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## Multiple jobholding and path-dependent employment regimes: Answering the qualification and protection needs of multiple job holders

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**discussion paper**

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**Multiple jobholding and path-dependent  
employment regimes – answering the  
qualification and protection needs  
of multiple job holders**

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## Abstract

The flexibilisation of labour markets is called for by most political and economic and firms as *the* sesame towards economic competitiveness. But do employment systems and social protection regimes provide the workforce with the adequate social incentives – in the form of secured, qualifying and acknowledged transitions between or combinations of occupations, that would at the same time facilitate and legitimize this labour flexibility ?

To answer this question from a very empirical point of view and in a diagnosis form, this study takes a particular form of non-standard employment – multiple jobholding – and explores first, on the basis of the scarce data available in the OECD, the differentiated occupational profiles it is hiding, from post-modern employment forms to archaic and „bad jobs“. It concentrates then, through a single French case-study, on the training and social policy issues at stake in making multiple jobholding a qualifying and secured form of employment. The French case appears as a negative yardstick to measure the inertia of employment systems in departing from the norm of “normal” employment understood as full-time mono-occupational male employment.

## Zusammenfassung

Die Flexibilisierung von Arbeitsmärkten wird von den meisten politischen und ökonomischen Akteuren als ein Allheilmittel zur Steigerung der Wettbewerbsfähigkeit betrachtet. Bieten jedoch die Beschäftigungssysteme und sozialen Sicherungssysteme den Beschäftigten die entsprechenden sozialen Anreize – d.h. abgesicherte, qualifizierende und anerkannte Übergänge zwischen (bzw. Kombinationen von) beruflichen Tätigkeiten - an, die gleichzeitig die Flexibilität des Arbeitsvermögens erleichtern und legitimieren?

Zur empirischen Beantwortung dieser Frage befasst sich diese Studie mit einer spezifischen Form der atypischen Beschäftigung – der Mehrfachbeschäftigung. In einem ersten Schritt werden auf der Basis von OECD-Daten, die verschiedenen beruflichen Profile, die sich hinter diesem Schlagwort verstecken, dargestellt – von sogenannten post-modernen Arbeitsformen bis hin zu archaischen und „bad jobs“. Die Studie konzentriert sich dann in einem zweiten Schritt auf die weiterbildungs- und sozialpolitischen Fragen, die sich bei der Entwicklung von einer qualifizierenden und gesicherten Mehrfachbeschäftigung stellen. Dies wird am Beispiel einer französischen Fallstudie deutlich gemacht. Der französische Fall liefert ein gutes Beispiel für die Trägheit von Beschäftigungssystemen, die den Wandel von „normaler“ Beschäftigung – d.h. von Vollzeitbeschäftigung an einem Arbeitsplatz von Männern – hin zu flexibleren Beschäftigungsformen erschweren.

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## Introduction

The word «pluriactivity» is used for more than twenty years in the French context (Muller et alii 1989 ; Biche et alii 1996 ; Mouriaux & Laurent 1999), to gather under an often loosely defined concept a plurality of atypical employment forms, going from multi-salaried employment (the same job for several employers), to combination of statuses (employed and independent) and/or professions (peasantry and commerce), via polyvalent employment (several professions for several employers). This vagueness corresponds at the same time to a field of research which is still structuring (Capelli et alii 1997 ; Keller & Seifert 1998), while exploring the rapid transformation of “typical” employment forms into so-called “atypical” or “non-standard” forms. But multiple jobholding describes nevertheless an employment phenomenon the complexity of which is at the moment under researched, particularly in a comparative perspective, although scarce statistics are showing that in the European Union, more than five million persons<sup>1</sup> were holding in 1999 more than one job more than a month a year.

A quick historical look back at this form of employment, through the French case, could help us putting this atypical working form in perspective. For a long time indeed, pluriactivity was rather quite typical, especially in rural areas (Mayaud 2000) : on the one hand, “worker-farmers” (“*ouvriers-paysans*” and “*paysans-ouvriers*”) were representative of small landowners, needing a second activity to survive and finding it in industrial factories ; on the other hand, in many regions with handcraft traditions, many farms also included workshops<sup>2</sup>, thus developing an “internalised” and seasonal form of pluriactivity. With the spreading of industrialisation and the mechanisation of agriculture, these forms of employment became an object of despise : the growing occupational group of “engineer-farmers” defined itself against those “archaic” forms of farming (Muller et alii 1989). But pluriactivity gained in the eighties a suddenly renewed political glance : these employment combinations were seen by some French policymakers as a possible way out of unemployment for low qualified people and later in the 1990s as a possible instrument to enable firms to enter more softly the era of flexibility, by “sharing” their employees (Laurent & Mouriaux 1999). Depending on the economic context of the time, the importance and the social acknowledgement of multiple jobholding has been therefore very variable in the last century.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the 1999 Eurostat Labour Survey (EU 15) : 5,36 million employed persons were this year multiple jobholders, out of around 155 millions employed persons (see Table 1 below).

<sup>2</sup> Typical of these “workshops in farms” were those of peasant-blacksmiths, -joiners, or -cutlers, not to forget women’s sewing, lacemaking and assembling activities (Mayaud, 2000 ; Castel, 1995, 233).

Recent analyses focusing on the spreading of new forms of employment (short-term contracts, part-time work, temporary work, etc. ; Capelli et alii 1997; O'Reilly et alii 2000 ; Oschmiansky & Schmid 2000; Kalleberg et alii 2000) and on the blurring frontier between dependent and independent employment (cf. “feigned self-employment”, etc.; Menger et alii 2001), are moreover giving multiple jobholding a renewed analytical position within the larger transformation of “wage societies” (Castel 1995). But multiple jobholding is covering both “post-modern” employment forms (that is chosen, acknowledged and financially comfortable) and rather archaic employment forms (combinations of “bad jobs” under financial constraint), in which labour flexibility has a very different individual meaning.

To explore this intuition, it is worth recalling first the scarce quantitative and qualitative studies already produced on multiple jobholding and then trying to enrich them through a both narrowly focused and comparative lens, so as to identify the differentiated nature of multiple jobholding, the social risks attached to it and then the degree of equity and efficiency provided by national employment systems to cover the specific social risks incurred by multiple jobholders.

Two elements of national employment systems are of particular interest to us : training policies and social protection regulations. Designed to improve the career chances of workers or to enable unemployed persons to come back on the first labour market, training policies seem to be less accessible to atypical workers, diminishing therefore their access to a qualifying flexibility and denying them de facto the access to “lifelong learning”. In the continental model of welfare state (which includes France and Germany), social protection systems were designed to protect the traditional “male bread winner”(Jenson 1991) - working his lifelong full-time in a firm – and his family, against sickness, unemployment and old age, through continuous and cumulative social contributions and retributions attached to a professional status. They are therefore structurally ill suited to offer an adequate protection to atypical workers. Those two elements of national employment systems could be the main institutional hurdles on individual occupational trajectories towards post-modern forms of employment<sup>3</sup>.

In this institutional context, multiple jobholders could benefit from a real “flexicurity” – i.e. be at the same time flexible and protected (Wilthagen 1998), only when these institutions are ready and able to get out this continental dependence path (Pierson 1997) - tailored for full-time immobile male mono-workers, so as to initiate new forms of institutional coordination, to define new social rights and to cover the risks attached to “atypical” employment, and in the end to ease and to secure the transitions between occupations and statuses (Boissonat 1994 ; Supiot 1999; Schmid 2000).

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<sup>3</sup> Here purposefully positively connoted.

Our research design will be of an explorative nature and methodologically twofold, both quantitative and qualitative. Multiple jobholding will be first given a demographic weight in the European Union, through the exploitation of some (somehow unreliable) Eurostat data. Some (more reliable) French and North American data will complement those so as to elaborate our first hypotheses and definitions and to help us to delimit our research field.

The second step of this study consists in an explorative single case-study : a neo-institutionalist analysis of the French landscape of occupational training and social protection policies will be led to examine how the qualification and protection needs of multiple jobholders were and are answered. The adaptation paths adopted by those institutions to guarantee pluriactive workers **fair** social rights and entitlements will be scrutinized.



Pluriactivity in the EU labour force	Germany		France		Denmark		The Netherlands	
Legislators and managers	59.000	2.83%	41.000	2.40%	10.000	5.02%	43.000	4.82%
Professionals	167.000	3.59%	170.000	7.01%	37.000	10.42%	122.000	9.05%
Technicians	187.000	2.61%	119.000	3.00%	35.000	6.86%	80.000	6.08%
Clerks	110.000	0.02%	65.000	2.04%	18.000	5.37%	40.000	4.41%
Services and sale workers	84.000	1.82%	92.000	2.26%	31.000	7.48%	54.000	5.89%
Agriculture and fishery	25.000	0.6%	63.000	6.3%	-	-	-	-
Craft and related trades	135.000	2.09%	44.000	1.43%	18.000	5.98%	17.000	2.15%
Plant and machine operators	63.000	2.34%	34.000	1.41%	11.000	5.47%	17.000	3.44%
Elementary occupations	68.000	2.35%	125.000	6.92%	20.000	6.49%	35.000	6.03%
<b>Total</b>	<b>913.000</b>	<b>2.53%</b>	<b>757.000</b>	<b>3.32%</b>	<b>188.000</b>	<b>6.94%</b>	<b>431.000</b>	<b>5.66%</b>

U.K.		Sweden		Finland		Italy		Spain		Pluriactivity in the EU labour force
134.000	3.32%	19.000	9.5%	8.000	3.46%	18.000	2.64%	26.000	2.31%	Legislators and managers
289.000	6.64%	80.000	12.57%	20.000	4.73%	84.000	3.99%	63.000	3.96%	Professionals
130.000	5.49%	69.000	8.47%	12.000	3.27%	40.000	1.33%	19.000	1.54%	Technicians
200.000	4.47%	31.000	7.29%	5.000	2.48%	22.000	0.81%	14.000	1.05%	Clerks
251.000	6.21%	64.000	8.58%	12.000	8.51%	31.000	0.99%	17.000	0.88%	Services and sales workers
12.000	4.52%	15.000	13.39%	8.000	2.71%	13.000	1.86%	25.000	3.51%	Agriculture / fishery workers
82.000	2.55%	33.000	7.25%	8.000	4.16%	26.000	0.68%	23.000	0.97%	Craft / related trades workers
61.000	2.81%	37.000	8.42%	-	-	14.000	0.72%	17.000	1.16%	Plant and machine operators
123.000	5.94%	18.000	8.53%	8.000	4.46%	24.000	1.40%	29.000	1.45%	Elementary occupations
<b>1 285.000</b>	<b>4.74%</b>	<b>368.000</b>	<b>9.07%</b>	<b>86.000</b>	<b>3.68%</b>	<b>283.000</b>	<b>1.37%</b>	<b>235.000</b>	<b>1.70%</b>	

**Table 1:** Multiple jobholding among the EU labour force in 1999, measured according to the first activity of the person concerned ; based on data from (Eurostat, 2000).

## 1. How many could they be?

A quantitative approach of multiple jobholding in the OECD

### 1.1 An approximation is available for the European Union

As preamble, one can underline the scarcity of data on multiple jobholders<sup>4</sup>. The EU financed statistical institute Eurostat has first introduced this criterion in its 1999 European Labour Force Survey (Eurostat 2000). How unreliable they can be - because of distortions introduced by the national specificity of measuring apparatuses, these first statistics nevertheless show that multiple jobholding concerns more than 5 millions people in the EU. More precisely, around 4 546 000 persons were in 1999 holding two or more jobs in the nine countries considered (see Table 1). A rapid overview according to countries and occupations seems to enable to trace two explorative hypotheses.

First, four groups of countries could be distinguished along geographical lines. In a “lagging pool” are playing southern countries (Spain, Italy and probably Portugal and Greece) : multiple jobholding concerns here no more than 1.5 % of the labour force ; the existence of a variably strong “black economy” – and therefore “black pluriactivity”, could be responsible for an underestimated evaluation. In an “intermediate league” are playing central countries (France, Germany) : between 2.53 % and 3.32 % of the employed persons are holding two jobs or more. Two more groups are composing the “upper league” – Great Britain and the Netherlands (and probably Ireland) on one hand, the Nordic countries (Denmark and Sweden, but without Finland) on the other : in the first group pluriactivity concerns from 4.74 % to 5.66 % of the employed workforce, as in the second, this goes from 6.94 % to 9.07 %.

This rough categorisation is quite similar to those of the “classical” categorisations of European social protection systems (Flora & Heidenheimer 1981 ; Esping-Andersen 1990, 1996 ; Mire 1995, 1996, 1999), which distinguish between a southern clientelist model, a continental statist model, a residual model, and an egalitarian universalistic model. Multiple jobholding seems therefore to be more widespread in the countries

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<sup>4</sup> Let us review rapidly here the vocabulary available in some EU languages to describe multiple jobholding: when the German language seems relatively poor (Nebentätigkeiten, Mehrfachbeschäftigung), the English language seems richer (multiple employment, dual employment, alternative work arrangements – of the overqualified / contingent work arrangements – for the unqualified), as the French language invents new words (polyvalence, multisalariat, pluriactivité, temps partagé, etc.). The Swedish language seems to have a single and simple word for it - mångsyssleri.

corresponding to the egalitarian universalistic model, where social protection is given according to a resident status and not linked to a professional status : this keyfact could facilitate transitions and combinations between working activities. This unrefined hypothesis should be further explored through a comparative analysis of training policies and of legal design of unemployment / old age / sickness risk covering, but one can state that the access to multiple jobholding is greatly eased in an employment system where social entitlements, rights and services are “universal”, that is attributed according to residence, whereas social rights attributed according to professional statuses could strongly hinder this type of occupational mobility, as social contributions and services are fragmented along occupational category lines (as in France and Germany, as we will see below).

Second hypothesis : multiple jobholding seems to concentrate at the two ends of the “social-professional ladder”<sup>5</sup>. On the one hand, the category of “professionals” seems to be the most concerned (an average of 6.88 % of professionals, among the 9 countries surveyed ; and 12.57% of them in Sweden). This case of pluriactivity among high qualified workers is socially acknowledged and valued : it includes for instance lawyers and other experts working in a firm, but allowed by their employer to offer their services to other firms as independent worker (it is also the case of doctors in a way). On the other hand, pluriactivity could also be spreading in some economic sectors employing a majority of low qualified workers (in services and industry). To confirm (or not) this hypothesis more statistical material must be analysed, but one can notice that the extension of part-time employment in these sectors (Fagan et alii 1999) could lead to a parallel increase in multiple jobholding : multiple jobholding could simply be for poor workers’ households the only way out of pauperism ; in other words, multiple jobholding could be for low qualified workers the other face of constrained short part-time employment (Bothfeld 1997). This second group could be of greater interest to us : as the first group is probably in a financial state that allows its members to “buy at any price” a social insurance, the members of the second group would be strongly prejudiced by institutions that are not fitted to protect efficiently people having such atypical employment profiles.

## 1.2 Begining exploring the French case

To go beyond these two raw hypotheses and to approach pluriactivity from a micro-perspective, recent French data are available<sup>6</sup>. These (first) reliable data, established for the French government in 1995 and 1999, were gathered and exploited with

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<sup>5</sup> The case of agriculture could be in this view specific (see below the analysis of the French case) of an economic sector in decline but with a strong culture of independence (whose motto is : “être maître chez soi”).

<sup>6</sup> The German Federal Department of Labour ordered a study to the Institut für Arbeit und Technik (Gelsenkirchen) in 2001 on “Nebentätigkeiten” ; the first results should be published in the summer of 2002.

immense difficulties. The national institute in charge of the population census (INSEE) and of other statistical surveys on the labour force does not take into account the possible diversity of professional activities, concentrating on the “main professional activity”, the choice of which is left to the “surveyed” person (who can privilege the most status-enhancing activity against the most lucrative). This statistical lacuna only reflects the everlasting strength of the representations attached to “normal” employment forms in industrialised societies. As alternative research strategy, it was decided to exploit on one hand individual data on income taxation (not without confidentiality problems...) - which have for an advantage to differentiate between the nature of earnings (wages / commercial and industrial benefits / agricultural benefits / other non commercial benefits)<sup>7</sup> and questionnaires to a representative sample of the population on the other hand.

*Multiple jobholding among independent workers: “young male transitional entrepreneurs” at the fore*

This first survey (Biche et alii 1996), based on 1990 data, reveals that 25.3 % of *independent workers* declared a second professional activity : that is 29.1 % of farmers (298,000 persons)<sup>8</sup>, 22.7 % of craft and trade workers (311,000) and 39 % of professionals (221,000), among which 89.6 % were **male** entrepreneurs. It first confirms the existence of a high qualified pluriactivity. This survey shows that a vast majority of these pluriactive workers combined a **salaried activity with an independent one** (86.1 %) – the rest combining two or more independent ones.

The age criterion shows moreover that in this sample, 34 % of the people under 35 were pluriactive and that the **youngest** among those, were the ones combining wages and an independent activity. This two figures could give flesh to a second micro-hypothesis – already confirmed by some regional data (Barnier et alii 1998) : there could be a transitional form of pluriactivity, where an employee uses his salaried job as a security, while preparing to “jump” into an independent activity.

*Data on French waged worker : elderly women working part-time in the back ?*

A second French survey, based on 1996 data on waged workers of the private sector<sup>9</sup>, shows that 3 % (400,000) of them were multiple job-holders (Roux et alii

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<sup>7</sup> One drawback remains : wages are here cumulated ; it does not allow to identify a plurality of wages and employers (but this lacuna was later overcome : see below). NB : we are therefore focusing here first on a limited definition of pluriactivity, based on a combination of independent activities or of an independent activity with a subordinated one.

<sup>8</sup> This percentage has fallen in the last ten years to approximately 20 % (Laurent & Mouriaux, 1999), and the Eurostat data seem in this case most unlikely.

<sup>9</sup> These data were based on yearly declarations made by employers to social protection institutions (DADS, “Déclaration Annuelle de Données Sociales”), which mention for each employee the “entrance” day in and the “exit” day out of the firm and the wages received (on a year and hour basis).

1999). Contrary to independent workers, multiple jobholding among waged workers concerns more **women** (3.8 %) as men (2.5%). Moreover, it concerns more **part-time and intermittent workers** (respectively 8.5% and 14%) as full time workers (1.9%). As the probability to be pluriactive diminish with age for full-time workers (2.9% under 25 / 1.5% above 55), the trend is opposite for part-time workers (6.7% under 25 / 9% between 25 and 55). Multiple jobholders are then rather high qualified young men working full-time but whose second activity is unstable (cases of transitional pluriactivity ?) or elderly women working part-time and whose second activity is rather stable.

If working-time patterns is the first determinant factor of multiple jobholding, sector of activity is the second one : the three sectors with the highest proportion of pluriactive waged workers are real-estate business (5.8%), **services to persons** (homework excluded, 5.3%) and **services to businesses** (4.9%). A clear line could be drawn between services to persons and services to businesses, along the qualification level of the workers : in the first sector the most qualified workers could be more frequently multiple jobholders, as in the second sector multiple jobholding could concern low qualified workers.

While our hypotheses can only be slightly confirmed by the French case - which is deprived of longitudinal data for historical and institutional reasons, extensive North-american data could be of a great help.

### 1.3 A transatlantic counterpoint: moonlighting in Canada and USA

Statistics from the US Current Population Survey (Stinson 1997) and from the Canadian Labour Force Survey (Sussman 1998) seem to confirm some of the EU data. A very high majority of multiple jobholders are also wage earners in their second job, with 35% of them in the services industry and 20% in retail trade. These longitudinal datas, collected over 20 years, show that beyond a steadily but unspectacular increase of the proportion of multiple jobholders over the two decades (from 2 to 5% of the employed in Canada ; from 5.2 to 6.2 %in the US)<sup>10</sup>, the social composition of this category as undergone important changes.

#### *A growing transitional multiple jobholding?*

The proportion of multiple jobholders being self-employed in their second occupation doubled over twenty years in Canada, as the proportion of those being self-employed in the first occupation remained the same, confirming probably a trend toward transitional multiple jobholding as bridge between waged and self-employment. They were representing 11% of all Canadian moonlighters in 1995 (see below).

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<sup>10</sup> All the statistics quoted here stem from the two above mentioned articles.

### *Voluntary versus constrained moonlighting: „fifty-fifty“*

Some Canadian data could moreover help us to quantify roughly voluntary and constrained multiple jobholding : the 1995 Survey of Work Arrangements indicates that if the half of moonlighters cited financial reasons for cumulating occupations (meet regular household expenses for a *quarter* of them > pay off debts > save for the future > other economic reason > buy something special) another half quoted non-financial ones, that are more related to self-accomplishment and vocational experience (enjoy the work in the second job > build up a business for 11% of them > other work-related reason > gain experience).

### *A growing and worrying gender divide among multiple jobholders:*

In both countries, the rate of multiple jobholding among women increased sharply : in the USA, between 1970 and 1996, it rose from 2.1 % to 6.2 %, as the rate for men, after a decrease from 7% to 5.8% around 1975 stabilized around 6.2 % at the beginning of the 1990s ; in Canada, a turning point was reached in 1988, as moonlighting became prevalent among women (from 4.5 % in 1988 to 6 % in 1997, as the rate for men remained almost stable around 4.5%). Comparison with the evolution of non-standard employment and of women employment on the same period shows, at least in the Canadian case, that „the rise and spread of non-standard employment relationship provides a growing and persistently gendered polarization between standard workers and non-standard workers and among non-standard workers themselves“ (Fudge & Vosko, 2001, 273). As the rate of moonlighters was twice as high for part-time workers (10%) as that of full-time workers (5%) in Canada in 1997, in the USA 12.7% of the US male multiple jobholders were working part-time on their primary and secondary job(s) as the same was true for 32.5% of the moonlighting women – that is far more than twice.

### *Moonlighting insecures the poorest : a surprise ?*

If the highest proportion of multiple jobholders is to be found among the most qualified (in 1995, respectively 4.6 % of US moonlighters achieved a secondary education or less, while 9.1% held a bachelor degree and 9.4 a PhD ; Amirault 1997), inequity seems not surprisingly to strike the first : multiple jobholders are less likely to have a pension plan, a health plan or a dental plan in the US and this difference can be explained by the higher proportion of part-time workers among moonlighters and in this case a second job is becoming necessary to purchase some of these services privately.

Gathering those heterogeneous statistical sources enables us in the end to disentangle and sketch the heterogeneous occupational profiles hidden behind the catchwords of multiple jobholding, pluriactivity or moonlighting.

## 1.4 Profiling multiple jobholders : four heterogeneous models

This figures could drive us to define at least three forms of pluriactivity :

- A **stable** and **voluntary** pluriactivity would concern mostly professionals, that is very high qualified and male workers, accumulating work experiences and benefits and working without time limits (i.e. workaholics).
- A **transitional** pluriactivity, combining dependent and independent work, where the first activity secures the progressive leap in the second one ; it can be characterised as a *voluntary* multiple jobholding, concerning mostly qualified young men.
- Beyond these socially two valued and acknowledged forms of multiple jobholding, is appearing a **constrained pluriactivity**, concerning above all part-time workers (and especially elderly women), with low qualifications, whose main activity take place in the sector of services to persons (and whose annex activity may be in the industrial sector), who need two activities (or more) to reach a decent standard of living.
- A fourth profile could be drawn as a **normative** ideal-type to be reached through institutional reforms of social and employment policies that would ease the access to pluriactivity of **quality** for persons of all qualification levels, who would be able to choose and design a combination of occupations that suits their personal aspirations.

Those four explorative profiles of multiple jobholders are recapitulated in the table below (Box 1).

<p><b>PROFILE 1 - the “bulimic” profile :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Voluntary and stable pluriactivity</li><li>- Prototype: elderly men with high qualifications and a solid work experience, working a “double full-time” ; for instance : experts, consultants, lawyers, doctors, etc.</li></ul> <p><b>PROFILE 2 - the “cautious entrepreneur” profile:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Voluntary and <i>transitional</i> pluriactivity</li><li>- Relatively high qualified young men, working full time and moving slowly towards independence.</li></ul> <p><b>PROFILE 3 - the “proletarian survivor” profile :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Constrained (stable) pluriactivity</li><li>- Part-time workers with relatively low qualifications, for instance elderly women in service sectors</li></ul> <p><b>PROFILE 4 - the futuristic profile :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Voluntary and stable (but progressively established) pluriactivity</li><li>- Integrated combinations of occupations (sometime on a seasonal basis), for instance: new tourist occupations and services (ex.: “biquelification” as open air sport trainer and cultural guide)</li></ul>
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**Box 1:** Approximation of individual profiles of pluriactivity, according to qualification levels, working-time patterns, age and sex.

## 1.5 Choosing a definition of multiple jobholding: uncovering an umbrella concept

Even limited to the French context, the definitions of “pluriactivity” are numerous. A basic one defines it as “the simultaneous or successive exercise of a several different professional activities in a year time” (Cornu 1987). As we must here limit our research object, we have to choose and define more precise criterions, that could suit our (future) comparative purpose. Of interest to us are the problems created by a combination of heterogeneous occupational statutes : in France, social security regimes are “cut” along occupational frontiers (insurance schemes for employees of the private sector / of the public sector / for farmers / for professionals / etc.) which render the coordination of those regimes vital for an equitable covering of individual training and protection needs of multiple jobholders. Pluriactivity can therefore be defined here as the combination of several occupational activities, either under several statutes or for several employers, in one or in different economic sectors, successively or simultaneously in a year time (See table 2 below). We are well aware that the above defined forms of multiple jobholding are “cut” along the institutional design of the French welfare system, and could therefore be later amended to suit a comparative context.

But it will help us to structure our empirical case study, namely the case of rural multiple jobholders in France, whose training and protection needs were submitted to a public debate in the last twenty years, providing us with a rich empirical material issued from numerous experimental policies.

**Table 2:** Six types of pluriactivity; adapted from (Laurent & Mouriaux 1999).

STATUTE(S) <b>PLURIACTIVITY</b> OCCUPATION(S)	Combination of several Independent statutes	<b>Combination of salaried and independent activities</b>	<b>Combination of several salaried activities</b>
<b>In one occupational field</b>	Several statuses as independent worker in one sector of activity (I)  <u>Ex.</u> : farmer and head of a firm renting agr. machines	Dependent and independent statuses in one occupation (III)  <u>Ex.</u> : doctor in a public hospital and in a private surgery	One waged occupation for several employers (V)  <u>Ex.</u> : “Putzfrau”
<b>In different occupational fields</b>	Several independent statuses for different activities (II)  <u>Ex.</u> : a farmer selling his products in a shop	Several statuses for several activities (IV)  <u>Ex.</u> : worker in a firm and farmer	Several waged activities for several employers (VI)  <u>Ex.</u> : seasonal workers



## **2 Learning from the French “rural entrepreneurs” : a qualitative case study approach**

The French case is for us of particular interest : “pluriactivity” is there part of a public debate going on for more than twenty years – a time span that enabled the diffusion of this policy concept in many policy circles, at the European, national and regional levels. This has for an empirical advantage to provide us with reports, studies and statistics (as seen above) but also with relatively stable advocacy coalitions (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith 1993) working for the social and legal acknowledgement of rural multiple jobholding.

The French debate has also for an advantage to hover somehow around the farming sector, paradoxically characterised on one side by its despise for pluriactivity - associated to “archaic survival of the past”, but on other side by many spaces created for policy experimentation and local policy reforms towards more post-modern forms of multiple jobholding – that is voluntary and integrated occupational compounds.

Moreover, the agricultural sector seems to question the profiles of multiple jobholders sketched above : as massive unemployment was striking France in the 1980-90’s, a political accent was put on access to pluriactivity for long-term unemployed and low qualified people (Mouriaux, 2000) and a political mobilisation took place, advocating a reformed institutional framework that would allow all citizens to become (voluntarily) pluriactive - whatever their qualification level can be ; this campaign was supported both by the European Commission (DGV) and the national Ministry of agriculture.

Having justified the choice of France as starting case study, we will have a look back in the recent history of agricultural and rural development policies to assess the social and political acknowledgement of the multiple jobholding issue, before analysing the first institutional answers to the political debate on “rural pluriactivity” : we will first explore the institutional answers given by training policies to their qualification needs, considered as a crucial element in the social recognition of new occupations and new professional identities ; we will then concentrate on the social protection of multiple jobholders against old-age, unemployment and sickness risks - in an historical context where all welfare institutions were designed for typical full-time employed (male) workers.

### **2.1 The revolution of French agriculture and the changing faces of rural pluriactivity**

A condensed chronological analysis will enable us to situate the debate on rural pluriactivity among several more general political debates - on agricultural reforms,

economic development and the metamorphoses of employment. First limited to the circles of rural activists, multiple jobholding was first seen as an economic instrument to save some parts of the country from decay. After having been instrumentalised in the “struggle against unemployment”, pluriactivity gained recently a renewed legitimacy as flexible employment form suited to the “informational economic era”.

### 2.1.1 From the maintenance to the modernisation referential: a turning point in the French agricultural policy

Before 1940, the French agricultural policy was characterised by a “maintenance referential” – that is a complex of norms and representations defining the social function of agriculture as “to remain what it was” (Muller 1989, 1994) : the political will was indeed to contain the “rural world”, so as to stabilise the young Republic ; this world had to be “protected” through strong tariff barriers and its modernisation had to be avoided (so as to slow down the rural exodus and the growth of the urban “dangerous classes”) – the regime relying for the economic development of the nation on the expansion of a banking bourgeoisie, which was relying mainly on rural savings. These societal consensus and equilibrium collapsed after the 1940 defeat and at the Liberation a “modernisation referential” replaced the “maintenance referential” : agriculture became for the government an economic sector (among others), which had to catch up for its dramatic backwardness. In the larger movement of economic planification, agriculture was assigned productivity objectives to reach - through mechanisation mainly ; to achieve this modernisation, “farmers” had to become trained technicians. If in pre-war times, rural pluriactivity was typical for small landowners (as told in the introduction of this paper), this post-war “modernisation spirit” gave it a durable image of a backward and inferior form of employment in agriculture as big farms were expanding.

The model of industrial agriculture (and of the farmer as engineer) gained rapidly an hegemonic status as it was progressively embedded into a corporatist form of policymaking, where all aspects of the farmers’ life (and their relatives’) was to be regulated through sectoral institutions controlled by a “majoritarian” agricultural union (the “FNSEA”<sup>11</sup>) - from social protection organisations, to vocational schools and further training organisations, via banks and insurance companies (Servolin 1989). But this model was also slowly recognised as responsible for an acceleration of the “rural exodus” and for spelling the end of more traditional forms of agriculture (in mountains especially ; Gerbaux 1994), and it instigated a contention against it.

### 2.1.2 The advocacy coalition for rural development: an alternative among others

Alternative models were progressively elaborated to confront with the above described model of industrial agriculture : the latter was accused of transforming

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<sup>11</sup> For “Fédération nationale des syndicats d’exploitants agricoles” – or national federation of farmers’ unions.

farmers into strongly specialised producers, exploiting and polluting natural resources without caution and moreover deprived of any mediation power between their products and their clients or consumers - since they are acting exclusively through intermediaries on international markets, via the price policies of the European Community (Muller 1987).

Several alternative models emerged, which themselves divided into many “schools and churches”. Biological agriculture was one of those alternative models (Fouilleux 1999, 133). Another model was advocating “rural development” – it is the model which will be analysed here. Initiated by some non-profit organisations of the popular education movement (Chosson 1990), the aim was to enable the people to remain on or to go back to the land – in opposition to the trend of rural exodus. Some of them launched at the end of the seventies a political call for a “service-oriented agriculture” (Muller 1991), concentrating on the quality and the regional identity of products (as opposed to intensive mass production) and promoting a prompt reaction to the demands of local clients through selling networks. In this rural model, peasants are becoming “rural entrepreneurs” : a strong commercial function is not only complementing the production function, but rather regulating and orientating it, through cautious and constant analyses of the evolution of local markets. This model advocated and advocates in short a “diversified agriculture”, providing rural areas with new social functions – namely residential, tourist and environmental functions. Rural pluriactivity or polyvalence is advocated as a form of employment that suits a “multifunctional” agriculture, but which contains moreover a strong potential of job creation<sup>12</sup>, as the rural entrepreneur control the whole production chain, from seed selection to marketing and selling of the products, via their transformation.

### 2.1.3 Pluriactivity as an instrument against unemployment: an ambiguous debate

The debate on pluriactivity remained for a long time quite marginal, as it limited itself to those rural circles, but two moments in the recent history of French social and agricultural policies gave it a renewed political glance.

In front of the massive unemployment that struck France at the beginning of the 1980's, the socialist government newly arrived in power launched a search for “new occupations” that could absorb young (and long term) unemployment, while answering unsatisfied “social needs” (Eme 1997). In the framework of this governmental programme called “New Qualifications”, the advocacy coalition for rural pluriactivity gained new financial and political supports : it codified rural entrepreneurship as a new profession and established a specific and stately recognized diploma. Pluriactivity gained a renewed political legitimacy as labour policy instrument in the struggle against unemployment and was presented as a way

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<sup>12</sup> Some practical examples concerning agricultural pluriactivity show, that with the same ground surface, a diversified farm can generate 4 full-time jobs – against one for a classical mechanised industrial farm (Muller et alii, 1989).

for low qualified unemployed persons to create their own employment. It nevertheless remains unclear if this complex and polyvalent form of multiple jobholding was to be reached easily by low qualified persons<sup>13</sup> and in the following years, the accent put on the struggle against unemployment became lighter and more attention was paid to the dimension of individual life choice that offers self-employment.

#### 2.1.4 Advent of a multifunctional agriculture: still too early?

At the same time, the growing anomalies engendered by the industrial model of agriculture (“rivers of milk and mountains of butter”, polluted ground waters, among others) and the symmetrical pressure from the European Commission to reform the common agricultural policy (CAP; Fouilleux 1999) - that sustained for thirty years this industrial model overall Europe, gave a stronger voice to the advocates of a diversified and service orientated agriculture. As a result of supranational and national pressures, the French government adopted in 1999 an important “agricultural orientation law” (“Loi d’orientation agricole” or LOA) that acknowledged the concept of “multifunctional agriculture” and gave pluriactivity a larger landscape where to reaffirm its legitimacy as a form of employment with a strong potential of job creation, especially in the sector of services to persons, to firms and to the community. In this legal text, the development of pluriactivity is wished and seen as a means not only to preserve but also to renew the rural social fabric (“*tissu rural*”) : the recent reverse of the rural exodus into an “urban exodus”(Font 2000), brought in the country new economical needs to create or satisfy, namely those of the “neo-rural” inhabitants, who got used to the service society in their “former life” and are therefore potential clients for more rural services. But this large political acknowledgement of rural pluriactivity through national and European law does not mean that the access to multiple jobholding was (institutionnally) eased (Laurent & Mouriaux 1999) – the “old” hegemonic unions and policy regimes are resisting, but that the advocates of rural pluriactivity were given a more legitimate voice to push their policy agenda further – at least in the limited sector of agriculture.

#### 2.1.5 Is pluriactivity about to loose its rural specificity?

Most interesting to us are the last developments in the French debate around multiple jobholding, which gained an enlarged scope as it became entangled with a larger debate on the spreading of non-standard employment forms. Among the arguments in favour of pluriactivity, the economic survival of the country lost some weight in front of the support of new forms of employment enabling SMEs to enter more rapidly and more easily the flexibility era, by “sharing” workers or technical

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<sup>13</sup> Even if the training sessions organized for rural multiple jobholders were regularly evaluated along the years, this point was often left aside, but it seems – not astonishingly - that the persons entering the training session with the highest qualification level are the most likely to create in the end their own activity.

experts with other firms and therefore hiring workers on a part-time basis. A new supporting element came from the second biggest cross-sectoral trade union, which led in the last three years a strong lobbying action in a favour of seasonal workers, asking the government to adapt the existing institutions to their qualification and social protection needs (Le Pors Report in 2000). This new dimension given to the debate has a drawback too: as employer pools were progressively considered as “the” institutional solution for multi-salaried workers (see below), the debate on pluriactivity was suddenly reduced to an “universal solution”, allowing the governmental authorities to escape a larger debate touching the reorganisation of social protection institutions and founding principles<sup>14</sup>.

The anchorage of the debate on (rural) multiple jobholding in the larger world of atypical work has finally for an advantage to shed a light on policy issues which remained long hidden under its late rural specificity : beyond the multiple forms of employment that covers the catchword “pluriactivity”, three issues are coming to the front, which concern all atypical workers :

- First, this renewed debate helps underlining the dimension of the individual choice - or its exact reverse, the organisational constraint - leading to multiple jobholding. It draws a decisive line between *voluntary* and *constrained* multiple jobholding, that is between a chosen overwork for a few overqualified workers and a threat of underemployment for many underqualified workers – such as seasonal workers for instance.
- Second, it highlights the fundamental inadequacy of the French social protection institutions to deal with such occupational profiles : structured along sectoral and occupational lines, they *stigmatize* (“you don’t pass in any case foreseen by the labour code”) and *penalize* multiple jobholders (with disproportional welfare contributions and / or underproportional welfare services), as we will see below.
- Third, it stresses the relative inadaptation of a training system built to satisfy the qualification needs of typical workers and which denies multiple jobholders the right to enter the “life long learning” era.

The following parts of this paper will concentrate on the last two points, exploring with the lenses of policy analysis the difficult adaptation of labour market and welfare institutions to a “third age for work and welfare links” (to quote Salais 2001) where the numerous transitions between occupational activities in a lifetime would be flexible and secured.

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<sup>14</sup> But the larger debate came back through the window, as a ruling was pronounced to condemn another form of collective organisation chosen by multiple jobholders to cover their training and protection needs and tolerated until then by the political authorities – namely the so-called “sociétés de portage” (Le Monde, 04.03.2001) ; see below.

## 2.2 Answering the qualification needs of multiple jobholders: new grounds for routinized training organisations

As makeshift project consisting in “putting together bits of employment” to earn a better living or in “elaborating an employment compound” to satisfy an individual life choices, pluriactivity is not without danger for the health or the finances of those who undertake it : getting information on the fiscal and social feasibility of multiple jobholding is a necessary prerequisite, but it should be (ideally) combined with capacity-building in the management of complex organisation - a key-competence to make multiple jobholding economically and humanly sustainable (Muller et alii 1989).

As an advocacy coalition for rural pluriactivity underlined it for fifteen years, the combination of several occupational activities requires a capacity to manage complex systems – understood as non routinised and self-adjustable systems of work. The acquisition of this competence is admittedly independent from the previously attained qualification level but it has nevertheless to be trained, so as to diminish the (social, personal or financial) failure rate of such occupational undertakings.

The French case is of particular interest since specific training measures and qualifications were already in the early 1980s at the top of the activist agenda for rural development. The priority given to the qualification and training needs of multiple jobholders was also thought as a way to provide them with a specific occupational identity and culture - that would enable them in turn to get out their social marginality and transform them into militants for their own cause, as any other recognized occupational group.

The achievements of this agenda for the adaptation of training policies will be analysed here, in an effort to identify some dynamics for policy reform among several local experiences considered as “exemplary”<sup>15</sup>. We chose to differentiate these training measures along a time dimension – that is between the training policies designed for people entering a transitional phase of multiple jobholding and for those stepping into a stable pluriactivity.

### 2.2.1 Organising transitional pluriactivity: on the social and technical progressiveness of business creation

Along the 1980s and the early 1990s, training for business starters was one instrument in the policy toolbox of many OECD national and regional authorities in the struggle against unemployment (Meager, 1995). If the effectiveness of this

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<sup>15</sup> This part of the paper is based on semi structured interviews led in April 2001 with members of French local training organisations, representatives of the national agriculture and labour departments, MPs and researchers. The local training organisations visited and the pluriactivity experts interviewed were previously identified with the help of a leading member of a national network for rural development.

employment policy measures were questioned, those played an important role in refining the training methods used until then : helping men and women of very diverse qualification levels to set up a business did not fit into the usual training pedagogy ; it led trainers to develop new methods concentrating on the maturation of a business idea and the construction of a business project. The crucial elements of these training methods, which were integrated and became central in training sessions for transitional jobholders, are twofold :

- The concept of “social and economic **progressiveness**” is at the core of this training *instrumentarium* : persons holding a waged occupation while preparing to spring in the world of independent work are considered to go through a far more secured transition. This transitional multiple jobholding offers moreover the opportunity to study in greater detail the economic feasibility of the business project and to negotiate explicitly its consequences on family life (especially for women entrepreneurs). This progressiveness principle implies a training infrastructure for advice and counselling that lasts longer than the formal training period and covers the whole period of occupational transition (4-5 years instead of a few months or a year) : as such costs are most of the time not foreseen in national or regional training policies, EU monies were often used to complement subsidies provided for a limited and inflexible number of class- and on-the-job training hours.
- Complementing this progressive approach of business creation, these training methods are also focusing on the daily organisation of work : the identification of flexible and rigid hours<sup>16</sup> in the working week helps to combine harmoniously the two activities (Higfill et alii 1995); learning to negotiate with the employer the permission to use some working time for personal officialdom is also crucial<sup>17</sup> as cost-saving device. Capacity-building in **strategic management**<sup>18</sup> – at an individual level, is therefore the second keyword : it entails the capacity to negotiate and adapt easily to changing conditions in the working environment, while limiting efforts and mastering risks ; this competence entails therefore the capacity to “see oneself in action”, that is to analyse permanently one’s task in relation to a collective and changing environment.

This type of training is time and energy expensive for local training organisations (as already seen above) since it relies often heavily on local networks - tutoring networks to find easily “partner firms” able to provide on-the-job training, in a classical work-based learning process ; administrative networks (with offices of social protection, banks, etc.) to get relevant technical informations and “tricks” on starting businesses; networks with local elected politicians, since the commitment of local and regional

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<sup>16</sup> Banks and administrations are reachable per phone during a limited daily time-span – those are rigid hours and cannot be moved on a timetable ; activities such as answering post or making photocopies belong mostly to the flexible hours, which can be easily moved on a timetable.

<sup>17</sup> That is being allowed to use for oneself a part of the rigid hours.

<sup>18</sup> The French language also defines this key-skill as “polyvalence”.

governments is becoming more crucial as training policies are decentralising (Richard & Méhaut 1997; Richard & Tessier 2000).

While temporary multiple jobholding can secure an occupational transition, many institutional disincentives still discourage such a work pattern : one of many hurdles lies in the absence of status for seasonal or part-time business starters ; many subsidies are moreover conditionally given - to training leavers or to unemployed persons for instance<sup>19</sup>. The creation of a status of the micro-firm or one-person firm was recently discussed in Parliament and it would somehow ease the situation, reducing the cost of getting registered or protected against usual risks (see below). But the adaptation dynamics of training organisations appears to be the most crucial point in answering these very specific training needs (see § 223), since they are key intermediaries enabling a matching of quality between the demand and the supply sides of local labour markets (Rouault 2001).

### 2.2.2 Building an economic project for a stable pluriactivity: training policies of a new type?

Despite their scarcity, training courses aimed at securing stable forms of pluriactivity are offered mainly in the agricultural, tourist and sport sectors and are based on a common idea: some occupations do not produce sufficient earnings in so-called “deprived” regions; combining several occupations is thus the only alternative to stay and live in the country. Such training courses were launched in the early 1980s in mountain regions and were built on an agricultural basis, inspired in this by the Austrian model of “Bed & Breakfast at the farm” (Gerbaux 1994). A diversification of the training offer for potential multiple jobholders occurred as severe qualification needs were identified in some occupational groups (for instance : high unemployment among graduated sport teachers) or in some regions (with a strong tradition of seasonal work for instance).

As forerunner stands an experimental training session cofinanced by the European Social Fund which gave birth around 1986 to the profession of “rural entrepreneur”: it was thought and planned as an attempt by some non-governmental training organisations to institutionalize a new vocation, not defined by a specific occupation but rather characterized by the elaboration of an economically sustainable and more profitable combination of farm, craft, commercial and tourist activities. Almost all the following curricula oriented towards complex rural activities or so-called “biquifying” curricula used this model as pedagogic pattern.

- Those training courses are first characterized by their (non surprising) multidisciplinary : while administration and accounting are the central training modules, they usually combine with more specific technical modules chosen

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<sup>19</sup> The last case brings training organisations to play with the law : in a couple, Monsieur can take part in the training course, while benefiting from Madame’s entitlements to social and training services attached to *her* unemployed status.



by the trainee according to his or her project of pluriactivity<sup>20</sup>. This trend towards **modularization** of training (Kloas 1997) enables a strong individualization of training trajectories but has in France a strong drawback : since much social value is attached to diploma acknowledging a precise qualification level (Möbus & Verdier, 1998), such training are not considered enabling the “social promotion” of trainees and are consequently not much institutionnally favoured.

- The notion of economic and social **progressiveness** is also at the core of a vocational project of stable pluriactivity (see above) - as the notion of **strategic self- management** (see above). But the latter notion is here understood in an extended form. Beyond the daily capacity to organize a complex economic activity (to avoid a rapid burn-out effect), training sessions are designed to support capacity-building in long-term strategic management : trainees are taught to master the instruments for a timely anticipation of market evolutions, which should help them to modify and recompose again in the long-run the complex of economic activities they built up.

To sum it up, such training courses are rather strategic than technical oriented : they are based on the implicit assumption of capacity-building in self-management of one’s occupational competences and qualifications, implementing on an experimental basis the **life-long learning philosophy** (Tuijnman & Schömann 1996). Once more, such complex and individualized training sessions require a solid infrastructure of multidisciplinary trainers as well as a plurality of local networks (see above) which are cost-intensive. While they are still of an experimental nature<sup>21</sup>, one can wonder if this type of complex local training policies are not defining the new horizon of the educational sector, where the economic survival of training organisations gets along with a continuous analysis of developping local or regional qualification needs so as to elaborate in time “prêt-à-porter” training programmes.

### 2.2.3 Training organisations in overhaul : adapting to rapidly changing qualification needs and training markets

Paralell to the decentralization of training policies (Richard & Tessier 2000 ; Casella & Freyssinet 1999), rapidly changing training needs of individuals and firms are a central challenge training organisations have been facing in the last years : being used to implement training policies decided at the national level, most of them are involved for a few years in an overhauling learning process for their economic survival, implying a diversification of financial resources (at the EU / national /

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<sup>20</sup> Examples of modular combinations : farming techniques (berries / donkeys/ horticulture / etc.) and / or sport instructor (trekking / ski / etc.) and / or cultural coordinator (environment / architectural heritage / art and craft traditions / etc.) and / or moutain first-aid worker and / or “landscape worker” and / or etc.....

<sup>21</sup> While for some training organisations, the experiment has been going on for more than a decade, the agricultural sector is once more the exception : the early modularization of farming training institutionnalized farm based pluriactivity.

regional / local levels) and a restructuration of their training offer in a regional and local environment (Rouault 2000).

Moreover, training organisations have to shoulder new functions in the regional economic space, notably as “mediator” (Muller, 1994) between the actors of the local labour markets, gathering them in policy networks to identify and solve in time qualification needs and qualification mismatches. New occupations are thus emerging in the education sector (for both initial and continuing training fields), among which are to be found classical profiles (such as public relation officers, human resources managers, accountants, etc.) but also new profiles, such as those of “educational engineer” and “local developer” (Lavignotte-Guérin 1999), formalizing the mediation function between the actors of training policies, regional development and employment policies.

If reforming training organisations and curricula is an important part of the social project of making multiple jobholding viable and acknowledged as new form of employment, reform of the social protection system is another crucial aspect on the way towards flexicured labour markets.

### 2.3 The social protection offered to multiple jobholders in France: a strong taste of inequity

The French system of social protection is first characterised by its extreme fragmentation : built by fits and starts, under the pressure of social protests and to answer the claims of specific occupational categories, it is structured along occupational lines (regime for the employees of the private sector / civil servants’ regime / craft and trade regime / farmers’ regime / etc.), which resisted the strong political will to “harmonise” them into a more unified system as the larger national project of modernisation was launched in the immediate post-war period (Palier, 1999). This historical context has for multiple jobholders a simple but complex consequence : when their combination of activities gets across these occupational lines, on the one hand they have to register in and contribute to several regimes ; on the other hand, the services and benefits they get can be uneven because of “insufficient contributions” – in comparison with those of full-time mono-active persons (whose entitlements are the reference point). In other words, for many French multiple jobholders, this fragmented and largely uncoordinated system of social protection can imply disproportionately high costs for disproportionately low benefits. But let us describe more precisely the legal and institutional constraints opposed to an “equitable” protection of multiple jobholders and some of the (precarious) solutions that were experimented in the last decade, both at the national and local levels.

### 2.3.1 A critical approach of the social entitlements of multiple job-holders<sup>22</sup>

To enter the legal landscape of the French social protection system with a focus on pluriactivity implies to confront oneself with a few general principles and a mass of heterogeneous exceptions - or “coordination schemes”, designed for multiple jobholders and issued from case-law or national laws. As we will see below, pluriactivity has mainly given way to very piecemeal and unsatisfying adaptations, which highlight once more the strong “dependence paths” – not to say inertia - of each occupational regime (Pierson 1997).

*The few general principles applying to multiple jobholders :*

“Pluriactivity = plurality of the social contributions” : if the professional activities of a person correspond to different occupational regimes, social *contributions* for all risks have to be paid in all the relevant regimes. But the *benefits* are paid only by one regime, namely the regime corresponding to the “main occupational activity”.

There are already some exceptions to the first principle (plurality of contributions), in the form of partial exemptions and reductions of contributions, especially for persons that are part-time employed or part-time farmer (i.e. taking part in the most generous regimes), but there is no institutionalised principle to avoid this plurality of contributions, which entails for the majority of multiple jobholders a double workload to solve these day-to-day administrative intricacies. The main exception to the second principle (no concurrently paid benefits) concerns pensions, which can be concurrently distributed<sup>23</sup>.

*The structural problems implied by these principles :*

- On the *contributions*' side, the basic problem lies by the ***absence of an institutionalised principle of proportionality*** : in most occupational regimes, contributions are owed on a fix-rate basis calculated on a full-time occupational scheme ; people working on a part-time basis are therefore prejudiced – multiple jobholding being in this case understood as concurrently or successively exercised part-time activities. This can lead to quite absurd situations, where a person owes contributions that are higher than his or her income ; this is particularly true for people, whose main activity is an independent one. The case of pluriactivity under several statuses of employee

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<sup>22</sup> The part of the paper relies heavily on Lise Casaux's PhD work (Casaux, 1993), which explored in a very detailed manner the legal aspects of the social protection of multiple jobholders ; we rather tried here to trace the structural lines of conflict underlined by a “disturbing” employment form and to see how those are questioning the founding principles of the French welfare state.

<sup>23</sup> But the several *contributions* to different pension regimes are not yet to be added to give way to an *entitlement* to a unique pension, that would be in effect higher than the sum of all the pension “pieces”, according to a cumulative process (in France, a “full pension” is due to the persons who contributed 37,5 or 39 years (full-time)).

is already much simplified by the fact that despite multiple employers, all the contributions are gathered in single organisation of social protection (“intra-coordination”).

**For instance** : an independent worker (in craft and trade) generating less than 60.000 FF (around 8.700 Euro) of net earnings has to pay a minimal fix-rate contribution of 7.600 FF (around 1.100 Euro) to protect him- or herself against sickness risk. The criteria “hiding” behind these figures are decisive : this minimum contribution due by workers whose *main activity* is independent is based on the yearly minimum wage earned by an employee working full-time. The prejudice for multiple job-holders is twofold : first, the fiscal nature of the earnings put into parallel are not comparable ; second, the possibility that a “main activity” is led on a part-time basis is not taken into account. Consequence : a disproportionately expensive social protection for pluriactive workers, whose main activity is independent.

The absence of a general principle of proportionality attached to the social contributions of multiple jobholders questions the **solidarity principle** founding the French welfare state, as far as this can lead to the paradoxical situation, where those whose earnings are the lowest are proportionately paying the highest contributions. The present state of the system is particularly dramatic for entrepreneurs whose firm is starting up and whose turnover can therefore show a temporary deficit.

- On the *benefits*’ side, the main problem lies in the **definition of the “main activity”** of multiple jobholders, as this activity determines the level of their social protection. Some occupational regimes of social protection being more protective than others (employees’ regimes > farmers’ regime > self-employed regimes), the covering of sickness, invalidity or maternity risks<sup>24</sup> can be very uneven according to the particular combinations of activities. Two criteria are taken into account for the definition of the main activity – the **working hours** and the **generated income**. Concerning multiple jobholders, two schemes can be identified : where independent activities are combined, income is the only criterion taken into account ; where dependent and independent activities are combined, time *and* income are compared. Once more, some income or time thresholds are established that prejudice part-time workers and therefore multiple jobholders.

**For instance** : a pluriactive person, combining a salaried occupation and an independent one, is in principle “attached” to the independent regime – i.e. to the least generous regime,

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<sup>24</sup> Reminder : the covering of old-age risk is excluded here, as far as pension benefits are the only benefits to be concurrently paid by several occupational regimes.

unless he or she can prove that (s)he has worked more than 1200 hours as employee in the reference year. A simple calculation : 1200 hours correspond to seven and a half months full-time work. As multiple jobholder, this necessary condition is often beyond reach. Once more, this figure shows that persons working part-time work or combining part-times are de facto prejudiced. One can also wonder if this high time threshold was not simply settled to restrict the access to the most generous regimes of social protection.

A sensible implementation of the **equity principle** would imply that the contributions due by multiple jobholders are calculated on the basis of all their simultaneous activities and earnings, so that this “sum” generates more complete entitlements – opposed to several fragmented entitlements in several social protection offices, thus giving way to several “modest” benefits and *in fine* to a degraded social protection of multiple jobholders<sup>25</sup>. The structural organisation of the French offices of social protection entails unfortunately permanent contradictions with this principle.

#### **The case of unemployment insurance as “cherry on the cake” :**

The French labour code is particularly vague on this aspect, so that the access to unemployment benefits for multiple jobholders was regulated by the social partners – in charge of a unique office for all professions, the “UNEDIC”<sup>26</sup>, which gave an operational definition of unemployment : are given access (under several other conditions) to unemployment benefits the persons who have no occupational activity *at all* ; in other words, in principle, a multiple jobholder, who loses one of his or her activities has no right to recover benefits related to the “lost” activity – despite the contributions (s)he could have been constrained to pay as part-time employee.

- But as always, there are some exceptions : so as not to discourage a person to hold or recover an occupation, it is allowed to combine *wages* and benefits in certain limits. For multiple jobholders, it entails the possibility with a part-time wage-earning activity, to receive one’s entitlements unemployment benefits, if the (gross) wages of this remaining activity do not exceed 47 % of the previous cumulated incomes. But if the remaining activity is lost afterwards, the entitlements to unemployment benefits remained the same – as if no second activity had been exercised and then lost.

- For the persons, whose remaining activity is *independent*, the situation is even more uncomfortable : a multiple jobholder who loses a wage-earning activity, as to be stroke off from the craft and trade registers for the remaining activity, if (s)he wants to perceive unemployment benefits (s)he has been paying for.

This state of facts contradicts two more founding principles of the French welfare state. First, it contradicts the **insurance** principle, in which contributions are paid to insure oneself against a risk ; for many multiple jobholders, the insurance principle

<sup>25</sup> This conclusion applies also to pensions : see footnote 10 above.

<sup>26</sup> For “ Union nationale pour l’emploi dans l’industrie et le commerce”.

does not enter into effect when the risk occurs, as if they had paid for nothing. Second, the possibility to combine wages and benefits, aimed at facilitating the “**integration**” of unemployed persons on the labour market, is often denied to multiple jobholders, who are thus on the contrary encouraged to fall in total unemployment.

### 2.3.2 Analysing some policy experiments designed to improve the social protection of pluriactive workers :

As foreseeable, the public solutions implemented to solve the problems multiple jobholders are faced with in social protection matters were of a piecemeal nature – leaving unquestioned the fundamental principles and structures of the overall system. But some of these solutions are nevertheless worth analysing : some are taking place at the national level through lawmaking – they are the most promising but the most difficult to implement, other are the result of local mobilisations and are thus geographically limited in their effects.

#### *Accepting rural pluriactivity as an “extended” form of agriculture : unifying and securing the status of atypical farmers*

In face of the growing number of farmers diversifying their activities (transformation of products, direct sale on markets or at the farm, rooms to rent, tourist activities, etc.), a law was enacted in 1988 that simplifies the social regime of those pluriactive workers. Are considered as an “extension” of farming (“*prolongement d’activité*”) all the activities, which are extending the production process further or for which the farming ground serves as support. This measure was a legal innovation : it concentrates on the economic and occupational logic gathering all these activities, bringing to the fore the comprehensive notion of (economic) “opportunity” (between activities), while the classical notion of “attached activity” (“*activité accessoire*”) implied a link of necessity or utility between activities. This reform had for a major consequence to unify under a status a plurality of occupations and therefore to simplify greatly the procedures for social contributions and payments of atypical farmers<sup>27</sup>.

#### *Lightening the administrative workload of all other pluriactive workers ?*

A 1993 law introduced the notion of “pivot office” (“*caisse-pivot*”), which offers all multiple jobholders the opportunity to get rid of their “double” administrative workload by getting a single administrative spokesperson, in charge of coordinating all the social protection offices implied - one office namely taking the “lead” in the name of

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<sup>27</sup> Within limits : for instance, the opening of a (collective) shop to sell the transformed products divides once more the activity into several fiscal statuses and social statutes – especially if a salesperson is hired.

the others<sup>28</sup>. Since a complementary 1995 law, the pluriactive person has even been given the right to choose the coordinating office. These legal measures do not imply that the several entitlements are added into a single one but only that procedures related to the several contributions and benefits are centralised ; in other words, the administrative workload that fell previously on pluriactive workers is taken over by the offices of social protection.

But the implementation of these measures illustrates once more the inertia of the overall system : the first implementation decrees were enacted in 1997 and until recently the several offices of social protection could not agree on the concrete steps to be taken (mainly because of technical calculation disputes) – in a word : a national fiasco occurs because of / despite the strength of the policy instrument used.

But more local propositions were pushed by some regional advocacy coalitions that gave birth to local coordination arrangements that are more promising but of a far more limited impact. An experimental arrangement was agreed upon in 1985<sup>29</sup> in the Queyras valley – a rural and tourist region in the Alps : a “single counter” (“*guichet unique*”) was established to inform pluriactive workers on their rights in social protection matters and to help them in unravelling all administrative intricacies – through an individualised treatment that can lead to rapid informal agreements (per phone for instance !). The operation of this first single counter was considered as a success and this model was reproduced in the same region in the following years.

**The simpler case of *multi-salaried workers* remained long unsolved:** or “the neverending quest of Sénateur Jourdain”

As they are contributing to single social protection funds (for a single risk), the case of waged multiple jobholders seems simple to solve, as it is revolving around a coordination of the multiple employers, on a voluntary basis or encouraged by the labour law. Proposals were pushed in the Parliament, aimed at easing maintaining the effectiveness of individual right to paid holidays or training leaves through a formal agreement between employers<sup>30</sup>, the form of which could have been designed by the “social partners”. The left governmental coalition dragged its feet, arguing the employer pools could solve the problem (see below), which is a far too constraining legal instrument. (To follow...)

One cannot say that the French case is exemplary for its giant steps towards the normalisation of social protection for pluriactive workers : all legal steps forwards were of a very incremental nature – even where lawmaking was at work. In this

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<sup>28</sup> One can notice that the farmer’s regime proposed at that time to take the lead for all pluriactive workers ; it also proposed to implement a proportionality principle in all the regimes concerned by an individual case. The other occupational regimes turned down this proposal, fearing to lose some “clients”.

<sup>29</sup> Once more, the farmers’ regional office played a leading role.

<sup>30</sup> It is indeed quite difficult to take holidays if all your employers do not agree on common period.

frozen landscape, local arrangements are offering the second-best adaptation strategy. But the French case could - in a reversed perspective - be considered as a negative yardstick to measure the relative drawbacks of a system fragmented along occupational lines and the relative advantages of more unified systems relying on residence / citizenship and universal social rights.

### 2.3.3 Summarizing the “flexibility incentives” provided by social protection systems: France scores bad.

Analysing the French system of social protection through the case of multiple jobholders enables us to assess how this system supports or stigmatizes atypical work patterns - of a stable or transitional nature. The French institutional arrangements show - when dealing with multiple jobholders (especially with differentiated statuses), the glaring lack of any institutionalized principle of proportionality and the failure to guarantee even the founding principles of solidarity and insurance. In this context, one can easily conclude that the “flexibility incentives” (Schmid 2000) provided to French workers to enter flexible employment forms are rather low, since these are discouraged, penalized and stigmatized when trying to combine part-time activities and /or statuses – with the notable exception of the agricultural sector. France is therefore rather badly prepared to enter the “third age of social protection”, where social policies and employment systems would encourage people “to risk transitions between various form of employment or to combine various forms of productive activities” (Schmid 2000, 7) through the provision of mobility options and mobility insurance easing and securing discontinuous employment trajectories.

But such a pessimistic picture can nevertheless be slightly enlightened : if social protection systems can have difficulties to escape their historical dependence path (in short protecting full-time mono-active male bread winners), one must not underestimate the creativity resources present in the society to circumvent such institutional hurdles : as we will see below, social actors are able to play with the intricacies of social and labour laws, to reinvest existing devices or invent new ones to guarantee themselves some degree of flexicurity.

## 2.4 Hiding beyond one’s pluriactivity: the French panacea towards flexicurity?

To end this French case study on a positive note, let us report that pluriactive workers and their advocates, confronted with the relative inertia of training and social protection institutions, are developing alternative strategies of action to render their occupational trajectories towards pluriactivity more sustainable : they build new (il)legal entities or invest existing ones to get a better social protection as salaried workers, while preserving their occupational independence and their complex life project, therefore questioning the adequacy of the subordination principle founding



industrial labour law (Chauchard & Dubernet 2001). Let us review some of these (legal) organisational statuses readily invested by multiple jobholders :

- The **employer pools**, created in the farming sector by a 1985 law, are one of the legal instruments used to promote waged multiple jobholding (or "*multisalarial*"). Instead of hiring a labourer on a part-time basis, several farmers could get together and hire through a pool only one worker they would "share", who thus benefits from full-time employment opportunities in simpler legal conditions - the working contract being signed with the pool. Employer pools were later used as qualification instruments (GEIQ) in work-based learning schemes, designed for future multi-salaried workers (in the horticultural sector for instance). The possibility to found multi-sectoral employer pools could be a further incentive to support forms of pluriactivity mixing activities taking place both private and public sectors and offering full-time employment to low qualified persons. These pools rely on a strong coordination of political and economic actors at the local level (Biche et alii 2000).
- The **micro-association** is a trompe-l'oeil arrangement used by pluriactive workers to be correctly protected against social risks : those simply found with trustworthy persons a non-profit organisation to hire themselves and get a salaried status, under the "cover" of which they can lead their previously "insecured" activities (Le Dantec 1998). The association status is also used collectively by pluriactive workers, as a way to "mutualise" their economic knowledge and share some administrative costs (Demoustier 2001).
- For many multiple jobholders the "**port society**" ("*société de portage*") is the latest promising institutional device (Grep 2001) : inspired by the example of temporary work agencies, these private companies hire workers through a contract that entails no subordination relationship between employee and employer. While he or she is salaried, the multiple jobholder remains totally independent for the organisation of his or her occupational activities - the port society is playing a simple administrative role in managing the benefits of the services provided by the pluriactive workers to their clients (and in "chasing up" the firms that take ages to pay their bills...) and therefore taking some management costs on those benefits<sup>31</sup>.

All these individual or collective arrangements, used by pluriactive workers to protect themselves against the usual social risks, have in common to "play" on the very blurred frontier between subordination and independence. While cultivating the values of independent workers and professionals, pluriactive workers want to benefit

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<sup>31</sup> This point led a port society to be sentenced by a Court : it was taken to trial by a "labour inspector", who argued that these management costs were illegal – and therefore the category "port society" as a whole – since no subordination principle links employer and workers. The suspended sentence was rather symbolic and represented a call to the legislator to fill up the gaps of an inadequate labour law (Le Monde, 15.03.2001).

from the protective salaried status – extracting thus the best from both forms of employment, sometimes with a foot in the illegality.

These complex or *trompe-l'oeil* arrangements are in France until then the only ones able to give flesh to the long standing political and legal project of the “activity contract” (Boissonat 1995), designed by a multidisciplinary think-tank of politicians and researchers at the beginning of the 1990s : this “contract” would ideally enable any person to compose his or her individualized occupational trajectory, on a pluri-annual basis, combining training, community work and occupational activities, while offering him or her a continuous and stable social protection.

### **3 Intermediary conclusions: on the scarcity of social incentives provided to multiple jobholders – using the French case as negative yardstick**

The entry into force of the “activity contract” would celebrate the entry of the French welfare state in its post-modern age<sup>32</sup>, which would provide workers with social incentives to move between or to combine occupations. Our inquiry showed that we are still very far from this day, at least in France which is representative of sectorally segmented welfare states (such as Germany and the Southern countries of the EU). If this new labour contract remains legally undefined - despite further reflections led at the European level under the lead of the European Commission (Supiot 1999), it nevertheless provides - just as transnational labour markets do (Schmid 1998), a normative ideal type to guide policy reforms.

This explorative case-study on multiple jobholding showed that despite a growing proportion of atypical workers, welfare states structured along occupational categories are ill prepared to cope with the most precarious forms of multiple jobholding : in a word, they rather penalize than encourage the flexibilization of their human capital. Despite many local initiatives aimed at satisfying the qualifications needs of multiple jobholders, national legal frameworks dealing with the coverage of usual social risks (sickness, old age, unemployment) are still dominated in France by the norm of full-time mono-employment, which entails in the case of multiple jobholders a denial of several founding principles of the whole system (proportionality, insurance, equity).

This category of welfare states moreover stigmatizes workers by denying them a socially valued occupational identity : in an internationalized labour environment where occupational identities are more and more structured along individual occupational trajectories and among affinity networks (Boltanski & Chiapello 1999 ;

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<sup>32</sup> After its charity and industrial ages (Salais, 2001).

Demazière & Dubar 2001) and are of a very reflexive nature (Sennet, 1998), the discrepancy is severe between legal frameworks and societal innovations : the latter value multiple jobholding through local networks promoting institutional innovations while hiding behind the archaic disguises of law.

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