



## Questions and Answers about Part-Time Work: A Sloan Work & Family Research Network Fact Sheet

### Introduction

The Sloan Work and Family Research Network has prepared Fact Sheets which provide statistical answers to some important questions about work-family and work/life issues. This Fact Sheet includes statistics about Part-Time Work. [Last updated: December 2006.]

### ? Who works part-time jobs?

- ✔ **Fact 1** "70% of part-time workers are women" (BPW Foundation, 2004, p. 1).
- ✔ **Fact 2** "Overall, women's rate of part-time work is nearly triple that of men's (22%, as compared to under 8% among men)" (Comfort, Johnson, & Wallace, 2003, p. 12).
- ✔ **Fact 3** "Among employees who work part-time, 68 percent of women and 51 percent of men do so voluntarily" (Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prottas, 2002, p. 10).
- ✔ **Fact 4** "Married women with young children are most likely to be interested in part-time work, whereas unmarried, childless men express least interest" (Wharton & Blair-Loy, 2002, p. 50).
- ✔ **Fact 5** According to a recent Canadian survey, "Women part-timers are roughly equally distributed across all age categories from 15 to 54, peaking in the prime childrearing years of 35-44 (27% of women part-timers are in this age category). Men part-timers are more highly concentrated in the 15-24 year age group (32%)" (Comfort, Johnson, & Wallace, 2003, p. 4).
- ✔ **Fact 6** "Employee interest in part-time work in Hong Kong is roughly twice as high as employee interest in the United States and England" (Wharton & Blair-Loy, 2002, p. 56).
- ✔ **Fact 7** "Hong Kong finance professionals are much more likely than their American and British counterparts to be interested in reduced-hour arrangements. American finance professionals are least likely to express interest in working part-time..." (Wharton & Blair-Loy, 2002, p. 32).

✓ **Fact 8** "...Hong Kong single men are more likely than single women and married men in England and in the United States to report interest in part-time work" (Wharton & Blair-Loy, 2002, p. 54-55).

### ? How common is part-time work?

✓ **Fact 1** "About 10% of all professionals now work part-time" (Corwin, Frost, & Lawrence, 2001, p. 121).

✓ **Fact 2** Fifty-three percent of organizations allow some employees to move from full-time to part-time and back again while remaining in the same position or level. (Bond, Galinsky, Kim, & Brownfield, 2005, p. 6).

✓ **Fact 3** "Over half of the establishments (57%) report having at least one part-time employee on staff" (Comfort, Johnson, & Wallace, 2003, p. 12).

### ? Why do people work part-time?

✓ **Fact 1** According to data gathered from a national Canadian survey, "When asked, 'What motivated your decision to work part-time', answers were: Family was my priority (60.3%), Needed the stimulation (23.8%), Full-time too stressful (11.1%), Liked the hours offered (7.9%), For the money (7.3%), and Desire to keep current (6.3%)" (Higgins, Duxbury, & Johnson, 2000, p. 26).

✓ **Fact 2** "The part-time employment decision of married women appears to have less to do with net earnings than the full-time employment decision and is less wage and price of child care elastic than either the full-time or part-time employment decision of single mothers" (Connelly & Kimmel, 2003, p. 770).

✓ **Fact 3** According to data gathered from a national Canadian survey, "when asked, 'What were you doing before you started to work part-time', 64.1% responded that they were employed full time, and 31.3% responded that they were home with children" (Higgins, Duxbury, & Johnson, 2000, p. 26).

✓ **Fact 4** "...the large majority of career women (86%) had been employed full time prior to opting for part-time employment. In contrast, less than half of part-time earners (47%) had been employed full time" (Higgins, Duxbury, & Johnson, 2000, p. 25).

### ? What are the advantages of part-time work?

✓ **Fact 1** "Part-time professionals reported less work-to-family conflict in terms of interference and strain than full-time professionals (2.4, and 3.0 on a scale from 1-5)" (Hill, Vjollca, & Ferris, 2004, p. 288).

✓ **Fact 2** Respondents working part-time reported the advantages of this work schedule at home as: "More time for kids (50%), my mood is improved (35.5%), more time for kids' activities (30.6%), and less hectic, less stressed (24.2%)" (Higgins, Duxbury, & Johnson, 2000, p. 27).

✓ **Fact 3** "Part-time mothers reported significantly more success than full-time mothers in managing the demands of their work and family lives" (Hill, Vjollca, & Ferris, 2004, p. 288).

✔ **Fact 4** "Part-time workers had significantly lower levels of work-to-family interference than their full-time counterparts, a much greater reduction in time management difficulty for earners, and a higher life satisfaction" (Higgins, Duxbury, & Johnson, 2000, p. 24).

✔ **Fact 5** Respondents working part-time reported the advantages of this work schedule as: "More relaxed, less stress (29.6%), avoid office politics (27.8%), enjoy social aspects (25.9%), more productive (16.7%), and flexible hours (9.3%)" (Higgins, Duxbury, & Johnson, 2000, p. 28).

✔ **Fact 6** "Nearly 90% of part-time workers (90% of women and 86% of men) were satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs" (Comfort, Johnson, & Wallace, 2003, p. 19).

✔ **Fact 7** "...there are no overall differences between PT and FT employees on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intention to leave and satisfaction with facets of the job...but one difference found was that FT employees are more involved with their jobs than PT employees are" (Thorsteinson, 2003, p.169).



#### What are the disadvantages of working part-time?

✔ **Fact 1** "...part-timers were much less satisfied with their pay and benefits (72% of women and 76% of men reported satisfaction in this area) than they were with their jobs in general" (Comfort, Johnson, & Wallace, 2003, p. 20).

✔ **Fact 2** "Only 17% of part-timers received a promotion at any time since being with their current employer" (Comfort, Johnson, & Wallace, 2003, p. 21).

✔ **Fact 3** Respondents working part-time reported the disadvantages of this work schedule at home as: "Hectic, stressful (33.3%), arranging part-time child care (27.8%), and housework waits for me (22.2%)" (Higgins, Duxbury, & Johnson, 2000, p. 26).

✔ **Fact 4** Respondents working part-time reported the disadvantages of this work schedule as: "Communication problems (42.9%), workload too great (23.8%), part-time employee stigma (21.4%), and reduced advancement opportunities (19.0%)" (Higgins, Duxbury, & Johnson, 2000, p. 28).

✔ **Fact 5** "...only 2% of men and 5% of women part-timers are managers, suggesting the incompatibility of part-time hours with management roles" (Comfort, Johnson, & Wallace, 2003, p. 16).

✔ **Fact 6** "...part-time professionals reported significantly less career optimism and work success than full-time professionals" (Hill, Vjollca, & Ferris, 2004, p. 288).



#### Do part-time workers have health insurance?

✔ **Fact 1** According to the 2005 NSE, "33 percent of companies offer full or pro-rated benefits to part-time workers" (Bond, Galinsky, Kim, & Brownfield, 2005, p. 22).

✔ **Fact 2** "In 2001, 18.5% of regular part-time workers had health insurance coverage provided by their employer, [compared to] 69% of regular full-time employees" (Wenger, 2003, p. 7).

✔ **Fact 3** According to a study of municipal employers, "There are significantly less benefits provided to part-time workers as opposed to full-time workers. Part-time employees are covered for the following: Vacation (44%), Sick Leave (18%), Pension (34%), Health Insurance (21%), Life Insurance (18%), Dental Insurance (16%). More full time employees are covered for the same benefits: Vacation (95%), Sick Leave (56%), Pension (79%), Health Insurance (76%), Life Insurance (87%), Dental Insurance (59%)" (Robert, 2003, p. 441).



### Are there differences between male and female part-time workers?

✔ **Fact 1** "...56% of men part-timers earn under \$12 per hour, as compared to 46% of women. Men surpass women at the high end of the scale, however-11% of men part-timers earn \$30 or more, as compared to 8% of women" (Comfort, Johnson, & Wallace, 2003, p. 18).

✔ **Fact 2** "Women who work part-time are nearly twice as likely as their male counterparts to have completed university or college (39% of women versus 25% of men)" (Comfort, Johnson, & Wallace, 2003, p. 15).

✔ **Fact 3** "Women part-timers (19%) are more likely than men (12%) to report having (supervisory) responsibility for the work of at least one employee" (Comfort, Johnson, & Wallace, 2003, p. 21).

✔ **Fact 4** "Two thirds of women part-timers are married or living with a partner, as compared to half of men; and 38% have children under 16, as compared to only 26% of men" (Comfort, Johnson, & Wallace, 2003, p. 15-16).



### How does having children influence part-time work?

✔ **Fact 1** "Working part-time during pregnancy increased, from 5 percent of first-time mothers in 1961-1965 to 11 percent in 1996-2000" (Johnson & Downs, 2005, p. 4-5).

✔ **Fact 2** When women were preparing for the birth of their first child, "full-time workers were more likely to use paid leave benefits than part-time workers (48 percent and 12 percent, respectively), while part-time workers were more likely to quit their jobs (45 percent) than were full-time workers (22 percent)" (Johnson & Downs, 2005, p. 10).

✔ **Fact 3** In 2002, "[m]ore mothers who worked full-time paid for child care (40 percent) than mothers who worked part-time (29 percent)" (Johnson & Downs, 2005, p. 16).

✔ **Fact 4** "For married and single mothers, those working full-time pay more (for child care) per week but less per hour than those working part-time" (Connelly & Kimmel, 2003, p. 768).

✓ **Fact 5** "Among part-time married and single mothers, relative (child) care was used the most (59.2% of married mothers employed part-time and 52.5% of single mothers employed part-time) while home-based (child) care was used the least (15.5% of married mothers employed part-time and 16.1% of single mothers employed part-time" (Connelly & Kimmel, 2003, p. 769).

✓ **Fact 6** "...the price of child care is a crucial ingredient for part-time employment of single mothers just as it is for full-time employment, while for married women, child care costs have very little effect on part-time employment status" (Connelly & Kimmel, 2003, p. 770).

### ? Which employers hire part-time workers?

✓ **Fact 1** "Most notable are the industries in which men's rates (of part-time employment) are high relative to their rates in other industries: real estate (13%), education and health services (16%), and again, retail (20%" (Comfort, Johnson, & Wallace, 2003, p. 13).

✓ **Fact 2** "...the use of part-timers rises with company size, with 91% of large establishments with 1,000 or more employees reporting part-timers on staff" (Comfort, Johnson, & Wallace, 2003, p. 12).

✓ **Fact 3** "Sixty-two percent of establishments for whom a labour-cost reduction strategy was important employed part-timers, as compared to 49% among those for whom it was not. Similarly, 63% of establishments that experienced a change aimed at cost reduction used part-timers, compared to 56% of those that did not" (Comfort, Johnson, & Wallace, 2003, p. 14).

✓ **Fact 4** "...the presence of union or collective agreement appears to be unrelated to the use of part-timers (roughly 57% of establishments report that they employ part-timers, irrespective of the presence of a union)" (Comfort, Johnson, & Wallace, 2003, p. 13).

The Network has additional resources related to this topic.

1. You can find a topic page for **Research/Teaching** dedicated to Part-Time Work at:  
<http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/academics.php> (choose 'Part-Time Work' from the Topics List).

If you are interested in this topic from the **State Policy** or **Workplace Practice** perspective,

- a) go back to our home page [www.bc.edu/wfnetwork/](http://www.bc.edu/wfnetwork/)
  - b) click on the appropriate user group
  - c) and choose 'Part-Time Work' from the Topics List
2. Our database of academic literature contains the citations and annotations of literature related to the issue of Part-Time Work. You can connect to this database at:  
[http://library.bc.edu/F?func=find-b-0&local\\_base=BCL\\_WF](http://library.bc.edu/F?func=find-b-0&local_base=BCL_WF)



## References

Bond, J., Galinsky, E., Kim, S., & Brownfield, E. (2005). *National study of employers*. New York, NY: Families and Work Institute.

This study was designed to build on the 1998 Business Work-Life Study and therefore provides data on changes that have occurred over the last 7 years. "The 2005 NSE sample included 1,092 employers with 50 or more employees- 66 percent are for-profit companies and 34 percent are nonprofit organizations; 44 percent operate at only one location, while 56 percent have operations at more than one location...(The survey was conducted) using telephone interviews with human resource directors. Harris Interactive staff conducted the interviews from September 23, 2004 to April 5, 2005. Employers were selected from Dun & Bradstreet lists, using a stratified random sampling procedure in which selection was proportional to the number of people employed by each company to ensure a large enough sample of large organizations. The response rate was 38 percent, based on the percentage of all companies on the call-list that completed interviews" (Bond, Galinsky, Kim, & Brownfield, 2005, p. 1).

Bond, J.T., Thompson, C., Galinsky, E., & Prottas, D. (2002). *Highlights of the national study of the changing workforce*. New York, NY: Families and Work Institute.

"The NSCW surveys representative samples of the nation's workforce once every five years (1992, 1997, 2002). Sample sizes average 3,500, including both wage and salaried employees and self-employed workers" (Highlights of the National Study of the Changing Workforce, 2002, p. v).

Several of the questions in the National Study of the Changing Workforce were taken from or based upon questions in the Quality of Employment Survey (QES) conducted three times by the Department of Labor from 1969 to 1977. Although the NSCW is more comprehensive than the QES in addressing issues related to both work and personal life and has a stronger business perspective, having comparable data from over a 25 year period has provided a unique opportunity to look at trends over time. The 2002 NSCW uses 25 years of trend data to examine five topics in depth: women in the workforce; dual earner couples, the role of technology in employees' lives on and off the job, work-life supports on the job, and working for oneself versus someone else (Highlights of the National Study of the Changing Workforce, 2002).

To read the Executive Summary or the press release, and to purchase the full report as a PDF E-product, please visit <http://www.familiesandwork.org/announce/2002NSCW.html>

BPW Foundation. (2004). *101 facts on the status of working women*. Business and Professional Women/USA and the BPW Foundation, Washington, DC.

The BPW Foundation and Business and Professional Women/USA compiled a list of relevant statistics concerning women in the workforce from numerous sources such as the U.S. Census Bureau and other publications regarding women and work, family, health, higher education, care giving, government wage earnings, etc.

Comfort, D., Johnson, K., & Wallace, D. (2003). *The evolving workplace series. Part-time work and family-friendly practices in Canadian workplaces*. Retrieved from, <http://www11.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/cs/sp/hrsdc/arb/publications/research/2003-000183/page06.shtml>

"WES was conducted for the first time during the summer (employer survey part) and fall of 1999 (employee survey part). Just over 6,350 workplaces and about 24,600 employees responded to the survey, representing response rates of 94% and 83%, respectively. The employer sample is longitudinal...The inaugural WES survey collected data from 6,351 out of the 9,144 sampled employers. The remaining employers were a combination of workplaces... The frame for the employee component of WES was based on lists of employees made available to interviewers by the selected workplaces..." (p. 2).

Connelly, R., & Kimmel, J. (2003). Marital status and full-time/part-time work status in child care choices. *Applied Economics*, 35, 761-777.

"The data set used in this analysis comes from overlapping 1992 and 1993 panels of the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP). These data provide a nationally representative data set for the second half of 1994 with sufficient information on child care expenditures and mode as well as extensive employment information. The study limits its sample to those women with at least one child under the age of six. These samples include 4241 married women and 1523 single women, both with at least one child under the age of six." (p. 763)

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Corwin, V., Frost, P.J., & Lawrence, T.B. (2001). Five strategies of successful part-time work. *Harvard Business Review* 79(7), 121-128.

This two-year study examines issues concerning work-life balance in the United States and Canada. The study included interviews from 30 part-time professionals in eight organizations and 27 of their co-workers including engineers, financial analysts, and consultants, etc. About 80% of the part-time workers interviewed were women.

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Higgins, C., Duxbury, L., & Johnson, K. (2000). Part-time work for women: does it really help balance work and family? *Human Resource Management*, 39(1), 17-32.

The survey data presented in the article come from a national study. Questionnaires were returned by 22,836 respondents from two sources: a random sample of all Canadian federal public sector employees working at the National Capital Region (6,287) and a cross-section of private sector employees from large, geographically diverse organizations (16,549).

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Hill, J., Vjollca, M., & Ferris, M. (2004) New-concept part-time employment as a work-family adaptive strategy for women professionals with small children. *Family Relations*, 53(3), 282-292.

This study used a sub sample of respondents from the US working in professional positions with preschool children at home (n=897), of which 529 were mothers and 368 were fathers, and 611 worked full-time positions, and 286 workers new-concept part-time positions. Female new-concept part-time professionals (n=279) and female full-time professionals (n=250) were compared.

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Johnson, J.O., & Downs, B. (2005). *Maternity leaves and employment patterns of first-time mothers: 1961-2000*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau.

"The 2001 panel of the nationally representative Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) included a fertility topical module in the second wave of interviews conducted June-September 2001. Information was collected on the birth dates of the first and last children born to all women 15 to 64 years old at the time of the survey. Women whose first child was born between 1991 and the survey date were also asked a series of questions concerning their employment history before and after the birth, as well as their receipt of maternity leave benefits. Data from this survey were used in combination with similar information collected in the 1984, 1985, and 1996 SIPP panels to provide an extended series of employment and maternity leave data between 1961 and 2000" (p. 1).

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Robert, G. F. (2003). Municipal government part-time employee benefits practices. *Public Personnel Management*, 32(3), 435-454.

Sample of 358 local governments... "The sample was generated from a national survey of 1831 municipal government personnel managers. The mailing lists were purchased from the National League of Cities (NLC) and consisted of member municipalities, the vast majority of which were greater than 10,000 in population....The NLC sample is not representative of all municipal governments of more than 10,000 in population, however, as a significant number of smaller municipalities choose not to hire a personnel director or benefits manager. This sample therefore may over represent municipal governments that possess more sophisticated and progressive human resources practices given the professionalizing influence of full-time personnel directors...There was an overall response rate of 19.5 percent...When the sample is compared to national data on form of government and population, the sample is reasonably representative" (p.437).

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Thorsteinson, T. J. (2003). Job attitudes of part-time vs. full-time workers: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 76, 151-177.

"A meta-analysis was conducted (k=38, n=51, 231) to examine the size of difference between full-and part-time employees on job attitudes." (p.151)

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Wenger, J. (2003). *Share of workers in 'nonstandard' jobs declines*. Economic Policy Institute, Washington D.C.

In February 1995, "the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) surveyed workers for the first of its Contingent Work Supplements to the Current Population Survey (CPS). The BLS conducted biennial follow-up surveys in 1997, 1999, and 2001. The 1995 and 1997 data were analyzed by the Economic Policy Institute in the reports, *Nonstandard Work*, *Substandard Jobs* (1997), *Managing Work and Family* (1997), and *No Shortage of 'Nonstandard' Jobs* (1999). This report on the 1999 and 2001 surveys updates EPI's work in this area using methodologically consistent definitions of nonstandard work." (p. 1)

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Wharton, A.S., & Blair-Loy, M. (2002). The "overtime culture" in a global corporation. *Work and Occupations*, 29(1), 32-63.

"In 1998, we received permission from International Finance to study work-family policies in their organization...Our respondents are urban, high-level financial professionals in the United States (in three large cities), Hong Kong, and England (London) ...Of the respondents, 160 were in the United States, 38 were in London, and the remainder (62) were located in Hong Kong." (pp. 41-42)

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