

A profile of women on part-time schedules

During 1977, 1 of 5 employed adult women worked part time by choice; the average part-timer was married with school-age children and worked nearly 20 hours per week, holding a clerical or sales position

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The growth of the American economy, especially among service industries, has spurred the expansion of part-time employment. Job opportunities have opened for men and women, students, and older workers. But the majority of the 13 million persons working part time (fewer than 35 hours per week) by choice in 1977 were adult women (age 20 and over). Of every 20 voluntary part-timers,¹ 11 were women, 4 were men, and 5 were teenagers. (See chart 1.)

An employed woman is more likely, of course, to be working full time. In 1977, women on full-time schedules outnumbered voluntary part-timers more than 3-to-1.² A decade earlier, the full-time/part-time ratio was only slightly higher; in recent years, the numbers of full- and part-time workers have grown at about the same rate. Decennial census data show that between 1940 and 1970 almost 40 percent of the increase in the number of working women³ was in part-time employment. The number of women on part-time schedules more than quadrupled, whereas the number who worked full time grew more slowly, about doubling the 1940 figure. Although male part-time workers had been more numerous than their female counterparts in 1940, the opposite was true in 1970.

Part-time women workers continue to be an increasingly important segment of the population.

The following tabulation shows that greater proportions of wives and adult women who never married were employed part time in 1977 than in 1970:⁴

	1970	1977
Total, women	8.9	9.5
Never married	8.2	9.1
Married	9.7	10.9
Other marital status	6.4	6.2

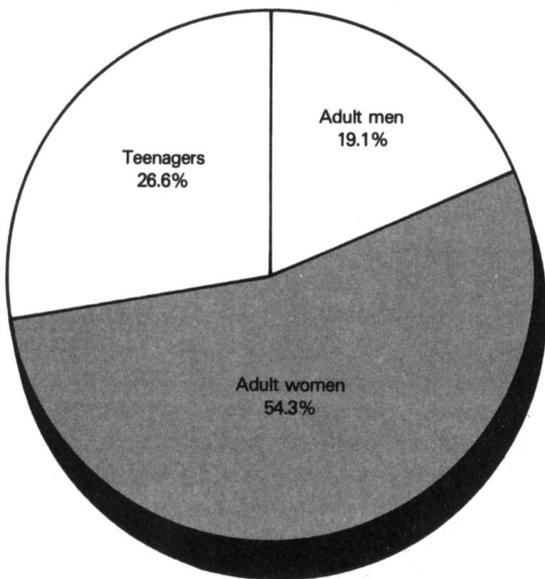
This article is concerned primarily with women who worked part time by choice in 1977—who they are, in what industries and occupations they worked, and their working hours and pay. To explain their increasing numbers, we will analyze demographic developments and use decennial census data to examine industrial and occupational changes since 1940.

Employment impetus

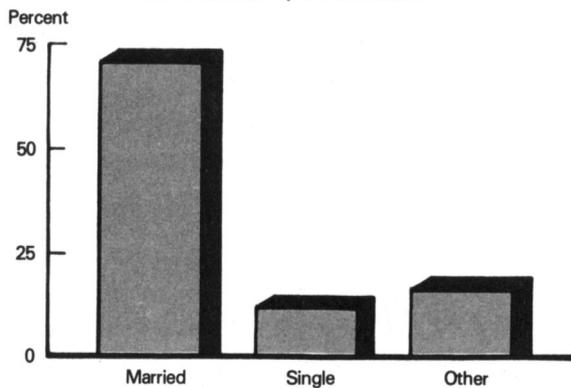
Demographic changes. Changes in marriage and childbearing patterns help account for some of the rise in the number of working women. For example, women's median age at marriage, which had been declining until the mid-1950's, has risen rapidly, especially during the 1970's.⁵ Birth rates and average family size have been declining, caused by factors such as married couples remaining childless longer than did couples two decades

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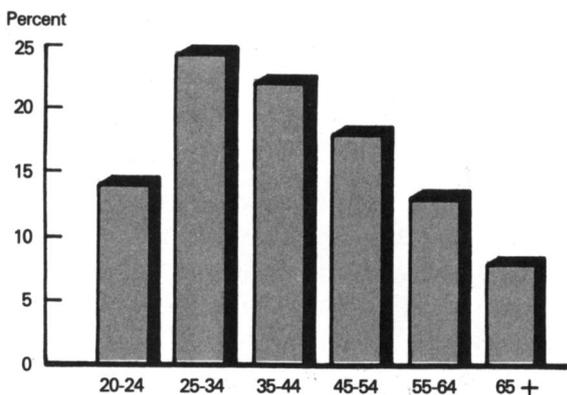
Chart 1. Voluntary part-time workers in 1977
(annual averages)



Adult women, by marital status



Adult women, by age



earlier. Half of the women married between 1970 and 1974 had not borne a child after 2 years of marriage.⁶ In fact, nearly half of all couples have no dependent children at home.

Perhaps more important for explaining the growth in the number of part-time employees is the increasing tendency of married women, including those with children, to work outside the home. Large advances in the number of married women who work resulted in an employment-population ratio of 43 percent in 1977 for married women. Thirty years earlier (April 1947), the figure was 19 percent. Nearly three-fourths of all adult female part-timers are married. (See chart 1.)

Indicative of both social and demographic changes is the decreasing proportion of women who are not working or seeking work because of home responsibilities. Over a 10-year period (1967 to 1977), the proportion of the adult female population outside the work force primarily because of home responsibilities dropped about 10 percentage points to 44 percent.

Shift from goods to service jobs. Different rates of growth among industries have been among the factors which have facilitated the entry of women into paid employment. Specifically, the long-term shift in the pattern of job growth, away from goods and toward services, has opened numerous opportunities for part-time employment, as service-producing industries have been increasing their employment of part-timers relative to full-timers. A familiar example is the addition of a short-hour shift by food stores and other establishments which have attempted to meet the needs of customers who cannot shop during daytime hours.

Between 1940 and 1970, all of the major service-producing industries, but most notably trade and services, posted gains in part-time employment of women. In 1940, the industries with the largest number of women at work part time were manufacturing and services; however, by 1970 trade had replaced manufacturing as one of the leading sources of part-time jobs for women. More specifically, the strongest growth occurred in retail trade and in professional and related services. In fact, professional services surpassed personal services as the largest employer of women regardless of their work schedules. (See table 1.)

In many industries, a large proportion of female workers are on part-time schedules. Nearly one-third or more of the women in the following industries worked part time in 1970: agricultural services; wholesale trade of farm products; most types of retail trade establishments (for example,

food stores, drug stores, department stores, eating and drinking places); real estate; business services (such as employment agencies, consulting services); all personal services (including private households, lodging places, beauty shops); all entertainment and recreation services (including theaters, bowling alleys); museums, art galleries, and zoos; religious organizations; nonprofit membership organizations; and the postal service. Women part-timers in direct selling establishments—that is, businesses with door-to-door sales—outnumbered their full-time female counterparts 4 to 1.

The trend toward a more service-oriented job market, particularly for those who want part-time work, is also reflected in 1977 data, as nearly 1 in 3 of the women in retail trade, and 1 in 4 of those in service industries (such as education and medical) were voluntarily employed part time. In contrast, manufacturing hired only 1 part-time worker to every 18 adult women employed in the industry; the same was true for public utilities. Generally, industries with the largest concentrations of women employees were the most likely to employ women for part-time jobs. Although construction and transportation had relatively high proportions of part-time workers among the women employees, these industries are not large employers of women. (See table 2.)

Furthermore, very few women part-time workers are now, or had been in earlier years, self-employed; 7 percent of all voluntary women part-timers in 1977 were self-employed.⁸ The majority of female part-time nonagricultural workers (61 percent) were wage and salary employees in the private service sector of the economy; 17 percent

were in the public sector. (Only 2 percent were unpaid family workers.)

Along with knowing *where* or in which sectors of the economy part-time workers are most apt to be found, we need to know *what* the part-time worker does. That is, a more complete sense of the character of the demand for such workers is provided by adding an examination of their occupational characteristics (what they do) to the examination of their industrial mix (where they work). Moreover, the changing pattern of the occupational distribution of women working part time vividly reflects the shift away from goods-producing jobs towards more service-producing jobs.

About equal proportions of women working part time held jobs as white-collar, blue-collar, and service workers in 1940, but by 1970 the majority were working in white-collar occupations. (See table 3.) In contrast, full-time women workers were concentrated in white-collar occupations over the entire 30-year span. Operatives and kindred workers had been the largest subgroup of part-time women workers but fell behind clerical and sales employees, service workers other than domestic, and professional and semiprofessional workers by 1970. Four of 10 women at work part time in 1970 held jobs in clerical, sales, and kindred fields, up from more than 1 of 10 in 1940. Among women at work full time, the changes have been less dramatic, as sales and clerical workers increased from 3.5 to 4.5 of 10. The number of women who were part-time operatives and kindred workers decreased from 3 to 1 of 10 between 1940 and 1970; there was little change in the proportion of

Table 1. Women at work by full- or part-time status and industry, selected years, 1940-70

[In percent]

Industry	Part time				Full time			
	1940	1950	1960	1970	1940	1950	1960	1970
Total, women at work (in thousands)	1,936	3,007	5,658	8,678	8,270	11,635	14,797	19,257
Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries	7.9	10.0	3.5	1.5	3.4	2.2	1.4	1.0
Goods-producing	25.1	16.0	13.8	13.0	21.9	26.7	26.2	24.1
Mining .....	.1	.1	.1	.1	.1	.2	.2	.2
Construction .....	.3	.6	.7	.8	.4	.7	.8	1.0
Manufacturing	24.7	15.3	13.0	12.1	21.4	25.9	25.2	22.9
Service-producing	67.1	74.0	82.8	85.6	74.7	71.1	72.4	74.9
Transportation, communication, and public utilities	1.2	1.5	1.8	2.6	3.8	5.2	4.6	4.4
Wholesale and retail trade	13.5	20.9	25.2	28.2	20.4	23.7	20.5	19.2
Finance, insurance, and real estate	1.9	2.5	3.7	4.4	5.0	5.8	7.1	7.7
Business and repair services .....	.5	1.0	1.9	2.6	.8	1.3	1.6	2.3
Personal services	27.7	25.1	22.7	12.8	25.2	12.5	10.3	7.1
Entertainment and recreation services	1.4	1.8	1.4	1.3	.6	.7	.5	.5
Professional and related services	19.7	19.1	23.7	31.1	15.1	17.1	22.3	28.3
Public administration	1.1	2.0	2.4	2.7	3.8	4.9	5.4	5.3

NOTE: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding. Data for 1940 and 1950 refer to age 14 and over; data for 1960 and 1970 refer to age 16 and over.

SOURCE: Decennial censuses.

women working full time in these occupations. Although the proportion of women at work as managers and administrators has increased for both full- and part-time employees, only 5 percent of women at work full time and 2 percent of those at work part time held such positions in 1970.

Table 3 illustrates that, in contrast to the industry mix, high concentrations of women in certain occupations do not necessarily indicate a large percentage of part-time workers among the female employees. For example, although most women had white-collar jobs in 1977, only 20 percent—the norm for all occupations combined—were voluntary part-time workers. Yet, within the white-collar group, there are large concentrations of part-timers, most notably among sales workers. Likewise, while only 10 percent of women blue-collar workers were voluntary part-timers, a large percentage of the blue-collar transportation equip-

ment operatives worked part time. A third of all service and farm workers were part-timers. However, the number of farm workers represents only a small proportion of all women part-timers.

A profile of the part-timer

Women who work part time by choice embody many diverse personal characteristics. It is possible, however, to create a composite picture of a woman part-timer who conforms to some general norms. Chances are the hypothetical part-timer is married to a full-time worker, has children who are at least of school age, is a high school graduate, and, as noted earlier, is employed in a white-collar occupation—probably performing clerical duties or selling.⁹ A more complete picture of the range of personal characteristics of part-timers can be obtained from looking at their age, family responsibilities, and educational attainment.

Age. Reflecting stages of the life cycle, young and middle-aged women may choose part-time work because of family responsibilities, whereas many older women cite reasons such as health or the desire for more leisure time for curtailing their workweeks. Women of all ages work part time and there is no 15- or 20-year age break to account for most of these workers. The proportion of women who are voluntarily employed part time holds at about one-fifth for adults, except those over age 65, where the proportion rises to more than one-half. But, because younger women are more likely than older women to be working, the number of employed part-timers age 20–24 exceeds that of women over age 60.

Employed voluntary part-time workers

<i>Age</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>As percent of total employed</i>	<i>As percent of population</i>
Women, 20 years and over	7,074	21.3	9.5
20–24	1,012	17.4	10.3
25–34	1,726	19.0	10.4
35–44	1,561	23.2	13.0
45–54	1,278	20.1	10.6
55–64	924	22.2	8.7
55–59	511	19.5	8.9
60–64	413	26.7	8.4
65 years and over	572	56.4	4.4

Family responsibilities. Married women are more likely than unmarried adult women workers to want part-time employment. One of 4 who work is a voluntary part-time employee; the ratio drops to 1 of 6 for widowed, separated, and divorced women, and 1 of 7 for adult single women.

Table 2. Women employed on voluntary part-time schedules, by occupation and industry, 1977 annual averages

[In percent]

Occupation or Industry	Employed		As a percent of all women employed in the occupation
	Total (In thousands)	Percent	
Occupation			
Women, 20 years and over	7,074	100.0	21.3
White-collar workers	4,234	59.9	19.7
Professional and technical	1,085	15.3	18.9
Managers and administrators, except farm	269	3.8	12.7
Sales workers	837	11.8	40.0
Clerical workers	2,043	28.9	17.8
Blue-collar workers	501	7.1	10.1
Craft and kindred workers	86	1.2	15.4
Operatives, except transport	245	3.5	6.4
Transport equipment operatives	110	1.6	49.5
Nonfarm laborers	61	.9	18.3
Service workers	2,194	31.0	34.4
Private household	442	6.2	49.9
Other	1,752	24.8	31.9
Farmworkers	144	2.0	34.2
Farmers and farm managers	39	.6	42.4
Farm laborers and supervisors	105	1.5	31.9
Industry¹			
Women, 20 years and over	5,631	100.0	19.0
Mining	7	.1	10.9
Construction	59	1.0	21.8
Manufacturing	312	5.5	5.4
Durable goods	114	2.0	4.2
Nondurable goods	198	3.5	6.5
Transportation	156	2.8	29.1
Public utilities	39	.7	5.6
Wholesale and retail trade	1,770	31.4	29.8
Wholesale trade	96	1.7	12.8
Retail trade	1,674	29.7	32.2
Finance, insurance, and real estate	295	5.2	12.2
Miscellaneous services	2,830	50.3	22.8
Business repair	185	3.3	24.1
Personal	243	4.3	25.6
Entertainment and recreation	77	1.4	32.8
Medical, except hospital	411	7.3	24.2
Hospitals	408	7.2	15.4
Welfare and religion	222	3.9	28.6
Education	1,133	20.1	24.9
Other professional	150	2.7	19.0
Forestry and fisheries	1	—	6.7
Public administration	163	2.9	10.4

¹ Nonagricultural wage and salary workers, excluding private household workers.

Table 3. Women at work by full- or part-time status and occupation, selected years, 1940-70

[In percent]

Occupation	Part time				Full time			
	1940	1950	1960	1970	1940	1950	1960	1970
Total, women at work (in thousands)	1,624	3,006	5,658	8,678	7,436	11,633	14,797	19,257
Farm	2.4	9.9	3.1	1.1	.7	2.0	1.2	.7
Nonfarm	97.6	90.1	96.9	98.9	99.3	98.0	98.8	99.3
White-collar workers	35.3	39.4	48.5	57.5	49.4	57.0	61.2	63.7
Professionals and semiprofessionals	18.9	14.1	13.9	15.0	11.6	11.8	13.7	15.6
Managers and administrators, except farm .....	.8	2.0	2.0	1.9	2.0	4.8	4.7	4.5
Clerical, sales, kindred	15.6	23.4	21.5	40.6	35.9	40.4	42.8	43.5
Blue-collar workers	31.0	18.0	13.7	12.9	20.9	22.8	19.6	18.9
Craft and kindred workers .....	.8	.9	.8	1.1	1.1	1.7	1.4	2.1
Operatives,	28.8	16.4	12.3	10.8	18.8	20.3	17.7	15.8
Nonfarm laborers	1.3	.7	.6	1.0	1.0	.8	.5	1.0
Service workers	31.4	32.7	34.7	28.5	29.0	18.1	18.0	16.8
Domestic service workers	21.9	18.9	16.8	7.0	18.2	6.1	5.1	2.6
Protective and other service workers	9.4	13.8	17.9	21.6	10.9	12.0	12.9	14.2

NOTE: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding. Data for 1940 and 1950 refer to age 14 and over, data for 1960 and 1970 refer to age 16 and over. Also, data are not strictly comparable due to

revisions in the Census of Population occupational classification system prior to each decennial census.

SOURCE: Decennial censuses.

These numbers may seem to indicate that working women who head families are substantially less likely to be part-time workers than are working wives. Actually, the difference is not large when part-timers are viewed in relation to all women, rather than just working women, in each population. As a proportion of their population, about 10 percent of all women who head families are employed part time, compared with 13 percent for wives. In other words, the part-time/full-time ratio is relatively low for female family heads because their full-time labor force participation rate is high.

Family size and, for wives, the financial position of their spouse are other measures of family responsibility that are likely to influence part-time work status. As illustrated in chart 2, the likelihood of part-time work differs for wives with younger children and for wives with higher or lower income husbands. When children are of preschool and school age, family responsibilities direct a number of women who want to work towards part-time jobs (although most working women with young children, like other women who work, are employed full time). This tendency to work part time is apparent for white wives regardless of the level of their husband's income, and for black wives whose husbands have a moderately high income. In general, however, black women have a higher probability of both working and working full time than white women, as shown in the following employment-to-population ratios for wives:

	White	Black and other
Employed, 20 years and over ...	42.8	51.1
Voluntary part time	11.2	7.7
Full time	29.9	40.4

Hence, the different employment decisions of black wives and white wives with children in response to the level of their spouse's income help explain the relatively low proportion of black and other minority women among wives employed on a voluntary part-time basis. About 22 percent of the working white adult women in 1977 had voluntary part-time jobs, compared with 15 percent of the blacks.

Interestingly, there is a divergent pattern for whites and blacks in terms of the incidence of part-time work experience among wives *without* children and the income of their husbands. That is, the percentage of white working wives with part-time work experience increases as the income of the husband increases, while part-time work experience among black wives decreases as their spouses' income increases. The part-time pattern for blacks parallels the inverse relationship between the overall labor force participation rate among black wives and husbands' income. The relationship for white part-timers contrasts sharply with the inverse relationship between overall wives' labor force participation and husbands' income.¹⁰ In terms of labor market flows, it should be recalled that persons move into a part-time work status from either full-time work or from outside the labor force. It appears that white women, more often than black women, choose to work part time when financial need does not require full-time work. Important reasons for their working part time may include upgrading or maintaining job skills or enjoying the nonpecuniary benefits of employment.

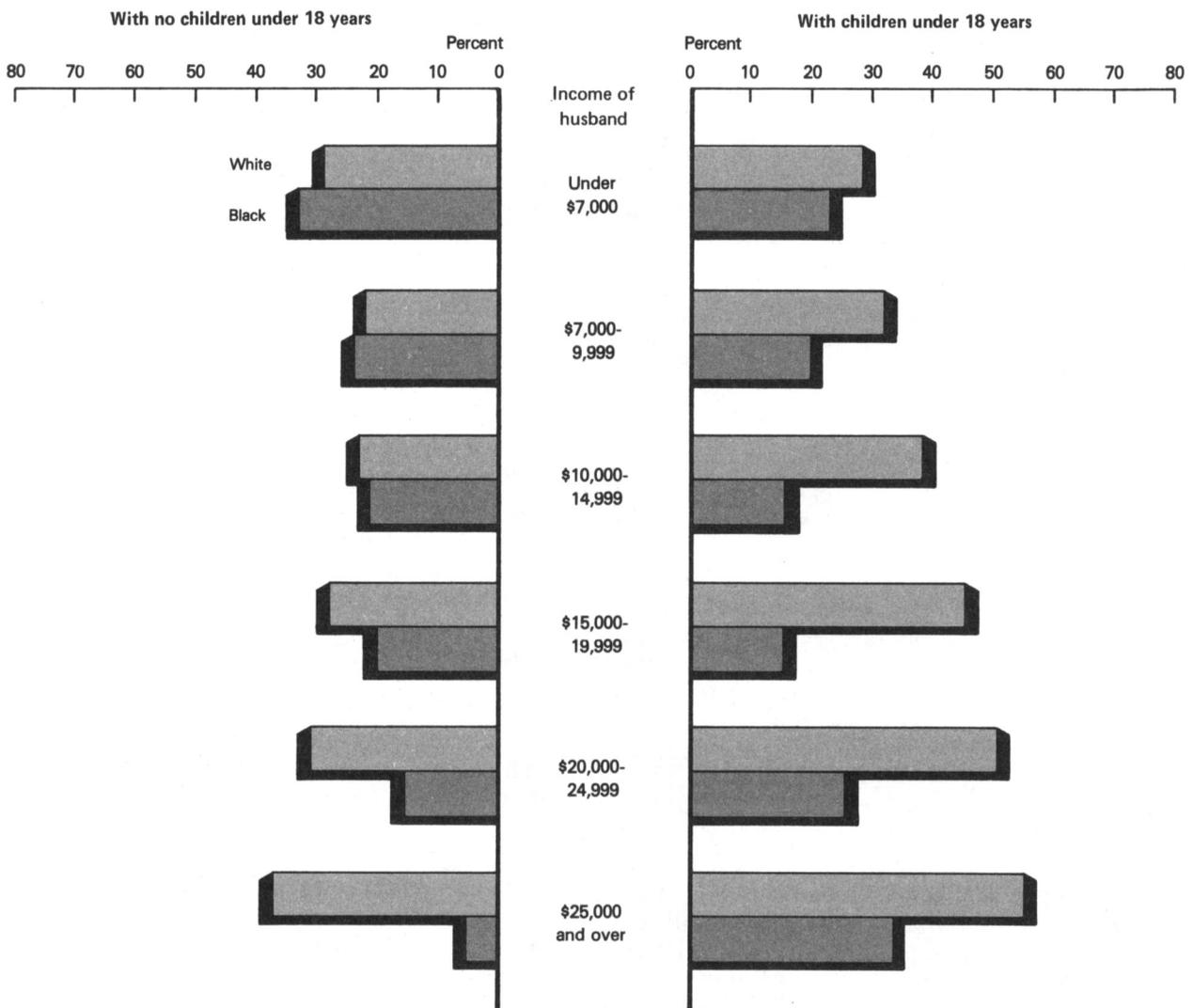
As chart 2 also reveals, working wives *with* school-age children are more likely to have part-

time jobs the higher the income of their husband. An exception is black wives with lower income husbands; these women are about as likely as those with higher earnings spouses to have some part-time work experience.

Educational attainment. Because women engaged in voluntary part-time work tend to be older than full-time workers—a median age of about 40 years compared with 35 years for full-timers—it might be expected that their educational attainment would also differ. The differences, however, are relatively small. For example, 75 percent of women

age 25 and over who are voluntarily employed part time in nonagricultural industries have at least completed high school; the comparable figure for employed full-time workers is 79 percent. (See table 4.) Two differences should be noted, however. There is a direct relationship between full-time work and the amount of women's college training, while voluntary part-time work does not increase with the number of years of post-high school training. This point is illustrated in the following tabulation which shows women age 25 and over employed in nonfarm industries as a percent of their population: ¹¹

Chart 2. Wives with part-time work experience in 1976, by income of husband, age of children, and race



	<i>Full time</i>	<i>Voluntary part time</i>
8 years or fewer	12.8	4.9
9 to 11 years	24.4	7.7
12 years	34.9	10.2
1 to 3 years of college	36.0	11.4
4 years of college or more ..	47.0	10.6

Working schedules

Opportunities for part-time work continue to expand as firms increasingly use part-time employees.¹² Of course, businesses with peak work periods—either certain hours each day or certain days each week—have long hired part-time workers to perform functions such as selling clothes and serving meals. Alternative work plans include night shifts, “mother’s hours,”¹³ unpaid time off, job sharing, temporary work,¹⁴ and flexible self-employment schedules. Moreover, many women work at jobs whose normal “full-time” workweek is less than 35 hours.¹⁵

This variety of working arrangements means that there is also a great diversity of weekly hours among women voluntary part-time employees, with some working fewer than 5 hours per week while others work nearly 35 hours. From 1970 to 1977, median hours for adult voluntary part-timers at work increased slightly, from 18.9 to 19.5 hours.¹⁶ The 1977 average distribution by hours for women 20 years and over who were voluntary part-time workers is shown in the following tabulation:

<i>Hours</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Fewer than 35	100.0
1-4	4.7
5-14	21.2
15-29	54.3
30-34	19.8

Median hours are little influenced by industry or occupation. However, persons who are best able to choose the length of their workweek, such as private household workers and the self-employed, worked relatively few hours. For all age groups between 20 and 65, median hours were between 19 and 21 per week. For those age 65 and over, however, weekly hours dropped to 16.

Labor market stability

A discussion of the length of the average workweek for women at part-time jobs calls for an examination of the number of weeks per year they are in the labor force. No single factor or small number of factors can entirely explain labor force behavior in a complex and rapidly moving economy.

Table 4. Schedules of women at work in nonagricultural industries, by educational attainment, March 1977

[In percent]

Schooling	On full-time schedules ¹	On voluntary part time	On part time for economic reasons
Women, age 25 and over (in thousands)	19,501	5,746	1,613
Educational attainment:			
8 years or fewer	8.2	10.7	16.5
9-11	12.9	13.9	20.7
12	45.3	45.0	39.5
1-3 years college	15.0	16.2	11.5
4 years college or more ...	18.6	14.2	11.9

¹Persons on full-time schedules include those who usually work full time (35 hours or more), but during the survey period had worked 1-34 hours because of noneconomic reasons, such as illness or vacation.

It has been suggested that the increasing labor force participation rate of women has contributed to a higher national level of unemployment. An analysis of women’s part-time work experience and unemployment patterns and their attachment to the labor force brings this issue into sharper focus. In 1977, slightly more than 25 percent of all unemployed women were seeking part-time jobs, whereas less than 10 percent were seeking such jobs in 1950. Following are the proportions of women seeking part-time work in 1977 by age and race, as a percentage of total unemployment for each group:

	<i>Total</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Black</i>
16 years and over	25.6	27.4	19.3
16-19 years	45.1	47.0	38.7
20 years and over	19.5	21.3	13.3

As a share of their respective unemployed groups, teenage girls are more likely than adults to be seeking part-time work and white women are more likely than their black counterparts to be looking for part-time jobs. Nearly half of all white unemployed teenage girls are seeking part-time work.

In other words, a growing proportion of unemployed women are seeking part-time work, and they are likely to be white and very young. These workers generally have the least amount of work experience—nearly half of all unemployed women seeking part-time jobs in 1976 did not have any work experience—and also exhibit the most changeable attachment to the labor force. For example, women seeking part-time jobs are unemployed more frequently, but for shorter periods than those seeking full-time jobs.¹⁷

The major stability factor, however, may be not a woman’s attachment to a specific job but her attachment to the labor force in general. In this regard, women part-time workers have a much

Table 5. Probability of labor force entry and exit for females 16 years and over, 1968-77 annual averages

Probability of —	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
Entry into full-time labor force	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.9
Exit from full-time labor force	4.2	4.1	3.6	3.4	3.6	3.7	3.5	3.0	3.2	3.0
Exit from seeking full-time work	30.5	32.1	33.4	31.4	26.7	25.4	28.9	33.1	22.0	23.0
Entry into part-time labor force	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.0
Exit from part-time labor force	17.9	16.4	14.8	13.6	13.8	13.7	12.7	11.9	12.1	11.5
Exit from seeking part-time work	58.0	61.1	63.8	60.4	46.5	50.1	51.0	54.0	42.1	44.1

¹ Full-time labor force includes persons working full time, persons working part time involuntarily (part time for economic reasons) and persons seeking full-time work.
² Part-time labor force includes persons working part time voluntarily and unemployed persons looking for part-time work.
 NOTE: Probability of entry into or exit from the labor force is equal to the number of persons who entered (or left) the labor force in period t (where t = an average month in the year under study) divided by the number of persons in the labor force in period t-1.

higher probability of leaving the labor force than do their full-time counterparts. Moreover, women not in the labor force have a slightly higher probability of entering the part-time job market than the full-time market. (See table 5.)

Entry into the part-time labor market does not appear to be cyclically related. An examination of the flow of women from outside the labor force because of home responsibilities to the part-time labor force over the 1967-77 period revealed that women did not use part-time employment as a means of supplementing lost family income during recessionary periods. That is, there was as much flow into the part-time job market during good times as during bad times.

The probabilities of labor force entry and exit in table 5 clearly illustrate the weak labor force attachment of female part-timers in comparison to those on full-time schedules. They have a higher probability of leaving the labor force from both employment and unemployment. Although these probabilities are declining, women part-timers are still four times as likely to leave the labor force from unemployment as their full-time counterparts.

The tendency of unemployed women looking for part-time jobs to leave the labor force is not age specific. Unemployed women 25 years of age and over show only marginally less tendency to leave the labor force than do teenagers and young adults. (See table 6.) It appears that women wanting part-time work test the job market, and, if not quickly successful, leave the labor force.

Usual earnings

There is a persistent gap between the hourly earnings of women who work full time and those

who work part time. In May 1977, adult women wage and salary workers employed part time reported usual hourly earnings of \$3.09 (median), about four-fifths of the full-time workers' \$3.92. Moreover, there is evidence that full-time workers receive more fringe benefits.¹⁸ The discrepancy in earnings can be attributed to several factors, such as experience, occupation, and education. Part-time employees are concentrated in occupations noted for fast worker turnover.

Another important factor appears to be differences between the full- and part-time workers' distributions among industries and occupations. For example, while women who work full time reported usual hourly earnings about one-third higher than those received by part-time workers,¹⁹ so large a differential is evident in only a few industries. The differences ranged from 58 percent between the salaries of those in mining (not a big employer of women) to 12 percent in agriculture. (Private household workers were the only part-timers who earn more per hour than their counterparts working full time.) Of course, it is quite likely that within an industry, full- and part-time workers may perform different tasks or be in different occupations.

Union membership or coverage under a union contract also affects the comparison between the wages of full-time and part-time employees. While only 10 percent of female workers (age 16 and over) receiving wages or salaries for part-time work were union members or were covered by a union contract, the respective percentages for those employed full time and for all men (either full or part time) were 22 percent and 32 percent. The women employed part time tend to work in fields which are not dominated by men and hence are not unionized.²⁰ Women in unionized industries earned about 40 percent more per hour than their

Table 6. Probability of labor force exit for unemployed women seeking part-time work, by age, 1968-77 annual averages

Year	Age 16-19	Age 20-24	Age 25 and over
1968	61.8	58.3	54.7
1969	65.6	53.8	58.9
1970	60.7	68.9	65.7
1971	61.1	68.3	57.3
1972	49.4	48.8	43.1
1973	52.9	52.7	48.4
1974	52.9	52.7	48.4
1975	52.1	48.7	47.8
1976	40.3	36.7	45.7
1977	43.9	48.7	42.9

NOTE: Probability of labor force exit for the unemployed seeking part-time work is equal to number of unemployed persons looking for part-time work who left the labor force in period t (where t = the average month in the year under study) divided by the number of persons looking for part-time work in period t-1.

nonunion counterparts. Among the part-timers, women covered by a union contract earned about 50 percent more than those not covered. The part-time workers not covered by a contract earned an hourly wage of \$2.90 (median), while those part-timers who were covered earned \$4.31.²¹

Union membership depends upon part-time workers' occupations. Occupations which are predominantly female—which also are those with heavy concentrations of part-time workers, such as sales and clerical fields—have very few union women members. The only occupation with strong union representation among part-time workers was

teaching (23 percent); even so, those working full time still were even more likely to be covered by union contracts (60 percent).

LOOKING AHEAD, one would expect the number of adult women employed as voluntary part-timers to continue to increase, as the general upward trend in the labor force participation rate among women, particularly married women who often prefer to work part time, is expected to continue. Also, the shift towards a more service, leisure oriented society with greater flexibility in working hours and in job sharing arrangements does not give an appearance of abating. □

FOOTNOTES

¹ The part-time labor force is comprised of persons voluntarily employed part time and unemployed persons seeking part-time work. The full-time labor force consists of persons employed full time, persons employed part time for economic reasons, and unemployed persons seeking full-time work. Most data in this article refer to women age 20 and over who are voluntary part-time workers or are in the part-time labor force.

² Except where noted, data for this article are 1977 annual averages derived from the Current Population Survey, a monthly survey of 47,000 households in 1977, conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In 1978, the survey was expanded to 56,000 households.

³ Data refer to women working part time during the census week regardless of their part- or full-time labor force status. The lower age limit was 14 years in 1940 and 1950, and 16 years in 1960 and 1970. Detailed industry and occupation data for part-time workers are available only from the decennial censuses.

⁴ In this article, employment-to-population ratios use civilian noninstitutional population as the base.

⁵ *Marital Status and Living Arrangements: March 1977*, Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 232 (Bureau of the Census, 1978), p. 2.

⁶ These data relate to first marriages between these years. See *Prospects for American Fertility: June 1975*, Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 288 (Bureau of the Census, 1976), table 9.

⁷ A rise in the employment-population ratio is due to two factors: more persons are employed at some time during the year, and their duration of work (that is, the mean number of weeks they work during the year) has increased. The tabulation below illustrates this point:

	Full time		Part time	
	1950	1976	1950	1976
Number, in thousands	17,139	29,701	6,211	15,011
Percent distribution:				
50-52 weeks	50	62	31	33
27-49 weeks	24	19	19	26
1-26 weeks	26	20	50	41

The data for 1950 refer to females 14 years and over, and 1976 data refer to females 16 years and over.

⁸ While only 7 percent of all women voluntary part-time workers were self-employed in 1977, the proportion was even smaller among women employed full time—4 percent. Self-employment was more prevalent among older (65 years and over) women part-timers (15 percent in May of 1977), but still not as widespread as among older men (nearly 40 percent of all male voluntary part-timers were self-employed).

⁹ A study of part-time workers residing in the 30 largest Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas in the United States in 1973 had similar

findings. That is, the study found that the probability of working part time for persons age 25-54 was greatest for those who were married, had children, and had some college training. See Robert W. Bednarzik, *Part-time Work and Public Policy*, Ph. D. dissertation, University of Missouri, 1978, pp. 139-41.

¹⁰ Robert W. Bednarzik and Deborah P. Klein, "Labor force trends: a synthesis and analysis," *Monthly Labor Review*, October 1977, pp. 3-12.

¹¹ Educational attainment data are derived from the March 1977 CPS. In this tabulation "full-time" consists of women working full time and those who usually work full time but were working part time during the reference week for temporary personal reasons (such as illness or vacation). The gap between the average years of schooling completed by adult women working full or part time widens when those employed part time for economic reasons are included among part-time workers. Only 63 percent of women 25 years and over working part time for economic reasons in nonfarm industries had graduated high school.

¹² Although we note expanding job opportunities, data from the CPS are best used in analyzing the growth in the number of workers employed part time. Even so, a count of adult women who work at part-time jobs is elusive. In 1976, for example, 11.8 million were usually working part time. An additional 3.8 million who usually worked full time worked 3 weeks or more on a part-time basis. (Three weeks or more was chosen as the cutoff because a number of women who usually work full time that work 1-2 weeks of part time generally do so only because they started or ended a job at some time during the reference week.)

There was also a number of multiple jobholders among women. Unless the work time in these multiple jobs totals less than 35 hours per week, the individual would be counted as a full-time worker. Of the 1.2 million women who held 2 jobs simultaneously (in May 1977), about 400,000 were included in the part-time employment figure because the 2 jobs totaled fewer than 35 weekly hours. The number of women who held 2 part-time jobs which resulted in more than 35 hours of work was about 200,000. These women, along with the 600,000 who held a part-time and a full-time job simultaneously, are considered to be employed full time. (Only about 1 percent of all female multiple jobholders had 2 full-time jobs.) The part-time job count would be even higher if the 100,000 women who worked less than 15 hours as unpaid family workers and those who do unpaid family work as a second job were included. Moreover, many of the 400,000 who are considered to be employed full time as private household workers may, in fact, have held part-time jobs in several (or even numerous) different households. Also, there are 1 million women workers whose normal full-time workweek is less than 35 hours.

¹³ A "mother's shift" involves hours of work while children are in school. See *World of Work Report* (Work in America Institute, Inc., 1977).

¹⁴ It has been noted that most temporary office workers work full time and part year. See "A profile of the temporary help industry and its workers," *Monthly Labor Review*, May 1974, pp. 44-49.

¹⁵ About 1 million women in 1977 worked at "full-time" jobs whose normal workweek was less than 35 hours. This number has risen only slightly over the past decade (from 0.9 million in 1968). The length of regular full-time workweeks (35 hours or more) appears to be declining very slowly for adult women; average hours worked by women on full-time schedules averaged 40.7 in 1968 and 40.3 in 1977.

¹⁶ These data on hours are not the same as usual weekly hours for part-time jobs because of several factors. The normal hours of women whose workweek was shorter than usual due to illness, bad weather, labor disputes, or other reasons for absences are understated, while those for women who put in extra hours during the week are overstated. Also, the hours for 2 part-time jobs are added together. If they total 35 hours or more, they are excluded from these estimates. Generally, women work an average of 11 hours on a second job, according to May 1977 CPS data.

¹⁷ The percent of unemployed adult women seeking part-time work with 2 and 3 spells of unemployment in 1976 was 3 and 4.1 percentage

points higher, respectively, than the percent of unemployed women seeking full-time work.

¹⁸ An experimental 1972 Area Wage Survey of establishments employing about 330,000 workers found that about half of the part-time workers (men and women), received a prorated share of paid holidays and vacations. Most of the other part-time workers received no such benefits. The part-time employees tended to be in businesses which did not have sick leave benefits for any workers. The definition of part-time workers used in the survey is based on hours and on comparisons with other workers in the same and similar occupations, such as wages and fringe benefits. See Robert Daski, "Area wage survey test focuses on part-timers," *Monthly Labor Review*, April 1974, pp. 60-62.

¹⁹ All earnings data, derived from the CPS, refer to women age 16 and over in May 1977.

²⁰ See Edna Raphael, "Working women and their membership in labor unions," *Monthly Labor Review*, May 1974, pp. 27-33.

²¹ Part-time median usual hourly earnings for union and nonunion workers were calculated (for women working 1 to 33 hours) from unpublished data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Night shift takes its toll

There are three types of shift work organization: one which covers less than 24 hours a day and usually with weekends off; a 24-hour, multiple shift system with a stop at the end of the week; and a round-the-clock and round-the-year system without interruption, not even on public holidays.

International Labour Office findings show that workers in plants operating the two latter systems often have sickness rates higher than average. Many of them fall victim to sleeping difficulties, overtiredness, and disruption of eating patterns.

On the personal side, the most obvious and irksome drawback lies in the disruption of social and family life. Irregular timetables may upset the quality of relations among family members and restrict

possibilities for leisure activities.

Experiments have shown that for an equal output night work demands a greater expenditure of physical and nervous energy. Moreover, daytime sleep is less refreshing, especially for mental fatigue. A night worker is, therefore, doubly handicapped—by greater strain at work and insufficient rest at home.

—"FOREVER SHIFT WORK?"

The World of Labour and Development
(Geneva, International Labour Office,
Bureau of Public Information, 1978),
pp. 11-12.