

Part-time work, full-time commitment: employment in the Irish hospitality sector

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1. Working Conditions in Ireland Project
2. Employment in the Irish hospitality sector
3. Part-time work in bars, hotels and restaurants:
implications

ENFORCED FLEXIBILITY? WORKING IN IRELAND TODAY



Working Conditions in Ireland Project (WCIP)

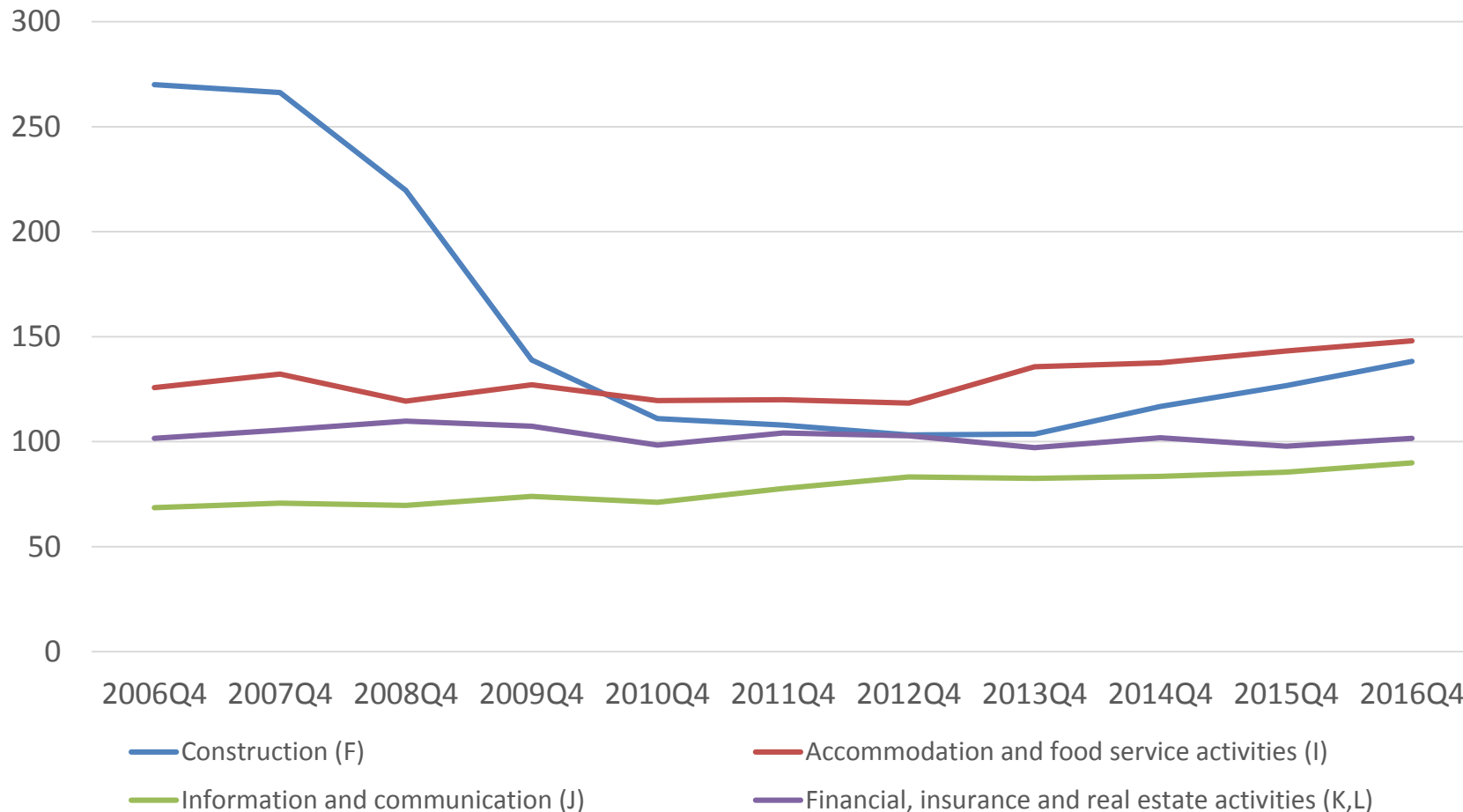
Employment in Ireland is now **growing** BUT how about **working conditions**?

- **Job quality dimensions(ETUI): wages, non-standard employment**, working time and work-life balance, working conditions and **job security**, skills and career development, collective representation

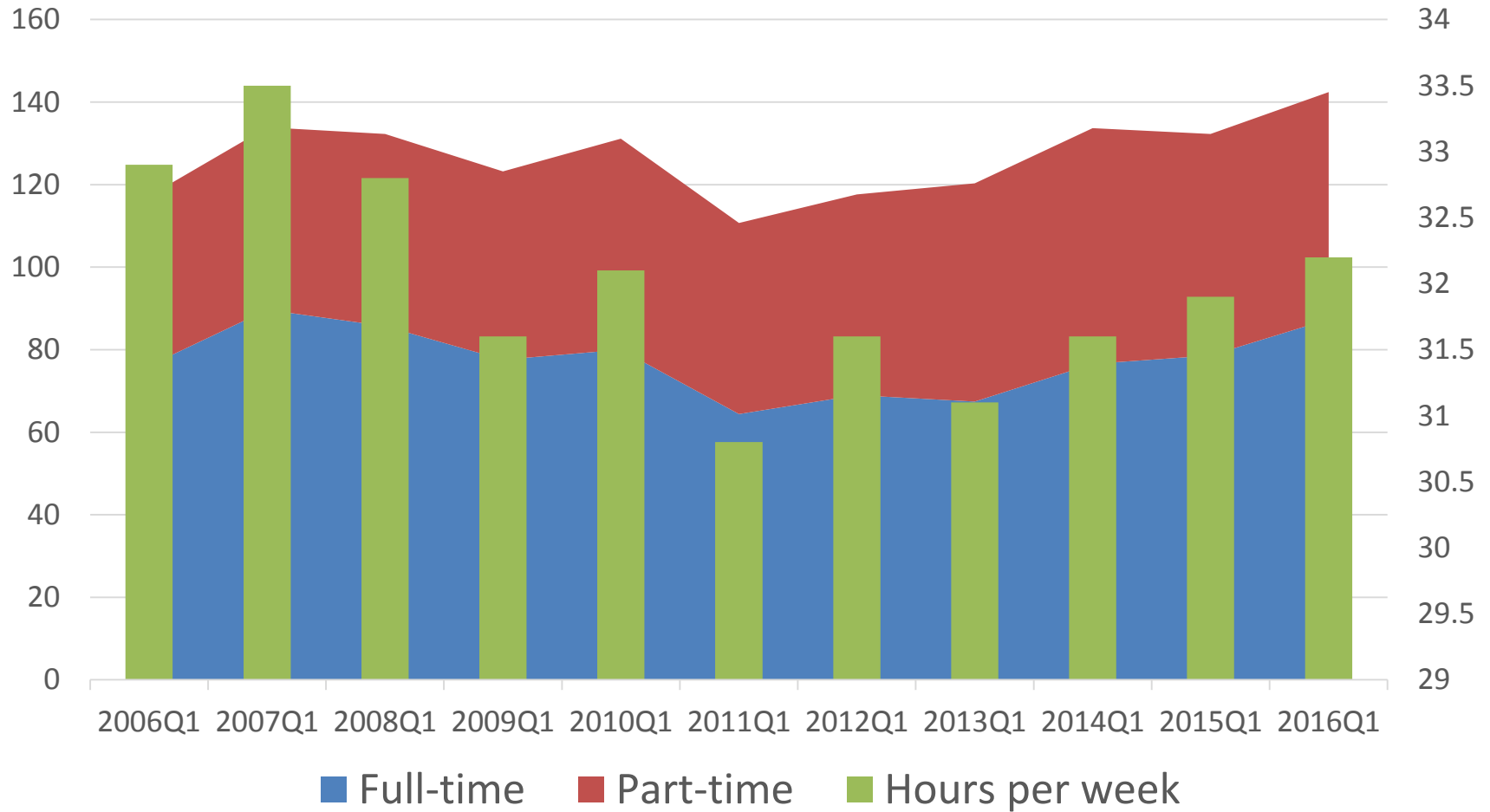
WCIP: Qualitative study; interviews with workers and Trade Union Reps

Four sectors: construction, hospitality, ICT, finance

Employment in Ireland: hospitality, construction, finances and ICT



Irish hospitality sector: employment and hours



Casualisation of employment in hospitality



Hospitality sector in Europe: low pay and bad working conditions (Baum 2007; Klein, Hasselink et al 2003)

- Shift from core to periphery (Atkinson 1984) and 'distancing flexibility' (Lai et al 2008);

Casual contracts, low pay, limited opportunities

- Increasing reliance on **transient workforce** (Ruhs and Anderson 2010; Wickham et al 2009)

Ireland: casualisation of stable employment

- **flexibilisation** started **before the recession**
- Students followed by migrants (1990s onwards)
- **After 2008: enforced flexibility?**

Zero-hours contracts and ‘if and when’ contracts



Regulations on **zero-hours contracts** in Ireland

- Employee **required to be available** for certain number of hours
- Some **compensation** if no work available

‘If and when’ and ‘**hybrid**’ contracts (O’Sullivan et al 2015)

- Number of hours not guaranteed (or minimum hours only)
- Employees **contractually not required** to be available
- **Reality:** obligation to accept hours and shifts

Getting regular hours

*Again, this is the whole **trauma bonding** thing being a factor here. Because... ‘**Why would you do this to your team mates?**’ ‘You know how hard it is, to work on Friday night, and now you are telling me you are not going to come in for us???’ You know... ‘What such and such is going to do, what such and such is going to do? **We don’t have enough people and you have to come in!**’ And you do [come in]
(Former Fast Food chain worker)*

Hospitality sector: unpredictability of shifts and income

*P: They [the managers] write on the roster, they write for example: **start at 8am and finish at 3pm** but next day **you come and you see that you have work until 5pm not until 3pm (...)** You never know ,you can't plan anything. And now it is even worse because they put the roster on the wall the last day, on Sunday. They put the roster on the wall so for example if you have on Monday your day off **you can't make a plan for your day because you didn't know [that] you will have tomorrow a day off** (...)*

A: ok, so how much did you get per week?

*P: **200-300..400 it depends***

A: how then can you plan financially?

*P: **you can't make any plan...you live in that hotel...like all your life is in the hotel** because you don't know, you just have to go to the hotel, that's all...*

(Accommodation assistant, large hotel)

Flexible contracts: who benefits?

Earnings in the Irish hospitality sector **lower** than the full-time **minimum wage salary**

- Workers need more hours!

Flexibility as a requirement; shifts assigned at last minute

- **Minimum hourly rate** but **unpredictable income**
- Finding additional employment not possible
- Possible difficulties with **social welfare entitlements**

Working time as form of **control**:

- Flexibility that suits the employer
- **Part-time contract** but **full-time commitment**

Working towards better hours

*I was doing very well. In the [name of the fast food chain]. I think it was like that **cause I was there for so long**. Cause generally, the **longer you were there, the more hours you would get out of it**. And I was doing pretty much full time hours. Well, 'full time hours'... I had **very good hours** and they were **always fairly regular**. I knew that I was always going to work on Friday and I was always going to work on Saturday.*
(Former Fast Food chain worker)

Hours longer in reality (and unpaid)

*Well to speak honestly **30 minutes for one room is not enough...because** a lot of tasks, a lot of things to do and also we have two beds in each room, so if there are four people or three people you have to change two beds...**It takes 35/40 minutes, even so, if you're lucky** and you have a clean room - it saves you but otherwise **you can't finish in time. Nobody from cleaning department, housekeeping department, are going to lunch** [because they have to] finish their work in time...*
(Accommodation Assistant, large Dublin hotel)



Inability to plan: constant insecurity

Importance of the national context: e.g. social welfare system, childcare options, housing

Not only context, but also **possible implications:**

- **Career paths and training**
- **Housing** (renting or buying...)
- **Delayed family formation**
- **Future consequences** (pensions)
- **Possible social welfare traps**

THANK YOU!

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