



# Are Hybrids the New Normal? A Labour Market Perspective on Hybrid Self-employment

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**Abstract.** In hybrid self-employment people combine a wage job with self-employment. During the last years a growing number of studies and references related to the topic of hybrid self-employment have emerged. This article discusses the phenomenon of hybrid self-employment (hybrid entrepreneurship) from a labour market perspective, it reviews existing literature and refers finally to existing data provided by *Eurostat*. Public data suggest that the extent of hybrid self-employment in the labour market is comparatively small but the rates in different countries diverge significantly.

**Keywords:** hybrid self-employment, hybrid entrepreneurship, self-employment, solo self-employment

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## 1. Introduction

This article is about linkages between self-employment, solo self-employment and hybrid self-employment. Nowadays, the term hybrid self-employment is also labelled as hybrid entrepreneurship (Folta et al., 2010). Those hybrid phenomena deal with multiple jobs where one of them is an occupational activity in self-employment. During the last years a growing number of studies and references related to the topic can be found (e.g. Raffiee and Feng, 2014; Bögenhold and Klinglmair, 2017; Solesvik, 2017; Luc et al., 2018). Currently, quantitative knowledge about hybrids is rare and some different interpretations and classifications are competing with each other, especially if a positive perception dominates over a negative one or vice versa. A positive perception interprets perceived phenomena and related discussion in context with an upcoming gig-economy and identifies specific elements of creativity and innovativeness that hybrid entrepreneurs can bring to the market place. Hybrids are seen in

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combination with digital technologies, new forms of knowledge and historically new portfolios of occupational puzzles, jobs and life-courses which may serve as an economic pool of regional innovativeness and prosperity (Florida, 2003).

Alternatively, a more sceptical interpretation cares for the question of uncertainty, social security, poor earnings and, lastly, precarity. In this perspective hybrid self-employment is mostly due to the fact that income through self-employment is not sufficient to make a living and that people are forced to moonlight through a further waged job to keep staying in business and to survive. These black-white scenarios come up quite exclusive to each other and do not offer moderating voices. Such a moderating perspective may try to combine both perspectives and discuss the issue in combination with the notion that hybrid forms may be transitory phenomena which relate to biographical passages from nascent entrepreneurship towards stable entrepreneurial firms or as temporary episodes through freelanced activities. One may also acknowledge that some forms of hybrid activity are accepted voluntarily by individuals to establish some form of self-realization through independent activities, e.g. in freelancing or self-employment besides university studies. Bögenhold et al. (2014) show e.g. that free-lanced artists operate their activities rarely along economic input-output calculations but just by decisions based upon passion so that they have sometimes to work wage-based in order to supplement a form of freelancing. Levels of social and economic (in)security must always also be measured by criteria of subjective well-being.

Josef Alois Schumpeter (1942, 1992) stated back in 1942 that capitalism must be seen as an evolutionary process, which, by its nature, never can be stationary. Societies and their inherent economies are in a flow. They are constantly changing over time due to the “products” of the society in a given period of time. Nowadays, of course, things are also changing, especially since the technological revolution centred on information and communication technologies which has reshaped and still is reshaping the fundamental basis of our society (Audretsch and Chowdhury, 2011).

As labour markets are closely linked to the settings of societies, they are also facing massive structural changes, which affect the composition of labour markets and, in particular, the self-employed part thereof. The current paper takes a closer look at these changing factors with a focus on implications for the labour market, in particular for the (solo-)self-employed and the specific category of hybrid self-employed. The majority of the self-employed are working as a one-man- or one-woman-firm without any other occupation. Hybrid self-employed are more complicated since – for different reasons – they are *nomen est omen* hybrid, e.g. wage or salary dependent *and* a bit self-employed or vice versa self-employed *and* a bit wage or salary dependent. Hybrid (solo-)self-employed are those people who have different sources of income and who belong to different employment categories. This special group within the sector of self-employment is receiving increasing interest from scholars working on labour market, social

stratification and entrepreneurship (Katz and Krueger 2019; Krueger 2018). Within this group, we are facing a great heterogeneity with respect to different aspects and we can see a rise of blurred boundaries between dependent work and self-employment. Why it is fruitful to engage in a discussion about stereotypical views of the self-employed or of entrepreneurs will be an important concern the paper deals with.

The structure of this paper is as follows. Chapter 2 discusses some historical lines of change in self-employment, chapter 3 focusses at empirical trends on international comparison while the following chapter 4 discusses more principally the division of work and ongoing changes in the labour market. Hence, chapter 5 turns to hybrid self-employment explaining terms, referring to existing literature and providing empirical indications based upon evaluations of *Eurostat* data. The final chapter 6 concludes and gives an outlook.

## 2. Self-employment over the Course of Time

As starting point for our discussion, the paper gives attention to some overall lines of development of self-employment on international comparisons. In parallel with the rise of mass production, modern societies experienced a secular decline of self-employment within nearly all OECD countries during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Much of this decline goes back to the decline of employment in agriculture due to the enormous productivity increase achieved in the agricultural sector. The general historical times and their related labour market situation are of crucial importance among different institutional factors influencing ratios of self-employment and concrete entries and willingness to self-employment. Different studies have introduced the idea that rising unemployment ratios push self-employment ratios. Bögenhold and Staber (1991) showed for a sample of eight countries based upon OECD Labour Force Statistics in a time series from 1950 to 1987 that changes in unemployment positively influenced changes in self-employment. In their study of 17 OECD countries, Staber and Bögenhold (1993) found that different institutional factors are partly responsible for variations in self-employment. Especially the availability and generosity of unemployment insurance schemes can explain, at least partially, relative self-employment variations and levels. Acs et al. (1992) came to comparable conclusions when including further variables in the analysis.

Blanchflower (2000) observed a large set of OECD countries for the period from 1966 to 1996, suggesting that self-employment is predominantly male and more prevalent among older age groups than it is among the young. Constant and Zimmermann (2014) analysed labour market transitions among self-employment, gainful employment, and unemployment across the business cycle comparing the performance of migrants and natives in Germany. They could show the same cycles to self-employment but in different intensities. The entry transition to self-

employment of Germans was three times higher. Evans and Leighton (1990) found that white men who are unemployed are nearly twice as likely as wage or salary dependent workers to enter self-employment. Thurik et al. (2008) argued in a more differentiated fashion that there is both a “recession-push” and a “prosperity-pull” aspect of the relation between unemployment and self-employment. In their analysis of a broad sample of countries worldwide, Falco and Haywood (2016) reported the varying attractiveness of self-employment for different degrees of education and professional backgrounds while Dvouletý (2017) showed a weak but positive relationship between self-employment and unemployment for the Czech Republic. The same was shown earlier in a study by Moore and Mueller (2002) for the case of Canada. The more specialized people are, the higher the appeal of self-employment. In all, there is no ultimate consensus about the clear links between unemployment and intentions to self-employment, but worse labour market conditions with high or increasing levels of unemployment always serve as a kind of proxy for intentions to self-employment, serving as a logic of necessity. However, the historical decline of self-employment has come to a relative standstill or even a slight revival since the 1980s, although different countries show different patterns of concrete development (Van Stel, 2005).

Discussion on self-employment and their rates of decline, stability or survival very often compares the occupational categories of self-employed people with those of wage- or salary-dependent workers as opposed categories in the employment system as if there are two worlds in a kind of black and white scheme. Too less acknowledged are the sometimes enormous heterogeneities among each of those categories. As for the labour market category of self-employment the span reaches from hybrid self-employed workers having more than one job up to entrepreneurial billionaires at the other side (Bögenhold, 2019b). Working in self-employment just as an own-account worker without any further employees, or working with the spouse as a family team, or being a manager or director of a bigger company, can all make a difference to how somebody feels about the own doing, namely in the perception of his- or herself and in the definition of the relation to others in the firm and in society. Hence, many self-employed operate their firms not as single responsible owners but as members of a team with shared rights and shared property. In other words, simple absolute numbers of self-employment populations indicate the extent of an occupational category but hide their internal differences and varieties of socioeconomic situations and rationalities (Cieslik and Dvouletý, 2019; Nickels et al., 2008, chapter 2).

Taking the employment category of the self-employed one is confronted with a magnitude of diverse social and economic situations which may also vary over people’s life time. While one fraction is keeping part of the occupational category of self-employment, another fraction experiences this activity for limited times or just as biographical episodes. Occupational positions in the scale of social

stratification and in the system of the labour market may be analysed in respect to material and social living conditions and, accordingly, related life-chances. Freelancers, farmers, or micro-entrepreneurs working full-time without employees, and “big” entrepreneurs employing a larger share of wage- or salary-dependent employees are difficult to summarize in one single box (Cieslik, 2017).

Not only labour market conditions influence the size of the contingent of self-employment in modern societies but a variety of further institutional variables as well, among them are different legal structures, governments, property rights, financial structures and business environments which affect intentions of individuals to enter self-employment. The intentions to engage in self-employment are not only a simple mirror of those different institutional variables but they are also influenced by different global cultures towards working in self-employment which can be measured as entrepreneurial intentions (Parastuty and Bögenhold, 2019). Different entrepreneurial intentions are related to different cognitive schemes to deal with economic life which are especially researched in economic and social psychology and behavioural and institutional economics (North, 1991; Akerlof and Shiller, 2009; Smith et al., 2013). Intention research in entrepreneurship may also refer to “narrative economics” (Shiller, 2017). This was already addressed by Keynes (1936) when talking about animal spirits as a noneconomic way to look at economic affairs. He had in mind different degrees of optimism to look at the future and to develop plans for further consumption decisions.

### **3. Empirical Observations of Self-employment Ratios on International Comparison**

Looking at self-employment ratios in several OECD-countries shows more or less similar directions of change although the concrete levels differ sometimes considerably. The historical decline of self-employment has come to a relative standstill or even a slight revival since the 1980s. Self-employment ratios show a specific level of self-employment at a specific time, but this view hides the fact of inter- and intragenerational social mobility behind the figures. A figure may remain the same, while at the same time multiple inflow and outflow dynamics are taking place. Sociological stratification and mobility research shows the high dynamics between wage dependent work and unemployment on the one side and self-employment on the other. In other words, self-employment as a category continuously receives fresh blood and loses old blood through ‘underground mobility’. The labour market dynamics and social mobility patterns are of great interest to researchers focusing on the division of occupations and related dynamics in the economy (Arum and Müller, 2004).

Divergent paths and logics of people moving towards self-employment must be taken into account so that not only one typical manner of recruitment is visible,

but several different types, each with competing social logics. In contrast to stereotypical assumptions, the phenomenon of self-employment may look entirely different when it is studied as a phenomenon embedded in the labour markets and specific occupational contexts, applications and sectors. Some types of small business persons and independent professionals belong to a category, which does not fit with an image of entrepreneurship (Burke, 2012; Burke and Cowling, 2015). They do not show ambitions for growth and they operate in routines, which are sometimes very close to low income ranges, occasionally to poverty. Empirical studies on diverse groups of self-employed individuals in larger societal and labour market contexts may produce alternative pictures, challenging stereotypical assumptions and types of rhetoric related to self-employment and independent business (Blackburn and Kovalainen, 2008; Kautonen et al., 2010; Cieslik, 2015; Van Stel and De Vries, 2015; Bögenhold et al. 2019).

When studying Table 1 and related data for selected European countries, it turns out that the overwhelming majority of self-employed people in Europe is working as solo self-employed person who does not employ further employees in their locations of activity. 71.35 percent of all people working in self-employment in Europe in 2017 are working without wage- or salary dependent employees.

Where Germany shows with 55 percent the lowest ratio of solo self-employment to total self-employment among those countries, the selected sample shows United Kingdom at the other side of the span with 84 percent. In other words, out of 100 self-employed workers in the UK, 84 are engaged as smallest actors in self-employment just working on their own. Of course, those international differences have to be explained reasonably. Again, ratios and changes in self-employment patterns are influenced by a bundle of different components which must be compared regionally and internationally. Looking exclusively at patterns of self-employment, we must consider those convergent as well as divergent developments within individual countries and in an international comparison. Self-employment consists of productive, unproductive and destructive elements (Baumol, 1990), and how these elements act “at a given time and place depends heavily on the rules of the game” (Baumol, 1990, p. 894).

Table 1: Ratio of Solo Self-employment among Total Self-employment

Year	EU countries	Germany	France	Italy	Netherlands	Austria	United Kingdom
2004	69.01%	52.51%	55.57%	71.54%	66.40%	62.68%	75.68%
2017	71.35%	54.89%	62.70%	72.34%	74.54%	56.75%	83.98%

Source: Eurostat, own calculations

Different percentages always hide and express relationships which show different lenses and indicate a variety of different components. If one compares solo-self-employment not as a ratio of self-employment but of total employment,

Netherlands has the highest ratio of self-employment measured as percentage of total employment (see Table 2). On average, the ratio for the EU is nearly 10 percent. This means that one person out of 10 in the labour market works as solo-employed. However, between the individual countries significant differences exist in the level of this ratio.

Table 2: Ratio of Solo Self-employment among Total Employment

Countries	Total	Male	Female
Austria	5.7	5.7	5.7
Germany	6.7	7.4	4.8
Italy	7.8	10.5	5.5
France	9.8	12.6	6.1
UK	14.3	17.9	10.1
Netherlands	14.6	17.5	11.8
EU-28 Countries	9.7	11.9	7.2

Source: Eurostat, own calculations.

Note: Table denotes percentages of self-employed without employees as a share of all persons in employment in 2017.

#### 4. The Changing Nature of Work and Labour in Revitalising Societies

As labour markets are closely linked to the settings of societies, they are also facing massive structural changes, which affect the composition of labour and in particular self-employment through changing profiles of knowledge. Increasingly we find a variety of different forms of work behaviour and of social security due to different economic and social status groups (European Commission, 2018). Taking a closer look at the changing contextual factors with a focus on implications for qualification profiles, and in particular for the (solo-)self-employed and the hybrid (solo-)self-employed, may also show recent dynamics in the composition and restructuring of the labour force. Within the category of the self-employed we are facing a great heterogeneity with respect to different criteria (Bögenhold, 2019b) and we can also see a rise of blurred boundaries between dependent work and self-employment. Bögenhold et al. (2014) have shown for specific groups of freelancers the overlapping areas between dependent work and self-employment since (i.) the demarcation lines are not very clear and (ii.) agents are always moving back and forth, depending on individual job opportunities, and (iii.) mixed identities or multiple jobs mostly do not exist within statistical categories (see Bögenhold and Fachinger, 2013, with a similar notion for the case of journalists).

Entrepreneurship has become a central issue when discussing ways to promote job creation and growth. Especially in the context of IT technologies and ideas on innovative regional clusters, entrepreneurship has evolved to be a pivot for a sustainable economic and social future (Audretsch, 2007; Bonnet et al.,

2010; Bonnet et al., 2012; Bögenhold et al., 2016). However, critical discourse shows that entrepreneurship, as a *terminus technicus* in scientific discussion is not always precisely defined (Bögenhold, 2019a). In particular, the socioeconomic diversity of the human actors and their different occupational and biographical careers and orientations are not sufficiently and fully acknowledged. Taking the labour market category of self-employment as a proxy for entrepreneurship, which is often practised – and discussed critically – one realizes that the majority of entrepreneurs is associated with the category of micro-firms, which are mainly one-(wo)man firms.

The complex processes of interplay between technological change, globalisation and labour market trends leading to a shift towards a service sector economy are mirrored by the emergence of new patterns of employment and a related institutional context. Viewing the issue of self-employment, a growing trend towards part-time self-employment and one-(wo)man firms can be found. Many of these actors were conventionally labelled as freelancers (Kitching and Smallbone, 2012; Meager, 2015; Shevchuk and Strebkov, 2018). Nowadays they are increasingly labelled as independent professionals (IPROs) (McKeown, 2015). Most of them show a high degree of academic knowledge since the ratio of actors with a university or polytechnic degree is much higher than the average in society. When Acs, Audretsch and Lehmann (2013) formulated their recent *Knowledge Spillover Theory of Entrepreneurship (KSTE)*, the emergence of many of those IPROs provides a good exemplification of the positive link between knowledge, self-employment and transformations of the composition of labour. Occasionally their work situations show a *hybrid status* (Folta et al., 2010) between dependent employed working and self-employment.

Economies worldwide are going through the profound process of structural change, which alters established employment relationships. As one consequence we do not only experience an upgrade to “good jobs” being autonomous and well-paid but at the same time also the proportion of people in precarious working arrangements raises. Also in this respect a raise in solo self-employment can be observed. New forms of small self-employment are – as already said – heterogeneous and sometimes contradictory, ranging from good positions in terms of income and security down to new kinds of modern day labourers who are permanently in search for “gigs” to realize income. “Gigs” has become a central word when portraying the economy and society as a “gig economy” (McKinsey, 2016; Holtz-Eakin et al., 2017; Kässi and Lehdonvirta, 2018) where parts of entrepreneurship are regarded as staying stand-by to fulfil gigs or being 24 hours a day prepared for readiness when somebody is calling (Da Palma et al., 2018). The notion of gig economy is not only a critical one but is also linked with digital economies and their chances and challenges.

When we discuss level, quantity and quality of recent work profiles we must also take into account that new phenomena are appearing due to new technological possibilities in the gig-economy, first of all crowdwork and “work



on demand via apps”. Crowdwork is work that is “executed through online platforms that put in contact an indefinite number of organisations, businesses and individuals through the internet, potentially allowing connecting clients and workers on a global basis” ... while “work-on-demand” via apps refers to “jobs related to traditional working activities such as transport, cleaning and running errands, but also forms of clerical work, are offered and assigned through mobile apps” (De Stefano, 2015). Of course, the last group is not homogeneous and the most relevant distinction can be drawn between apps that match demand and supply of different activities such as cleaning, running errands, home-repairs and other apps that offer more specialised service such as driving, or even some forms of clerical work such as legal services or consultancy.

## **5. Hybrid Entrepreneurship: Concept of the Term and Statistical Evidence**

Historically, the most decisive factor accelerating, channelling and shaping the information technology paradigm has been the process of capitalist restructuring undertaken since the 1980s. This process led to a series of reforms (deregulation, privatization and dismantling of the social contract between labour and capital). Four goals were pursued: (1) deepening the capitalist logic of profit seeking in capital-labour relationships, (2) enhancing the productivity of labour and capital, (3) globalizing production, seizing the opportunity of the most advantageous conditions for production and (4) marshalling the state’s support for productivity gains and competitiveness of economies. Without the new information technology, the capitalist restructuring would arguably have been much slower, with much less flexibility (Castells, 2010). When we speak of the “informational society” and the new semantic of a “gig economy”, we have to acknowledge that these societies are capitalist societies and that they always experience some degree of cultural and institutional diversity.

We have been trained to think in binary terms of reciprocal exclusion, where people belong to one or another category within the system of employment. Generally, one distinguishes between dependent work including blue- and white-collar workers on the one hand and independent (self-employed) workers on the other hand. The nomenclature of self-employment is very difficult to describe and leaves many spaces of vagueness (Bögenhold and Klinglmair, 2016a; Skrzek-Lubasiska and Szaban, 2018). Unclear positions and overlapping phenomena are very often neglected. Hybrid phenomena exist when people try to combine both categories. In these cases, dependent workers and independent actors have overlapping identities. We call those identities hybrid entrepreneurs. The literature of hybrid entrepreneurship emerges since about 13 years now (Folta, 2007; Folta et al., 2010; Raffiee and Feng, 2014; Shevchuk and Strebkov, 2015; Bögenhold and Klinglmair, 2016a, 2016b, 2017; Schulz et al., 2016; Solesvik, 2017; Viljamaa et al., 2017; Luc et al., 2018).

The seminal article by Folta et al. (2010) started to discuss assumptions about the dichotomous nature of entrepreneurial entry and the authors concluded that these assumptions are so entrenched in social science research that little work has been done to investigate them empirically. Folta et al. (2010) encourage readers to recognize the need for future research to sort out the relative importance of these rationales. “Our primary intent was to justify why hybrid entrepreneurship might be unique and to supply evidence around its uniqueness” (Folta et al., 2010, p. 265). The study matched longitudinal data sources on the entire Swedish labour market that were gleaned from governmental registers and maintained for research purposes by Statistics Sweden. Among many different findings which the study brought up were the aspects of prior self-employment experiences as a preference for hybrid entries, the entrepreneurial career dependencies and different sizes of firms and related economic sectors. Taken together, various different motivations and social paths exist to engage in hybrid self-employment.

Bögenhold and Fachinger (2013) concentrated at the creators of the media business, especially journalists. Their empirical part focussed at journalism in Germany based upon public census data including dependent, independent and hybrid self-employed journalists. The results show that there is no typical pattern of a journalistic occupation and its forms of employment, where the journalistic existence is split into freelancing on the one side and staff writers on the other side. There is a diversity of forms, entities, thereby arranging various ways in which creators of media do appear.

Shevchuk and Strebkov (2016) found in their survey for Russia that people who work exclusively as freelancers have distinct work values than moonlighters who also hold regular jobs, or entrepreneurs who also run small businesses. Genuine freelancers ignore security and social values, but seek intrinsic rewards and comfort to balance work and life. Entrepreneurs show the least preference for security, do not appreciate comfort, but seek intrinsic and social job rewards. Moonlighters show the highest preference for security, value social rewards, but ignore intrinsic rewards and comfort.

Xi et al. (2018) investigated a sample of French hybrid entrepreneurs. The authors conclude that not only gender but also education status highly influences the likelihood to engage in hybrid self-employment. Luc et al. (2018) employed a research sample of hybrid entrepreneurs in Quebec, Canada, examining the influence of socio-demographic variables and of employees’ perceptions of resource accessibility and of work and job quality on their hybridization process. One of the results of this study is related to the existence of “soft support” by employers and their business advice which hinders or supports (hybrid) entrepreneurs.

Views of hybrid entrepreneurs oscillate between very positive and very negative views; negatively, hybrid entrepreneurship is always interpreted in relation to precarious work (Conen and Schippers, 2019). Here, general working conditions decrease, so that income situations of individual actors and their

households show to be increasingly uncertain and insufficient. Hybrid entrepreneurship often questions the changing boundaries of the modern corporation as Murgia and Pulignano (2019) concluded based upon their qualitative study in Italy. Hybrid entrepreneurs are seen as reactions to scenarios of social and economic polarization (Friedman, 2014). The so-called Americanization of work is associated with perceptions that workers especially in urban areas are often forced to have a second and third job just to gain an extra income to meet with high living costs. Hybrid entrepreneurship is sometimes seen analogously since low incomes through wage activities alone do not provide enough income to maintain household needs. In this view, dependent workers need an extra income through self-employment to maximize their living budget.

A more positive view states that hybrid entrepreneurship is just one manifestation of current trends of destandardisation of work profiles in which, through imperatives of lifelong learning, occupational immobility is going to become a museum piece. Instead, work profiles are increasingly puzzles of new combinations and jobs are almost sets of different activities with different tasks, contents, and employers. There is also an idea that hybrid entrepreneurs are increasingly knowledge based having a background of high degree of further education and specialized knowledge profiles. Professionalization and trends to independent expert work in networked and flexible work arrangements are the more positive slogans of such thought and argumentation. Additionally, being in self-employment and especially being in hybrid forms of self-employment must sometimes also be seen as a biographical episode, which has a specific structure of relevance and organization within the life-course. People increasingly try to test ways of living and working with intentions for shorter periods to evaluate how things work and feel. Life-courses in this understanding seem to be increasingly fragile and accidental. This fits also with another positive notion which interprets hybrid forms of self-employment primarily as a *bridge* from one form of work to another. For instance, many nascent entrepreneurs still keep former (old) employment, at least partially, and run already the new self-employed activity simultaneously.

### 5.1. Some Quantitative Data on Hybrid Entrepreneurship

At the end, which scenario is more appropriate confronted with real life has not been answered by empirical data yet. There is a lack of information about the economic and social rationalities of the hybrid self-employed and the results of their obtained social mobility: What are their motives for being a hybrid self-employed? How satisfied are these people with their professional situation? What does their economic and financial situation look like, and finally, can their emergence be linked to an absence of opportunities in the labour market or must they be regarded as a positive challenge to new opportunities and to increased

dynamics in economy and society? Most of these questions seem to be somehow less researched on the basis of reliable quantitative data and international comparisons. The present article is also not able to answer the above questions but in what follows we do provide some quantitative data on the prevalence of hybrid entrepreneurs in the European Union. This may serve as a starting point for further empirical work on hybrid entrepreneurs.

This article provides an evaluation of empirical data provided by EUROSTAT (European Union Labour Survey). Table 3 shows the number of workers in the European Union with a second (paid) job, either in wage-employment or in self-employment (unpaid family workers are excluded from the table).<sup>2</sup> We can see that, among workers with two jobs, it is most common to have two wage jobs. Out of 8.7 million EU-28 workers with two jobs in 2017, 4.5 million have two wage jobs. In line with this, we can see that it is far more common to be wage-employed in the main job (7.3 million in 2017) than being self-employed in the main job (1.4 million; see last column of the table). Having two jobs seems to have become more common in the EU between 2002 and 2017, as the number increased from 6.5 to 8.7 million workers. Nevertheless, having two jobs still remains the exception rather than the rule as in 2017, only 3.53% of the labour force had two jobs. Moreover, only 1.36% of the labour force can be labelled hybrid entrepreneur: 1.11% is wage-employed in their main job and self-employed in their second job, and 0.25% vice versa.

Taken together, on the global European level hybrid self-employment plays a minor role although it has increased between 2002 and 2017. Moreover, the data suggest that multiple jobs in dependent work are much more on the agenda than hybrid forms of self-employment.

Table 3. Number of people with a second job (including hybrid entrepreneurship) in the EU-28

Second Job Main job	2002				2017			
	Wage- employed	SE with employees	SE without employees	Total	Wage- employed	SE with employees	SE without employees	Total
Wage- employed	3099 (1.37%)	143 (0.06%)	<b>2145</b> <b>(0.95%)</b>	5387 (2.38%)	4538 (1.84%)	191 (0.08%)	<b>2549</b> <b>(1.03%)</b>	7277 (2.95%)
Self-employed (total)	436 (0.19%)	92 (0.04%)	559 (0.25%)	1087 (0.48%)	613 (0.25%)	125 (0.05%)	674 (0.27%)	1411 (0.57%)
Total	3535 (1.56%)	235 (0.10%)	2704 (1.19%)	6474 (2.86%)	5150 (2.09%)	316 (0.13%)	3222 (1.31%)	8688 (3.53%)

Note: Absolute numbers are  $\times 1000$ . Numbers in parentheses are percentages of total labour force. Numbers in bold relate to the most common form of hybrid entrepreneurship: wage-employed in the main job and solo self-employed in the second job. Source: Own calculations based on European Union Labour Force Survey (accessed via Eurostat website: (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>)).

2. I am grateful to Martha O'Hagan-Luff and André van Stel for their help in constructing this table.

Table 4. Hybrid entrepreneurship across EU-countries in 2017

Rank	Country	Hybrid entrepreneurs (× 1000)	Hybrid entrepreneurs (% of labour force)
1	Iceland	6.4	3.21%
2	Poland	374.0	2.17%
3	Sweden	113.7	2.11%
4	Norway	52.6	1.91%
5	Netherlands	168.5	1.86%
6	Austria	77.3	1.71%
7	Finland	46.4	1.71%
8	Belgium	83.0	1.66%
9	Denmark	46.6	1.56%
10	Germany	637.8	1.47%
11	Portugal	64.7	1.24%
12	Lithuania	16.7	1.15%
13	Cyprus	4.5	1.05%
14	United Kingdom	336.3	1.01%
15	Czechia	51.9	0.97%
16	Estonia	6.7	0.96%
17	Slovenia	9.7	0.94%
18	Malta	1.7	0.74%
19	France	208.1	0.70%
20	Ireland	16.1	0.68%
21	Latvia	6.4	0.65%
22	Switzerland	31.7	0.65%
23	Luxembourg	1.6	0.56%
24	Romania	41.7	0.46%
25	Italy	116.6	0.45%
26	Hungary	18.7	0.41%
27	Spain	74.9	0.33%
28	Slovakia	6.7	0.24%
29	Croatia	4.3	0.23%
30	Greece	11.0	0.23%
31	Bulgaria	2.9	0.09%
	EU-28	2548.6	1.03%

Note: The table includes the 28 countries of the EU (anno 2017) plus Iceland, Norway and Switzerland. Source: European Union Labour Force Survey (accessed via Eurostat website: (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>)). The numbers refer to the most common form of hybrid entrepreneurship: wage-employed in the main job and solo self-employed in the second job (corresponding to numbers in bold in Table 3).

Comparing the 31 countries in Table 4 is a very first systematic analysis of the extent of hybrid self-employment in Europe. Just one percent of the labour force can be considered as hybrid self-employment in its most common form (1.36% if all forms are considered, as explained earlier). Remarkable are the differences: Iceland shows a value of 3.2 indicating that Island has a three times

higher ratio than the average for Europe, Poland is following at the next rank which is more than 100 percent above the average. However, related to the current hullabaloo in academic discussions on hybrid self-employment, the statistics should not be seen as an absolute truth but should rather be treated with some relativity.

## **6. Conclusion and Outlook**

While solo self-employment is increasing rapidly in Europe during the last 15 years, hybrid self-employment seems to play a more minor role in most countries in Europe according to Eurostat statistics. However, in combination with discussions about increasing digitalization of the economy and in the context of contemporary discussions about an upcoming gig-economy, one may be well-advised to monitor hybrid self-employment in further detail and with different methods. Self-employment is very often a biographical period and takes the form of being a social process within a life-course (Mayer, 2009; Kohli, 2007).

As the “rules of the game” (Baumol, 1990) are changing, we have to pay attention to the changing character of self-employment. Different countries have different specific institutional settings, making it almost impossible to generalize self-employment. Especially human geography and regional studies are asked to provide further insights how international and regional differences can be explained in relation to a variety of institutional variables. The striking differences between individual countries – and possibly between individual regions – must be analysed and explored analytically in detail. Contextual views are necessary to grasp the diversity in self-employment, therefore an acknowledgment of the historical, temporal, institutional and social context is inalienable (Welter, 2011). The implication is that we have to respect different forms of self-employment when talking abstractly about the category of self-employment in the labour market, as the social, economic and cultural conditions and related biographies are too diverse.

Hybrid self-employed actors are difficult to locate exactly between the boundaries of the employee and the self-employed. Two forms of hybrid self-employed have been classified by Bögenhold and Klinglmaier (2016b): (1) self-employed having an additional dependent employment relationship to maximize their income and vice versa (2) people having a dependent employment relationship who pursue a form of self-employment to ensure an additional income. The data presented in Table 3 of this paper suggest that the second group is considerably greater in numbers than the first group.

Probably one of the most promising tasks in research is the necessity to deliver generalizable theoretical contributions which differ from established ones or are even in conflict with them (Davidsson, 2016). The great heterogeneity among self-employed workers and the very modest amount of “classic” self-

employed persons (in the sense of ambitious job creators) constitute a difficult challenge for research (Davidsson et al., 2010) which does not even consider the phenomenon of hybrid self-employment. Nevertheless, following Folta et al. (2010), future research should attempt to deliver theoretical contributions focused on the motivations and economic performance of hybrid entrepreneurs. As data bases on hybrid entrepreneurs are relatively rare, also at the empirical level there is still a lot to be done (including primary data collection) in this emerging field of research.

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