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## **Ordinary Atypical Workers, Participation within the Firm and Innovation: A Theoretical Endeavor and Empirical Outlook\*\***

This paper offers a theoretical exploration and empirical outlook towards a triptych heretofore not properly investigated: atypical work (e.g., self-employed, agency workers, and workers with a fixed-term contract), participation within the firm, and innovation. How, it must be asked, can and will atypical workers contribute to innovation through participation within the firm or, from another angle, how can participation within the firm contribute to atypical workers willingness to express innovative behavior? For the answer researchers have to learn far more about two distinct groups of atypical workers: ‘external knowledge workers’ who are highly educated and explicitly hired for innovation, and ‘ordinary atypical workers’ who are neither highly educated nor hired for innovational purposes. For two reasons, the focus here is on the latter: we (1) presume and show, in contrast to what many scholars assume, that ordinary atypical workers can contribute to innovation in a direct and positive way, and (2) argue that participation within the firm is the key for these workers potential contribution to innovation.

**Key words:** atypical work, flexible labour, freelancers, fixed-term contracts, temp agency work, (direct and representative) participation within the firm, social and technical innovation

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\*\* Article received: December 3, 2010

Revised version accepted after double blind review: August 23, 2011.