

Temporary work, precarious employment and the social implications

‘The new European precariat? Educated young people in
temporary employment’

Research Workshop

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1. ‘Working Conditions in Ireland’ and ‘Social Implications of Precarious Work’ Projects
2. Precarious work and temporary employment
3. Method/recruitment for the project
4. Social consequences of (temporary) precarious work

ENFORCED FLEXIBILITY? WORKING IN IRELAND TODAY





- **Objective** and **subjective** precarity
- **Contractual precarity:** (some) part-time, solo-self employment, temporary contracts
- **Also:** combination of two or more

Precarious work: what is new about it?

- Changing nature of **employment relationship**
- **Low-skill** versus **high-skill** precarious work



Temporary employment

- May be linked to seasonal nature of work and temporary
- Retail, hospitality, agriculture, construction etc.

High-skilled and ‘boundaryless career’ (Arthur and Rousseau) concept:

- People no longer want a job for life \leq 1970s revolution against work (Ross, 2008)
- Projectification of work, fixed-term and specific purpose contracts
- Education, ICT, finance

Temporary contracts as part of total employment



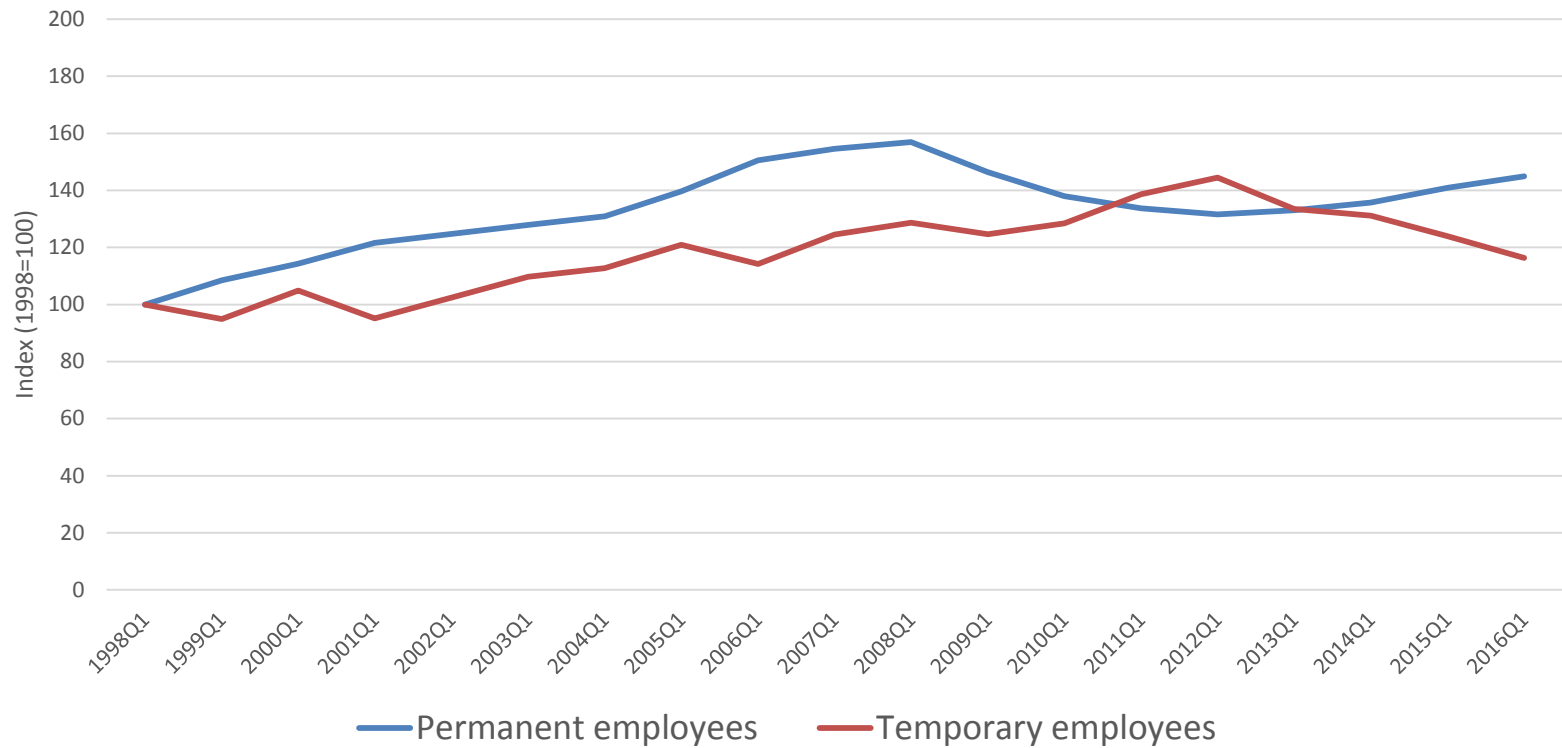
Temporary employment



Temporary work: long-term trends



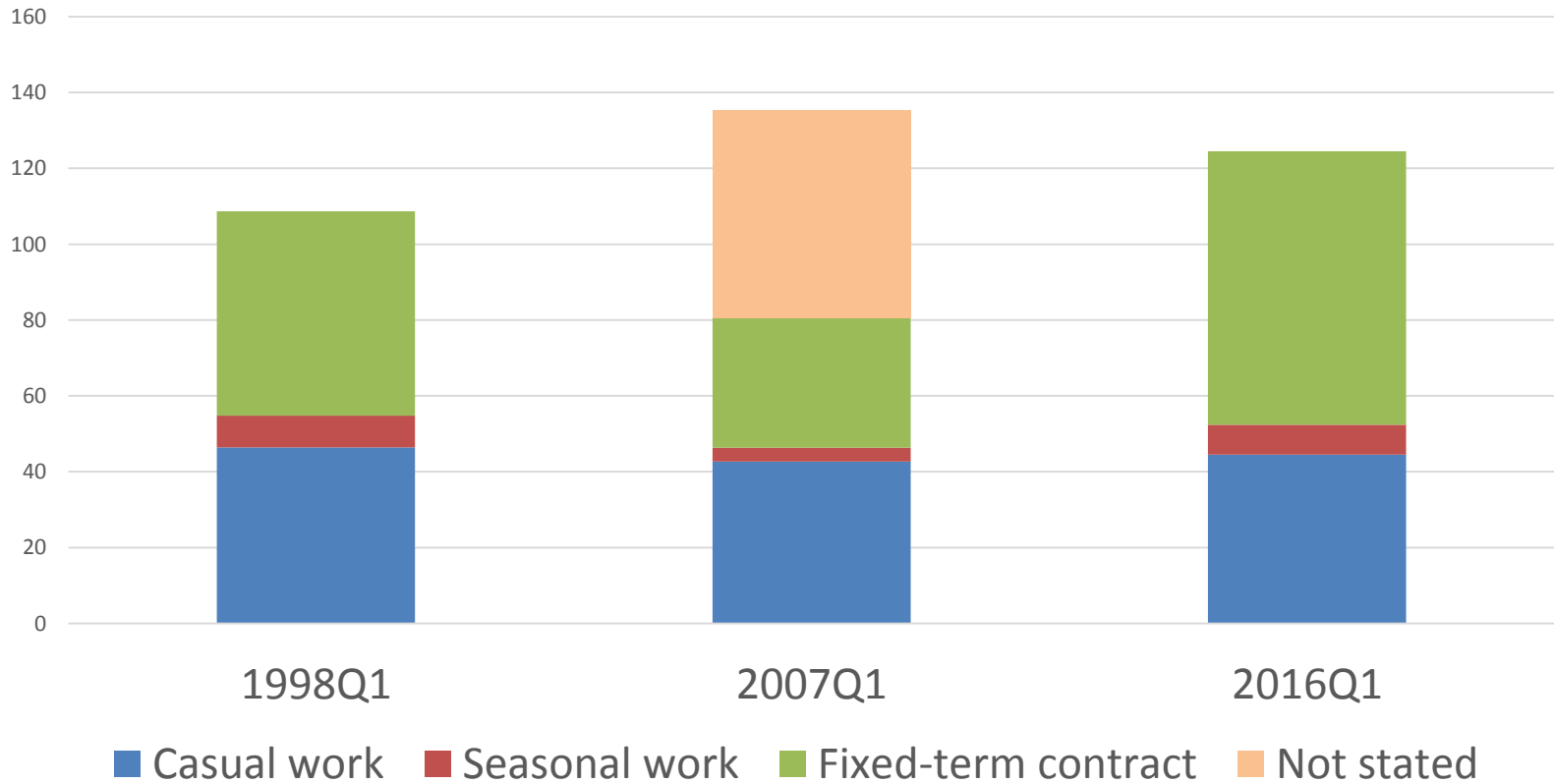
Chart 2: Permanent and temporary employment in Ireland 1998-2016 (Index, 1998=100)



Shift towards fixed-term work



Temporary work: types for temporary employment



Shift towards involuntary temporary work?



Temporary contracts: reasons for temporary employment





Hospitality and retail

- Certain percentage of **seasonal work** (summer time, Christmas etc.)
- **'If and when' contracts:** continuity of employment but hours not guaranteed

Construction

- High **self-employment** amongst trades, often solo self-employment => another form of temporary work
- **Agency work** amongst general operatives => variation of 'if and when' contracts

Highly skilled and temporary work



Education

- **Third level:** predates the recession, however sharp increase after public sector recruitment freeze
- **Childcare:** linked to the ECCE scheme

ICT and Finance:

- Specific purpose for certain projects
- Reluctance to offer permanent positions

Affecting mainly **new entrants**



Career and work-life

- Job hopping not necessarily positive for individual's 'portfolio'
- Possible negative effects on training

Personal life implications

- Inability to have long-term plans
- ⇒ Deciding where to live, buying a house etc.
- ⇒ Demographic consequences: delayed family formation



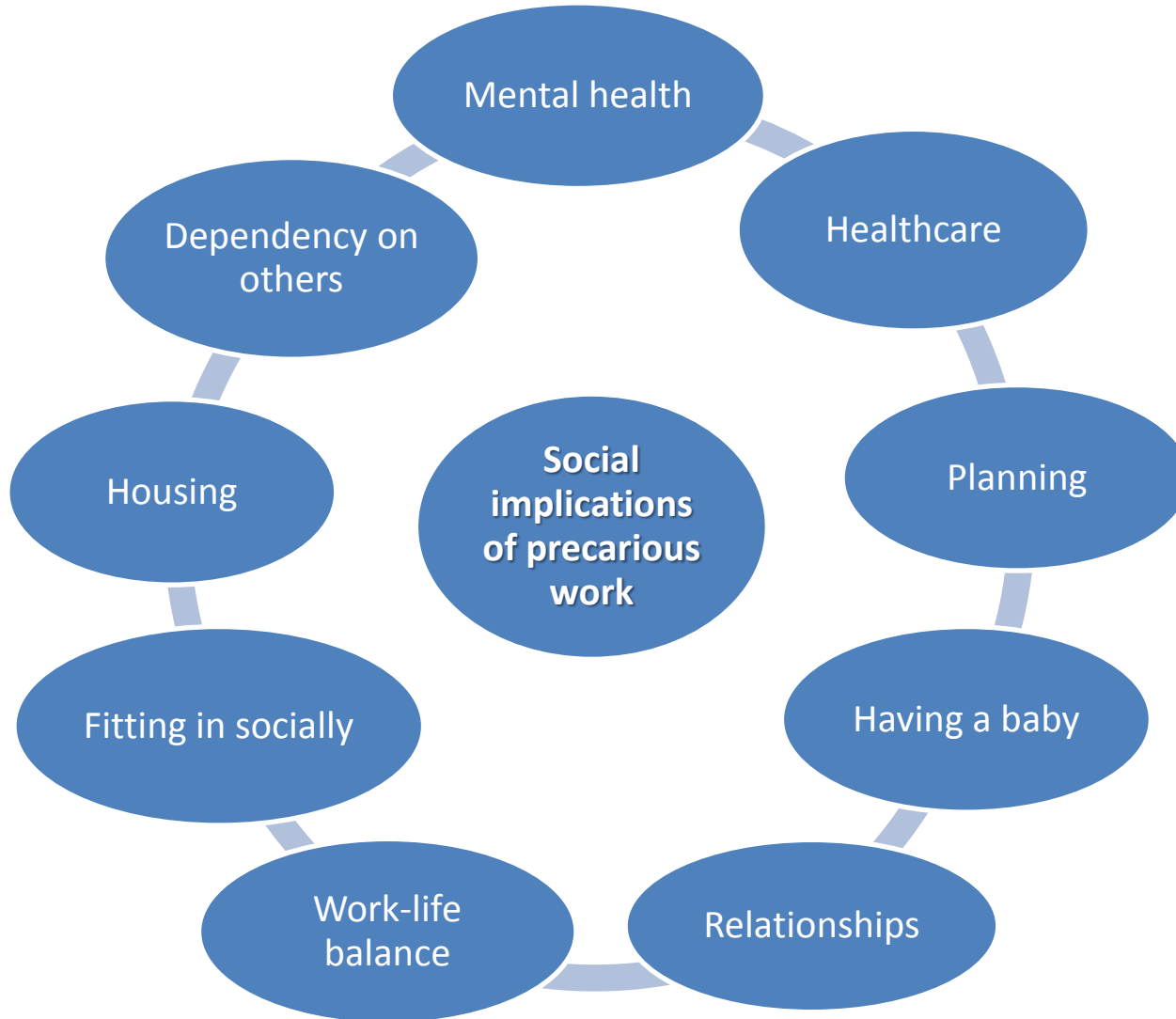
- **Recruiting men and women 18-35 living in Ireland employed (or has been employed) on a part-time irregular hour basis, on a fixed term contract or self-employed.**
- **Advertisements placed with:**
 - ✓ Various Trade Union representatives
 - ✓ Social media and Activelink
 - ✓ INOU (Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed), The National Youth Council and St Vincent de Paul
 - ✓ Personal contacts
 - ✓ Snow-ball effect
- Informed consent
- Interviews are conducted using a topic guide
- Recruited and interviewed 12 people so far.

Sampling matrix



Life/work Situation	Part-time (irregular)	Self-employment no employees	Temporary contract	More than one type of precarious work
Single				
Single with child/children				
In a relationship				
In a relationship with child/children				

Some preliminary findings



Preliminary findings: Housing



“Like I was looking for a house, in that time actually as well when I was working in the law firm, **I was homeless for 3 months**, 3 whole months because my last landlord he wanted to sell the house, so we had to move out. And then I was looking for a house for 3 months and I just couldn’t find anywhere! I finally got a place, but I’d turn up for viewings and there would be like 7 other people in the waiting room, and more and more, like the whole day. **Like I was sleeping in my boyfriend’s house, and at the weekends I’d go home or stay in another friend’s house, just to keep it looking like it was normal.** So you’d be working all hours and then trying to go to a house viewing after work or at the weekends” (SIPW-PAR10).

“I’m still living at home with my mum and dad, and **brother...I’d love to move but not a hope I’d be able to afford it.** So again that’s another thing” (SIPW-PAR01).

“I had a meeting with a bank adviser, and she was going to help me save to pay for a mortgage, but she brought up all these little rules and regulations...Like, let’s say I’m very good at saving, say if I live on just 600 a month and I save everything else that I own, I will never be able to buy a house because of my contract; they won’t give me a mortgage. **And I do want to buy because I don’t want to be renting for the rest of my life and living with strangers because, with the renting situation you never know who you’re going to have to share with. With the price increasing and increasing it’s very unlikely I will be able to rent an apartment or house by myself.**” (SIPW-PAR05).

Preliminary findings: Healthcare



“I used to be on the pill but you have to go back every 6 months to see your doctor again, which is 60 quid. So I’ve come off that. That’s since I started part-time, because it was always, really do I have to pay 60 quid to have a 15 minute conversation” (SIPW-PAR03).

“I was able to afford it, but it’s very expensive! It was really, really expensive! It made me doubt whether I’d want to access medical services again. So I avoid it as much as I possibly can. It’s so expensive! 60-80 euro for a consultation, and then on top of that charging an extra 20 euro for writing a prescription, and all they did was look at me and tell me what I already knew I had! It’s just too expensive” (SIPW-PAR05).

Preliminary findings: Relationships



Difficulty to maintain relationships (romantic and platonic) with people

“I’d say the break-up of my first relationship was largely because of that stress, on his part and mine; the precarity of both of our lives just bombed the whole thing. And it’s causing depression now because I’m very resentful of my boyfriend in some ways and it’s just funny when you meet people whose lives are easier and who don’t know it” (SIPW-PAR10).

“And you just couldn’t see friends – that’s the big thing, you don’t see your friends, so you have no support system outside your boyfriend or your family. And then when things go wrong, like in those situations, you’re just screwed because you haven’t been able to cultivate your friendships” (SIPW-PAR10).

Preliminary findings: To have a baby or not to have a baby?



“well I was putting it off for ages, but I’m 35 and I just said to my husband, we can’t put this off forever because I’m getting already to the stage where you’re risking it at this stage; like are you going to be able to have a kid this late? **So, I kept saying, I’ll wait till I have something proper, but then you just don’t get anything proper**” (SIPW-PAR04).

“**I would probably really think twice about planning** a family because I know how it is out there, and I don’t want to bring children to the world when I can’t cope financially. I don’t want to have to worry about not having food for my kids the next day. I don’t think I’ll ever get to that position, but then again last week I only had 31 euro in my account, that could happen any other time. I probably would still want to have children but put it off a little while longer. **But as a woman you can’t really put it off for too much longer either.**” (SIPW-PAR05)

Preliminary findings: Dependency on others



“I have to go to the dentist next month, and I just don’t have the money for that, it just doesn’t exist. So **I’m going to have to ask him for a loan and pay that back**” (SIPW-PAR03).

“I’m so lucky I have my husband; if I was single **I don’t even know if I could afford rent, never mind a mortgage!**” (SIPW-PAR04).

“We were out at the weekend for my mum’s birthday, and we split the bill 50:50, but then we wanted to keep going for a couple of drinks and stay out with my sister and her fiancé, who have a lot of money. And I was like, oh well I’m at cut off point now because I had X amount of money for tonight and now it’s gone. And he was like, don’t worry about it, I’ll buy a couple of drinks. So, in that way **he facilitates certain aspects of our life**”(SIPW-PAR09).

Preliminary findings: Work-life balance



- **Unpaid work**

“At the end of the year we have to make these books. Like at the end of the year, as I said, these books have to be ready, and I remember one year, my manager told us to write down all the hours that we spent on these books. So, at the end of it I had over 100 hours on these books, and my manager asked us to give the hours to her. And I gave her mine, and she said, I can’t pay for all of that. And I was like, oh ok. And she said, well maybe I can give you 40; **so she gave me 40 of those over 100 hours.** And, she said, you shouldn’t have put that much work in, that’s what she said. She said, I didn’t think you’d put that much work in, you shouldn’t have; you’re too much of a perfectionist.” (SIPW-PAR04).

- **Not enough paid work**

“Some days it’s fine, you’re glad to do nothing. But like **some weeks when you’re sitting at home, it’s very depressing doing nothing** and you have nowhere to go because everybody is at work” (SIPW-PAR01).

Some preliminary findings: Planning



- **Can't plan for the future:**

“I have no idea where I'm going to be in October. I could be here, maybe I won't be here. **I can't plan holidays, I can't plan future things like having a house or being able to take a trip, I can't plan.** I have to go abroad every year to do humanitarian work, I can't plan that because I don't know what's going to happen in October. So, not knowing what's going to happen in the future; there's no stability” (SIPW-PAR05).

- **Pension? I haven't really thought about that:**

“I'm a mess about that kind of thing; about pensions and all those kinds of things. It's true that every month I pay in this company some money and I know it goes to the pension because it says so. But I never thought about that. But yea, I should be more aware of those kind of things, pensions and what kind of taxes I pay and everything” (SIPW-PAR6).

- **Can't make short term plans:**

“You don't know where you're going to be from week to week really. I could look up at the roster and I could see I'm only in on Friday the following Friday. A few weeks ago they organised a session in town, and they literally gave me a months' notice. But when it came to it, I only worked 1 day that week, and I wasn't able to afford to go out with them in the end” (SIPW-PAR01).

Preliminary findings: Trying to fit in socially



When people just assume you can afford to do the same social activities they do:

“Like my group of school friends, we meet every so often, and they always want to go for brunch! So I go and I order the cheapest thing on the menu, and then it comes to the end, **and they go: “will we just split it 5 ways?” And I have to go: “guys I’m really sorry, I can’t do that because I haven’t any money”**. And then they get embarrassed and they start calculating it, and then they go: “well you just pay for yours and we’ll just split the rest four ways”. And you’re just like, I’m a massive failure!”
(SPIW-PAR09).

“I remember going to a wedding, I planned to give her 100 euro (**you know you’re supposed to do that for the wedding**), but in the end I didn’t have money for the bus, so I snuck out 20 euro- and I could tell she was raging! I could tell she was weird with me because I ended up giving her 80 euro”
(SIPW-PAR10).

Some preliminary findings: Mental health



“I had terrible mental health issues, like awful, really, really bad! And it was all work related. Like, very, very bad anxiety; I talk in my sleep when I’m anxious. It’s the mental health that does it worst, and you’re just going to crack a lot of the time, and depression really hits. And you wouldn’t expect work to have that effect on you, but it really did. I think mental health is the biggest thing, and the stress of not knowing” (SIPW-PAR10).



- Work is reliant on a good relationship with your manager

“It’s just like the fear of not knowing how to pay your rent, or not knowing – it’s such a bind over you, not knowing how you can afford things or **being frightened** as well that your name would be ruined, that you won’t get a job in this town again” (SIPW-PAR10).

“Yea and again when you have such a good relationship with people you work with, it feels kind of **awkward** to talk about money. Like **today I don’t think I can say to my boss, I deserve more pay; there’s no way I could say that to her.**” (SIPW-PAR05).

Thank you 😊

