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Jutta Allmendinger
Lena Hipp
Stefan Stuth

Atypical Employment in Germany

Discussion Paper

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The Institutional Determinants of Atypical Employment and Social Inequality in Europe, founded by the Hans Böckler Foundation and supervised by Jutta Allmendinger, Johannes Giesecke, and Kathrin Leuze



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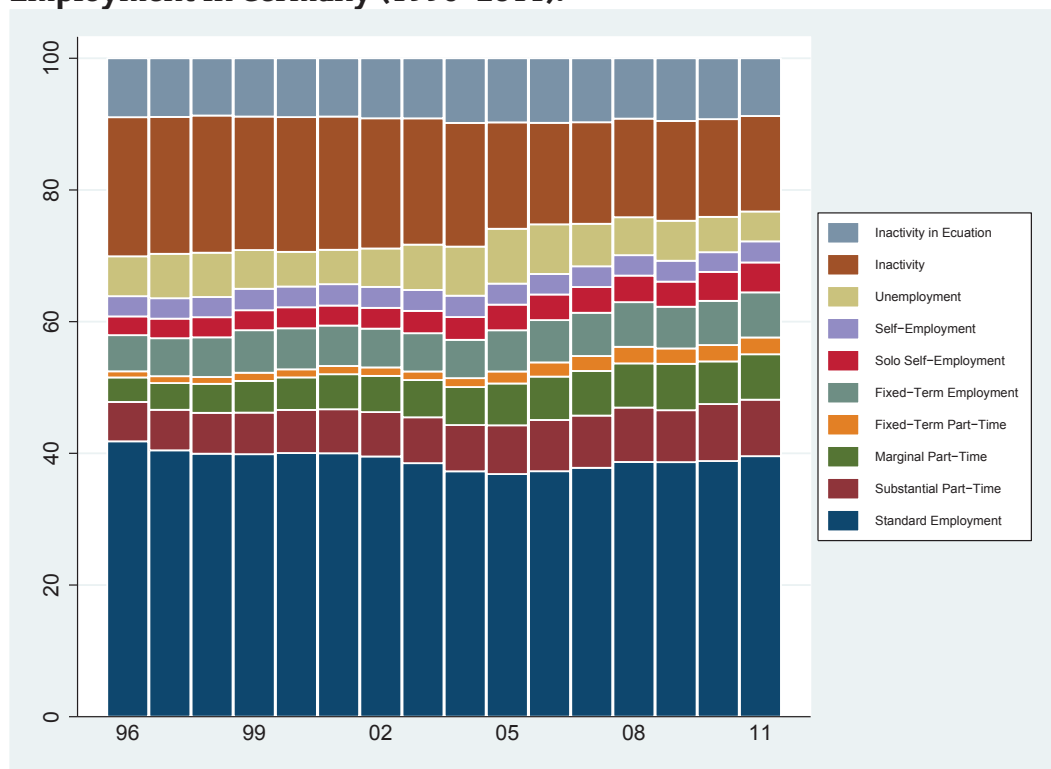
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Germany

Employment in Germany rose in the last 1.5 decades in almost all groups. Women and people over the age of 49 have been the primary beneficiaries of this, while other groups, such as the under-30s and low-skilled workers, had lower employment rates compared to the top performing groups. Low-skilled workers also had the highest levels of unemployment. Permanent full-time positions have declined in all groups, with the exception of the older group, where standard employment increased by 4.8 percentage points. Part-time employment was the most common form of atypical employment in nearly all groups. Men and the under-30s were the only groups in which fixed-term employment exceeded part-time employment. Marginal part-time employment increased in importance in all population groups, with the exception of highly qualified individuals and men. Solo self-employment was primarily taken up by highly qualified individuals, men, and people in the middle age category.

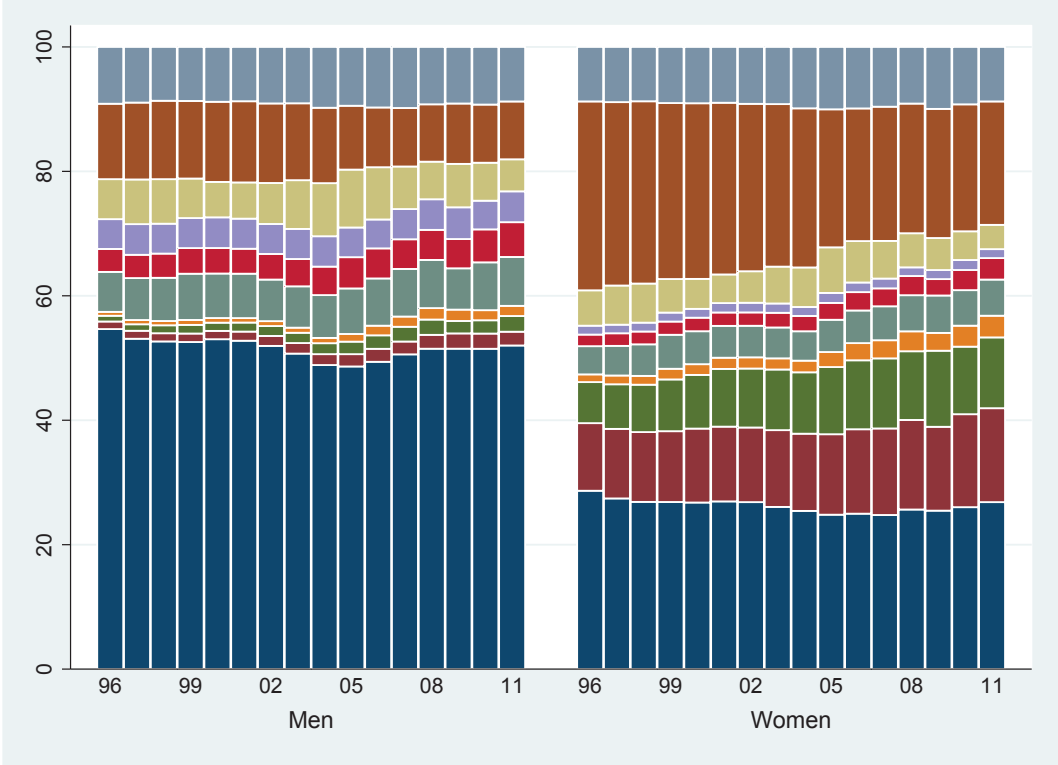
In contrast to many other European countries, Germany emerged largely unscathed from the economic and financial crisis. Due to favorable economic conditions, employment has in fact increased by 2.1 percentage points since 2008. Atypical employment only grew by 1.1 percentage points during this period. The growth in atypical employment is due in equal measure to solo self-employment and part-time work, but not to fixed-term contracts. Women in particular had higher employment rates in 2011 than at the start of the crisis. Women's employment rates rose by 2.9 percentage points, whereas men's only rose by 1.3 percentage points. Among younger people, almost the entire increase in employment is in fixed-term contracts.

Employment in Germany (1996–2011).



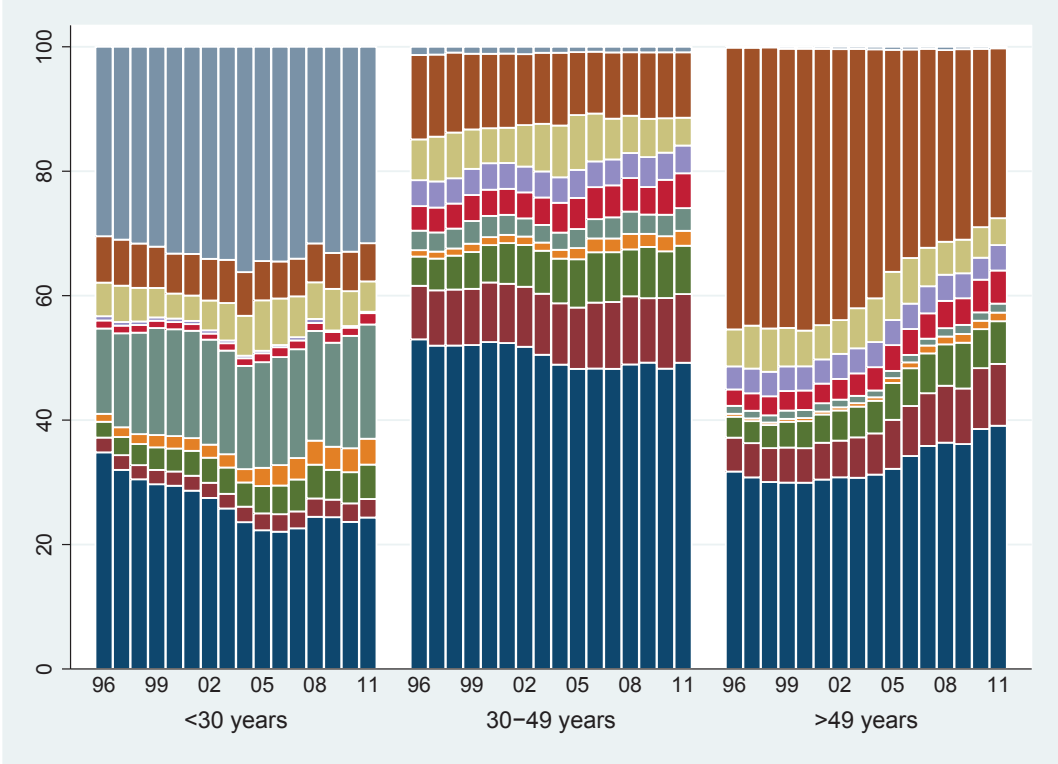
Data sources: Microcensus until 2009, ELFS for 2010 & 2011 (second quarter based on yearly and quarterly surveys)

Employment in Germany by Gender (1996–2011).



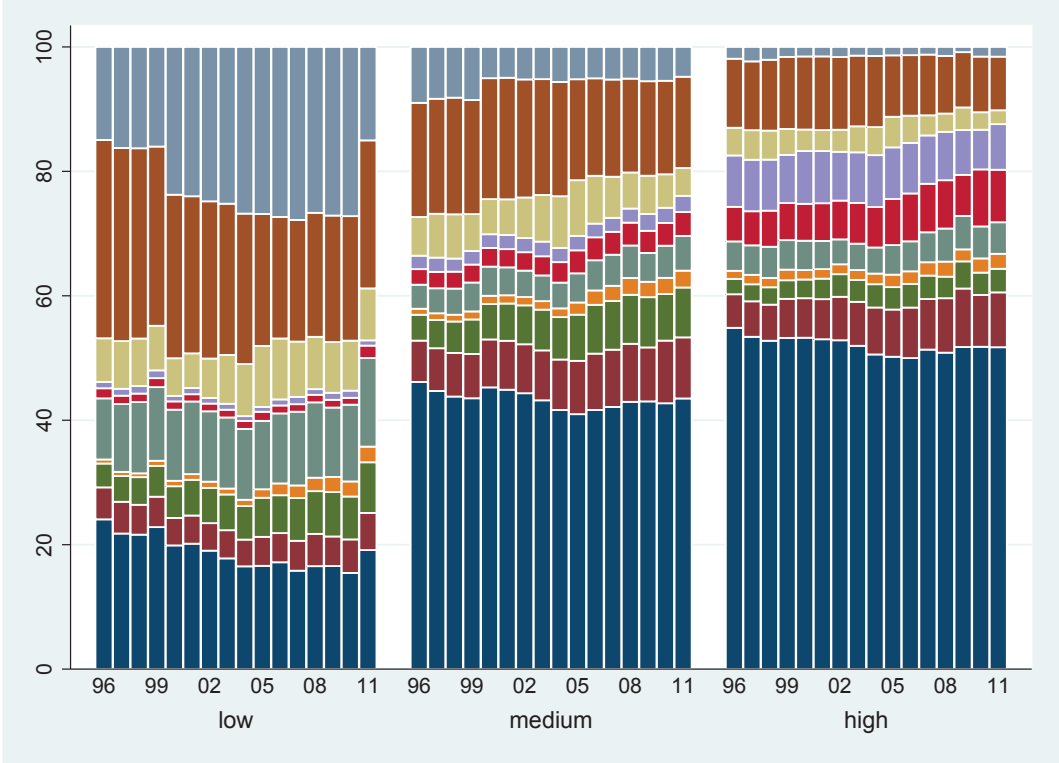
Data sources: Microcensus until 2009, ELFS for 2010 & 2011 (second quarter based on yearly and quarterly surveys)

Employment in Germany by Age (1996–2011).



Data sources: Microcensus until 2009, ELFS for 2010 & 2011 (second quarter based on yearly and quarterly surveys)

Employment in Germany by Education (1996–2011).



Data sources: Microcensus until 2009, ELFS for 2010 & 2011 (second quarter based on yearly and quarterly surveys)⁸

⁸ From the years 1996 to 1999, the Microcensus categorized education levels differently to the ELFS. Therefore, the proportions for the years up to including 1999 are not comparable with subsequent years. There is a data problem for the low educational/skills level in the year 2011. The quality report 2011 highlights the following change in the German questionnaire: Increase of number of employed persons (due to change of leading questions on employment). These data should therefore be interpreted with caution.

Important terms

The **population studied** includes all people who were of working age (between 15 and 64 years of age) at the time of the survey but excludes those living in collective living quarters (monasteries/convents, hospitals, etc.) and those doing military service.

A person was considered **employed** if they were working in the private or public sector, either in a dependent or self-employed capacity, for at least one hour a week and received a salary, wage, or other monetary remuneration for this.

Individuals were considered **unemployed** if they were not employed but were actively seeking work and were available to the labor market or if they were entering employment within the following three months.

Those who were neither employed nor unemployed were considered economically **inactive**. Inactive individuals who were in education or training were assigned to the inactive **in education or training** category.

A **standard employment relationship** exists when an individual is in a dependent employment relationship for at least 35 hours weekly and has a permanent employment contract.

Marginal part-time employment is employment with fewer than 20 hours a week.

Substantial part-time employment is employment with 20 hours and more a week but less than 35 hours a week.

Fixed-term employment exists when the period during which a contract is valid is limited. We differentiate between fixed-term employment (35 hours and more a week) and fixed-term part-time employment (less than 35 hours a week).

Self-employment exists when an individual's main economic activity is not dependent employment.

Solo self-employment refers to self-employment without employees.

The **educational/skill levels** "low," "medium," and "high" are based on the ISCED classification of qualifications developed by UNESCO.

The aggregated data used in our country profiles can be downloaded from the project's website (www.wzb.eu/atypical). Interested users can also find explanations regarding some of the methodological problems that exist for certain years or variables.