



Letter to the Editor

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Authors' response to "Multiple-job holding is not a type of precarious employment"

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Authors' response to "Multiple-job holding is not a type of precarious employment"

We would like to thank the authors of the letter entitled "Multiple job holding is not a type of precarious employment" (1) and extend our thanks to the Editor-in-Chief for giving us the opportunity to respond.

The authors of the letter point out that precarious employment is a multidimensional construct, with which we completely agree. There is however no consensus on which dimensions should be included in this construct, and therefore we chose a broad approach including three of the most wide-spread definitions: Guy Standing's (2), the Employment Precarious Scale (3) and the ILO's (4). The ILO definition explicitly includes multiple employers. A one-on-one comparison of the definitions can be found in table 1 of our review (5). A one-on-one comparison of these can be found in table 1 of our review (5). We found very few studies using a multidimensional definition of precarious employment and so our review ended up investigating studies on single dimensions, such as holding multiple jobs.

The main argument of Bouwhuis et al is that multiple job holding should not be included as a dimension of precarious employment as it "does not relate to the quality of the terms of employment" and "not all multiple job holders are vulnerable or precarious". This argument could be made about any single dimension and is the rationale behind creating a multidimensional construct, ie, no single variable is enough to capture the complexity of the issue. In the case of employment instability, some temporary workers are precarious and some are not (6). Some part-time workers are precarious although many are not. And as the authors of the letter has shown in their own study; some multiple job holders are precarious while some are not (7).

Thus, we can all agree that holding multiple jobs is not the same as being precariously employed. However, we believe that multiple job holding should continue to be considered as an important dimension of precarious employment.

There are several ongoing initiatives to try to reach consensus on what comprises precarious employment. We are glad that the debate on precarious employment is alive and well in this journal and elsewhere. Any reader interested in contributing to this effort are welcome to contact us.

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