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Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin
für Sozialforschung



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Atypical Employment in the United Kingdom

Discussion Paper

P 2013-003

www.wzb.eu/atypical

August 2013

Social Science Research Center Berlin (WZB)

Research Area

President's Project Group

Project

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



Citation:

Allmendinger, J., Hipp, L., Stuth, S. (2013): Atypical Employment in the United Kingdom, *Atypical Employment in Europe 1996–2011*, Discussion Paper P 2013-003, Berlin: WZB, pp. 75-77, www.wzb.eu/atypical.

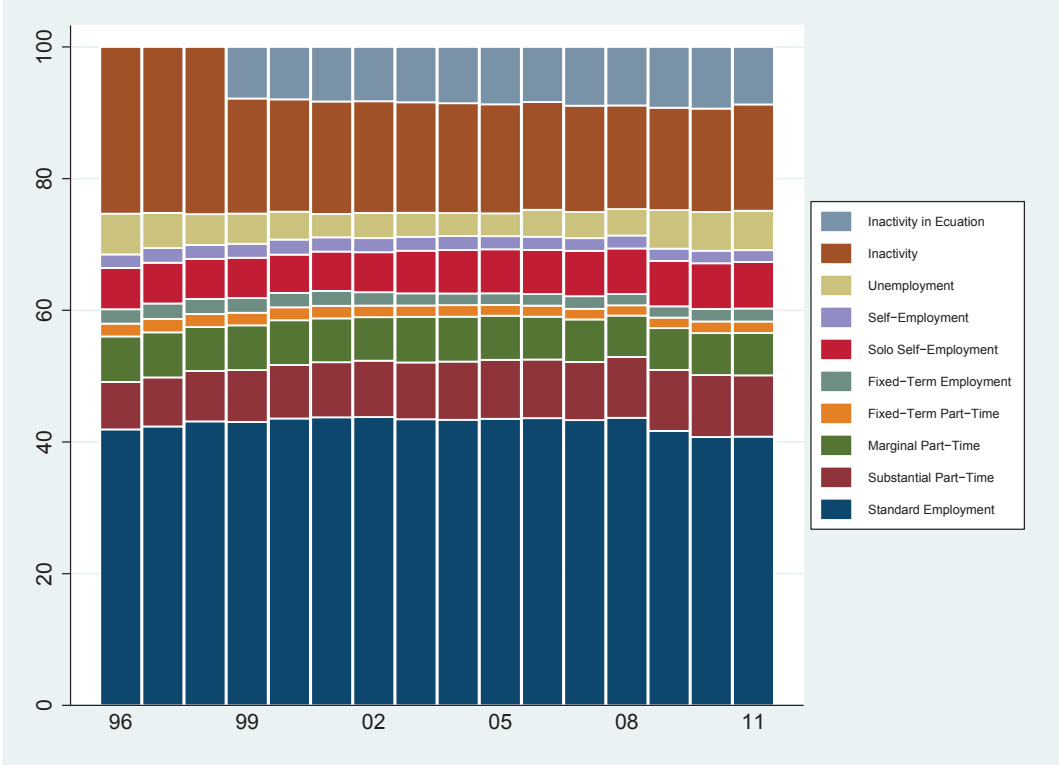
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United Kingdom

There were overall increases in employment in the UK from the mid-1990s until the turn of the millennium, and rates remained constant until 2008. In the UK, men, highly qualified individuals, and the 30-to-49 age group were most likely to be in permanent full-time employment, while women, the over-49s, and low-skilled workers were least likely. Standard employment fell in almost all groups from 1996 onwards. Since 2004, low-skilled workers have been squeezed out of employment in the United Kingdom (-10 percentage points between 2004 and 2011). With regard to atypical employment, there were marked differences between the groups studied. Women, the 30-to-49 age group, and moderately qualified individuals were increasingly employed in nonstandard jobs, whereas men engaged comparatively rarely in atypical employment. Part-time work was the dominant form in almost all the groups. Although substantial part-time employment slightly outweighed marginal part-time employment in almost all the groups, the marginal form played an important role for women, low-skilled workers, those with mid-level qualifications, and the under-30s. Solo self-employment was of particular importance for 30 to 49 year olds, the over-49s, and men. Men are also the only group for whom the solo self-employment levels are higher than the levels of part-time work.

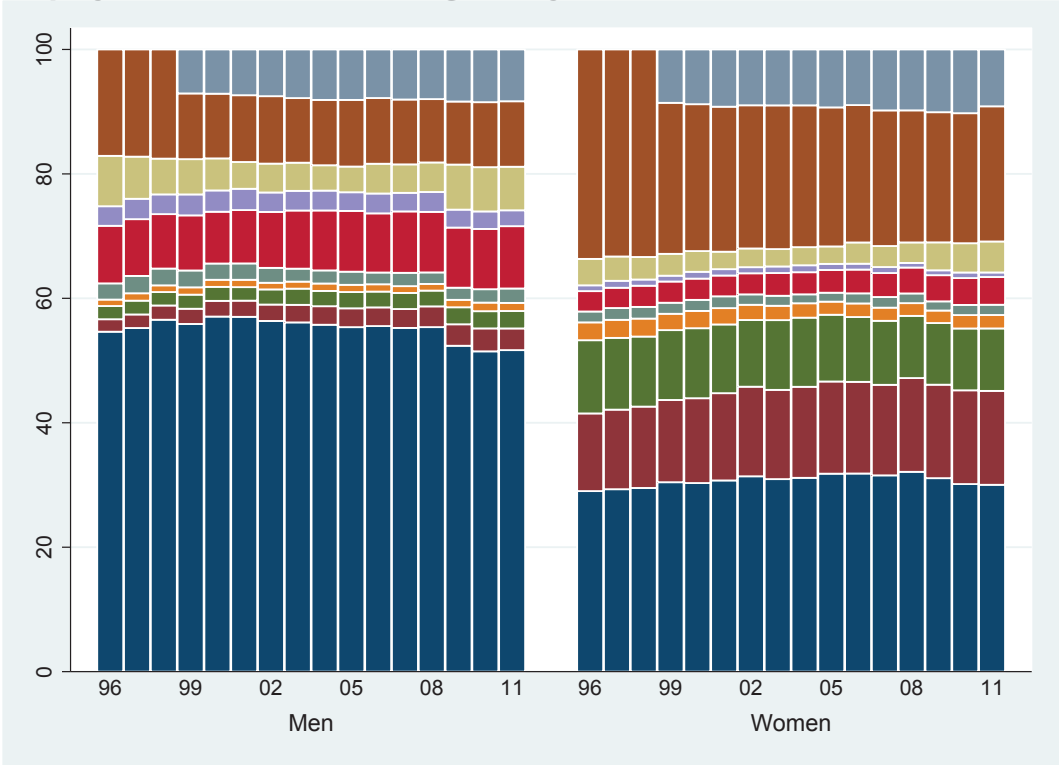
The economic crisis brought the employment rates slightly down and unemployment rose among all population groups. However, the crisis affected the various groups differently. Men were more strongly affected than women, and younger workers were harder hit than those in the middle and older age groups. The reduction in employment was mostly due to the reduction of standard employment.

Employment in the United Kingdom (1996–2011).



Data source: ELFS (second quarter based on yearly and quarterly surveys).²²

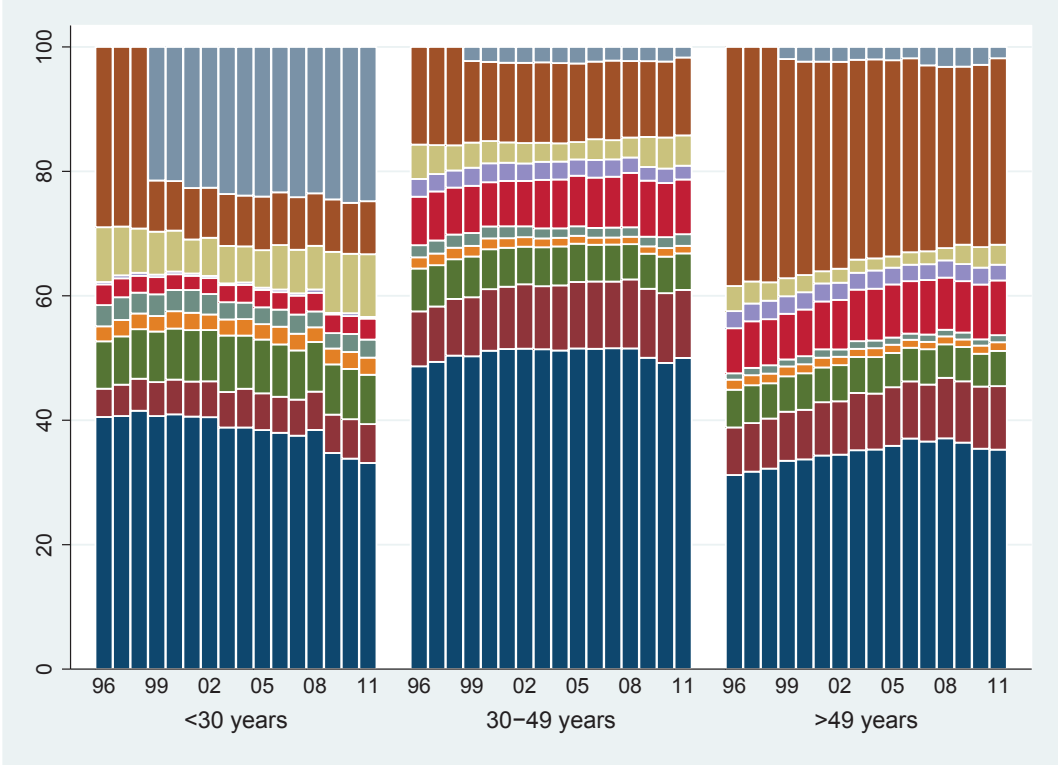
Employment in the United Kingdom by Gender (1996–2011).



Data source: ELFS (second quarter based on yearly and quarterly surveys).²²

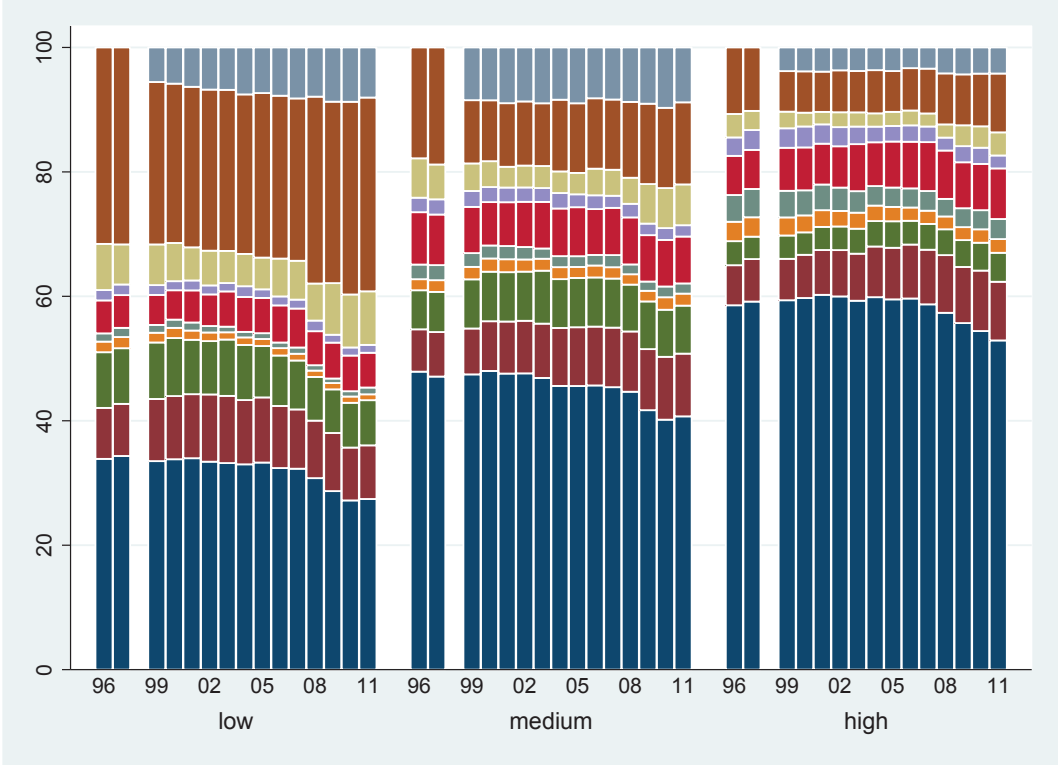
²² No information was available on education and training for the United Kingdom from 1996 to 1998. Therefore, people who were in education or training between 1996 and 1998 are in the “inactive” category. Further details are contained in the respective country tables, which can be accessed on the project website.

Employment in the United Kingdom by Age (1996–2011).



Data source: ELFS (second quarter based on yearly and quarterly surveys).²²

Employment in the United Kingdom by Education (1996–2011).



Data source: ELFS (second quarter based on yearly and quarterly surveys).^{22,23}

²³ There is no information on qualifications for the year 1998. Therefore, no results could be depicted for 1998.

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.