing work and

other responsibilities, although many workers use such shifts to manage to child care coverage (Presser, 1999).

Employment status: public sector, union contract coverage and self-employment

Being a Federal employee somewhat enhances the probability of having a flexible schedule. This is clearly because of two, offsetting effects. Federal employees have long had access to formalized alternative work schedule programs, such as flexitime (see Ezra & Deckman, 1996). The effect of Federal employment is consistent across occupation groups. Employment in State government, in contrast, yields a reduced probability of having flexibility. Finally, local government employees suffer a considerable disadvantage in access to flexible schedules, on the order of about 20 percent reduced probability of having a flexible schedule.

The utter absence of flexibility for local government employees both local and state employees speaks to the potential efficacy of “comp time,” which is legal as a substitute for overtime pay in those sectors, as an instrument of “flexibility.” The results for state and local government provide less than convincing evidence that comp time arrangements actually provide the kind of daily schedule flexibility so many workers request. On the other hand, the widespread adoption of flexitime in the Federal Government (e.g., Ezra & Deckman, 1996) sector appears to be taken up and having its intended effect.

Unionism has a negative effect on flexible scheduling. Workers who are union members have about a 17 percent reduced likelihood of getting schedule flexibility (although this estimate may not be reliable because three-quarters of the CPS sample contains no observations regarding union member or not). This effect of unionization may be traced to traditional union preference for regularity of work and/or skepticism regarding flexible scheduling, which they tend to view as a risk for losing control to employers of the starting or ending time of work shifts. It supports the literature finding that unions inhibited flexitime, in part because unionized occupations tend to have fixed schedules (Glass, 1995).

Self-employment usually exerts a positive effect, as might be expected by being one’s own boss. Indeed, flexible daily scheduling of work is considered and documented as one of the allures of self-employment (e.g., Boden, 1999; Parasuraman & Simmers, 2001). In addition, the advantage of the self-employed appears to stem from the nature of their occupation more than their job status. This is consistent with Glass (1995), who found no improvement in flexibility of schedules among self-employed mothers.

Accounting for occupations of employment

Adding controls for a worker’s occupation illustrates the extent to which their sector of employment contributes to or diminishes their access to flexible scheduling (see Baltes, et al, 1999). It is unclear in the analysis and data whether it is the nature of the job itself, employers or employees that create the observed differences by occupation [see Weeden, 2001]. By running these control variables segmented into three groups, we will be able to observe if, e.g., females’ reduced access to flexible schedules is traceable to their concentration in certain classes of jobs often grouped together—managerial and professional; technical, sales and administrative support; craft, labourer, service and agricultural jobs.

The effect of age becomes linear, at least with managerial and professional. Being female is much more of a disadvantage in blue collar and service jobs than managerial and professional, although it impacts negatively on flexible scheduling for both. Thus, women’s disadvantage is traceable in part to occupational segregation or perhaps self-sorting. Females’ reduced access to flexible schedules appears traceable largely to their concentration in service

sector jobs, in Table 3c. For example, the disadvantage stems at least in part from the reduced flexibility in educational service, health treatment and tech jobs, the absence of flexibility in clerical and sales and women's general under-representation in management where flexibility is greatest.

Occupations that enhance flexible scheduling

With all personal and work status attributes controlled for, it is clear from Table 3 that all managerial, administrative and professional occupations, with two notable exceptions, have considerably more flexibility than all other occupational types, often on the order of almost 20 to over 30 percent more. In particular, attorneys, engineers and math/computer professionals have the greatest access to flexibility. Among technical occupations, those outside of health, engineering and science tech jobs have more flexibility. Sales jobs, with the notable exception of retail and personal service sales, have more flexible schedules than other jobs. Among administrative support personnel only financial records processing has more, as do agricultural occupations except farm operators.⁶

Occupations that reduce flexible scheduling

Several occupations tend to exert a negative effect on having flexible scheduling. Two professions that reduce the probability of having flexibility are health assessment and treatment occupations and Kindergarten-12th grade teachers. Both health treatment and health technical jobs reduce flexible scheduling. Among administrative support, mail and message distributing jobs and other clerical positions also have significantly less flexibility than all others. Virtually all service-type jobs reduce flexibility. Protective service jobs do so on the order of about 20 percent and health service, food service and building and cleaning services all by about 14 percent. Among blue-collar occupations, in order of magnitude, machine operators, fabricators and assemblers, construction labourers, other (non-construction) craft and repair, freight and materials handlers, motor vehicle operators, mechanics, and construction trades. Many administrative support personnel, such as computer equipment operators and secretaries, have no greater or lesser flexibility than other occupations. Other occupations without a significant effect either way are engineering and science technical jobs, retail and personal service sales, personal service, private household service, and forestry and fishing occupations.⁷

Summary of key findings

- Women have less access to flexible schedules than men, all else constant.
- African Americans lack access to flexibility relative to others.
- Married workers have no more access to flexible schedules than others, unless they have children.
- Parents of pre-school aged children have greater access to schedule flexibility, but parents of school aged children have only slightly greater access, which can be attributed to their job status (being self-employed, or in public sector or certain, presumably more flexible occupations or industries).
- Working a traditional 40-hour workweek clearly hampers access to schedule flexibility. Relative to others, those working 50 or more hours a week or 34 or fewer hours per week enhance their access to schedule flexibility.
- Being self-employed provides more flexible schedules, but not very strongly.
- Being covered by a union contract inhibits access to flexible scheduling.

- Public sector employment provides advantages for federal employees, but likely via its more formal flexitime programs. Local government employment and, to a smaller extent, state government, provides less access to flexible schedules.

Conclusions and Implications of the Findings for Theory, Policy, and Future Research

This research has established the extent and nature of flexible scheduling in the US. The spread of flexible schedules appears to have ground to a halt in recent years. Moreover, many disparities remain among demographic groups and job types in access to these presumed desirable flexible working options, although demand for such scheduling exists across all such groups. The uneven distribution and unmet demand for flexible daily schedules in the US work force suggests that not all workers are equally able to gain some control over the timing of their daily hours. Flexible scheduling opportunities remain disproportionately denied to certain workers with characteristics arguably most in need of such arrangements. This includes women, married employees and those on a traditional 40-hour workweek. It is relatively less available for non-white, women, childless (relatively less-educated), state and local government and an array of private sector industries. Moreover, the advantage in flexible daily scheduling once enjoyed greatly by part-time, self-employed, regular day shift and unionized workers seems to have eroded since the level observed in 1997 (see Golden, 2001).

The fact that having a flexible schedule has at least as much if not more to do with a worker's particular job status and occupation than with their personal characteristics and that the flexibility gap has endured over time, begs an explanation. Two alternative theoretical explanations may account for the distributional pattern of flexible scheduling. Either it reflects exclusivity on the part of employers in their allocation of job amenities or an occupational segregation of workers with certain characteristics into jobs that have inherently more (or less) flexible scheduling. Either way, employers appear to be targeting some jobs or their incumbents more than others in provision of schedule flexibility. Perhaps the jobs given flexible scheduling are the lowest hanging fruit, where such scheduling is easiest to implement and administer. In theory, flexible schedules should be concentrated among those workers who most value flexibility and are prepared to sacrifice wages (and perhaps other working conditions) to obtain them (e.g., Weeden, 2001; Gariety & Shaffer, 2001). Similarly, they might be allocated to workers in particular occupations where they support higher wages by stimulating greater retention or labour productivity and thus cost savings (see Moss & Curtis, 1985; Krausz, 2000; Altman, 2001). It is not directly observable whether flexible schedules are issued primarily as an employee benefit or an instrument to enhance individual worker productivity. Further research needs to explain why flexible schedules are still not being delivered to at least 7 of 10 workers.

The unevenness in the allocation of flexible schedules suggests that legislative and policy reform should focus on bringing more flexibility to those workers currently relatively deprived of such opportunities. This study has uncovered which workers are currently deprived and need priority attention in FLSA reform and tax policy. These include women, African Americans, those on standard 40-hour workweeks and an array of occupations lacking equal opportunities for flexible work scheduling.

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Notes

¹ Hayghe (1988). However, BLS finds that much smaller proportions of employers offer a “Flexible Workplace” as an employee benefit to full-time employees, although it is higher (but still only 5 percent total) for professional and technical employees than for clerical, sales, blue-collar and service occupations (BLS, *Employee Benefits in Medium and Large Firms 1997*).

² An added feature in the 2001 CPS Supplement followed up with those who responded that they indeed have such flexibility “... your flexible work schedule [is] part of a flexitime or other program offered by your employer?” Indeed, many previous studies have labeled all schedule flexibility as “flexitime.” However, flexitime is but a rather small subset of all flexible arrangements, about 38% of workers with flexible schedules (11.1% of the total work force).

³ There is overlap between the variable used, age of youngest child, with a variable in unreported results-- number of own children present in the household. A dummy variable for having 1, 2 or 3 or more children was dropped due to lack of independence from the age of child variable.

⁴ Osterman (1994) finds a positive association between the discretion over the method of doing one's job and employer provision of work-family programs such as flexitime.

⁵ Workers who perform some work for their job at home appear to have more flexible schedules than those who do not (its positive effect dominates the positive effect of some other variables, such as self-employment and 50 or more hours). However, we will assume, below, the causality to be more in the reverse direction—that flexible scheduling facilitates work from home.

⁶ Farm operators and manager jobs have a very large positive effect. This is probably a reflection of seasonality, where the starting and finishing times must vary according to season. This raises the larger issue as to whether having flexible daily start and end times means workers truly have discretion over their work day or if it reflects the nature of the sector or the job.

⁷ An Appendix is available upon request containing 3-digit detailed occupational classifications that make up the 46 2-digit classifications formed by BLS in this CPS May Supplement.

Chapter 5

Building on Flexibility, Training for Construction: A Comparison of Training Arrangements for Flexible Workers in the Dutch and American Construction Industries¹

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Introduction

In many industrialized countries labour markets have grown to be increasingly flexible. This flexibility has become manifest in, among other things, a substantial use of flexible workers, such as temporary agency workers, contract-firm employees, direct temporary hires and on-call workers (OECD 1993; OECD 1996). Companies have turned to this external numerical flexibility to respond to fluctuating demand for products and services. Almost at the same time, employers, unions and governments have come to champion employability through lifelong, job-related learning.

While employment flexibility and lifelong learning have been put center-stage simultaneously, they clearly are at odds with each other. In his seminal work on investment in human capital, Becker (1964) concludes that an employer is only likely to invest in the skills that are specific to the training firm and thus cannot be used outside this firm. In Becker's model, these specific training costs are then shared between the firm and the employee. Hashimoto (1981) formalizes the decision of a firm and a worker to share the specific training costs, asserting that the lower the post-investment uncertainty of a continued employment relation, the more likely are an employer and employee to share the training costs. There is reason to assume that the likelihood of training provision increases when post-investment uncertainty is reduced. Applying Becker's analysis to the flexible – or 'peripheral' – labour force, Morse (1969) concludes that the flexible worker will face underinvestment in specific skills, because a firm is uncertain whether such training investments can be appropriated. Becker's classical distinction between purely general skills and purely specific skills has been refined and adjusted by many scholars to explain the actual existence of a firm's investments in the general skills, which can be used at many firms outside the training firm (see, for in-

¹ In writing this paper I benefited from the inspiring academic environment at the Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California at Berkeley. I am indebted to Jason Christopher at the IIR for technical assistance. Clare Kelliher, Daniele van Jaarsveld, Harm van Lieshout, and Ton Wilthagen provided helpful comments on previous versions of this paper.

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stance, Acemoglu & Pischke 1998; Barron et al. 1999; Katz & Ziderman 1990; Loewenstein & Spletzer 1998). In terms of this paper's topic, Stevens (1996) has probably made the most helpful theoretical contribution. Stevens considers skills to be mostly 'transferable': they can be used at least at one company outside the training firm. Here, the combination of uncertainty and imperfect competition creates a potential externality problem, namely that of poaching by other firms that benefit from the transferable skills of the trained worker. Thus when an employer is uncertain about whether training costs can be amortized, and whether new skills can be used at other firms, it is likely that a workers' human capital will be under-invested in. The above suggests that employers will probably be reluctant to deliver training to workers in flexible staffing arrangements.

The theoretical implications are supported by ample empirical evidence from the United States and several European countries of the likelihood of underinvestment in short-term, flexible workers on the part of employers (Arulampalam & Booth 1998; Bishop 1996; Frazis et al. 1998; Goudswaard & De Nanteuil 2000; Jonker & De Grip 1999; Loewenstein & Spletzer 1997; Paoli 1997; Parent 1999). Although firms that use temporary agency workers may not be inclined to train these workers, temporary work agencies are willing to provide them with general training (Autor 2000; Krueger 1993). Temporary work agencies can directly appropriate training costs by passing these on to the client firm through the wage sum – or indirectly because the quality of the agency's staffing service delivery increases, which may result in a growth of its business. In some cases, temporary work agencies directly charge temporary agency workers for the training facilities they provide. However, temporary work agencies are like any other employer and they may decide to invest primarily in workers whose trainability is highest (Krueger 1993; Lynch & Black 1995; Mincer 1962). Clearly this will leave low-skilled temporary agency workers without the proper training provision.

In this paper I discuss the training-flexibility paradox for the construction industry in the Netherlands and the United States. More specifically I address the questions: which training arrangements have evolved for flexible workers in the Dutch and American construction industries? Which actors are involved and what is their motive to engage in the training initiative?

Two reasons stand out that warrant a Dutch-U.S. comparison. First, there are differences between the two countries in the way job security and employment flexibility are regulated. A comparison of the 27 OECD member states shows that in the late 1990s the United States scored lowest on overall strictness of layoff protection, whereas the Netherlands had the strictest employment protection only after Portugal and Korea (OECD 1999). Some scholars have suggested a relationship between tight layoff constraints (e.g. because of dismissal law, high costs of redundancy schemes) and the use of flexible staffing arrangements, such as temporary work, enabling employers to establish flexibility under a rigid labour market regime (for instance Robinson 1999; Van der Heijden 1998). Others have presented evidence that rejects the existence of a relationship between labour market flexibility and social protection (Blank & Freeman 1994).

The national differences in the design of the training systems are the second reason to include the Netherlands and the United States in a comparative study on flexible-worker
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training. The Dutch institutional framework for job-related training bears similarities with the more well-known German system, not only in the field of initial vocational education (Van Lieshout 1997), but also with respect to continuous worker training. The Dutch training landscape is characterized by heavy regulation and a strong involvement of government agencies, employers' associations and trade unions. In the United States, there is no national training system. Vocational training is highly fragmented and patchy: national skill standards and curricula are lacking, and training programs differ in their size, content and design from state to state and from county to county. Perhaps more striking than the different national training infrastructures is the fact that the Dutch system seems to produce an intermediate-high/skill equilibrium and that a bipolar low/skill-high/skill equilibrium characterizes the training of U.S. workers (cf. Finegold & Sokice 1988).

This paper is of an exploratory nature probably best illustrated by what can be seen as the 'how' and 'why' questions phrased in the beginning of this paper. The type of questions that need to be answered warrants the use of a multiple-case study approach (Yin 2003). The unit of analysis in the cases is the training arrangement. The cases were selected after an initial review of existing examples of training for flexible workers in the two industries in both countries. This review was based on insights from a secondary analysis of earlier studies and from meetings with academic experts, government representatives, unions and employers' associations in the Dutch and U.S. construction industries.

By applying a case study approach as the way to answer the questions above, I use a qualitative approach that provides a better understanding of a training arrangement's actual design and the rationale behind the training. This approach offers relatively limited insight into the *pervasiveness* of training for flexible workers. It does not enable statistical generalization of the findings. Clearly, herein lies one of the limitations of the study. A second limitation of this study involves the selection of the two countries. The sheer size of the United States in terms of its labour force (150 million) skews a comparison with the Netherlands, which has a working population of approximately 6.5 million people. Much of the U.S. legislation pertaining to the employment relationship and to its terms and conditions is drafted at the state level. For instance, employment law in the state of California is characterized by striking exceptions in the use of the employment at-will doctrine and non-competition clauses. The state's economic dynamics, triggered by the information technology boom during the 1990s, has had clear spillover effects for other industries, such as the construction industry, which saw an employment growth of over 50 percent from 1993 to 1999. With 15 million people in the California labour force, the state still outnumbers the Dutch working population, but it constitutes a better fit in a comparison with the Netherlands. I have decided to take (the socio-legal setting of) the state of California as the starting point in the analysis of training arrangements for U.S. flexible employees, however without excluding beforehand arrangements of interest in other states.

Flexible Work in the Construction Industry

At first sight, employment in the construction industry appears to be temporary by nature: a worker is employed for the duration of a construction project, and laid off as soon as the work is completed. The industry is characterized by short-term seasonal cycles as well as by long-term conjuncture-related fluctuations. Another characteristic of the industry is that, no matter whether a project is carried out in residential, commercial or heavy construction, almost every building project involves multiple crafts. The nature of the industry thus requires an organization of the work process that 1) is flexible to meet the *variability* in the demand and 2) is able to cope with the *variety* in the demand for construction work. The first suggests the existence of a numerically flexible organization involving a “floating labour force, that is not tied to the fortune of any specific employer” (Colean & Newcomb 1952, 93). The second calls for functional flexibility, requiring a range of different construction specializations. Building firms could hire a large number of tradesmen with different specialized skills during peak times and fire them when demand for construction work drops. This, however, would not be efficient. Instead construction firms try to reduce transaction costs involved in hiring and firing by subcontracting the majority of the work (Eccles 1981). By subcontracting to specialized firms, construction companies secure numerical and functional flexibility. Subcontractors provide a flexible pool of workers to the main contractor, who is commonly known as the ‘general contractor’. Depending on the characteristics of the construction project, a general contractor uses subcontractors that specialize in the trades and skills required for the project. Given transaction costs, a general contractor is likely to continue, for future projects, the relationship with the group of subcontractors he has worked with. Following the same logic, subcontractors will limit recruiting, screening, hiring and training costs by offering employment security to (selected) workers. The above implies that the common notion of construction employment being temporary – and thus insecure – by nature, might not be justified. This is not to say that flexible, short-term employment is absent in the industry. With the introduction of prefabricated building material and concrete pouring during the second half of the twentieth century came a heightened specialization in the division of labour. Consequently, large construction projects have increasingly been broken down into smaller projects requiring relatively narrow skill-sets, prompting a growth in the use of subcontracting. This has created room for labour market intermediaries, such as temporary work agencies, to provide labour for very short spells, aimed at the completion of narrowly defined tasks.

The Netherlands

Most worksite personnel, especially bricklayers and carpenters, are permanently employed with a construction firm. In 1999 approximately one in ten employees had been working for more than twenty years with the same contractor (slightly higher than the economy-wide average), while 17.8 percent of the workers are with their contractor for shorter than twelve months, well below the national average of 22.5 percent (Kok 2001).

The use of flexible staffing arrangements has doubled in the 1995-2000 period, with 6 percent of total employment in the industry now being flexible. This includes temporary

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agency workers, on-call and substitute workers and other employees without a permanent contract at a construction firm. Temporary agency work in the construction industry is estimated at somewhere between 1 and 2 percent of the 150,000 construction-site employees in residential, commercial, and heavy construction. The cause for the relatively modest share of temporary agency employment lies in the fact that staffing agencies were barred from the Dutch construction industry from 1970 till 1997. The ban had its origins in the widespread abuse by intermediaries, contractors and subcontractors of market-mediated staffing arrangements in order to evade payment of social insurance contributions during the 1960s. During the ban, trade unions and employers' associations continued to jointly explore the possibilities to reinstate temporary agency work. They agreed that a complete ban on placement agencies in the building trades would distort the efficient operation of the labour market.

It was, however, not until the publication of the government's *Memorandum on Flexibility and Security* in 1995 that the return of temporary agency work in the construction industry became a viable option. The memorandum was the government's response to the growing use of flexible staffing arrangements in many Dutch industries. It set out the need and desirability to expand employment flexibility while at the same time safeguarding an appropriate level of worker security. Together with the 1996 recommendation by the bipartite Labour Foundation ('Stichting van de Arbeid') the memorandum blueprinted the introduction of legislation that reformed requirements for the operations of employment agencies (the 1998 WAADI Act) and that provided workers in flexible staffing arrangements with more employment security, while employers would face fewer obstacles in the dismissal of permanently employed workers (the 1999 Flexibility and Security Act).

After a one-year transition period starting May 1997, during which temporary agency work in the construction industry was reintroduced on an experimental basis, the ban was lifted in 1998. In the experimental year 1997, 65 percent of all temporary agency workers was new to the trades, 35 percent of the temps was journeyman, as reported by the Dutch Economic Institute for the Building industry (EIB 2001). Ten percent of all temporary agency workers chose to work voluntarily as a temporary worker. The new entrants were generally younger and lower educated. This temporary agency worker category worked on short projects: 50 percent of the newcomers were employed for shorter than one month. Twenty percent of the journeyman temporary agency workers were employed on similar short assignments. In the year 2000, 17 percent of all contractors used temporary agency workers, compared to 6 percent in 1997. Fifteen percent of the contractors in the residential and commercial sector used temporary workers, whereas 28 percent of the contractors in heavy construction hired workers from temporary work agencies or other intermediaries.

Staffing services in the construction industry are characterized by small agencies that cater to the needs of regional labour markets for construction personnel, although it is common for workers to be employed throughout the country. Several agencies use foreign workers from other EU-member states, benefiting from the free transfer of labour within the European Union. The domestic market has been dominated by one agency, a subsidiary of a major

general Dutch staffing organization. By using all branches of its parent company, the agency has nationwide coverage.

As with many issues in the construction industry, the industry's collective agreement regulates the use of temporary agency workers. A temporary agency worker is entirely covered by the industry's collective agreement if he or she is enrolled in a designated training program or if the worker is experienced. The latter implies that a worker has completed an apprenticeship program or has worked at least twelve months in the construction industry during the two years preceding the current assignment in the industry. In all other cases, a temporary agency worker is only covered by those sections of the construction industry's collective agreement that deal with wages and worker compensation. In sum: temporary agency workers in the construction industry receive equal pay for equal work.

The United States

An essential feature of the U.S. construction industry is the operation by unions of hiring halls, a job-referral system through which union members are matched with job vacancies at union contractors in the order of their registration date. Open-shop associations have no tradition of hiring halls, but instead operate referral systems through which laid off workers are allocated to contractors in need of personnel. However, these referral systems are not widely in place. Therefore much recruitment remains informal and depends on networks of contractors and workers. Workers are recruited through newspaper advertisements, the public employment services, temporary work agencies and vocational schools. Because nonunion contractors depend on this patchy system for new skilled workers they have a significant incentive to retain regular employees. The need of nonunion contractors to secure a pool of skilled workers coexists with the self-claimed flexibility these firms have compared to union contractors (Northrup 1984). Part of this flexibility is rooted in the supposedly quick adjustments nonunion contractors can make to changes in the demand for personnel. Previously laid-off workers are recalled during peak demands or workers are hired on a temporary basis through a labour market intermediary. Nearly all temporary agency workers are hired by nonunion contractors.

The 2001 Current Population Survey (CPS) of the Bureau of Labour Statistics shows that almost 3 percent (or 34,000 people) of all temporary agency workers were employed in the construction industry. In addition, nearly 37,000 workers were assigned to a building firm by so-called 'contract firms', which typically employ people to only one customer. (Temporary work agencies and contract firms are usually grouped together as 'help supply firms') These figures are based on self-identification of *employee*-respondents. Data collected from *firms* through the BLS 2000 Occupational Employment Statistics survey, indicate that 122,000 people were employed in the construction industry through a temporary work agency. This number is still significantly lower than data provided by the Building and Construction Trades Department (BCTD), which estimates the average number of temporary agency workers at 250,000, employed by approximately 450 agencies. The increased importance of temporary work agencies may be best illustrated by the income growth for agencies

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operating in the combined industrial and construction sectors: revenues rose from \$4 billion in 1991 to \$15 billion in 1998, as reported by the American Staffing Association. The Bureau of Labour Statistics expects temporary agency employment in the construction industry to grow 61 percent over the period 2000-2010.

On average temporary agency workers in the U.S. construction industry earn forty percent less than their colleagues who are employed by a contractor (Bureau of Labour Statistics 2001). The average wage rate for temporary agency workers is affected by the large share of low-pay, low-skill jobs in total temporary agency employment in the industry. For instance, nearly one in every five temporary agency workers in the construction industry is a labourer, which ranks among the lowest paid construction jobs. Wages may be further pressed downward because temporary agency workers are typically working at nonunion job-sites. Generally, nonunion jobs tend to pay less than union workplaces (Buckley 1999; Foster 2000; Schwenk 1996).

In terms of absolute numbers on-call workers play a more significant role in the construction industry than temporary agency workers. According to the Bureau of Labour Statistics around 210,000 people worked on-call in the construction industry in 2001, which may also include workers who are employed through a union hiring hall. An unidentified number of people work as a day labourer in metropolitan areas, being hired off street corners and engaging in highly informal employment. Many of the day labourers are (undocumented) immigrants from Latin America. They are low skilled and many do not speak English well enough to familiarize themselves with basic safety procedures on the job-site. Day labour is increasingly being institutionalized as community-based organizations respond to the dire situation of many of these workers and for-profit intermediaries see a market niche (Ruckelshaus & Goldstein 2002). There is a fine line between the for-profit day labour intermediaries and the temporary work agencies operating in the construction industry, although they are sometimes counted as both working 'on-call' and as a contract firm employee (Polivka 1996). In some community-based day labour programs (such as the San Francisco program) workers can set their own wages, earning anywhere between \$11 and \$18 an hour, and have access to health care. Temporary work agencies that specialize in low-skill labour on a day-to-day basis, do not consider themselves as being involved in day labour, but see their work as offering 'staffing solutions'. A manager of a staffing agency in San Jose explained how workers on a thirty-day project are considered to be working thirty separate days and getting paid after each day they have worked. Workers typically are paid minimum wage or slightly more, making \$7 to \$9 per hour. Because of their short employment spells they are not offered additional benefits by the temporary work agency.

Worker Training in the Construction Industry

The Netherlands

Employment and the demand for labour in the Dutch construction industry have steadily risen since the late 1980s. The number of people employed in the building and construction industry has increased from 1.2 million in 1980 to 1.5 million in 2005. © van Velzen, M. 2005. In Zeytinoglu, I.U. (Ed.), 2005. "Building on Flexibility, Training for Construction: A Comparison of Training Arrangements for Flexible Workers in the Dutch and American Construction Industries. *Flexibility in Workplaces: Effects on Workers, Work Environment and the Unions*. Geneva: IIRA/ILO. ISBN Web pdf: 92-2-116130-7; Web html: 92-2-116131-5

struction industry hovers between 450,000 and 500,000, or approximately 6 percent of total employment in the Netherlands. These workers are employed at 33,000 construction firms. Small establishments (with fewer than 10 workers) comprise 75 percent of all firms in the industry. A small majority of all employees (including administrative personnel) is employed in the general construction segment, which consists of residential, commercial and heavy construction.

Training and education of the construction workers is embedded in the industry's various collective agreements, concluded for workers in the general construction and for the special trades (such as painters and plasterers). The agreements are primarily concluded between two construction industry unions of the Netherlands Trade Union Confederation FNV and the National federation of Christian Trade Unions CNV (together representing 40 percent of all workers) on the one hand and two-dozen employers' associations on the other hand. The Dutch government often extends collective agreements to all employers and employees in an industry. Most provisions of the collective agreements in the construction industry apply to all workers and construction firms, covering both union and nonunion construction workers. In the remainder of this paper I will focus on the collective agreement for general construction personnel, since it is the industry's main agreement.

The collective agreement stipulates an employer's obligation to enable employees to attend vocational education and apprenticeship programs and craft training. Educational institutions and (regional alliances of) employers jointly organize apprenticeship programs, all of which are governed by the 1996 Adult and Vocational Education Act ('Wet Educatie en Beroepsonderwijs'). An apprentice signs three contracts: an employment contract with a construction company (which then becomes the 'apprenticeship firm'), a contract with a regional training center (in Dutch 'regionaal opleidingscentrum' or ROC) for classroom-based learning, and a contract with the employer and the ROC concerning the practical component of the apprenticeship program, such as guidance, supervision, and skill standards. The set of contracts – which is commonly referred to as the 'practice-employment contract' – requires approval from the industry's tripartite training body. Apprentices work four days at a contractor and attend class one day a week. While the apprentice attends class, he or she receives full (apprentice) pay for a maximum of eight hour per week. Employers are partly compensated for the productivity loss they incur while employing an apprentice. They receive a subsidy from the industry's Education and Development Fund. All employers contribute to this fund by donating approximately 2.5 percent of their wage sum. Each year €60 million is spent on apprenticeships in the construction industry as 10,000 participants enroll in an apprenticeship program.

Unlike apprenticeship programs craft training typically involves short-term courses, which are related to an employee's current or future job with a contractor. The industry's Training Fund partly compensates employers for the two days of paid leave each worker can annually claim to attend training programs. Financial support for the Training Fund is drawn from mandatory annual employer contributions, about 1 percent of the wage sum. The Fund also provides the monies for the training programs. Since 2000 employers receive an average amount of approximately €85 per training day per worker from the Fund. This amount has

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replaced the full compensation, and has led to plummeting numbers of training days: from an all-time high 135,000 training days in 1998 to 80,000 in 2000. Especially small and medium-sized firms have been hurt by the reduced compensation and are more reluctant to offer their workers access to training.

In 2001, the shortage of skilled workers was considered the major bottleneck for general contractors' in conducting their business (Beereboom 2001). The 2001 collective agreement does show an expansion of employability policies in the trades. Several projects have been announced that will broaden and deepen the skills of workers in order to enhance their mobility within the construction industry as well as enable them to switch industries. Furthermore, funding is made available to finance the certification of job experience.

The United States

Approximately 667,000 construction companies in the United States employ 6.7 million workers (roughly 5.5 percent of total employment), with another 1.6 million people being self-employed in the trades. Eighty percent of all establishments employ fewer than ten people. The large majority of construction employment can be found in the special trades.

Apprenticeship programs are the main avenues to enter the construction industry. Under the 1937 National Apprenticeship (Fitzgerald) Act, apprenticeship programs have to meet the basic standards laid down by state apprenticeship councils or the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training (BAT). Once an apprenticeship has been completed, a worker can obtain further training to acquire journeyman skills that help workers to stay employable in the trades.

Traditionally, apprenticeship and training programs are negotiated between the various craft unions and contractors. Although union density is less than 20 percent in the construction industry, nearly 75 percent of all new apprentices during the period 1989-1995 entered union apprenticeship programs (Center to Protect Workers' Rights 1998). Workers without certified skills who join a union can apply for an apprenticeship. A worker's trainability is a key factor for a union in deciding whether or not to grant access to the apprenticeship program. The programs are administered by local joint apprenticeship and training committees, made up of local union representatives and employers. Funding is provided through a jointly administered trust fund. Collectively organized apprenticeships in the U.S. construction industry remedy the lack of incentives for an individual contractor to invest in a worker who may work for another employer after completing the job (Mills 1972; Strauss 1965). According to the AFL-CIO's federation of construction unions – the Building and Construction Trades Department (BCTD) – signatory contractors and local unions operate over 2,000 training centers across North America through which over 180,000 apprentices and tens of thousands of journey-level workers receive training each year.

Although apprenticeship programs are typically associated with union presence, such programs also exist in the nonunion or open-shop segment of the construction industry. Northrup (1984) suggests that the fact that the BAT has approved relatively few nonunion apprenticeships is partly politically motivated, alleging that directors of state and federal ap-
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prenticeship councils have a union-bias. The Associated Building Contractors (ABC), a principal open-shop contractors' association, probably runs the most widely developed open-shop training system. It offers unilaterally administered apprenticeship and craft training to its members, with 15,000 apprentices and craft workers attending training programs in two dozen construction crafts each year. As with the union programs, open-shop apprenticeship programs have to meet standards set by the federal and state apprenticeship councils. The craft training programs organized by the ABC are less formal than its apprenticeships, and they are aimed at both the entry-level and more experienced worker. The principal body in the ABC training system is the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER), an educational foundation established to develop standardized construction curricula. Training programs are funded by an NCCER national training service agreement, through which a contractor commits to contribute a share of the wage sum (\$0.15 per craft-labour hour in 2001). The NCCER is responsible for the content of the training programs, but the individual ABC chapters have complete latitude in the management of these programs. Another association that unilaterally organizes training programs is the National Association of Home Builders. The association's Home Builders Institute offers pre-apprenticeship training programs for at-risk and adjudicated youth, for adult offenders and for homeless people. It also organizes continuing education programs, providing building and remodeling contractors certified courses in management, finance, sales and marketing.

Training Flexible Workers in the Construction Industry

In this section I will discuss for each of the two countries the preliminary findings on the provision of training for flexible workers. In the construction industry three actors may decide to get involved in such training arrangements: unions, as the traditional training providers in the industry either in a partnership with contractors or unilaterally), contractors and labour market intermediaries (such as temporary work agencies).

The Netherlands

As mentioned above, unions and employers in the construction industry have jointly regulated the use of temporary agency workers through the industry's collective agreement. A contractor that is covered by the construction industry's collective agreement must, when using a temporary agency worker, contribute to the industry's training fund for this worker. A contractor can be exempted from this obligation if the temporary agency is willing to contribute to the training fund instead.

Temporary work agencies may qualify to become an apprenticeship firm as described in section 3 of this paper. In addition to general requirements for apprenticeship firms set by the national training and education body, temporary work agencies have to comply with the 1998 WAADI Act in order to be accredited. Furthermore temporary work agencies have to be a member of either one of the two principal staffing agency associations (the General Association of Staffing Agencies or ABU, and the Dutch Association of Intermediary and Staffing © van Velzen, M. 2005. In Zeytinoglu, I.U. (Ed.), 2005. "Building on Flexibility, Training for Construction: A Comparison of Training Arrangements for Flexible Workers in the Dutch and American Construction Industries. *Flexibility in Workplaces: Effects on Workers, Work Environment and the Unions*. Geneva: IIRA/ILO. ISBN Web pdf: 92-2-116130-7; Web html: 92-2-116131-5

Services, NBBU, respectively). A temporary agency needs to employ training coordinators for each distinct type of apprenticeship it provides. These coordinators are responsible for the guidance and supervision of the apprentice on the worksite. The temporary agency and the apprentice sign a practice-employment contract.

Since 1999 only a handful of temporary work agencies have met – or have been willing to meet – the requirements set by the training body for becoming an apprenticeship firm. These agencies offer two-year training programs, certified by the training body. Both the agency and the worker can initiate an assessment of the worker's training need. Whenever a need for training has been determined and discussed by the worker and the agency, agreements are formalized through a training contract. Training may take place during work hours, either on or off the job, or after work. If training is offered after work hours the temporary agency worker is expected to invest his or her own spare time in attending the training. Training costs are discussed and laid down in a separate contract, which may include agreements about payback clauses or specifications about a worker's financial contribution.

Most temporary agency workers in the Dutch construction industry are people reentering the labour market and are often uncertain about the type of work they want to do. On average they possess skills at the lower or intermediate level. Typically agencies provide training aimed at acquiring narrow but deep skills, for trades such as carpentry, masonry and tile-setters. The practical component of the apprenticeship program is realized through dispatching workers to client-firm job-sites. Temporary work agencies can place their apprentice temporary workers only at construction firms that have been accredited as an apprenticeship firm by the construction industry's national training body. Classroom training takes place at an ROC regional training center. Agencies are responsible for supervising and monitoring an apprentice's progress. In addition to formal training provision, one agency has introduced informal on-the-job learning schemes by jointly dispatching inexperienced newcomers and journeymen. Here, the younger worker is supposed to learn by working side-by-side with the experienced worker. Younger workers are generally hard to get interested to pursue a career in the construction industry. Incentives to attract young workers vary from providing motor scooters to reimbursing apprentices for tuition and offering graduation bonuses.

During the experimental year, half of the requests for temporary agency workers could not be honored by agencies essentially due to a lack of skilled personnel. The small number of agencies that have started to offer certified training programs to their workers use this as a unique selling point vis-à-vis their competitors. Given the gloomy past of temporary work in the trades, *bona fide* temporary work agencies feel that they have to show their credibility by committing to investments in the skills of tradesmen.

Temporary work agencies that are exempted from the construction industry's collective agreement are bound by the collective agreement for temporary agency workers, which features its own mandatory employer contributions for training. Under the 1999-2004 collective agreement an obligation for temporary work agencies was created to discuss a worker's training needs after having worked 26 weeks for the agency. Eighteen to 24 months after the beginning of the temporary employment relationship, an agency has to permanently hire a temporary worker. Compliance with the temporary agency workers collective agreement, par-

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ticularly with respect to the provision of training, has been of recent concern to both the unions and the employers' association in the temporary staffing industry. The employers' association acknowledged that training is scattered, mostly targeted at higher skilled workers, and seldom an integral part of an agency's long-term strategy. With the introduction of a new collective agreement in March 2004 (which expires in 2009), each temporary agency worker will be entitled to a personal training budget after 78 weeks of agency work. Starting from 26 weeks of agency work, one percent of a temporary agency worker's monthly salary is set aside for this budget.

The United States

In the mid-1990s the Dunlop Commission (concerned with the future of worker-management relations) addressed the flexibility–training paradox in the United States by reconciling the need for enhancing workplace training and improving the economic position of workers in flexible employment relationships. Unions responded by naming one of their greatest challenges the search for ways to advance the interests of unskilled workers at the periphery of the labour market.

In the construction industry unions have been rather wary of the rise of temporary work agencies. Unions view temporary work agencies as the nonunion equivalent of the hiring hall. There is a strong believe among unions that temporary work agencies have helped nonunion contractors underbid signatory contractors, especially for heavy manual labour, which requires few craft-related skills. Sixty-five percent of local union leaders identified temporary work agencies as a threat, according to a survey by the BCTD.

The principal strategy of construction unions vis-à-vis temporary work agencies has been to rein in agency work in the industry by launching a campaign, which aimed at providing temporary agency workers in the construction industry with 'a permanent voice' through organizing these workers. Local unions have had mixed successes in organizing temporary agency workers. Many of these workers are employed on a day-to-day basis: today they work in the construction industry; tomorrow they might work on a farm or as a janitor. Temporary work agencies fiercely try to inhibit organizing attempts by unions. In *NLRB v. Labour Ready, Inc.*, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals found that a 'no-solicitation, no-distribution' rule by a temporary work agency violated the National Labour Relations Act. The agency's rule prohibited construction workers from soliciting union support or distributing literature while waiting for assignments in the company's waiting room.

The BCTD considered itself successful in denouncing agency malpractices by taking agencies to court. A particular concern is noncompliance with OSHA standards by agencies that specialize in low-skilled labour, as a relatively high number of Hispanic construction labourers are involved in occupational injuries and fatalities. A BCTD study found that Labour Ready, Inc., one of the major temporary work agencies in the construction, has an injury rate three times higher than the industry's average. In 2001, the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) started an investigation into the safety problems at Labour Ready and other temporary

work agencies. In other cases the BCTD filed suit against agencies that charged workers for cashing their paychecks at agencies' offices.

The above indicates that some agencies, among them publicly traded companies, are inclined to curtail worker benefits. Preliminary results from interviews with managers of temporary agencies in the construction industry provide mixed perspectives in terms of training entitlements for flexible workers. Temporary agencies that specialize in low-skill, low-pay labour are reluctant to invest in the skills of their workers, besides providing basic safety instruction. If a client-firm wishes to continue its business with the agency either the same worker will be sent out or, if the job requires additional skills the contractor can hire a new worker from the agency. For these agencies there is no apparent need to train workers. They either do not see it as their niche, or they consider training the responsibility of external training institutions, such as trade schools and community colleges. These agencies view experience gained through learning-by-doing as a valuable skill, although other contractors may have a hard time recognizing such experience.

One nationally operating temporary work agency specialized in skilled craftsmen introduced pilot-projects at two agencies in the course of 2000, offering free craft training programs to its workers. In order to qualify for participation, a worker was required to have worked a minimum of 1,200 hours with the agency. ABC had set the training curriculum and the acquired skills were registered with the NCCER, enabling the transfer of skills to another employer. After the pilot the agency decided that the programs were not cost-efficient. Some temporary work agencies have developed ties with community colleges, reimbursing workers for courses and exams. Other agencies work together with local employment development departments, referring workers who need additional training to government agencies. Typically temporary work agencies that do invest in worker skills specialize in staffing for high-skill, high pay jobs.

Many day labourers who are organized in day labour programs need basic services: housing, clothing, and food. A decent pay and health care come second. In many cases undocumented immigrant day labourers need protection against harassment by the police and neighbors. If these safeguards are built in, instruction on occupational safety and hazard and language courses can be offered. Some programs go as far as assisting workers in entering classes at community colleges in order to acquire work-related skills.

While temporary agency workers are almost exclusively dispatched to nonunion contractors, open-shop contractors' associations such as ABC have not designed a distinct training policy for these workers. Individual contractors are therefore left to decide whether a temporary agency worker needs training and whether or not the contractor wants to share in the training expenses. Typically contractors are reluctant to invest in the skills of agency workers. Although, as one open-shop training coordinator stated, temporary work agencies could recoup train costs by demanding higher mark-ups for higher skilled workers, agencies often cite cost-efficiency as a reason not to train.

Discussion and Conclusion

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The institutional differences between the Dutch and U.S. construction industries are mirrored in the way training for flexible workers is organized. The Dutch construction industry is relatively open to outsiders, for the better part because the collective agreement is almost all-inclusive, thereby avoiding ‘cheap labour’ in the industry. Construction unions in the United States see themselves as providers of high-skilled labour whereas nonunion contractors compete on the basis of lowest costs. They operate in separate markets, reserving benefits strictly for members. As American unions are losing ground vis-à-vis nonunion contractors, each development weakening the unions’ position, such as the increased use of temporary agency workers, is greeted with suspicion if not hostility. Dutch unions and contractors have nationally agreed to offer temporary agency workers and others moving in and out of the industry access to many provisions that are available to regular workers. In the United States unions bargain within their crafts and are very much aware of their jurisdiction: no craftsman is allowed to work outside his craft, no benefits are offered to workers who are not a member of the craft union. This ‘outsider-unfriendly’ approach cuts off avenues to union-provided training for temporary agency workers. As temporary work agencies and contractors using agency workers are reluctant to pick-up the training tab, especially for low-skill workers, this creates a predicament for many flexible workers.

In addition to the institutional features of the construction industry in the two countries, legislation (or the lack thereof) governing flexible staffing arrangements plays a role in triggering labour market actors to provide training. In the United States legislative responses to remedy the lack of training provided to flexible workers are scant. Following a report by the GAO (U.S. General Accounting Office 2000), some proposals have been initiated both at the state and federal level to improve the conditions for flexible workers, but they seem to primarily deal with pension rights and health care benefits. The BCTD, which considers legislative proposals at the federal level as “token bills with zero chance of success”³, has introduced a model legislative package of which parts have been enacted as laws in Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts and Texas. The unions’ support of a bill of rights for flexible workers further hints at the search by unions for a legislative framework to support their campaign against the largely unregulated temporary agency work in the construction industry. They may partly be helped by the ruling of the National Labour Relations Board in *M.B. Sturgis* of August 2000, which states that unions may petition the NLRB to rule that temporary agency workers at a unionized work site should be included in the union bargaining unit.

Although the regulatory framework (collective agreements and legislation) in the Netherlands offers flexible workers in the construction industry access to training, the Dutch system is certainly not flawless. In the construction industry as a whole training investments have dropped significantly, affecting both regular and flexible workers. Secondly, temporary work agencies generally are skill-biased, hurting low-skill workers who are not covered by the collective agreement of the construction industry. In addition, temporary work agencies that have initiated apprenticeship programs report a disappointing quality of the inflow of

³ Personal communication BCTD director, July 16, 2002.

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program participants, resulting in lower than average passing rates on apprenticeship exams. Finally, given that the construction industry's collective agreement does not include all workers it opens the door for actors to operate outside the realm of the agreement. Temporary work agencies that are not bound by the temporary agency workers collective agreement and construction firms can create a secondary labour market for lower-skilled workers in lower pay jobs, thereby virtually replicating the two-tier U.S. construction industry. Solving the flexibility-training paradox therefore starts with a regulatory framework that leaves no labour market actor behind and that prevents firms from adverse selection when targeting training.

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Chapter 6

Flexibility in the Workplace: Determinants and Consequences of Occupational Stress among Canadian Female Non-Standard Workers in the Retail Trade¹

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Introduction

The Canadian labour market has seen drastic changes with respect to work relationships over the past 20 years. The service sector is growing; telecommunications technologies are affecting work relationships, and the internationalization of businesses is increasing. In response to this, economies in industrialized countries are restructuring their labour markets to meet cost reduction and workplace flexibility strategies, by implementing various forms of non-standard work arrangements. The most common forms of non-standard employment are part-time and temporary/casual jobs (Zeytinoglu, 1999a). In Canada, there is a disproportionately high share of women in non-standard jobs, particularly in the service sector. As poverty continues to be a pressing issue for Canadian women, and as non-standard employment is associated with lower income, it is important to understand how these jobs interact with other factors to affect women's occupational health.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the impact of part-time and casual employment on work-related stress for women. We also consider other factors (including other working conditions, gendered work environments and demographic factors) that contribute to stress, and how these factors work together to affect stress. Our analysis focuses on gender as a determinant of occupational health and as a contributor to the non-standard employment status for many women. Links are made between stress, the women's experiences in their part-time and casual jobs, and the unique conditions of women's lives in both paid and unpaid employment. We conclude the analysis by examining how stress, in turn, affects female workers' physical health, emotional well-being, and their workplaces.

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Definitions of key terminologies

In this study, *part-time work* (also known as *regular or permanent part-time work*) is considered to be work that is less than full-time hours in a continuous employment contract, with a fixed work schedule and a guaranteed number of hours (Kalleberg, 2000; Zeytinoglu, 1999). Employment that is completed on an on-call temporary basis, with no guaranteed hours of work or a fixed schedule of work hours, is referred to as *casual work*. This work can involve full-time or part-time hours; however, in the retail trade, casual work is typically on a part-time basis (Zeytinoglu & Crook, 1997).

Stress as an occupational health problem has been studied in medical, behavioral and social science research over the past 60 years, but there are discrepancies in the literature on how experts define and operationalize stress, and there are numerous different scales to measure occupational stress (Cooper et al., 2001; Di Martino, 2000; Fields, 2002; Jex, 1998). In this study, stress refers to self-reported symptoms occurring as a result of transactions between the individual and the environment (Lazarus, 1990). Using the definition from Denton et al. (2002) and Zeytinoglu et al. (2000), symptoms of stress include frequent exhibition of the following (over the preceding six months): exhaustion, burnout, the inability to sleep, lack of energy, feeling like there is nothing more to give, wanting to cry, difficulties with concentration, feelings of anger and helplessness, irritability, anxiety, feeling dizzy and feeling a lack of control over one's life (Denton et al., 2002, Zeytinoglu et al., 2000). *Physical health problems* refers to self-reported physical health problems such as musculoskeletal disorders, respiratory illnesses, headaches and migraines, and burns or cuts in the body that incurred as a result of continuous involvement in work or the work environment (not as a result of an acute or an instantaneous event) (Hales & Bernard, 1996). Musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) are defined as disorders of the soft tissue and their surrounding structures. Such disorders occur as pain or discomfort in the neck or shoulder; arm, elbow or hand; back pain; sore or sprained muscles; hips, knees and feet. *Emotional health problems* include self-report feelings of low job satisfaction, motivation and self-esteem as a result of work and the work environment. Workplace problems such as high absenteeism rates, high turnover rates, high rates of grievances, a larger propensity to engage in conflict with peers and superiors, and a willingness to go on strike all fall into the category of *organizational problems* (Cooper et al., 2001; Lowenberg & Conrad, 1998; NIOSH 2002; Wilkins & Beaudet, 1998). These outcomes are also examined in this study. All outcomes discussed are perceived outcomes, as they are measured through self-reports of individuals.

Literature Review

Both paid and unpaid forms of work are important determinants of health. Research indicates that paid work contributes to women's emotional health problems of stress, anxiety, and depression (Collins et al., 1997; Messing, 1997; Walters & Denton, 1997). Our previous research on women's health has identified non-standard jobs as a specific source of chronic stress and exhaustion for some female workers. Studies have pointed out that stress as an occupational illness has both physical and mental effects on workers as well as having organizational effects (Hall, 1992; Hales & Bernard, 1996; Kahn & Byosiore, 1992; Lowenberg & Conrad, 1998; MFL, 1996; Wilkins & Beaudet, 1998). Furthermore, Buchanan and Koch-Schulte (2000) found that stress in part-time and low-paid employment can have both physical and emotional consequences for employees, ultimately leading to high levels of turnover. There are a number of factors affecting stress, and consequences of stress. In this literature review, we first give a brief relevant literature on factors affecting stress, © Zeytinoglu, I.U., Lillevik, W., Seaton, B., & Moruz, J. 2005. "Flexibility in the Workplace: Determinants and Consequences of Occupational Stress among Canadian Female Non-Standard Workers in the Retail Trade." In Zeytinoglu, I.U. (Ed.), 2005. *Flexibility in Workplaces: Effects on Workers, Work Environment and the Unions*. Geneva: IIRA/ILO. ISBN Web pdf: 92-2-116130-7; Web html: 92-2-116131-5

followed by the literature on self-reported outcomes of stress on the individual and their workplaces.

Non-standard work in retail trade as a factor affecting stress

Although part-time and temporary work have always existed in Canada, what is new and challenging is rising proportion of non-standard work arrangements in newly created jobs since the 1980s; a large share of which lies within retail trade. Labour force data from Human Resources Development Canada (1996) shows that since 1976, 44 percent of total employment growth has been due to growth in non-standard employment. Lipsett and Reesor (1998) assert that the “typical” full-time, permanent, nine-to-five, Monday-to-Friday job with one employer is now the work arrangement for only a third of the Canadian work force. Different types of flexible work arrangements are used by both private and public sector organizations, and in the service and goods-producing sectors. Part-time, temporary, contract workers, and home-based workers are typically found in the service sector, while the goods-producing sector often uses full-time workers on an overtime or shift basis, or contracting out work. In addition, employment in these sectors is further divided along gender lines; the majority of employees in the service sector are female and male workers dominate the goods-producing sector (Zeytinoglu 1999a).

The increase in part-time and casual jobs in the retail trade has had a negative affect on working conditions in the sector. It is now rare to find 8-hour shifts in cashier and clerical positions in many retail food stores, and employers are cutting back hours whenever possible and eliminating rest breaks (Zeytinoglu & Crook, 1997). Split-shifts, which occur when an individual works in the morning from 8 a.m. to 12 noon and from 5 to 9 p.m. the same day, for example, are increasing in frequency in the workplace. Such schedules make it difficult, particularly for females, to manage both work and life responsibilities, especially if they have dependants. Split-shifts were reported to create stress and tiredness, especially when workers were juggling several split shifts in different workplaces.

Overall, in the retail trade, employment used to be characterized by full-time jobs with part-time workers being used to cover peak periods only, such as Thursday and Friday nights, and Saturdays. Now, however, full-time jobs in the retail trade are becoming increasingly replaced with part-time positions. Throughout the years many female-dominated jobs (such as cashiers, bakery, and deli-counter positions) are converted to part-time positions. Similar developments did not seem to be taking place with respect to jobs in warehouses, which were predominantly male (Zeytinoglu and Crook 1997). From this data, it is clear that the move to precarious non-standard forms of employment within the service sector and downsizing are primarily affecting women workers.

Physical demands of the retail trade as factors affecting stress

Many studies have shown that jobs in the retail trade often require heavy physical effort (especially while in a stationary standing position); may be performed in extreme hot or cold temperatures; often involve the presence of dangerous objects and substances such as knives, hot ovens, or cleaning solvents; or can be in physically or emotionally harassing environments (Hinton et al., 1999; Messing, 1998). Some customer service jobs are prone to violence due to the hours of work and location, such as working alone at night or early morning hours in isolated areas, or as a result of being responsible for handling money or valuables, such closing the cash register(s) and depositing the money after work or being in charge of opening and closing the store.

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Psychosocial work factors and working conditions as factors affecting stress

One major trend is that the shift towards non-standard forms of employment has been accompanied by a decrease in staffing levels in retail stores. Reducing staff levels results in both job loss for some workers and places an additional strain on the retained members of the workforce, who are then responsible for managing the workload of multiple individuals. Studies also show that psychosocial work factors (Collins et al., 1997; Denton et al., 1999; Messing, 1997) such as lack of support from the managers and co-workers and lack of control over work increase stress for workers. In general, retailers have policies relating to harassment and sexual harassment. However, those policies often lack procedures for their implementation (Zeytinoglu & Crook, 1997).

In terms of working conditions, one of the concerns about non-standard jobs is that they do not provide an equitable work environment for workers in comparison to their full-time counterparts. Previous studies have found that part-time workers earn on the average much less than their full-time counterparts and fewer have access to benefits, including company pension plans and extended health coverage. Non-standard jobs are unprotected by employment and health and safety legislation (Quinlan & Mayhew, 1999). Temporary/contract workers are also paid less than full-time workers (Statistics Canada, 1998). Since temporary/contract workers are often paid a “fee for services”, the employer-employee relationship is essentially non-existent; as such, temporary/contract workers are usually responsible for their own benefits coverage and tend to not qualify for employer-sponsored pension programs.

With respect to wages and benefits, the wholesale and retail trades have the lowest estimated average weekly earnings of all industries. In the retail food sector, wage rates in both unionized and non-unionized workplaces tend to vary according to tenure. Moreover, while the sector provides employees with access to some benefits, individuals in non-standard employment tend to fare even more poorly than their full-time permanently employed counterparts by receiving lower rates of pay and fewer access to benefits. Regarding job security, training, promotion, and career development, the literature points that for part-time and temporary/contract workers, job security and income security take priority over training. Since women dominate part-time positions in the retail sector, their disadvantageous position in terms of income and job security contributes to the inequality between female and male workers, and between full-time and part-time women workers (Zeytinoglu and Crook 1997).

For the majority of workers entering the service sector workforce in non-standard jobs, there is less job security and fewer opportunities for positions with stability than in the past. Particularly in non-unionized jobs, workers may have no assurance from their employers about how long their job will last. For example, temporary/casual employment trends have resulted in a growing number of individuals employed for set periods of time only, such as during the holidays or for the summer season. In comparison to non-unionized workers, union workers generally have more certainty about their employment status because the terms of collective agreements usually guarantee unionized workers a minimum number of hours or weeks of work, and often temporary/casual jobs become permanent after a defined time period (Hinton et al. 1999).

Literature has shown that part-time and other non-standard workers do not receive the same amount and quality of training as their full-time counterparts, which often puts them at a disadvantage for upward career mobility. Moreover, in divisions of the industry where women in non-standard jobs make up a large proportion of the total number of employees, © Zeytinoglu, I.U., Lillevik, W., Seaton, B., & Moruz, J. 2005. “Flexibility in the Workplace: Determinants and Consequences of Occupational Stress among Canadian Female Non-Standard Workers in the Retail Trade.” In Zeytinoglu, I.U. (Ed.), 2005. *Flexibility in Workplaces: Effects on Workers, Work Environment and the Unions*. Geneva: IIRA/ILO. ISBN Web pdf: 92-2-116130-7; Web html: 92-2-116131-5

very few, if any, opportunities for advancement are provided. Salespeople in non-food stores have limited opportunities to move up to store management positions. Within food stores, cashiers can move up to head cashiers, but there is little opportunity for upward mobility and advancement beyond the head cashier position. As a consequence, most workers in the retail sector can only achieve advancement by changing employers. Part-time workers are thus rarely considered for promotion, and promotion occurs typically if there are no full-time workers available to fill the position, or if the part-time worker has been willing to work in a full-time job (Zeytinoglu & Crook 1997).

Research conducted by the UFCW indicates that working conditions for women in non-standard jobs is increasingly untenable, with workers being forced to accept lower rates of pay and few benefits in order to remain employed. For example, the majority of workers in part-time and casual jobs in this sector are excluded from workplace benefit programs such as pension plans, dental plans, or other medical coverage. Unfortunately, however, because these employees are often working on an “on-call” basis and are required by the employer to be available for work on short notice, it is extremely difficult for them to seek better employment (Hinton et al., 1999). Nevertheless, unionization has been very advantageous to workers with respect to wages and benefits. In 1997, “unionized female part-time workers in Canada earned 94.3 percent of the hourly wage of unionized female full-time workers, while non-unionized female part-time workers earned only 75.5 percent of their non-unionized female counterparts (Kumar, 1998). In this same year, 86.6 percent of unionized full-time workers and 56.7 percent of unionized part-time workers were members of a pension plan, which far exceeds the pension coverage rate of 7.5 percent for non-unionized part-time workers (Jackson, 1998). The extended health care plan coverage rate for unionized full-time, unionized part-time, and non-unionized part-time workers was 88.9, 47.8, and 9.0 percent, respectively, in 1997 (Jackson, 1998: 173-174)”.

Gendered work environments and demographic factors as factors affecting stress

Gendered work environments often encompass male-dominated organizational cultures and climates, resulting in discrimination against women, harassment, prejudice and sex stereotyping, which are all factors that increase and intensify the stress symptoms of women (Messing 1998; Theobald 2002; Zeytinoglu et al. 1999). In the retail sector, occupational segregation based on sex and the employment status divide between full-time and part-time/casual workers is still prevalent. Almost all supervisory and managerial positions were held by men and those were also full-time, relatively well-paid positions. Male employees tend to work in warehouse departments and as stock clerks and meat cutters. In contrast, women are generally in cashier, store clerk, and bakery jobs, which are also the lower-paid and part-time positions (Kainer 2002; Zeytinoglu and Crook 1997).

Adult women (age 25 + years) comprise 70 percent of part-time work positions in the country (Statistics Canada, 1998) and 68 percent of involuntary part-time work positions (HRDC, 1996). Statistics Canada (1998) also identifies youth (age 15-24 years) as a large group in the part-time work force, as indicated by their 35 percent share of these positions in the country in 1997. From these statistics, it is clear that there is a disproportionately high share of women and young people in non-standard jobs, and thus placing them in a secondary position compared to males. This produces a cycle of less financial support and an increased dependence on their spouse, family, and the government, ultimately resulting in a higher likelihood of living in poverty in old age, and more health problems (Zeytinoglu et al., 1999).

The workforce in retail food stores consists of two groups: middle-aged women (between the ages of 34 and 55 years) with children or single mothers (24 + years of age), © Zeytinoglu, I.U., Lillevik, W., Seaton, B., & Moruz, J. 2005. “Flexibility in the Workplace: Determinants and Consequences of Occupational Stress among Canadian Female Non-Standard Workers in the Retail Trade.” In Zeytinoglu, I.U. (Ed.), 2005. *Flexibility in Workplaces: Effects on Workers, Work Environment and the Unions*. Geneva: IIRA/ILO. ISBN Web pdf: 92-2-116130-7; Web html: 92-2-116131-5

and female and male students (16 to 24 years of age). These two groups have different employment goals and expectations. While middle-aged women and single mothers consider their employment in retail food stores as their career, students consider their employment in retail food stores as jobs for supporting themselves while they are studying in order to pursue other careers. Each group of workers has to deal with personal life responsibilities (of juggling work and home life, taking care of children or schoolwork) while working in non-standard jobs (with inconsistent schedules and hours).

Stress as an occupational health problem

As we demonstrate in our model (see Figure 1), stress is a multi-causal outcome of work and working conditions, and gendered work environments and demographic characteristics. The effect of the work environment on stress is well known (Cooper et al. 2001; Hales and Bernard 1996, and Kahn and Byosiere 1992). The unique work environment of part-time and casual employment, in particular, the economic pressure in terms of competition for jobs/contracts, pressure to retain a job, and pressure to earn a livable income, are all conceptualized as factors affecting stress levels of precarious workers (Quinlan et al. 2001). Stress among part-time and casual workers can also be attributed to the ‘employment strain’ in these jobs due to uncertainty in employment, earnings, scheduling, location of employment and tasks, and the precariousness of the household and demands required to manage employment uncertainty such as time spent in looking for work, time spent travelling between jobs, and conflicts from holding more than one job. ‘Employment strain’ is a concept explained by Lewchuk and his colleagues (2003), which identifies possible health risks due to uncertainties and insecurities of an occupation or sector (not just due to one particular workplace). This often leads to the additional stresses faced by those in non-standard work, who often find themselves emotionally exhausted from constantly seeking other employment and juggling multiple jobs. Employment strains include issues of lack of control over types of work, work schedules and hours of work, location of work, and earnings (Lewchuk et al., 2003).

Self-reported outcomes of stress

Stress from non-standard work can affect the individual’s physical and emotional well-being, and can also affect the organization.

Work stress can have adverse effects on individuals’ physical abilities to function well. Aspects of non-standard work such as long shifts and very short breaks and the type of tasks typically found in the retail industry such as heavy lifting and repetitive motions can lead to a variety of physically debilitating results, particularly for women who tended to work in cashier, store clerk, and bakery jobs and who often encounter “split shifts” and the elimination of rest breaks (Zeytinoglu & Crook 1997). The possible physical manifestations of work stress include arthritis, heart disease, migraines and headaches, and musculoskeletal disorders.

Work-related stress can also affect individuals’ emotional health and well-being. In the retail sector, the nature of their tasks combined with the daily interaction with customers and co-workers can reduce women’s job satisfaction, self-esteem, and motivation. Such outcomes can be a result of many of the factors described in the model. Research shows that work-related stress is highly associated with low job satisfaction, decreased levels of self-esteem and motivation (Walters & Denton 1997, Zeytinoglu et al. 1999).

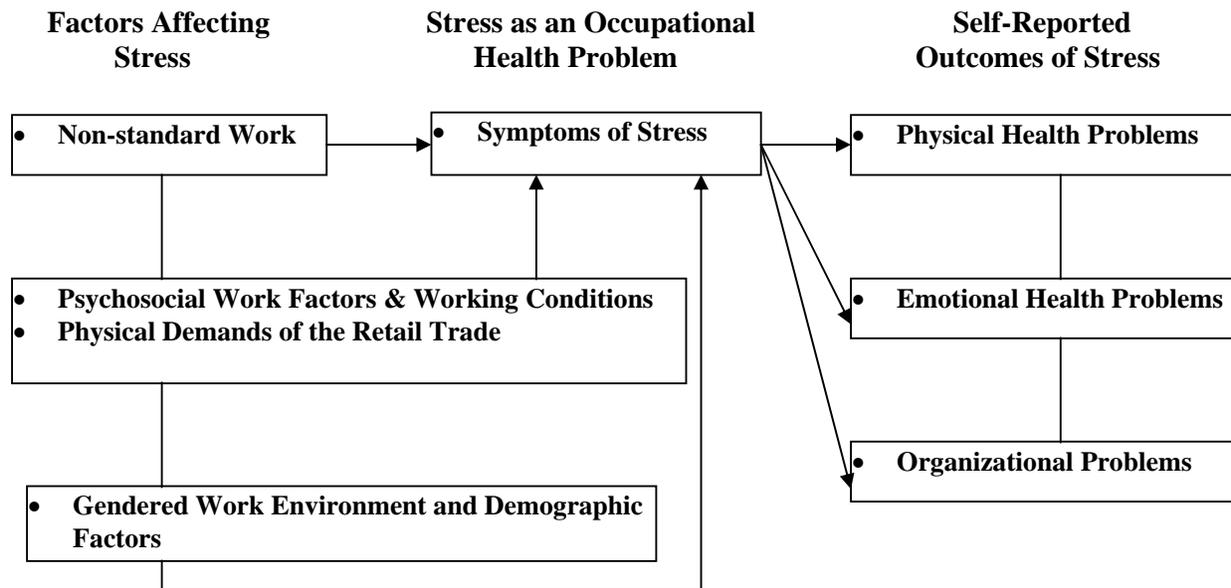
All of the above factors, including physical health and emotional well-being outcomes of stress, can impact employers in negative ways. Employers and unions need to have a good understanding of the stress that women workers in non-standard employment face not only to comprehend the difficulties that are placed on these workers but also to become aware of the outcomes of this stress on the organizational and economic aspects of employment. Stress in part-time and low-paid employment can have both physical and emotional consequences for employees, ultimately leading to high levels of turnover (Buchanan and Koch-Schulte 2000). Other consequences of work stress include higher levels of absenteeism, a higher propensity to file grievances, lowered workplace morale, and the willingness to engage in conflict with co-workers or management (this includes strike activities).

The Model

We developed a model for our research based on the recent available literature (See Figure 1). This model demonstrates the posited interrelationships among work environment factors with stress mediating workplace factors in the retail environment and workplace outcomes of stress. The model is influenced by Karasek's (1979) demand-control model, Ivancevich and Matteson's (1980) organizational stress model, Marshall and Cooper's (1979) work environment related stressors and resultant physical and mental health problems model, Davidson and Fielden's (1999) model of stress and the working woman, and O'Connor et al.'s (1999) feminist participatory model for health promotion research. Two recent, additional studies (Quinlan et al. 2001; Lewchuk et al. 2003) have surfaced in the literature conceptualizing precarious work and occupational health consequences.

Although previous studies have examined individual factors that affect the occupational health of women separately, an examination of these factors as a complete interacting system affecting women's health has not been studied. In this project we expect to find a link between the occupational health of women and non-standard employment, and to better understand how economic, legislative, workplace, and individual factors work together to create stress for women working in part-time and casual jobs. We also expect this stress to manifest itself in health and workplace problems.

Figure 1 The model for examining occupational stress for women in non-standard jobs



Methodology

Research design

This project uses *qualitative research methodology* (semi-structured interviews with union representatives, semi-structured interviews and focus groups with workers). The female worker is the unit of analysis in this research. This type of methodology provided the rich information that emerged from the focus groups and interviews. Stress is analyzed in the work environment as a complete, interacting system of factors. Self-reports of stress from the individuals in the study will be assessed.

The research design is aimed toward qualitative information, which allows for an overall analysis of the work-related stress phenomenon. The research is designed to provide voice and empowerment to women who are working in non-standard jobs, and for researchers to learn from their experiences. This qualitative approach allows a deeper understanding of the context of the data, and allows for the presentation of this information in a meaningful, holistic way; this contrasts with quantitative data, whose goal is total objectivity through eliminating outside factors and issues during data collection.

The participants engaged in interviews and focus groups that ranged from one hour to three hours in length, and they were asked a variety of questions around stress, their workplace, and their personal lives. Sample questions included “What are possible reasons for you to be stressed at work?”, “Do you have any physical health problems as a result of stress?”, “How do you think stress affects your job satisfaction, motivation, and self-esteem?”, and “How do you think working part-time or on a casual basis and the other factors that we discussed work together to affect your stress?”

Population and sample

The research population in this study consists of women working in part-time and casual jobs in Canada. The sample consists of eight members of the UFCW Canada who are Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) representatives of the retail food stores and fifty-nine workers in non-standard jobs. The intermittent and unpredictable schedules of non-standard workers make it almost impossible to reach a larger population given the time constraints and resources we had. We consider the achieved sample size of 59 in a qualitative study, where similar themes emerge in different focus groups and interviews, as sufficient to provide policy recommendations. A sample size of 59 is a respectable size as long as the themes that come up in the meetings arise on a consistent basis (Lee, 1999; Marshall & Rossman, 1989), which occurred in our study. The UFCW Canada members were selected for this study because this union has a large percentage of members in non-standard jobs. The sample includes non-unionized workers as well, who provided us with information about women workers' occupational health and experiences of non-standard employment in smaller workplaces and in workplaces not covered by collective agreements. This study focuses on the retail trade (a female dominated sector) and casual and part-time work by sampling from a variety of retail trade outlets with high use of female workers in non-standard jobs.

This study was open to all workers regardless of gender; however, the main focus of the discussions within the interviews and focus groups revolved around the particular stress that females in non-standard employment experienced or seemed to have experienced. Thus all workers who wanted to share their experiences of women's occupational health issues in non-standard employment were allowed to participate in the focus groups and interviews. For this reason, the sample in this study includes 3 male workers, and 8 female workers who were employed in full-time jobs at the time of data collection. In addition, we felt that these individuals could provide us with some additional insight from their perspectives on how females in non-standard work are treated in their organizations.

Data collection process

Data are collected through interviews and focus groups. Data was collected from workers in a few metropolitan areas within Southern Ontario in 2001. All of the members who participated in this project work in the retail trade. Knowledge about this project was disseminated to workers through notices posted in their workplaces, through their union steward or occupational health and safety representative, and through telephone contact. The primary contact person in this study was the UFCW and the majority of the participants were female union members who were employed among different organizations in the retail sector. A few participants in this project are employed in non-unionized retail establishments in the Hamilton Area, and their recruitment occurred through contacts by researchers and participants. Interviews with union members who are OHS committee representatives were first completed. Our goal in conducting these interviews was to develop an understanding of health issues for women and non-standard workers in the unionized workplaces. We then conducted interviews and focus groups with workers to gather their input on non-standard women workers' health issues in the workplace.

During the focus groups and interviews with workers, each participant was given the project information package, then asked questions and invited to elaborate on the type of work that they do, what they like and dislike about their jobs, the symptoms of and factors affecting their stress, how stress affects them and their workplace, and the changes that could be made to reduce their stress and improve their health and that of other workers.

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Data collection and analysis

In this research we are studying factors that affect the stress of women workers in non-standard employment (external factors, work factors, workplace factors and individual factors), factors that contribute to stress as an occupational health problem, and self-reported outcomes of stress (physical health problems, emotional health problems, and organizational problems). In order to get information about how these factors relate to each other and to non-standard employment, we asked research participants a number of questions related to perceived stress in the workplace.

Data analysis for the union representative interviews was conducted through a content analysis of the transcribed interviews by the research team. Because of the small number of interviews, the data analysis was done by researchers manually. For focus groups and interview transcriptions, the principal researcher developed a coding scheme, and the transcriptions were double-coded. We analyzed this qualitative information for common themes and emerging issues. QSR-N5, a qualitative data analysis computer program, was used for data analysis of the transcribed focus groups and worker interviews. Responses from the transcribed interviews were coding according to the coding scheme, and these passages were entered into the software. This enabled the researchers to assess the depth and degree of each topic area and issue that was discussed across the participants.

Characteristics of the sample

OHS representatives

Eight OHS representatives from unionized food store and retail establishments participated in key informant interviews, seven of whom completed demographic questionnaires. Our sample consists of mostly women, married, and supporting two to four dependants (young or adult children, elderly parents) who are living in their homes. The majority of the OHS representatives are between the ages of 30 and 55 years. On the whole, our sample is of a healthy group of workers who are satisfied with their jobs although they describe their jobs as being somewhat stressful. With respect to occupation and employment tenure, our sample is quite varied. The participants in the OHS interviews are employed as a customer service representative, truck driver/delivery crew member, service and department clerks, as a cashier, photo lab technician, and as a stock handler. Half of the sample has been working in their occupation for more than twenty years. All of the OHS representatives in our study have experience in non-standard employment, although four are currently employed on a full-time basis and seven are permanent employees in their workplaces. Three representatives are currently working in part-time jobs and one has indicated that she is a temporary/casual employee. Two of the eight representatives interviewed hold second jobs in order to obtain full-time work hours or the hours that they would prefer to work. As is typical of work arrangements in the sector, six of the representatives are paid on an hourly basis and only one receives a salary. Furthermore, all of these individuals have significant experience working in the retail trade, having been employed for between seven and thirty-seven years in the sector. Finally, our sample is of a racially and ethnically homogenous group of people. None self-identify as members of racial and ethnic minorities, all are more comfortable speaking and reading in English than in another language and one is an immigrant (i.e. born outside of Canada to non-Canadian parents).

Focus groups and interview participants

In addition, we have collected data from fifty-nine workers who have participated in focus groups or interviews. Forty-one of these workers are UFCW Canada members and the rest are non-unionized workers. The majority of worker participants in this project are female. Three males attended focus groups and shared their knowledge of women's occupational health issues in non-standard employment. All of the participants in this project have experience working in part-time and casual jobs in food stores or in retail establishments such as clothing stores, garden centres, and beer stores. The majority of our respondents are young, single, and without dependants. They are well educated and many have qualifications that exceed the requirements for the tasks they perform at work. Their self-reported health is at least good, though the majority show self-reported job stress. They are mostly satisfied with their jobs. The tenure in occupation is low for our sample. Many individuals work part-time and many are in permanent jobs. They are overwhelmingly hourly-paid workers. Some have additional employment to have full-time hours. Many work in shift jobs. The respondents are overwhelmingly homogeneous in their ethnicity and language spoken.

Limitations of the methodology

The qualitative methodology allowed us to contact a small number of individuals, but as such, this does not enable us to collect large data for in-depth study. Interviews and focus group methodologies allowed us to obtain detailed information and explore the interrelationships between a variety of factors affecting occupational health of women in non-standard employment in a holistic manner. We have chosen to contact unionized workers through UFCW Canada locals because we were able to receive the assistance and support of the union in gaining access to members in non-standard employment. There is ample research evidence that unionized workers have better pay and benefits and better working conditions than non-unionized workers. Thus, our sample of unionized workers most likely has good working conditions. Therefore, we believe that the sample is biased towards those that are working in better working conditions than it exists in many workplaces. Sampling from workers represented by the UFCW Canada has given us the additional advantage of including individuals from a variety of different establishments in our research, and helps us to represent the diversity of female workers. We also sought to include non-unionized workers using snowballing sampling technique. This technique allowed access to individuals in non-unionized, more marginalized workplaces. All of these individuals are self-selected in the research, and thus, although our findings are reliable and valid for the participants in this study, more studies are needed to support the findings of this study. Although we are not focusing on a single workplace, our results can be similar for workers in the service and retail sector, where non-standard work is predominant, across organizations within Canada.

Analysis of Interviews and Focus Groups

These interviews were conducted in order to gain an understanding of health issues for women and non-standard workers in the unionized workplaces. We include quotes from the OHS representatives as well as the workers who participated in the study. Each representative's personal code is included at the beginning of the quote. For workers, each focus group participant/interviewee's personal code is included at the beginning of the quote. F refers to a focus group participant, I refers to an individual interview respondent, NU refers

to a non-unionized worker and U refers to a union member or an individual covered by a collective agreement. Each person was given a unique identification code, identified with a number.

Non-standard work

Many participants felt that being part-time often meant that their ability to gain seniority was hindered, especially since newer contracts based seniority on the number of hours worked, rather than on straight tenure with the organization. Seniority (or lack of it) was a concern even for non-unionized employees. This issue was identified as a major source of stress for many of the respondents, as 41 of the 59 participants indicated non-standard work as a stressor for them.

One non-unionized employee referred to how her seniority was stripped away when new employers came in and how this was a source of stress for her.

(F10NU39) ...we had new owners take over about a year and a half ago. So I'm one of their original workers, as well as another lady, and even though I have seniority I get little to no hours a week. And it's not flexible because the lady is very stubborn about it. She won't let you change your hours with someone and it gets to the point of that. And it gets to the point of, also, we don't have to clock in. You work the schedule that you're set down to work. And if you stay an hour later then you're volunteering your time.

Hours of work also contributed to stress, as 31 of the 59 participants noted this is a factor leading to stress. A couple of respondents (F1U3, F3U11) identified that they were often working full-time hours but were classified as "part-time" (thus receiving no benefits), and another (F2U8) was pressured regularly into working on Sundays although they are not legally required to do so. Irregular work schedules and the unpredictability of work hours each week added to stress, as the income stream became quite variable, which made budgeting very difficult, as outlined by the following participant.

(F3U12) when I started there I worked like forty hours a week so that's why another thing is hard for me now when I'm down to like... [...] But I find that in the winter I might have fourteen hours and then in the summer I have a lot more. So it's hard to judge money wise with that.

Often these workers found themselves being scheduled for "bad" hours, such as late night and weekend shifts. A worker in a nonunion retail store referred to no guarantee of hours as a source of stress for her:

(F6NU26) They have issues at my work with hours, they need to cut back hours. So we're getting three hour shifts in the middle of a weekday or on the weekends. So it will be a Saturday and I'll work twelve to three so I can't work anywhere else in the morning or at night. Like it's taking up my whole day for three hours.

Wages and benefits were issues that arose consistently throughout the focus groups and interviews. Many part-time and casual workers felt that they were not paid as well nor receiving the same benefits as their permanent, full-time counterparts. This was a source of stress for most of them (30 of the participants) as these individuals were often given the same

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work and responsibilities as their full-time co-workers, but were earning much less, and were excluded from receiving benefits.

The inequalities in wages between those doing the same job but have different levels of seniority came up as a source of stress in our discussions, as demonstrated by one individual:

(I7U7) My wages were terrible to be honest with you. When I started there I was told that I was going to make \$7.15...somewhere between \$7.15 and \$7.25. That was by the old manager. And then Carol had come in and she was the new manager. And I told them - "this isn't...wasn't what I was supposed to be paid" - because they paid me at \$6.85 and that's not what I had been told and I want what I was told. Because that's how it's supposed to be, right? And they gave me \$7.25 and they said that was my raise that's coming up. And I said okay. So when the union rates were coming and my five hundred hours were coming, I didn't get either. Like the people that started January 2000, everybody that started after that date was voted out of getting union raises and getting the every six month raise. So, basically, I had to work twelve hundred and ten hours to get a quarter. So I was there for a year and all I was up to was \$7.50.

The lack of benefits was another source of stress for part-time and casual workers in this study. Few (if any) of these participants received benefits, and the seasonality of jobs and the industry they work in, i.e. retail and agricultural retail sector, resulted in no benefits at for many participants. This was a particular concern for those workers who required to pay for uniforms or other specific items of clothing for their job, but were not getting any additional compensation or benefit to cover the costs of these clothes.

The precariousness of non-standard forms of employment, with lower rates of pay than full-time work and sometimes a complete absence of guaranteed hours of work, is well-documented in the literature (Hinton et al., 1999, Zeytinoglu & Crook, 1997). Zeytinoglu and Crook (1997) also note that while all workers are concerned about job and income security, unions are especially protective of these rights, and workers in unionized workplaces are at an advantage over non-unionized workers with respect to these factors. Thus, although it is not surprising that the part-time and casual employees from workplaces organized by UFCW Canada experience stress because of job insecurity, it is probably that workers in non-standard positions from non-unionized workplaces experience even greater anxiety and stress symptoms.

Very low levels of job security fuelled the stress even more for these non-standard workers. This status often meant for these participants, that their jobs were continually at risk, causing anxiety and vulnerability to management.

(OH5) “So [workers] are talking [about their health problems] regularly...but not reporting. And that’s part of one of the issues we have right now, is the fact that if you’re hurt, if there’s a problem, then report it, because that’s the only way it’s going to get caught. And, um, reporting things is an issue because [workers]... they think maybe it’ll come back on them later. Or, that they don’t have the time because of the, “I’ve got to get my work done so I don’t have the time to stop and report’.”

Physical demands of the retail trade

The OHS representatives identified several health problems which members commonly experience. All mentioned repetitive strain injuries as one of the major, most prevalent health problems in their workplaces. In particular, tendonitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, and chronic pain due to soft tissue damage in the back, shoulders, wrists, and elbows were highlighted by the representatives as compromising the health of workers. Cashiers, front-end staff, meat wrappers, and service clerks are especially susceptible; other than meat wrappers, women dominate these occupations. These types of injuries were attributed to the repetitive nature of jobs in the majority of departments (constantly twisting, continual lifting of heavy objects, twisting, bending, and reaching), and the non-ergonomic design of most workstations. In addition to repetitive strain injuries, cuts from knives, migraine headaches (resulting from eye strain from lighting to stress), poor housekeeping of the floors, resulting in slips and falls were cited. Stress was identified as a major health problem for workers, largely attributed to frequent contact with customers, some of whom become abusive, and to worker-management tension. Another representative noted that some workers do not feel safe reporting their health concerns and injuries to employers for fear of the repercussions, or they are preoccupied with trying to complete their workload and don't take the time to address their health issues with management.

Many (42 of the 59 respondents) of the non-standard women workers interviewed in this study indicated that they experienced some physical problems of work stress. The most common physical ailments that the participants reported were musculoskeletal disorders (MSD), and migraines or headaches. Other physical problems that people encountered included eczema and other skin diseases, arthritis, respiratory illnesses, and heart disease. Over half of the respondents mentioned this in focus groups and interviews. One participant (F7U27) mentioned that she had been seeing a chiropractor for the past six months for her back and neck pain, and that she has pain in her wrist and thumb for the past six months due to a problem with her tendon arising from nine years of work. Tendonitis appeared to be a common disorder among the part-time and casual workers in the retail industry (I1U1). Back, neck, and shoulder pain due to the physical nature of the job seemed to be prevalent among many of the non-standard working respondents in the study, but this pain seemed to appear more when the workplace became busy (I16U16). A number of non-standard women workers in this study also mentioned that they had headaches or migraines on an ongoing basis as a result of their jobs.

One worker mentioned the effects of heavy physical labour.

(F1U1) And you're thinking, you know, - I'm doing the work of two people, I'm not being paid for two people. So you're tired and you're aggravated and the kind of work I do is really physical. There's a lot of lifting, heavy lifting.

Many of respondents discussed their workplaces as being hot, cold, dusty, noisy, etc. and said that such environmental issues contributed to their stress. One participant discussed how the weather conditions outside made her work environment very uncomfortable for her:

(F10NU38) With me, it's the weather because I am outside. [...] I've noticed certain things. Like when we get the smog warnings in the area, people mention that they

have trouble breathing at work, especially when...if it's hot. You know, I do see a lot of people saying - "it's so heavy, my lungs feel funny".

Psychosocial work environment and working conditions in the retail trade

The lack of supervisor support was the most cited reason contributing to work stress, as it was identified by 51 of the 59 respondents in the study. This issue often led to a variety of negative consequences, including (I8U8) low morale within the department as the workers do not feel appreciated. Employees' work often goes unnoticed, and they are rarely praised for their accomplishments. In some cases, the managers are demeaning to the workers, and in other cases, managers simply did not know how to manage employees well, or the manager was a unionized employee and thus workers felt a conflict of interest if they were to complain to him/her. In addition, the lack of peer support was identified by 30 of the participants as a contributor to stress.

A respondent (I10U10) who worked for her employer for twenty years adds that it really hurts her feelings that management will believe customers' complaints over her words, and she feels that the management should know her after all these years and they should know how well she does her job by now.

One participant described her relationship with her supervisor as being the single cause of her stress. She said:

(I11U11) He's [the manager] the, he's the only cause of my stress at work [...] like, this one manager doesn't just hound me, he hounds a lot of people, you can't work like that.

Another interviewee describes how her relationships with different managers, and the difficulties associated with them, adds to her stress:

(I12NU12) Okay, um, well when I was first hired I had a different manager and then she resigned and I got a new one so I was kind of right in between, um, the two managers and I've just found completely different relationships with the two of them, the one would want to try and help me get my sales goals, whereas the other, my newer one, she just kind of expects it. [...] But I just find with my newer manager, it's that close relationship isn't there as much, and that adds to the stress, um, especially if she's always looking over my shoulder, wanting to bring up my sales goals and those kinds of things, like, I get along with her and we do have a good relationship, but it's just sometimes she adds to the stress, by, by saying things that really, aren't possible.

Respondents also found that having little or no control over their work was a source of stress for them (as mentioned by 17 of the 59 respondents). This includes the ability to make decisions regarding their work, being able to operate various machines and equipment, and having significant input into the scheduling of their shifts. In fact, one participant (F1U3) equated her work to "being in jail", because management was keeping such a close watch on employees on the job.

Being classified as "part-time" or "casual" workers added to the stress, as a certain stigma accompanied the labels. This issue was discussed by 31 of the respondents in the study. Respondents often felt that they were perceived by management and by full-time co-
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workers as lacking ambition and drive, being uneducated, and being easily replaceable. They often felt like “third class citizens” (F2U8) and discriminated against (F1U1), as they are often treated poorer than their full-time permanent counterparts, even if they are all performing the same work. Participants also felt a lack of respect from management by their lack of willingness to invest in their employees. In some cases, the part-time workers, in particular, felt like they had no value to the company, that they were expendable.

Gendered work environment and demographic factors

Gender played a part in adding to the stress experienced by part-time and casual workers in the retail trade for many of the participants. Twenty-seven of the participants outlined this factor as a contributor to stress. Males and females are sometimes segregated into different positions, and it was noted that females often seem to experience more emotional stress than males. Older customers who are used to dealing with males in certain types of retail stores sometime dismiss or overlook female workers who are capable of servicing them (F10NU39). In some cases, women were not offered permanent part-time positions, while the male part-timers were given such jobs (F1 discussants). Participants also discussed how men and women are perceived and thus treated differently.

(F2U5) Men are treated a little bit differently than women are...it's okay for a man to have a mood swing and be grumpy and yell at you - that's okay - but if a woman does it...you get the jokes about PMS...they don't take you nearly as seriously as a male manager going to the store manager. Their things are done right away. You're a female - "oh, you're overreacting, [agreement by the others] it's not a big deal, deal with it on your own".

Gender and age

Age also played a factor in the stress levels of non-standard workers, but it is the extreme ages (too old or too young) that were a source of stress for the participants. Younger workers (particularly those who were working to put themselves through school) felt exploited because of poor working conditions in some instances (F10 participants), while older workers often see their non-standard jobs as their careers, but are treated poorly with low wages and no benefits (I2U2). In terms of age, the workforce in retail food stores largely consists of females, but with widely different stages of life and family commitments: notably, middle-aged married women with children, single mothers, and young workers of both genders without dependents comprise the bulk of this workforce. Along with the different stages of life and age, there was a different goal in employment for these individuals: middle-aged women and single mothers worked at their retail jobs as a career (and for many the only employment option), while young workers consider this employment as a temporary means to support themselves while studying to pursue other careers (Zeytinoglu 1999; Zeytinoglu and Muteshi 2000a and 2000b). Even though age seemed significant in the choice of retail work (i.e. the retail workforce tended to recruit particularly older or younger workers), all of these workers still had to balance their personal life responsibilities of juggling work and home life, raising children, or completing schoolwork while earning money to support either themselves and/or their dependents.

Sometimes age and gender had a combined effect, as fully qualified females were often denied the opportunity to engage in appropriate tasks simply because management felt

that the customers likely would not want to see an older female performing them (F10NU39). Seventeen of the 59 participants identified age as a source of stress.

Outcomes of stress

Stress had appeared to have a number of outcomes on workers and the work environment. Many individuals identified the following outcomes as a result of stress in the workplace: physical health problems, including musculoskeletal disorders (MSD), migraines and headaches, arthritis and respiratory problems; emotional health problems, including low motivation and individual morale, low self-esteem and decreased job satisfaction; and organizational problems, such as perceived high turnover levels, higher rates of absenteeism, and an increased willingness to engage in conflict with peers and supervisors.

Physical health problems

Many of the workers interviewed in this study indicated that they experienced some physical symptoms of work stress. The most common physical ailments that people reported were musculoskeletal disorders (raised by 31 of the 59 participants), and migraines or headaches (mentioned by 24 respondents). Other physical problems that people encountered included eczema and other skin diseases, arthritis, respiratory illnesses, and heart disease. One respondent discussed her description of her deteriorating body from the repetitive work that she does, resulting in tendonitis as well:

(F1U4) It's the wear and tear. Eventually it just tears your body down, like wear and tear you know, especially when you're doing monotonous things, the same job constantly. Like, you know, lifting, pushing, that sliding, that bending, you know. Pulling off pallets, pulling kegs down off a two pallet thing, you've got to bump them down and...like, it's just monotonous and I guess my wrist couldn't take it no more and...I went to the doctor's and that's what it is, it's tendonitis. So I have to wear a support on my right wrist at all times.

Other participants mentioned pain in their feet, backs, elbows, necks and shoulders (F3U13, F3U14 and I16U16). Many workers, despite these injuries, continued to work in their jobs because of their fear of losing their jobs (F1U1 and F10U39).

Emotional health problems

Many respondents found that their individual morale and their motivation levels decreased as they experienced more stress on the job. Some of the participants (14 of 59 participants) found that they experienced lowered self-esteem as a result of the stress at work, and an equal amount of respondents found that they experienced decreased levels of job satisfaction when they were stressed on the job. Most respondents (30 individuals) felt that motivation levels tended to fall during a shift as a result of stress (I4U4), and another mentioned that stress reduces her motivation to be friendly with customers (F7U27). A couple of part-time and casual workers made similar remarks about their motivation levels and how they often declined during a shift due to stress:

(I3U3) Initially when I get to work you know I'm in a good mood and, maybe halfway through the shift [job satisfaction] starts to decline. Um, how does it affect my motivation? Oh ya, I'd like to just say to people "serve yourself".

Another participant who works as a cashier at a grocery store discussed how her self-esteem is affected when people talk down to her, in a demeaning fashion.

(F3U13) Self-esteem can get pretty shot. Because like people do talk down to you. Co-workers, office [workers], customers. And if something doesn't scan in and it's not on file – it's your fault. Your fault.

Organizational problems

The interview and discussion group participants felt that in many cases, what they perceived as high levels of absenteeism and turnover were a result of the stress that came from their jobs. Of the 59 participants, 22 identified turnover as a result of stress experienced by the non-standard workers, and 14 felt that higher absenteeism levels were associated with stress. Some workers (12 of the 59 respondents) also felt that where there was workplace stress, there tended to be lower workplace morale and a less happy work environment, and a higher likelihood of employees getting into conflict with other workers and with their supervisors/management (as mentioned by 14 participants). One focus group participant identified stress as a result of a co-worker/superior conflict, which eventually led to the person in question leaving the organization:

(F6NU26) At the movie theater there's a huge staff turnover rate. Also one of my friends quit the work just because the assistant manager has a lot of personal issues and she takes them out on the people that she works with. When she comes in she's like the grumpiest person I know. And she just quit because she couldn't handle it coming there.

One representative discussed her rationale for the absenteeism she sees in her workplace, which is related to the low wages discussed earlier.

(OH6) You know, the pay is good if you stay for years and are getting lots of hours. But people who are just coming in, then they're getting 10-15 hours, and you know, \$6.90 an hour, there isn't anything holding them there at that rate of pay to deal with that type of atmosphere either.

Conclusions and Recommendations

A growing service sector, the increased use and development of telecommunications technologies, and the increased internationalization have changed the nature of business relationships in retail sector in Canada. As a result, the need and desire for organizations to achieve increased workplace flexibility has come through the establishment of nonstandard employment, particularly through the implementation of part-time and temporary/casual jobs which are occupied by a disproportionately high share of women.

The purpose of this paper was to investigate the factors that affect the occupational health of these non-standard employees, by focusing on their stress levels, and how this stress results in physical and mental individual outcomes, and their workplace outcomes. In the © Zeytinoglu, I.U., Lillevik, W., Seaton, B., & Moruz, J. 2005. "Flexibility in the Workplace: Determinants and Consequences of Occupational Stress among Canadian Female Non-Standard Workers in the Retail Trade." In Zeytinoglu, I.U. (Ed.), 2005. *Flexibility in Workplaces: Effects on Workers, Work Environment and the Unions*. Geneva: IIRA/ILO. ISBN Web pdf: 92-2-116130-7; Web html: 92-2-116131-5

focus groups and interviews with workers and OHS representatives, the participants felt that women in part-time and casual jobs were stressed at work and that fatigue, exhaustion, inability to sleep through the night, and feeling irritable and tense were common symptoms of work-related stress. They mentioned non-standard work schedules, which encompassed shift work and unpredictable work hours as sources of stress. The inability to gain seniority in part-time and casual jobs, and having a part-time employment contract but often required to work close to full-time hours (without the benefits that full-timers receive) were other sources of stress. The women in non-standard jobs also cited poor working conditions that often entailed low wages/benefits and not having job security in non-standard jobs as sources of stress. Stress also arose from lack of management support for women on non-standard jobs, lack of respect as a part-time worker, and lack of control over their work. Feelings of being second-class workers due to their gender (female) and age (either old or young) added to the workers' stress. Respondents also acknowledged that many of the factors they gave combined together to produce stress in their lives. The women said that as a result of stress, musculoskeletal disorders, migraines and headaches were common illnesses for them. They stated that the stress of working in non-standard jobs and in the retail trade resulted in a decreased sense of self-esteem, motivation, job satisfaction and individual morale. In addition, the participants said absenteeism, turnover, and workplace conflict escalated as a result of stress.

The gendered nature of the work for women in retail trade and the gendered division of labour in retail workplaces, along with the non-standard characteristic of the work they engage in, seem to have led these workers to believe that the issues arising in this study are a given in the work environment; a “reality” of their work situation that the female participants in our study felt unable to change, despite their frustration about the inequalities. Although our recommendations focus on the retail trade, it is important to note that the occupational division of labour and non-standard work status by gender in retail food stores are consistent with general trends in women's employment in the Canadian workforce. Our conclusions are valid for the participants in this research since based on their experiences. Since retail trade has the highest percentage of women in non-standard jobs in Canada, we argue that our findings are similar to the experiences of female workers in non-standard jobs.

The following recommendations are based on an overall analysis of our findings, suggestions raised by the occupational health and safety (OHS) representatives and by workers who live with the part-time or casual work experience on a day-to-day basis. The OHS representatives and women working in non-standard jobs made specific recommendations to management in retail workplaces. We synthesized the knowledge that we learned from the study participants to make several additional suggestions to managers on ways to reduce work-related stress for women non-standard workers.

Our first recommendation is to create regularity and consistency in work schedules and work hours for non-standard workers. This will help to decrease work-related stress, because irregular work schedules and hours result in problems arranging elements within their personal lives such as child care, elderly care or school work. In addition, this will help with monetary household budgeting for workers. In order to reduce this stress, managers should let workers know their work schedule at least two weeks ahead of time so that they can plan their personal schedules. In addition, if workers are hired for part-time hours they should not be expected to work full-time hours but get paid (the low) part-time wages and denied benefits.

Another recommendation is to try to distribute shifts equitably between non-standard and regular part-time workers. “Bad” shifts (weekend shifts, night shifts) should not be allocated exclusively to non-standard workers; regular full-time workers should be scheduled

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to work weekend and night shifts as well if such “bad” shifts are common. In addition, managers should avoid split shifts of non-standard workers as much as possible, as they are a considerable source of stress for workers. When scheduling workers to shifts, in addition to seniority, managers should take the consideration of the work scheduling requests of non-standard workers as seriously as they do for the full-time permanent workers.

Management should engage in equitable treatment between full-time and part-time workers, and between permanent and temporary workers in term of workplace policies and rules, such as meal breaks, the allocation of Sunday work, and health and safety training on equipment. The participants in this study provided many examples of employers favouring full-time workers over part-time workers, and permanent workers over temporary ones. A source of stress for women in non-standard jobs was these inequities that they faced with on a day-to-day basis. For example if a part-time worker is assigned a five-hour shift, at least one break for a rest period should be given. For health and safety and other training on equipment, employers should not consider that non-standard workers are here only for a short period or are transient employees and therefore they do not require training. Injuries to bodies and accidents at work do not discriminate between a full-timer and part-timer, or between a permanent or temporary worker.

Non-standard workers performing the same or substantially similar tasks as full-time workers should be earning equal pay. Managers should examine their perceptions that regular full-time workers perform different tasks than non-standard workers. If workers in these jobs are doing substantially the same work and using substantially the same skill, effort and responsibility, then non-standard workers should earn the same hourly rate as their full-time counterparts. As well, managers should provide pro rata benefits to non-standard workers for hours worked. These should be provided as tangible benefits (rather than cash paid in lieu of benefits). Part-time and casual workers should also be given sick days, vacation time, and bonuses paid, based on time worked (not an arbitrary amount). To further reduce the work-related stress of the female non-standard workforce, managers should modify methods of promotion and wage increases within the employment contracts into ways that incorporate and emphasize merit, not just tenure, so that women and other workers who are quick learners, high achievers and career oriented can move ahead and not feel “stuck” in their current positions.

Support, encouragement and respect to all workers, especially toward non-standard workers, should be provided as much as possible to allow workers to excel in performing their jobs. Our results showed that social relationships at work are highly associated with stress for women in part-time and casual jobs. If social relationships at work between management and workers, between full-time and part-time workers and within each group are poor, work-related stress increases. Decreasing and eliminating such stress is dependent on good management and communications skills. Thus, we recommend that managers should respect the non-standard workers' contribution to the workplace and show appreciation to these female workers. In addition, the women who perform these part-time and casual jobs should be treated with dignity. Uncivilized behaviour from management creates stress among female non-standard workers and makes them feel like they are second-class workers in the workplace, which creates cliques, and thus tension among subgroups. Not being appreciated and praised for good work also creates stress; thus positive reinforcement for non-standard workers will help to reduce stress levels.

Employers should provide non-standard workers with more control over their work. Lack of control over work is another source of stress for women working in part-time and casual jobs. Managers should allow workers to make decisions on their own or with co-workers about the scheduling and organization of their work, and also take responsibility of

the results. This will help to reduce the stress levels particularly for non-standard workers, as they often have particular needs with respect to juggling personal and work life, and this empowerment will help to boost their self-esteem and job satisfaction on the job.

By implementing these recommendations, the quality of work life for non-standard workers should increase substantially. Many of these recommendations do not involve substantial costs; a number of these suggestions simply require a shift in managerial attitude toward non-standard workers. These simple recommendations can assist with reducing the stress levels among part-time and casual workers, particularly for female non-standard workers; however, they can also contribute to an overall positive work environment for all workplaces within the retail trade.

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Chapter 7

Breaking Down Boundaries: Functional Flexibility and Occupational Identity in Health Care

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Introduction

This chapter is concerned with examining the impact of introducing functional flexibility on employees' perceptions of their occupational identity in a health care environment. The chapter seeks to examine how the breaking down of traditional job boundaries and the deployment of workers across a broader range of tasks impacts on how they see their jobs and their occupational identity. In recent years there has been a growing literature on how functional flexibility impacts on employees (see for example Allan, 1998; Bryson, 1999; Cordery, 1989; Cordery et al, 1993; Cross, 1991; Kelliher & Riley, 2002). This literature presents evidence of both positive (for example greater job variety, satisfaction and learning opportunities) and negative (for example increased stress, greater intensity of work) outcomes for employees where functional flexibility is introduced. However, to date there has been little examination of how the movement of workers across traditional job boundaries influences how they see themselves and their work. This chapter seeks to address this by presenting evidence from two case studies of the introduction of functional flexibility in health care environments. The health care environment was chosen for this study since, although there are currently moves in the UK to change this, there has traditionally been a culture of occupational specialisation, often supported by lengthy training and strong professional associations.

The chapter will first, present some background to both the use of functional flexibility and the notion of occupational identity and will discuss how the introduction of functional flexibility might impact on occupational identity. Second, data will be presented from the two health care case studies where functional flexibility was introduced. Finally, a number of observations will be made about how occupational identity for the different groups of workers is influenced by the breaking down of traditional job boundaries.

Background

Flexibility in the management of labour has been advocated as a means of utilising labour more efficiently, by means of matching the supply and demand for labour more closely (see for example Cordery, 1989; Turner, 1999). Two broad categories of labour flexibility have been identified, those of internal and external flexibility (Mueller, 1992).

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These refer to an organisation's ability to adapt to change by modifications to the internal and external labour markets respectively. External flexibility strategies include use of part-time staff, temporary and fixed term contracts. Internal flexibility strategies include use of alternative work scheduling, functional flexibility and multi-skilling. This chapter is solely concerned with one form of internal flexibility, the use of functional flexibility.

According to O'Reilly (1992: 370),

...the concept of functional flexibility, in its widest sense, refers to employees performing more than one function or task, or being able to do jobs other than the one they do on a regular basis.

Increased efficiency, it is argued, can be achieved 'as traditional production methods are replaced by multi-skilled employees undertaking more varied forms of work' (Cridland, 1997). In order for functional flexibility to bring about greater efficiency in the management of labour, employees need to be redeployed in line with fluctuations in the level of demand. Where demand is unpredictable this may mean employees are redeployed from one task to another at short notice. Functional flexibility can also contribute to quality of service. The use of flexible, multi-skilled staff can mean that the number of staff a user has contact with can be reduced and a more holistic service be provided.

In practice, functional flexibility may take a number of forms. In terms of breadth, it may involve employees taking on a small number of additional tasks closely related to their main role, or alternatively may involve employees in practising a wide range of diverse skills. As far as depth is concerned, employees may be partially trained in additional skills in order to provide assistance, or they may be expected to be able to take on additional tasks in their entirety. A number of impediments or obstacles to the introduction of functional flexibility have been identified (Bryson, 1999). These include the willingness and ability of employers to invest in the necessary training to reap the benefits of functional flexibility and resistance from employees. Resistance from employees may be encountered as a result of the challenge posed to job security (Carnall, 1982; Cordery et al., 1993) and to the intensification of work and the resulting negative impact on employee well-being and stress levels (Allan, 1998).

Furthermore, Kelliher & Riley (2003) suggest that when staff are deployed across a range of tasks, especially on a frequent basis, the boundaries between traditional job demarcations may start to erode. If individuals frequently perform tasks other than those normally associated with their regular job, then this may start to raise questions about what is the job that they do and may raise questions for their occupational identity. Thus, the introduction of functional flexibility raises two broad issues in relation to occupational identity, first, those relating to what is the identity of a flexible, multi-skilled worker and second, the impact of taking on tasks associated with occupations which are perceived to be of different status or prestige to those normally undertaken.

In general terms Watson (2002: 107) describes identity as 'a notion of who a particular person is' and

it defines in what ways the individual is like other people and in what ways they differ from other people. (Watson, 2002: 107)

He goes on to suggest that there is a self-identity component (an individual's notion of who they are) and a social identity component (the notion others have of who the person is). The

work of Tajfel and Turner (1986) on social identity theory suggests that in certain circumstances people will primarily define themselves and others at group, as opposed to individual level. In an organisational context it is likely that those who perform similar work will develop a sense of occupational identity. Van Knippenberg and Ellemers (2003) suggest that the work group provides the basis for shared social identity at work and note the positive impact of identification with a salient group on employee motivation and performance. Ellemers, Haslam, Platow and van Knippenberg (2003) also argue that an individual's membership of social groups at work is an important determinant of work behaviour and that therefore work related behaviour is often best understood in the context of group relations. Whilst group membership can facilitate co-ordination, co-operation and communication, the perceptions of individuals and their responses to social situations will be influenced by their identity.

More specifically, Fine (1996) suggests that occupations are 'a collection of tasks and assignments, set in an organisational environment' and that they involve meaningful work identities, understood in the light of the division of labour. For the employee whose work, as a result of functional flexibility, crosses traditional job boundaries, the notion of their occupation may become blurred and the question may arise of what is their job, what is their identity. Occupational identity is constructed by a community of workers in the light of the responses of others and workplace interaction (Abbott, 1988; Colomy and Brown, 1995). Furthermore, for professions occupational identity is shaped by the socialisation process of formalised training and qualification, often regulated by a professional association. Employees with strong occupational identities may resist taking on tasks they view as being outside the work of their profession.

Within organisations different occupations vary in status and prestige. Abbott (1988) suggests that occupations are a means of placing oneself and being placed by others in a social system. Consequently, the use of functional flexibility whereby employees cross job boundaries may present problems. Employees may respond negatively if their responsibilities alter to incorporate work which they perceive to be of lower status or prestige. Not only may their identity become blurred, but there may also be an incongruent association with the tasks they normally do.

If we look at the existing evidence of how different groups of workers have reacted to the implementation of functional flexibility, the evidence is mixed. Herrigel (1996) has argued, using German workers as an example, that a high degree of specialisation amongst skilled workers militates against the use of functional flexibility, since the relatively narrow range of skills is linked to individuals' work identity. Finegold and Wagner (1998), based on a study of production workers in Germany and the US, found that the occupational orientation of German workers' training creates a strong notion of occupational identity and that this acts as a barrier to the formation of multi-functional work teams. By contrast, they argue workers in the US tended not to have such a strong sense of craft identity and were more willing to embrace a broader range of skills. Cordery, Sevastos, Mueller and Parker (1993), based on a study of more than 3000 public service workers in Western Australia, however found little relationship between unfavourable attitudes towards functional flexibility and the scope of the employee's existing job. Kahn (1999) also notes the significance of gender identity in relation to work. She reports evidence of male workers resisting the implementation of functional flexibility where they perceived the new tasks they were asked to take on as 'female work'.

This paper is concerned with the implementation of functional flexibility in a health care environment. In health care notions of occupational identity have traditionally been strong and often protected by the trade unions and professional associations covering health

care workers. Equally, at least for professional jobs, training is often lengthy and specialised. As a result traditions of what constitutes the work of a particular occupation or profession are deeply embedded (Seifert, 1992). As such there may be considerable resistance, both from the workers who are asked to take on the tasks normally associated with the work of other occupations and also from other occupational workers. Clearly, there are also psychological barriers to be overcome when say, for example, a nurse takes on tasks previously performed only by doctors, or where health care assistants take on work previously only undertaken by qualified nurses.

In recent years a number of initiatives have been introduced in the UK to the way in which human resources are managed in the National Health Service (NHS) as part of the modernisation process. One such initiative has been the Changing Workforce Programme, which aims to breakdown occupational boundaries and to have staff working across a wider range of activities. This has been motivated by a number of factors. First, a desire to provide more patient centred care; second to utilise labour more efficiently, thereby reducing costs; and third to provide improved development opportunities for staff, in an attempt to tackle labour shortages and reduce labour turnover. However, as described above, the health care environment has typically been characterised by a number of factors which have militated against flexible working which involves crossing job boundaries. As a result it is especially pertinent to be examining this issue at this juncture, since an increasing number of staff will be subject to greater role flexibility.

Methodology

The data presented in this chapter are drawn from a study which examined the implementation of functional flexibility from a number of facets. The data reported here are drawn from two case studies of health care environments in the UK. The case organisations were chosen to reflect environments where staff, who had previously worked in specialist roles, experienced a change whereby they were required to work across a broader range of tasks. One case is concerned with examining the responses of professional staff, whilst the other is concerned with support staff. It could be hypothesised that professional staff would have stronger notions of occupational identity and therefore would be more reluctant to move outside the boundaries of what they considered to be the work of their profession. One case organisation is located in the UK public health service and the other is a private health care organisation. Here it was hypothesised that the private sector, where levels of trade union membership are generally lower, might encounter less resistance to change. The case studies were based on a series of semi-structured interviews, observation and access to internal documentation. In each case interviews were conducted with managers responsible for the initiation and implementation of the functional flexibility programme and with a sample of staff (33% in Case 1 and 50% in Case 2) who were subject to functional flexibility. The interviews were designed to elicit data on the experiences of those subject to functional flexibility. All interviews were conducted in working time at the workplace, either in offices or in staff common rooms. Interviews were audio recorded and later analysed initially separately for the findings to be located in context. Subsequent cross case analysis was carried out in order to identify themes in the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Results

Case 1 - the walk-in centre

This case study was one of the 36 pilot Walk-In Centres initiated by the UK government. The idea behind the Walk-In Centres was for patients to be treated on a walk-in basis (i.e. without appointment) for a range of minor injuries and health problems. This approach had implications for the way in which work was organised. The overall aim was to have a situation whereby any member of staff would be able to deal with anyone who walked in, or at least be able to provide a base line assessment to be passed on to a specialist. Thus staff had to be able to cover a wide range of nursing activities. Traditionally nurses in the UK specialise and are experienced in dealing with minor injuries, from say an Accident and Emergency (A&E) background, or in dealing with minor health problems from a district nursing background, but normally do not span the two. Therefore in this case nurses were working more flexibly than is normal within the UK nursing profession.

At the time of the case study the Walk-In Centre had been open for 18 months. There were 4 full-time and 8 part-time nurses. These nurses had been recruited for their breadth of experience and as a result they were all over 30 years old. It was felt that this would not be a suitable job for a newly qualified nurse. Many of the nurses had been recruited from an accident and emergency background. In order to ensure that any nurse could see any patient, the nurses had been trained in areas they did not have experience in. Although in practice when rotoring staff they did try to ensure that on each shift there was at least one nurse with an A&E background and one with a district nursing background to support those that were less experienced in either area. The approach to staff organisation was very much a team based one and staff were encouraged to learn from and support one another. Operating like this required a strong commitment to training on the part of the centre management, in order to provide nurses with the range of skills they required.

In this case nurses were working more flexibly in so far as they were working in a broader way than is common amongst qualified staff in the UK health service. However, from our research we did not find much evidence of nurses experiencing a challenge to their identity. This was largely because although they worked in a broader way than is common for qualified nurses in the UK, they continued to do what they considered as nurses' work. One interviewee commented that rather than seeing themselves as multi- or in some way additionally skilled, these nurses saw working in this way as an opportunity to use all the skills they had initially been trained in, rather than having to specialise in a particular type of work. Most staff expressed positive sentiments about the opportunity to undertake a broader range of work and to learn new skills and build their confidence in working in a broader range of activities. It is noteworthy that all staff who had been recruited at the outset were still in post at the time of the research. There was some evidence of nurses feeling stressed as a result of the increased complexity associated with working across a broader range of areas, especially in areas in which they felt less confident of their skills. However, since basic nursing training covers a broad range, it was seen as an opportunity to use all of their skills, which would not normally be available in a more traditional nursing job.

In the environment of the Walk-In Centre there was little evidence of opposition from other staff to nurses taking on broader roles, but this needs to be seen in the context of all nurses in the Walk-In Centre working in this way and the fact that the centre was staffed by nurses and therefore other professional staff were not present in the workplace. More generally however, there had been some initial opposition from the British Medical Association to the establishment of Walk-In centres based on the fear that they would undermine the role of general practitioners (GP). Also there was some evidence that patients saw the nurses in the Walk-In Centre in a different way. A number of interviewees commented on feeling stretched by patient expectations. Some indicated that patients coming to the Walk-In Centre expected to be fully treated there, yet in practice there were limits on

how much the nurses could treat or address a problem and often they had to refer them to a GP or to an A&E doctor.

Thus in this case study nurses did feel challenged by their role in terms of the scope of it, but not really in terms of identity. They were still nurses, doing nurses work, even if they covered a broader range than normal. However this finding does have to be seen in the light of the fact that the Walk-In Centre was staffed entirely by nurses and all the nurses worked in a similarly flexible way. Specialist nurses and doctors were not present in the walk-in centre and so therefore the erosion of demarcations is likely to have been less obvious. Equally, all the nurses who worked here did so voluntarily and the need for flexibility was stressed to the nurses who were recruited to work here. This was not a change imposed upon them.

Case 2 - multi-skilled care support workers

The hospital which is the focus of this case study was run by a private health care organisation. The range of activities undertaken included general medicine and general surgery. There were 39 in-patient beds and they also dealt with day-care surgery, outpatients and physiotherapy. The hospital had been taken over by the private health care organisation (previously a Convent Hospital) three year prior to the research being undertaken. When the private health care organisation took over they made some changes to the way in which work was organised. The focus of the case study was the re-organisation of work of a number of support roles in the nursing area. The previous roles of nursing auxiliary, medical records clerk and ward reception were amalgamated into a new role of Care Support Worker (CSW). At the time of the research there were 6 CSWs in the nursing department, all of whom worked across all three roles. The work of the auxiliary involved in the words of one CSW 'all the things a qualified nurse doesn't do'. This included dealing with patient hygiene, making beds, taking temperatures and blood pressure, replacing dressings and dealing with every day needs such as assistance with feeding. The ward receptionists 'meet and greet' new patients, help them complete their registration forms, deal with the charging for sundries, answer the telephone, deal with the mail, assemble notes, test results etc for consultants visits, make appointments for patients who are being discharged and deal with paperwork for nurses. The administration role is concerned with dealing with the paperwork for in-patients (e.g.: preparing registration documents), maintaining medical files, (including scanning old files for storage) sending out patient satisfaction questionnaires. A new uniform was introduced for CSW which they wore irrespective of the role they were undertaking (previously each role had had a separate uniform).

In practice each of the three jobs continued to exist in a discrete sense, however the care support workers were rotated on a regular basis between each of these roles. They were also redeployed at short notice at the discretion of the senior sister, to cover absences and unforeseen changes in workload. There was also some evidence of movements taking place on an informal basis here. One member of staff explained that since they worked as a team, if one area was particularly busy they would 'help each other out, rather than see someone else struggling'.

From the above descriptions it can be seen that each of the three roles CSWs were expected to cover involved quite different types of work, from those primarily involved in patient care, to those that were primarily administration roles. The roles also involved differing degrees of patient contact. The majority of interviewees indicated that they had responded positively to taking on the role of CSW. They welcomed the challenge of taking on new roles and enjoyed the variety of moving between jobs. However, staff reported that they found the work to be more intense and demanding, especially when they moved between

roles at short notice and for a small minority of staff this was a source of stress. In terms of identity, moving between these roles did raise issues for some staff. For example, one member of staff, who had previously been a nursing auxiliary, identified strongly with a caring role and resisted taking on administration. She did not see this as part of her job and felt she would be better employed solely in patient care. Another member of staff who had previously worked as a ward receptionist did not initially respond positively to the idea of taking on what she perceived to be the ‘dirty work’ associated with the nursing auxiliary role.

Thus in the main in this case staff responded positively to taking on new roles, although these were not professional jobs, there were however staff who had well-developed notions of whether they were ‘carers’ or ‘administrators’ and did not all respond positively to moving away from these roles. In this case also there were issues regarding how others saw these flexible workers. The senior sister in charge of the scheme indicated that since these staff no longer had clearly designated roles recognised by the rest of the hospital community, there was a tendency for other staff to see them as the hospital ‘dogs bodies’ who could be ‘borrowed’ to take on other tasks. For this reason she had attempted to spell out the duties of the CSWs for other staff.

Discussion and Conclusions

These two case studies present data on the implementation of functional flexibility in two different healthcare environments, one involving professional and one involving non-professional workers. In line with other studies of the implementation of functional flexibility, there was some evidence that taking on additional tasks intensified work and was a source of stress and anxiety for the staff involved (Allan, 1998; Cordery et al., 1993). However, in these two cases we did not find that the implementation of functional flexibility had a major impact on workers notions of occupational identity. Interestingly, although we had anticipated that the impact would be greatest for professional staff, our findings show the identity of non-professional workers to be challenged to a greater extent. With the CSWs we found that some staff had developed strong identities associated with the kind of work they had done previously, be it patient care or administration. These staff were not happy with taking on the additional roles required by the flexibility scheme, which they saw as being significantly different from the role they identified with.

In the case of the nurses in the Walk-In Centre, we did not find that these new roles presented a challenge to their professional or occupational identity. However, in this case whilst they took on a broader range of work than would normally be the case for nurses, they did not take on work which would have been done by other professionals or non-professional workers elsewhere. Even if outside traditional demarcations within their occupation, they were still doing nurse’s work. This would suggest that their notion of a professional identity as nurses was stronger than an occupational identity constructed around a set of tasks. This finding would imply that it may be easier to implement flexibility which crosses occupational boundaries *within* professions, rather than *between* different professions.

What is especially interesting from these findings is the response of others in the workplace to staff working in these new roles. This reinforces the importance of social identity in organisations, in addition to self identity (Watson, 2002). In the case of the nurses, patient expectations were heightened by (and even beyond) their broader role. In the case of the CSWs there was a tendency for other hospital staff to see them as more flexible than their new roles were intended to be.

Whilst these findings provide a useful insight into the impact of implementing functional flexibility on notions of occupational identity, the extent to which these findings

will be applicable to the wider reforms of working practices currently taking place in the UK health service is questionable. Many of these initiatives involve professional workers taking on the work of other professionals and of non-professional staff taking on some tasks previously undertaken by professionally qualified staff. However, what these findings do demonstrate is the importance of context in shaping the responses of employees, both from the point of view of self and social identities.

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