

# **Temporary workers and permanent worker performance in European workplaces: the double-edged sword of autonomy**

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WORKING PAPER, please do not cite

## **Introduction**

“High road” employment strategies—job autonomy, task enrichment, skill development and career opportunities—have in recent decades become popular due to the importance of individual performance as a source of competitive advantage in modern organizations (Grant & Parker, 2009). Roughly in the similar period of the 90s and 2000s, and still continuing, organizations have increased the use of temporary work (OECD, 2013). Commentators have as early as the 1990s noted the contradictions between the use of temporary labor and goals to achieve high work performance (Osterman, 1994; Smith, 1994). Indeed, a large literature showed lower organizational citizenship, motivation, and less job satisfaction among temporary workers than among permanent workers (De Cuyper et al., 2008; Wilkin, 2013). Surprisingly, there is only small and scattered research on the question how the use of temporary labor relates to the performance of permanent workers within workplaces. While existing findings of low temporary worker performance are alarming in light of employability and labor market inequality (Gash, 2008), organizations’ main concern is arguably the performance of “core”, mostly permanent, workers (D. Lepak & Snell, 2007). This paper aims to fill this void by addressing to what extent the presence of temporary workers and their work arrangements relate to the performance of permanent workers.