



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

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### Introduction

The Sloan Work and Family Research Network has prepared Fact Sheets that 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: June 2009)

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### 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** "Whereas almost 36% of EU women work less than 35 hours a week according to the most recent figures (and 58% less than 38 hours), only 10% of men work less than 35 hours a week (30% less than 38 hours)" (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2005, p. 3).
- ✔ **Fact 4** "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 5** According to a recent Canadian survey, "[w]omen 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 et al., 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** "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).



### 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 et al., 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 et al., 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 et al., 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 et al., 2003, pp. 15-16).



### How common is part-time work?

- ✔ **Fact 1** “Overall in Europe, the proportion of part-time work has increased from 13% to 18% in the last 15 years (in the EU15, the proportion of part time has risen to more than 20%)” (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2005, p. 2).
- ✔ **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 et al., 2003, p. 12).



### 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** “Part-time mothers reported significantly more success than full-time mothers in managing the demands of their work and family lives” (Hill et al., 2004, p. 288).
- ✔ **Fact 3** “Nearly 90% of part-time workers (90% of women and 86% of men) were satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs” (Comfort et al., 2003, p. 19).
- ✔ **Fact 4** “...[T]here 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** "...[P]art-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 et al., 2003, p. 20).
- ✔ **Fact 2** "Only 17% of part-timers received a promotion at any time since being with their current employer" (Comfort et al., 2003, p. 21).
- ✔ **Fact 3** "...[O]nly 2% of men and 5% of women part-timers are managers, suggesting the incompatibility of part-time hours with management roles" (Comfort et al., 2003, p. 16).



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

- ✔ **Fact 1** According to the 2005 National Study of Employers, "33 percent of companies offer full or pro-rated benefits to part-time workers" (Bond et al., 2005, p. 22).
- ✔ **Fact 2** According to a study of municipal employers, "[t]here 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).
- ✔ **Fact 3** "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).



### What type of schedule do parents prefer to 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, pp. 4-5).
- ✔ **Fact 2** "Mothers with younger children (ages 0 to 4 years) also are less likely to prefer full-time work today (16%) than a decade ago (31%). A narrow plurality (37%) preferred part-time work in 1997; today 48% of mothers with younger children prefer part-time work, while 36% prefer not working outside the home and 16% prefer full-time work" (Pew Research Center, 2007, p. 3).
- ✔ **Fact 3** Among part-time working mothers, "eight-in-ten (80%) says that part-time work is their preferred option. Part-time work is also the preferred option of about half (49%) of mothers who work full-time and a third (33%) of mothers who don't work outside the home" (Pew Research Center, 2007, p. 3).
- ✔ **Fact 4** "Six-in-ten (up from 48% in 1997) of today's working mothers say part-time work would be



their ideal, and another one-in-five (19%) say she would prefer not working at all outside the home” (Pew Research Center, 2007, p. 1).

✔ **Fact 5** “Among working mothers with minor children (ages 17 and under), just one-in-five (21%) say full-time work is the ideal situation for them, down from the 32% who said this back in 1997” (Pew Research Center, 2007, p. 1).

✔ **Fact 6** Among at-home mothers with minor children (ages 17 and under), “just 16%... say their ideal situation would be to work full time outside the home, down from the 24% who felt that way in 1997” (Pew Research Center, 2007, p. 1).

✔ **Fact 7** “Unmarried mothers are much less likely to prefer full-time work today (26%) than a decade ago (49%). A plurality of today’s unmarried mothers now prefer part-time work (46%), while 26% prefer not working outside the home and 26% prefer full-time work” (Pew Research Center, 2007, p. 3).

✔ **Fact 8** “About seven-in ten (72%) men with minor age children say that full-time work is their ideal situation, while 12% say they would prefer to work part-time and 16% say they would prefer not working outside the home” (Pew Research Center, 2007, p. 3).



#### How do part-time working parents organize child care?

✔ **Fact 1** 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 2** 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).

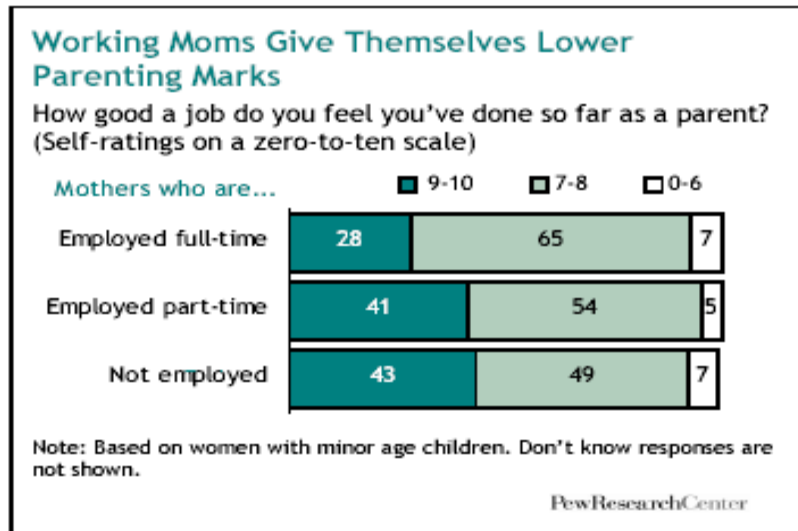
✔ **Fact 3** “For married and single mothers, those working full-time pay more [for child care] per week but less per hour than those working part-time” (Connelly & Kimmel, 2003, p. 768).

✔ **Fact 4** “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).



#### How do part-time working mothers rate themselves as parents?

✔ **Fact 1** “Mothers working full-time give themselves slightly lower ratings as parents, on average, than do at-home mothers or mothers employed part-time” (Pew Research Center, 2007, p. 2).



## ? 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 et al., 2003, p. 13).
- ✓ **Fact 2** “...[T]he 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 et al., 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 et al., 2003, p. 14).
- ✓ **Fact 4** “...[T]he 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 et al., 2003, p. 13).

The Network has additional resources related to this topic.

1. Visit a topic page on Part-Time Work at: <http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/topic.php?id=10>  
Topic pages provide resources and information, including statistics, definitions, overviews & briefs, bills & statutes, interviews, teaching resources, audio/video, suggested readings, and links.
2. Visit our database of academic literature with 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-&local\\_base=BCL\\_WF](http://library.bc.edu/F?func=find-b-&local_base=BCL_WF)



## References

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Bond, J., Galinsky, E., Kim, S., & Brownfield, E. (2005). *National Study of Employers*. New York: Families and Work Institute. Retrieved from <http://familiesandwork.org/site/research/reports/2005nse.pdf>

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).

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Bond, J. T., Thompson, C., Galinsky, E., & Prottas, D. (2002). *Highlights of the National Study of the Changing Workforce*. New York: Families and Work Institute. Retrieved from <http://www.familiesandwork.org/site/research/summary/nscw2002summ.pdf>

"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" (Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prottas, 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 (Bond et al., 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>

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BPW Foundation. (2004). *101 facts on the status of working women*. Washington, DC: Business and Professional Women/USA and the BPW Foundation. Retrieved from <http://www.bpwusa.org/files/public/101FactsonWorkingwomen2005.pdf.pdf>

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, caregiving, government wage earnings, etc.

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Comfort, D., Johnson, K., & Wallace, D. (2003). *Part–time work and family–friendly practices in Canadian workplaces*. Ottawa, Ontario: Statistics Canada. Retrieved from <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/cs/sp/sdc/pkrf/publications/research/2003-000183/71584NO6E.pdf>

"WES [Workplace and Employee Survey] 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..." (Comfort, Johnson, & Wallace, 2003, 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." (Connelly & Kimmel, 2003, p. 763)

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European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. (2005). *Fifteen years of working conditions in the EU: Charting the trends*. Dublin, Ireland: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/pubdocs/2006/85/en/1/ef0685en.pdf>

"The European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) is carried out every five years by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, a tripartite European Agency based in Dublin. The questionnaire is developed by the European Foundation team in close cooperation with an expert questionnaire development group. This group comprises representatives of the European social partners, other EU bodies (EU Commission, Eurostat, European Agency for Safety and Health at Work), international organisations (OECD, ILO), national statistical institutes, as well as leading European experts in the field. The sample of the EWCS is representative of persons in employment (according to the Eurostat definition this comprises both employees and the self-employed) in the countries covered for the respective periods. In each country, the EWCS sample followed a multi-stage, stratified and clustered design with a random walk procedure for the selection of the respondents at the last stage. All interviews were conducted face-to-face in the respondent's own household" (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2005, p. 8).

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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, 282-292.

This study used a sub sample of respondents from the United States working in professional positions with preschool children at home ( $n = 897$ ), of which 529 were mothers and 368 were fathers; 611 worked full-time positions and 286 worked 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, DC: 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" (Johnson & Downs, 2005, p. 1).

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Pew Research Center. (2007). *From 1997 to 2007: Fewer mothers prefer full-time work*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://pewresearch.org/assets/social/pdf/WomenWorking.pdf>

"The Pew survey was conducted by telephone from February 16 through March 14, 2007 among a randomly selected, nationally-representative sample of 2,020 adults. The margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points. Many of the analyses presented in this report are based on responses among selected subgroups. Results based on working mothers (259 respondents to the survey) have a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 8 percentage points. Results based on at-home mothers (153 respondents) have a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 11 percentage points. Whenever possible, these findings have been compared with a nationally-representative survey of 1,101 women conducted in 1997 by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. The subgroup of women in the 1997 survey who are working mothers (317 respondents) and at-home mothers (140 respondents) have a margin of sampling error of plus or minus six and nine percentage points, respectively" (Pew Research Center, 2007, p. 2).



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

Study used a 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" (Robert, 2003, 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." (Thorsteinson, 2003, p.151)

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Wenger, J. (2003). *Share of workers in 'nonstandard' jobs declines*. Washington DC: Economic Policy Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.policyarchive.org/bitstream/handle/10207/8144/bp137.pdf?sequence=1>

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." (Wenger, 2003, p. 1)

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Wharton, A. S., & Blair-Loy, M. (2002). The "overtime culture" in a global corporation. *Work and Occupations, 29*, 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." (Wharton & Blair-Loy, 2002, pp. 41-42)

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