

**Measuring Precarious Work: The
Institutional Indicators
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Regulating for Decent work**

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The Role of Indicators

Indicators are not neutral statistical constructs - they validate particular world views and prioritize selected areas of knowledge.

Outline

- 1. Why measure precarious work?
- 2. Related Concepts
- 3. Definition
- 4. Indicators
- Conclusion

1. Why measure precarious work?

- Regulatory gap
- Increased exposure to risk
- Low income
- Poverty
- Social inclusion

2. Related concepts

- The Standard Employment Relationship
- Gender Regime

The Standard Employment Relationship



<http://www.umd.umich.edu/dept/acad/casl/csah/>

The Gender Regime: Male Breadwinner and Female Housewife



http://www.ngcsu.edu/Academic/Arts_Let/Psych/GenderStudies/GenderStudies.html



<http://www.televisionheaven.co.uk/ozzie.htm>

Alternative but related concepts*

- Nonstandard employment
- Contingent employment
- Vulnerable workers
- Informal employment

*Judy Fudge, "Beyond Vulnerable Workers? Towards a New Standard Employment Relationship," *Canadian Labour and Employment Law Journal* 12(2) (2005) 145 -270 .

Precarious Work

Gerry Rodgers*

The concept of precarious work goes beyond the form of employment to look at the range of factors that contribute to whether a particular form of employment exposes the worker to employment instability, a lack of legal and union protection, and social and economic vulnerability.

* G. Rodgers, "Precarious Work in Western Europe: The State of the Debate," in G. Rodgers & J. Rodgers, eds., *Precarious Jobs in Labour Market Regulation: The Growth of Atypical Employment in Western Europe* (Geneva: ILO, 1989), at p. 1.

Dimensions of Precarious Work

- The level of wages
- access to benefits
- degree of job control
- regulatory protection
- income and employment security

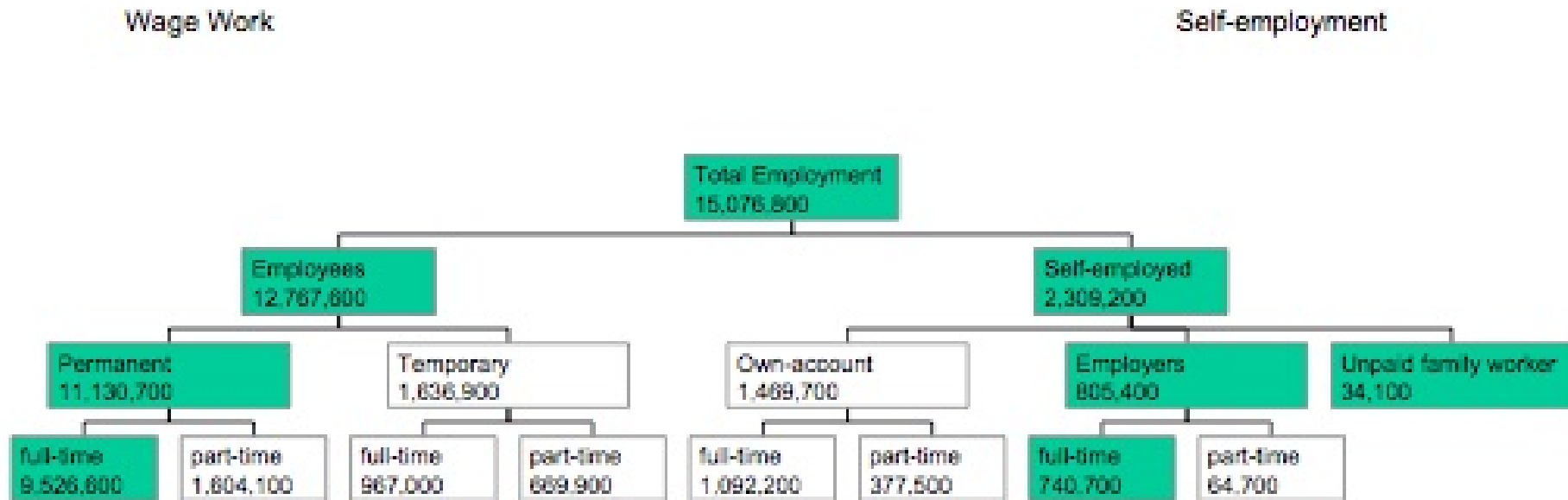
Barbier, Brygoo and Viguier: Precarious Work*

- Temporal
- Organizational
- economic
- Social
- Supply - age, gender, skills, migrant status, disability
- Demand - firm size, sector

*Jean-Claude Barbier, Angelina Brygoo, and Frederic Viguier ,
DEFINING AND ASSESSING PRECARIOUS EMPLOYMENT IN
EUROPE : 2002 European commission)

Precarious Work

Figure 1: Typology of Mutually Exclusive Employment Forms, Canada 2001*



*Total Employment ages 15 and over.

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey 2001, Public Use Microdata Files

From L.Vosko, N. Zukewich & C. Cranford, "A New Typology of Employment" (2003), 4(10) Perspectives on Labour and Income 16.

Cranford and Vosko*: Indicators

Forms of Wage Work

- Full-time permanent employees
- Full-time temporary employees
- Part-time permanent employees
- Part-time temporary employees

Earnings

- Less than minimum wage
- Poverty wage (less than \$10.00/hr)
- Median industrial wage (less than \$14.13/hr)
- Poverty earnings (less than \$20,000/year)

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Cynthia Cranford and Leah Vosko, "Conceptualizing Precarious Employment: Mapping Wage Work across Social Location and Occupational Context," in L. Vosko, ed., *Precarious Employment: Understanding Labour Market Insecurity* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006)

Indicators con't

Social Location

- Visible minority women (women of colour)
- Visible minority men (men of colour)
- Not-a-visible minority women (white women)
- Not-a- visible minority men (white men)

Occupational Context (Occupation and Industry)

Indicators con't

Social Wage

- No extended medical benefits
- No dental benefits
- No pension plan
- No disability/life insurance

Regulatory Protection and Control

- Not covered by a union contract
- Firm size less than 20

Indicators continued

- **Contingency**
- less than 12 months job tenure
- In and out of work
- Company uncertainty

Limitations of Indicators

- Weighting of indicators
- Capturing change
- Problem of enforcement
- Shifting levels of analysis; micro, meso and macro

Conclusion

- Continuum of precarious work
- Pros and cons of indicators versus narrative
- Problem: does the focus on precarious work ignore the deterioration in standard employment?
- The way forward?
 - A new flexible SER? (Bosch)
 - Beyond Employment (Supiot)
 - Guaranteed annual Income (Standing)