

Employment trajectories of workers in non-standard jobs: more than just traps and stepping-stones

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Abstract

Non-standard employment – e.g. fixed-term contracts, on-call work, temporary work agency jobs, internships and self-employment – is a widely discussed topic both in politics and research. As non-standard employment is often considered to be inferior to standard (permanent) employment, research has mostly focused on transitions from non-standard to permanent work and on wage differences between those employed in a non-standard job and those in permanent employment. The results of previous research are however inconclusive and point either towards a stepping-stone effect or a trap effect of non-standard employment. This paper will look further than point-in-time transitions and wage differences and study career trajectories of those employed in non-standard employment as a whole to investigate which types of non-standard employment careers can be found in the Dutch labour market. Using detailed register data collected by Statistics Netherlands, a multichannel sequence analysis of both the labour market positions and the incomes of workers is conducted. The analysis results in a typology of 20 non-standard employment trajectories, that shows that there is much more variation in careers than a simple classification into traps and stepping-stones.

DRAFT VERSION, PLEASE DO NOT CITE

Key words: non-standard employment; multichannel sequence analysis; labour market.