

## Implications of Precarization in the Context of Generational Groups: Direct and Indirect Effects



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**Abstract.** The effects of employment precarization are the subject of active discussion in the scientific literature. Despite the novelty of the topic, the negative impact of this process on the labor and daily life has been subject of a large number of works over the previous decade. At the same time, age specifics have not been widely reflected in studies: as a rule, authors focus on the population as a whole or its individual categories, for example, youth. The purpose of the article is to analyze and generalize the existing experience of studying the impact of employment precarization on generational groups of the economically active population. For this purpose, we have examined the situation of young, middle-aged and older workers involved in unstable labor relations. The information base is the Russian and foreign sources of empirical orientation; in the work we have used general scientific methods. The results show that the impact of employment precarization on generational groups has serious specifics. For young people, job instability mainly affects the planning of their own future forcing them to postpone the issues of starting a family and having children, leaving the parental home, etc. Prolonged transition to stable employment harms mental health, which is most pronounced in adulthood, when instability becomes part of everyday life. It can be difficult to get out of the “precarity trap” because low earnings and social insecurity limit the ability to change the current situation. The effects of employment precarization for older people are ambiguous. Even taking into account all the disadvantages of unstable labor relations, having at least some work is often a necessity to maintain a habitual lifestyle. The main limitation of the research is the generalization of information obtained using various conceptual constructions and methodological tools.

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**For citation:** Popov A.V. (2022). Implications of precarization in the context of generational groups: Direct and indirect effects. *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 15(6), 167–181. DOI: 10.15838/esc.2022.6.84.10

**Key words:** precarization, precarious employment, generational groups, labor market, non-standard employment, standard of living, youth, middle generation, elderly people.

### Acknowledgment

The research was supported by Russian Science Foundation grant 22-28-01043 (<https://rscf.ru/project/22-28-01043/>) at Plekhanov Russian University of Economics.

### Introduction

Humanity's transition to information-oriented society has a significant impact on the employment. It is most evident in the industrialized countries, which a century ago formed general principles determining the nature of relations between labor market subjects. We are talking about the standard employment model, which is understood as "*full-time employment on the basis of a permanent contract in an enterprise or organization, under the direct supervision of the employer or their appointed managers*" (Gimpelson, Kapelyushnikov, 2005, p. 3). Such conditions were the best for mass production and helped to meet the needs of industry for qualified personnel. At the same time, wage workers united by the labor union movement had social protection and the opportunity to assert their labor rights. In any case, further technological developments and other factors have brought the tertiary economic sector to the fore, with employment exceeding 70% in high-income countries (50% worldwide)<sup>1</sup>. Today's leitmotif is flexibility, which is reflected in the spread of fixed-term employment contracts and informal labor relations, the reduction of working hours, etc. In turn, nonstandard employment forms (temporary, part-time, remote, self-employment, etc.), often used by employers to quickly adapt to the effects of financial and economic crises<sup>2</sup>, are becoming

increasingly popular as a promising way to organize working life including through the disclosure of the potential of digital platforms. In OECD countries, it is estimated that more than half of the jobs created in the period from 1995 to 2013 were nonstandard. At the end of the period, their cumulative share had reached about 33%<sup>3</sup>. Thus, a new paradigm of employment is emerging, which is characteristic of the next stage of social development (Castells, 2000, p. 200).

At the same time, the diversity of practices of population's participation in paid employment, some of which have no social guarantees or are poorly regulated by law (for example, self-employment), contributes to differences in the quality of employment, which against the background of flexibilization of the labor market and global uncertainty increasingly depends on the stability of the worker's position. Such a discourse has been developed in precarization theory, which focuses on issues of societal destabilization, where a key role is assigned to the *erosion of previously guaranteed conditions of standard employment*<sup>4</sup> (Unsustainable Employment..., 2018, p. 32). The negative effects of this process are multifaceted and manifest themselves both at the individual, organizational (despite the possibility of situational gains), and public levels (Popov, Solov'eva, 2019).

<sup>1</sup> Employment in services (% of total employment) (modeled ILO estimate). World Bank Open Data. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.SRV.EMPL.ZS> (accessed: August 10, 2022).

<sup>2</sup> Non-standard employment around the world: Understanding challenges, shaping prospects. ILO. Available at: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/@publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_534326.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/@publ/documents/publication/wcms_534326.pdf) (accessed: August 10, 2022).

<sup>3</sup> In it together: Why less inequality benefits all. OECD. Available at: [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/employment/in-it-together-why-less-inequality-benefits-all\\_9789264235120-en](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/employment/in-it-together-why-less-inequality-benefits-all_9789264235120-en) (accessed: August 10, 2022).

<sup>4</sup> Barbier J.-C. "Employment precariousness" in a European cross-national perspective. A sociological review of thirty years of research. Available at: <https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-00654370/document> (accessed: August 10, 2022).

Moreover, reports of the International Labor Organization emphasize that *signs of precarity can also be observed within the standard employment model, while not all of its flexible forms lead to social vulnerability*<sup>5</sup>. In this respect, the sustainability of workers' situation is conditioned not only by the *type of contractual agreements* (by the term and nature of the employment relationship), but also by *specific working conditions* (wages, access to social protection mechanisms, etc.)<sup>6</sup>.

The studies show that, for population in developed countries, precarious employment is a very common way to enter the labor market (Kapsalis, Tourigny, 2005), and is also seen as an intermediate step on the way to more favorable working conditions (Gash, 2008). However, it is rarely possible to make this transition; as a result one may end up in the “precarity trap” that limits the possibilities of improving one’s position in the labor market and in society. This situation affects workers in different ways, depending on the length of their working career. For some, it may be the beginning of a professional path, when the main value is the very fact of the start of labor activity, and for others – a good opportunity to earn extra money for retirement. In this regard, the *age factor is almost the most important one when analyzing the effects of employment precarization*, if we are not talking about the least competitive groups in the labor market (women with young children, people with disabilities, foreign migrants, etc.). In particular, the precariousness of labor relations can be a serious obstacle for young people on their

way to adulthood: gaining financial independence, leaving home, starting a family, having children (Miguel Carmo et al., 2014), etc. Even the digital platforms, so popular among young people, do not change the situation much, since a significant number of their employees lack social security and have experienced or witnessed discrimination or harassment<sup>7</sup>. Experience in Russia suggests that the transition from school to stable or satisfying employment can take up to about 4 years when the first attempt was unsuccessful (Russian Youth..., 2016, pp. 63–64).

*The purpose of our research* is to analyze and summarize Russian and foreign experience in studying the impact of employment precarization on generational groups of the economically active population. In the article, we will consider the state of workers of young, middle and old age with precarious labor relations.

#### **Extent of elaboration of the problem**

The topic of employment precarization has actively been discussed in the scientific literature since the early 2000s, when the spread of “nonstandard” jobs in industrially developed countries led to aggravating the issues of workers’ social protection. It was also facilitated by the crises of the following years and the slowdown in economic growth, forcing economic entities to reduce costs including labor costs. An undoubted breakthrough in studying and popularization of the phenomenon of precarization is associated with the name of G. Standing, who published in 2011 the book *The Precariat. The New Dangerous Class* (Standing, 2011), where the author outlined own views on the class structure of the new society. One of the features of the time is the emergence of the *precariat* – a large socio-economic group

<sup>5</sup> Non-standard employment around the world: Understanding challenges, shaping prospects. ILO. Available at: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/@publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_534326.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/@publ/documents/publication/wcms_534326.pdf) (accessed: August 10, 2022).

<sup>6</sup> From precarious work to decent work: outcome document to the workers’ symposium on policies and regulations to combat precarious employment. ILO. Available at: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed\\_dialogue/@actrav/documents/meetingdocument/wcms\\_179787.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_dialogue/@actrav/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_179787.pdf) (accessed: August 10, 2022).

<sup>7</sup> World Employment and Social Outlook 2021: The role of digital labour platforms in transforming the world of work. Available at: [https://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/weso/2021/WCMS\\_771749/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/weso/2021/WCMS_771749/lang--en/index.htm) (accessed: August 10, 2022).

(affects about a quarter of the adult population), deprived of most rights and guarantees. In such cases, it is common to speak about immanent instability preventing the implementation of work and life plans. Such concepts have found a wide response in Russian sociology, which has deepened ideas about the theory and methodology of studying the precariat, the scale and specifics of its formation in Russia (Precariat..., 2020; Golenkova, Goliusova, 2013; Shkaratan et al., 2015). The authors' approaches and assessment often have significant differences, which is due to the lack of clear criteria for class formation.

Additionally, we use the category of “*precarious employment*”<sup>8</sup> to analyze the process of employment precarization, which has become firmly established in scientific usage thanks to the works of J. Burgess, L. Vosko, A.L. Kalleberg, I. Campbell, G. Rogers, J. Fudge, etc. Compared to the established terminology, it does not characterize any specific forms of labor relations or their combination (however, some of them are used to identify general trends and patterns (Cranford, Vosko, Zukewich, 2003; Kim et al., 2008)), but rather describes the condition (Bobkov, Chernykh, 2014, p. 30), when the employee is in a state of vulnerability and social insecurity related with the features of the organization of the labor process<sup>9</sup>. This usually refers to both *objective prerequisites* (lack or limitation of social guarantees, low wages, informality of employment, etc.) and *subjective assessments* (inability to set aside their labor rights, concern about the threat of losing their jobs, dissatisfaction with working conditions, etc.). Increasing attention is also paid to the *compulsion*

*factor* (Unstable employment..., 2018, p. 6; Odegov, Babynina, 2018, p. 393), which makes it possible to separate the precariously employed from those who voluntarily chose such a path to achieve their own goals. In fact, it can be quite difficult to distinguish them.

For certain, we can say that precarious employment is the basis for classifying workers as precariat, but such parallels should be carried out very carefully, since the latter may include other categories of the population. Nevertheless, each of these concepts is independent in the context of studying the effects of the phenomenon of precarization. English-language scientific literature more often mentions precarious employment, while the Russian one uses the precariat<sup>10</sup>. At the same time, the conceptual apparatus is regularly mixed, as a result of which the existing differences in research areas become not so noticeable from a meaningful point of view.

Within the framework of precarization, a special place belongs to the works devoted to studying its effects in the context of employment prospects, ensuring a decent standard and quality of life. Due to the limitations of official statistics, it is most often necessary to deal with data that requires specific empirical research (mass surveys, in-depth interviews, etc.), which is a very time-consuming task. It is in this way that we have revealed patterns concerning the negative impact of the process on material well-being, health status, reproductive plans, possibility of professional development, social inclusion<sup>11</sup>, etc. In this regard, health issues are virtually of top priority in highly specialized publications, which substantiate the relationship between the instability of the workers' position with

<sup>8</sup> We use the term “precarious employment” because it has become the most widespread in the Russian-language literature (according to the data on keywords in the RSCI system).

<sup>9</sup> Kalleberg A.L. Measuring precarious work. Available at: [https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/voices.uchicago.edu/dist/5/1068/files/2018/05/einet\\_papers\\_kalleberg-lowgfyz.pdf](https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/voices.uchicago.edu/dist/5/1068/files/2018/05/einet_papers_kalleberg-lowgfyz.pdf) (accessed: August 10, 2022).

<sup>10</sup> According to Google Scholar. Available at: <https://scholar.google.com/>

<sup>11</sup> The precarity penalty. The impact of employment precarity on individuals, households and communities – and what to do about it. Available at: [https://pepsouwt.files.wordpress.com/2012/12/precarity-penalty-report\\_final-hires\\_trimmed.pdf](https://pepsouwt.files.wordpress.com/2012/12/precarity-penalty-report_final-hires_trimmed.pdf) (accessed: August 10, 2022).

fatigue, sleep and diet disorders, stress, muscle pain (Benavides et al., 2000; Bohle et al., 2004) and other aspects. These problems are also reflected in the context of individual socio-demographic groups, although if they are not in the subject field of the research, then they are mentioned in passing.

As we have already mentioned, the age factor is of great interest in analyzing the effects of employment precarization, since it allows not only identifying the features of the situation of generational groups, but also determining their prospects both in the labor market and beyond. Some studies in the scientific literature address the issues of subjective well-being of workers of various ages (Jetha et al., 2020; Kuchenkova, 2022), but they mainly focus on one category of the population. We would like to analyze and summarize the existing experience in this area, which could contribute to a better understanding of the multifaceted effects of employment precarization and possible ways to overcome them.

### **Materials and methods**

During the research, we use the Russian and foreign scientific literature on the impact of employment precarization on generational groups of workers, namely: the young, middle and older generation. This division reflects the most important stages of a person's life path associated with entering the labor market, professional maturity and career endings, which ultimately determines the dynamics of material well-being (Bobkov, Odintsova, 2021, p. 18). Despite the heterogeneity of the information base (including on a territorial basis), we are deliberately talking about generational groups, the formation of which occurred in one chronological period of time. The proposed approach contradicts some provisions of the Strauss – Howe generational theory; however, in our opinion, it can be implemented within the framework of this study, since the phenomenon of precarization itself is not only relatively new to science and practice, but is

also inherent, first of all, in the most developed countries that have much in common in terms of providing conditions for employment. In turn, we use the term “age groups” as a synonym.

In the analysis, we did not take into account differences in the conceptual framework and methodological approaches (including in terms of substantiating age boundaries), which may impose restrictions on the conclusions. For instance, some publications identify signs of precarity that characterize working conditions from an objective and subjective point of view, and others – the least stable forms of labor relations (first of all, temporary and part-time employment). Both cases usually use a sample, which is a certain set of features characteristic of the standard employment model. Most commonly, it happens when questionnaire surveys act as an information base, the data of which allow for comparative analysis and quantification of the parameters of the identified patterns. Qualitative methods (mainly focus groups and in-depth interviews), which are also actively used to study the effects of precarization, make it possible to approach the issue of revealing cause-and-effect relationships in more detail. All these things leave stamp on the nature of the results, which are very difficult to sum up under a common denominator. Similar is the case with cross-country characteristics, which make adjustments to the understanding of the fullness and depth of the resulting effects.

We carried out the selection of sources in the period from July 15 to August 2, 2022 by a continuous method (including without taking into account industry affiliation and the year of publication of works) with the help of Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science and RSCI databases, as well as the Google search engine. The search queries consisted of the words “precarization”, “precarious employment” and “precariat”. The sample totaled 112 papers, most of which were published in the last decade (*Tab. 1*).

Table 1 – Characteristics of the initial sample

	Young generation	Middle generation	Older generation
Selected works, units	61	16	35
Years of publications, years	1999–2022	2000–2022	2005–2022
Share of works published after 2010, %	94.4	76.9	93.5
Share of sources in Russian, %	53.7	61.5	32.3
Note: We counted separately the works in which several generational groups were affected (double counting). Source: own compilation.			

Further, we “manually” reviewed the literature for information on the effects of employment precarization for workers of various age groups. At the same time, we emphasized the *indirect effects* going beyond the essential features of the phenomenon (low wages, lack of social guarantees, illusory professional prospects, etc.), which in itself has a negative connotation<sup>12</sup>. For this purpose, we conducted a content analysis of the text of the works; as a result, the final sample included those where the identified relationships *were confirmed empirically*. When preparing the text of this article, we used general scientific research methods.

### Research results

**Young generation.** In matters of the influence of employment precarization on the workers’ position, the central position belongs to young people. A large number of scientific papers have been devoted to studying youth, in which attention is focused on the process of transition from education to paid work. This stage in the life of young people is characterized by many difficulties (lack of work experience and qualifications, high material claims, etc.) that prevent successful employment. It is no coincidence that the youth unemployment rate is several times higher than

among the adult population<sup>13</sup>. As a result, many are forced to accept unfavorable working conditions just to have at least some kind of job, which is especially important during periods of socio-economic instability. Nonstandard employment forms, not to mention the informal sector (Volchik, Maslyukova, 2020), acquire the role of a “bulwark” when entering the labor market (Papadakis et al., 2021). The lack of an alternative leads to the fact that the feeling of uncertainty is perceived by the younger generation as part of growing up, another step on the way to sustainable future (Burrows, 2013, p. 14; Eckelt, Schmidt, 2014, pp. 145–146). However, this transition is not always easy.

According to a longitudinal study conducted in Germany, only about a quarter of young people make a quick transition to a permanent and guaranteed job, which averages one year (Stuth, Jahn, 2020). All the others can be combined into 5 clusters (“dropout”, “express”, “return”, “slow transition” and “family”), depending on which the duration of precarious labor relations will vary. For example, for young men who have chosen the trajectory of early employment, it will be almost 8 years, and for girls who have prematurely stopped studying or returned to school in order to improve their qualifications and thus avoid social insecurity – about 3 years.

<sup>12</sup> In accordance with the accepted approach, we consider the process of employment precarization purely in a negative context, since the instability of the employee’s position is often not voluntary (as it happens, for example, with flexible forms of employment), but is a consequence of forced circumstances. As a rule, the possible benefits that the employer mainly extracts (Popov, Solov’eva, 2019, p. 188) are situational and do not play a big role over a long distance.

<sup>13</sup> Global employment trends for youth 2020: Technology and the future of jobs. Available at: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_737648.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_737648.pdf) (accessed: August 10, 2022).

Usually, young people face precarious employment even as students combining studies with part-time jobs, which can take a variety of forms (from casual earnings to part-time work). This practice is widespread all over the world and is positively perceived by young people, as it allows them not only to gain the necessary work experience, but also to get closer to gaining financial independence. The downside of early employment is a deterioration in academic performance and a decrease in the total time spent on study, which can push you into the “precarity trap” (Sršen, Dizdarevič, 2014, pp. 165–166). Subsequently, it is possible to form a *precarious habitus* that determines an individual’s lifestyle, where uncertainty is an integral part of life (Tartakovskaya, Vanke, 2019, pp. 110–111). The results of such transformations are difficult to overestimate.

Employment precarization carries a lot of negative effects affecting both the working and everyday life of young people. In the first case the influence is not so noticeable (Kuchenkova, 2022, pp. 115–116), since the first entry into the labor market itself has many advantages, as we have already mentioned, while in the second case, it is exclusively destructive. In particular, Slovenian scientists have found that involvement in precarious labor relations results in higher rates of dissatisfaction with life for the younger generation, the frequency of symptoms of anxiety and depression, as well as emotional exhaustion, which in turn leads to internal burnout (Umicevic et al., 2021, p. 239). Such conditions are associated with extreme demands placed on the mental health of young workers, which results in excessive loads and stress.

The need to constantly think about the “present” resulting from an obsessive sense of insecurity negatively affects the ability to make adult decisions, plan own future and make commitments including in matters of creating a family. Similar statements were

made by young scientists holding positions at a major Australian university on temporary or fixed-term contracts during in-depth interviews (Bone, 2019). It helps the authors to conclude that precarious employment significantly limits the transition to adulthood, regardless of educational achievements or the prestige of professions. Similar conclusions are clearly presented in other publications (Lewchuk, 2017; Chan, Tweedie, 2015), where using quantitative and qualitative methods, the desire of young people to postpone the birth of children is also justified due to the impossibility of providing them with proper care (both in material terms and in terms of access to basic social guarantees, free time etc.).

These aspects are of the greatest interest in the research environment due to the long-term nature of the effects of employment precarization and the difficulty of finding a stable job for young people. Other aspects of their lives are affected much less often. In some works, we can see, for example, attempts to assess the impact of precarious employment on participation in elections, but empirical data indicate that there is no relationship (the strongest correlation is observed with the indicator of work autonomy) (Robert et al., 2017, p. 133).

**Middle generation.** Compared to young people, the middle-aged cohort is practically not given attention in scientific sources. The reason for this is that the group is considered the least vulnerable in terms of opportunities to meet the needs and the necessity for social support. As in the case of the population as a whole, a fairly wide range of negative manifestations of employment precarization is applicable to representatives of the middle generation including a decrease in material security, social security, deterioration of health, increased uncertainty regarding personal/family and professional prospects (Popov, Solov’eva, 2019, pp. 185–187).

A few studies on this topic have shown that mature workers are characterized by the most stable employment (Kuchenkova, 2022, pp. 111–113). However, they experience the greatest dissatisfaction with work and life when labor relations become less stable, which also leads to increased concerns about wage uncertainty and complaints about poor working conditions. Apparently, the reasons for this lie in obligations (household, family, financial, property, etc.), which simply cannot be abandoned. However, the presence of a certain burden can just encourage a quick search for a job that provides the necessary income level. In practice, it can result in the deprivation of all social guarantees and complete disenfranchisement of the employee, who is forced to put up with the current situation.

As we have already mentioned, employment precarization has a serious impact on the transition to adulthood. Lack of social guarantees and opportunities for career growth, instability in wages lead to difficulties in starting a family (Piotrowski et al., 2015). The studies prove that the instability of labor relations significantly reduces the likelihood of realizing reproductive intentions, especially for women with a high level of education (Pailhe, Solaz, 2012). Prolonged stay in the status of casual employment for women by the age of 35 reduces the chances of having a first child (Steele et al., 2014, p. 158).

The negative influence of employment precarization is also manifested in a decrease in the health of the middle generation. Data from a prospective cohort study Whitehall II, launched in London among office staff aged 35–55 in 1985, indicate that workers who were precarious for a long time had the highest incidence rates, in particular cardiovascular pathologies (Ferrie et al., 2002, pp. 451–452). On the other hand, even if during the period of working capacity people did not experience visible problems, being involved in precarious employment, then when they reach older ages, it

may affect their health, reduced access to medical care, and the amount of pension. For instance, the long-term informality of labor relations has negative consequences in the form of “gray” pensions, when the insurance record and the amount of official contributions are insufficient for pension savings<sup>14</sup>. In addition, due to the lack of confidence in the future, a mindset may develop that prevents long-term planning<sup>15</sup> (Vulnerable workers..., 2010, p. 45), which cannot but affect material and spiritual well-being.

The category of pre-retirees is particularly vulnerable. In order to keep their jobs and, at least, finalize them before retirement, they have to put up with the transition to part-time or less skilled work, reduced wages, limited career advancement (Chernykh et al., 2020, pp. 1183–1184), etc. Workers over 50 years old are more at risk of long-term unemployment<sup>16</sup>. In this regard, going on a well-deserved rest can be burdened by a number of problems caused by the instability of labor relations.

**Older generation.** Elderly people traditionally belong to socially vulnerable categories of the population<sup>17</sup>, which in comparison with other age groups is manifested in lower indicators of health, income level, access to various benefits, etc. Due to a decrease in the health resource, the older generation has relatively low productivity and significant economic needs (Aisa et al., 2012). However, in practice, it can be compensated by the availability of professional skills and experience.

<sup>14</sup> Malysheva E., Kopalkina E. After the gray salary came the gray pension. *Gazeta.ru*. Available at: <https://www.gazeta.ru/business/2017/03/31/10605221.shtml> (accessed: August 10, 2022).

<sup>15</sup> *Vulnerable Workers and Precarious Work*. Toronto: Law Commission of Ontario, 2010.

<sup>16</sup> Unemployment and employment support. Available at: <https://ageing-better.org.uk/unemployment-employment-support> (accessed: August 10, 2022).

<sup>17</sup> Integrating Social Services for Vulnerable Groups. Bridging Sectors for Better Service Delivery. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/els/integrating-the-delivery-of-social-services-for-vulnerable-groups-9789264233775-en.htm> (accessed: August 10, 2022).

The decision to continue working at retirement age is made under the influence of not only the health condition, but also a number of other factors, such as: the level of material well-being, satisfaction with working conditions, desire to work further, etc. Abroad, particularly in Europe, elderly people are usually not inclined to continue working after retirement<sup>18</sup>, while in Russian's conditions, for the most part, work in retirement is forced. This is mainly due to unsatisfactory pension provision and the desire to maintain an acceptable standard of living<sup>19</sup>.

From the point of view of vulnerability, elderly people often face explicit and implicit discrimination in the labor market (Ivanova, 2019), characterized by restrictions on hiring, setting wages, and career growth. Therefore, in order to find a job or stay in the workplace, they have to agree to less attractive conditions. All these circumstances create prerequisites for the employment precarization of pensioners. According to the research, a significant part of them have low-paid jobs in the informal sector, casual employment, or are self-employed with low qualifications or generally unskilled (Reddy, 2016). At the same time, the choice of one or another form of work can be both voluntary and forced. For example, elderly people may prefer flexible forms of work for a number of the above reasons. If a person has a certain financial reserve, then they are more likely to prefer entrepreneurship or self-employment as options for continuing work (Sahoo, Neog, 2015). For example, foreign studies show that self-

employment or part-time employment plays an important role for the population over 65 years old (Casey, 2005, p. 625). However, in the first case, there are significantly fewer opportunities to receive a higher pension upon retirement (Wahrendorf et al., 2016, p. 280). Employment flexibility is also important for Russian pensioners: when moving to the age category of 61–67 years, the importance of the convenient schedule factor increases and the role of career advancement and high income is reduced (Kipervar et al., 2022). On the other hand, the reason for employment flexibility may lie in the fact that over time older employees become too “expensive” for the company, and employers are forced to reduce their working hours<sup>20</sup>.

The work, led by V.N. Bobkov, reveals that the older generation prevails in the first group, largely characterized by indicators of standard employment (Bobkov, et al., 2018, pp. 372–374). However, a number of representatives of this category is quite significant in other profiles that have signs of instability. For example, in profile no. 4 with a high precarization level, the share of pensioners and pre-retirees is about 23%, and in profile no. 5 (with an income below 2/3 of the median) – 31%.

A study based on the Russian Longitudinal Monitoring Survey conducted at the HSE proved that most pensioners work full-time (Kozina, Zangieva, 2018). However, if changing jobs after reaching retirement age, it is three times more likely to move to an informally employed group. This situation indicates that there are corresponding risks of precarization when re-entering the labor market, since older people most often get a job where working conditions are worse than in the previous place. In addition, there is often downward professional and career mobility.

<sup>18</sup> Research Institute. Rethinking retirement. Davos edition 2020. Available at: <https://www.credit-suisse.com/media/assets/corporate/docs/about-us/research/publications/rethinking-retirement-wef-en.pdf> (accessed: August 10, 2022).

<sup>19</sup> Sinyavskaya O., Ermolina A., Lyubushina E. Why pensioners should work. After going on a well-deserved rest, Russians are ready to work even for a small increase to their pension. HSE. Available at: <https://iq.hse.ru/news/204917251.html> (accessed: August 10, 2022).

<sup>20</sup> Research Institute. Rethinking retirement. Davos edition 2020. Credit Suisse. Available at: <https://www.credit-suisse.com/media/assets/corporate/docs/about-us/research/publications/rethinking-retirement-wef-en.pdf> (accessed: August 10, 2022).

In general, data from the International Labour Organization suggest that about 78% of workers over 65 years old are involved in the informal employment (most of this is typical for developing countries)<sup>21</sup>. Pensioners working informally experience a shortage of funds to meet their needs, have limited access to quality medical services and leisure activities, are often subject to negative feelings up to depression (Alvarez et al. 2016, pp. 421–423; Makovskaya, 2020, p. 53). The risks of falling below the poverty line for the older generation are higher than for other age cohorts (Lancet, 2012, pp. 95–97). It is especially difficult for lonely elderly women in such a situation (Lain et al., 2019).

As we have already noted, employment precarization leads to a deterioration in the quality of working life (low wages, restriction of rights, less job satisfaction, etc.), while there have been practically no attempts to go beyond it for people of retirement age. Scientists emphasize that when assessing the full variety of consequences, it is important to take into account the following: elderly workers may have not only wages, but also other sources of income (pension, social benefits, income from entrepreneurial activity, etc.) (D'Amours, 2009, p. 213). In this case, there may be a situation where employment is precarious, but this does not affect the total income so clearly.

The results of the All-Russian survey of the working population prove that the following signs of employment precarization are most often found in the population over aged 50: the absence of an indefinite employment contract (47%), salary in envelopes (31%), unpaid sick leave and vacation (26% each) (Kuchenkova, 2022, p. 107). It is worth noting that with an increase in their number, job

satisfaction decreases to a lesser extent than in other generational groups. In particular, elderly people show less sensitivity about pay equity. According to the author of the study, this is resulting from the need to agree to less comfortable working conditions due to the risks of job loss. In general, the relationship between the level of employment precarization of the older generation and its subjective assessments of life is statistically insignificant.

### Conclusion

The results obtained indicate that the precarization impact on generational groups is not the same (Tab. 2), however, as well as the labor strategies of population involved in unstable labor relations. Most often, young people find themselves in such a situation, since “nonstandard” jobs provide an opportunity to combine study with work or simply enter the labor market after completing vocational training. The duration of the transition to stable employment depends on many factors, while most are willing to put up with the current state of things: potential benefits in the form of work experience and financial independence compensate for disadvantages, while often the only alternative is unemployment. At the same time, empirical data show how destructive the indirect effects of employment precarization can be. They not only cause serious harm to the mental health of young workers, but also hinder their maturation and socialization, forcing them to constantly be in limbo and think about pressing problems. Ultimately, precarity can become a lifestyle that determines all further behavior, regardless of educational achievements or the prestige of the profession.

The middle generation group is deprived of the attention of the academic community. The reasons for this may be resulting from the fact that precarious employment is observed much less frequently in adulthood, and its manifestations

<sup>21</sup> Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture (Third Edition). ILO. Available at: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms\\_626831.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_626831.pdf) (accessed: August 10, 2022).

Table 2. Drivers and effects of employment precarization in the context of generational groups

	Young generation	Middle generation	Older generation
Drivers of employment precarization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- complexity of the transition from study to a stable job;</li> <li>- early employment related to the need to earn money or gain work experience;</li> <li>- attractiveness of flexible employment forms;</li> <li>- no other alternative to unemployment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- unsuccessful transit from study to stable work and consolidation of precarious habit;</li> <li>- availability of household, family, financial and other obligations;</li> <li>- necessity to finalize before retirement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- loss of the main job after retirement;</li> <li>- forced nature of employment due to lack of funds;</li> <li>- objective factors (for example, poor health) that prevent full-time employment</li> </ul>
Direct effects of employment precarization	Unfavorable working conditions, which are expressed in low wages, lack of social guarantees (payment of sick leave, provision of annual paid leave, contributions to funds, etc.), inability to defend their labor rights, restrictions on career growth, fear of losing their jobs, etc.		
Indirect effects of employment precarization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- prevents socialization and growing up (leaving the parental home, starting a family, gaining financial independence, etc.);</li> <li>- harms mental health and leads to emotional exhaustion;</li> <li>- contributes to the formation of a precarious habitus, where uncertainty is an integral part of life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- prolonged instability leads to deterioration of general health (in particular, development of cardiovascular diseases);</li> <li>- prevents the creation of a family and long-term life planning;</li> <li>- forces to postpone reproductive plans (especially for women);</li> <li>- creates retirement threats</li> </ul>	Relevant information is almost absent. We can assume that, taking into account the direct effects of employment precarization, their impact on the daily life of elderly people will be insignificant compared to the benefits (labor income, physical activity, communication, etc.) that the older generation can receive when experiencing the need for paid work in retirement
Source: own compilation.			

cause a negative reaction from employees burdened with household, family, financial and other obligations. On the contrary, in case of unsuccessful transition from study to permanent work, future planning issues may go far to the periphery, and everyday worries will take center stage and acquire the status of chronic. And if at first these difficulties are insignificant, then over time they will increasingly affect work and daily life creating threats to a decent old age. This applies even to those moments when the income level corresponds to relatively high standards of consumption. The category of pre-retirees is particularly exposed to the risks of employment precarization; this group often has to put up with unfavorable working conditions in order to maintain their current job or directly in the process of employment.

Despite extensive work experience and professionalism, the older generation is not highly competitive in the labor market, and the decision

to continue working in retirement is made under the influence of external circumstances and is largely forced, which creates prerequisites for precarious employment and downward labor mobility. Among the elderly people, work on fixed-term contracts and in the informal sector is common, as well as self-employment, which, although they contribute to maintaining a habitual lifestyle, have the negative sides mentioned above in the article. There is almost no relevant information in the selected scientific literature that could shed light on the indirect effects of employment precarization for the older generation. It may even give the impression that they are not very noticeable. And we tend to agree with it, as long as the fact of employment at retirement age remains a necessity.

In conclusion, it is important to emphasize that the effects of employment precarization are cumulative and over time have an increasingly serious influence on human life. It is no

coincidence that the problems of the transition of young people from study to stable work are at the forefront and arouse the greatest interest, judging by the number of literary sources. However, other generational groups should also remain in the focus of attention, since the instability of labor relations itself generates new behavioral patterns that are reflected in a variety of areas of life. Understanding the complexity of the research area, the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods of collecting information will allow identifying existing patterns and approach the issue of disclosure of cause-and-effect relationships in more detail. It will also be facilitated by a holistic understanding of the essence and methods of studying the process of employment precarization, which is currently disclosed in the categories of “precarious employment”, “precarariat” or simply in the least stable forms of labor relations. Such a variety of points of view has a positive effect on the formation of a general idea of the effects of the phenomenon, although it limits the possibilities of generalizing the research results. In this regard, the use of software products for automated selection of scientific sources and analysis of their content (according to the MAXQDA type) is promising, which will reduce the complexity of forming an information base, as well as improve its quality and completeness.

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Received August 22, 2022.