Measuring Precarious Work: The Institutional Indicators
IRRA Study Group, Sydney, August 24, 2009, 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/csa.html
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

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.

Dimensions of Precarious Work

- The level of wages
- access to benefits
- degree of job control
- regulatory protection
- income and employment security
Barbier, Bryggo and Viguier: Precarious Work*

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

*Jean-Claude Barbier, Angelina Bryggo, 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*

Wage Work

Total Employment
15,076,800

Employees
12,767,800

Permanent
11,130,700

full-time
9,528,600
part-time
1,604,100

Temporary
1,636,900

full-time
567,000
part-time
669,900

Own-account
1,489,700

full-time
1,092,200
part-time
377,500

Employers
805,400

full-time
740,700
part-time
64,700

Self-employed
2,309,200

Unpaid family worker
34,100

*Total Employment ages 15 and over.

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)

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)