



Summer 6-1-1995

Part-Time Work and Workers in the United States: Correlates and Policy Issues

Arne L. Kalleberg

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarlycommons.law.wlu.edu/wlulr>



Part of the [Labor and Employment Law Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Arne L. Kalleberg, *Part-Time Work and Workers in the United States: Correlates and Policy Issues*, 52 Wash. & Lee L. Rev. 771 (1995).

Available at: <https://scholarlycommons.law.wlu.edu/wlulr/vol52/iss3/7>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Washington and Lee Law Review at Washington and Lee University School of Law Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Washington and Lee Law Review by an authorized editor of Washington and Lee University School of Law Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact christensena@wlu.edu.

Part-Time Work and Workers in the United States: Correlates and Policy Issues

Arne L. Kalleberg*

Introduction

Employment relations in the United States are changing. During the past fifteen years, U.S. work organizations have moved away from the traditional model of employment in which most employees, especially males, were connected to their employers on a full-time, relatively permanent basis. Employees were expected to be loyal and committed to their employers, who reciprocated by granting them job security and long-term employment. Now, jobs are becoming less permanent and less secure. In essence, employment relations have become more "contingent." Contingent employment relations have been defined broadly as those situations in which "individual[s] do [] not have an explicit or implicit contract for long-term employment or [those] in which the minimum hours worked can vary in a nonsystematic manner."¹

Contingent employment relations constitute a sizeable portion of the U.S. labor force. A frequently cited estimate is that between 25 to 30% of all employees in the U.S. civilian labor force, or 29.9 to 36.6 million workers, in 1988 were either part-time workers, temporary workers, contract employees, or independent consultants.² These estimates, however, are only approximations because government statistics generally are not collected for contingent workers as a group.³ Estimating the size of the contingent work

* William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor of Sociology, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I thank James W. Moody for his valuable research assistance and Eileen Appelbaum, Barbara Reskin, Rachel Rosenfeld, and the discussants for their useful comments on earlier versions of this article.

1. Anne E. Polivka & Thomas Nardone, *On the Definition of "Contingent Work,"* MONTHLY LAB. REV., Dec. 1989, at 9, 11 (footnote omitted).

2. RICHARD S. BELOUS, *THE CONTINGENT ECONOMY: THE GROWTH OF THE TEMPORARY, PART-TIME, AND SUBCONTRACTED WORKFORCE* 15-17 (1989).

3. Eileen Appelbaum, *Structural Change and the Growth of Part-Time and Temporary Employment, in NEW POLICIES FOR THE PART-TIME AND CONTINGENT WORKFORCE* 1, 2 (Virginia L. duRivage ed., 1992); Polly Callaghan & Heidi Hartmann, *Contingent Work: A Chart Book on Part-Time and Temporary Employment*, 1991 ECON. POL'Y INST. 2. A supplement to the

force is complicated by the existence of overlap among categories⁴ and by the inappropriate classification of all part-time and self-employed persons as "contingent," even though many of them are in stable, long-term work arrangements. In any event, it is generally agreed that the growth rate of temporary and part-time workers exceeded the growth rate of the entire U.S. labor force during the 1980s.⁵

This paper focuses on *part-time* employment, the most common form of contingent work in the United States, comprising more than half of the contingent work force. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), 19.6 million workers worked fewer than 35 hours in 1990, representing 18% of the total U.S. civilian work force of 108.7 million.⁶ In 1991, two out of every three U.S. work organizations employed part-time workers.⁷ The percentage of part-time workers has grown steadily since 1957, when 12.1% of the civilian labor force worked part time.⁸ As Figure 1 shows, most of the growth of part-time employment during the past two decades has occurred among the "involuntary" part-time workers.⁹ In 1990, 4.5% of all workers were involuntary part-timers, compared to the 13.6% of all workers who voluntarily worked part time.¹⁰

February 1995 Current Population Survey will collect information on the various types of contingent work. These data will provide needed estimates of part-time, temporary, and contracted work for the U.S. labor force.

4. See Callaghan & Hartmann, *supra* note 3, at 7 (reporting Bureau of Labor Statistics' estimate that 40% of temporary workers also work part time).

5. See Richard S. Belous, *How Human Resource Systems Adjust to the Shift Toward Contingent Workers*, MONTHLY LAB. REV., Mar. 1989, at 7, 9-11; Michael A. Pollock & Aaron Bernstein, *The Disposable Employee is Becoming a Fact of Corporate Life*, BUS. WK., Dec. 15, 1986, at 52, 52-53.

6. Callaghan & Hartmann, *supra* note 3, at 2 (citing BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, U.S. DEP'T OF LABOR, HANDBOOK OF LABOR STATISTICS (1989)). This is undoubtedly an underestimate of part-time employment because, for example, a person with two part-time jobs at 18 hours each would be counted as working full time. About 6% of men and women in 1994 held more than one job. See LAWRENCE MISHEL & JARED BERNSTEIN, THE STATE OF WORKING AMERICA (1994-1995) 229 tbl. 4.19 (1994) (showing growth of multiple jobholding). An important question for research, which we are unable to address here, is the extent to which various categories of persons have more than one part-time job.

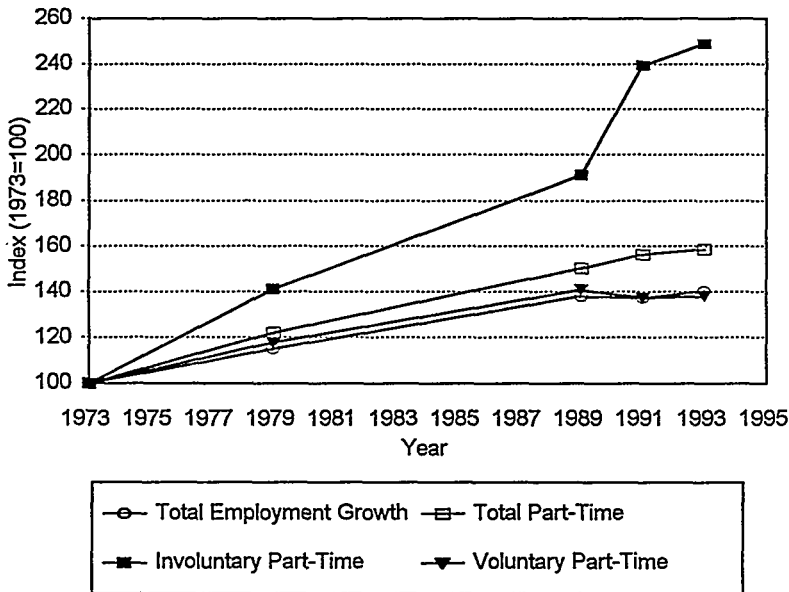
7. Arne L. Kalleberg & Kathryn Schmidt, *Contingent Employment in U.S. Organizations: Part-Time, Temporary, and Subcontracting Relations*, in ARNE L. KALLEBERG ET AL., ORGANIZATIONS IN AMERICA. A PORTRAIT OF THEIR STRUCTURES AND HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTICES (forthcoming 1996) (manuscript at 230, on file with author).

8. *Id.* at 224.

9. Source of data in Figure 1. computations by MISHEL & BERNSTEIN, *supra* note 6, at 219 tbl. 4.12.

10. Callaghan & Hartmann, *supra* note 3, at 3 (citing BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, U.S. DEP'T OF LABOR, HANDBOOK OF LABOR STATISTICS (1989) and BUREAU OF LABOR

**Figure 1. Sources of Employment Growth
1973-1993**



The expansion of contingent employment relations in the United States has brought with it new policy issues and challenges. Laws and institutions intended to provide worker protection were established mainly for full-time, permanent employees. These laws and institutions need to be changed to accommodate the distinctive features of part-time and other forms of contingent work. Unfortunately, data on contingent work are scarce and often inadequate for policy discussions. Most of our information about contingent work comes from nonrepresentative case studies of particular occupations, industries, organizations, or from a small number of labor force surveys that focus almost exclusively on the economic aspects of such work. We know relatively little about noneconomic correlates of part-time jobs, nor do we know much about why people work part time. This paucity of empirical evidence is problematic because part-time work and workers are heterogeneous. This heterogeneity needs to be taken into account in debates about laws and regulatory policies targeted at contingent employment relations.

This paper provides a broad overview of some important correlates of part-time work and workers in the United States. Consistent with general

STATISTICS, U.S. DEP'T OF LABOR, EMPLOYMENT & EARNINGS, Jan. 1991)).

practice, we define part-time work as any job that regularly employs a person less than 35 hours per week.¹¹ The analysis is based upon data from the General Social Survey (GSS), a multitopic survey of the U.S. population that has been conducted almost every year since 1972 by the University of Chicago's National Opinion Research Center.¹² These surveys are useful for studying part-time employment both because they contain information on work rewards and attitudes for a representative sample of the employed U.S. population — including both part-time and full-time workers — and because such data are currently unavailable from the larger Current Population Surveys.

The first four sections of this paper summarize differences between part-time and full-time work and workers. Part I describes who works part time. Part II compares the work motivations of part-time and full-time workers. Part III compares the nature of part-time and full-time work with regard to various economic and noneconomic job rewards. Part IV compares part-time and full-time workers' attitudes toward job satisfaction and organizational commitment and their feelings about union representation. Finally, Part V discusses policy and regulatory issues raised by the differences between part-time and full-time workers.

I. A Portrait of Part-Time Workers

Previous research provides a portrait of part-time workers in contemporary America. Compared to full-time workers, part-time workers tend to:

- be *women*. Figure 2 shows the percent of working men and women in the United States who were employed part time during the past several decades. Both the BLS and GSS data indicate that women were much more likely than men to work part time in each year.¹³
- be *younger* (21% are aged 16 to 19) and *older* workers (18% are aged 55 or older).¹⁴

11. Thomas J. Plewes, *Understanding the Data on Part-Time and Temporary Employment*, in FLEXIBLE WORKSTYLES: A LOOK AT CONTINGENT LABOR 9, 9 (U.S. Dep't of Labor, 1988).

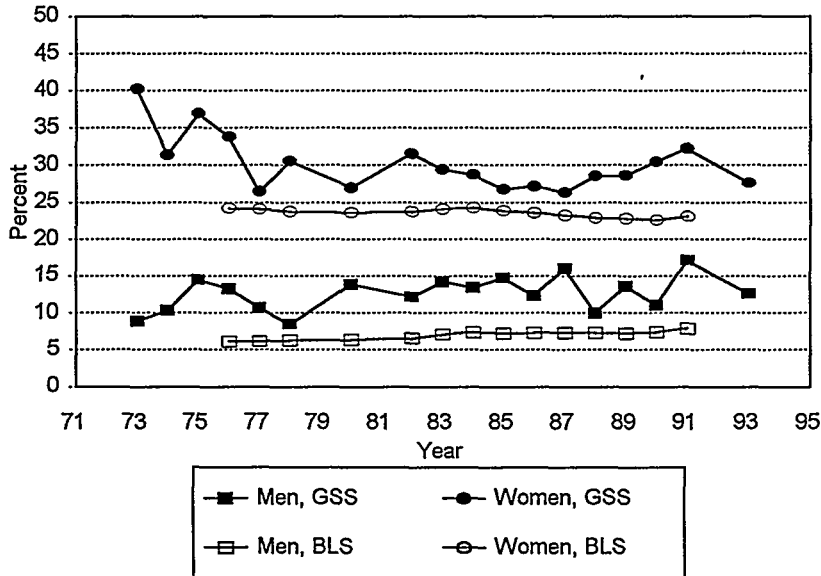
12. See JAMES A. DAVIS & TOM W. SMITH, THE NORC GENERAL SOCIAL SURVEY: A USER'S GUIDE 1 (1992) (describing GSS).

13. The Bureau of Labor Statistics' estimates of part-time employment are lower than those obtained from the GSS mainly because the BLS includes persons aged 20 and over while the GSS includes persons over 18. As we note in this section, a relatively large proportion of persons who are younger than age 20 work part time.

14. Hilda Kahne, *Part-Time Work: A Hope and a Peril*, in WORKING PART-TIME: RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES 295, 296 (Barbara D. Warne et al. eds., 1992).

Figure 2. Percent Working Part Time

1973-1993 GSS (Ages 18+); 1976-1991 BLS (Ages 20+)



- have *less education*. Persons with less than a high school diploma are more likely to be involuntary part-time workers.¹⁵
- be *non-white*. Black and Hispanic men and women historically have experienced much higher rates of involuntary part-time employment than white men and women;¹⁶ however, white women have had higher rates of voluntary part-time work — 22.5% in 1988.¹⁷
- be women with more *family responsibilities*. For example, women in the child-rearing ages of 25 to 44 are more apt to need flexible schedules and are thus nearly eight times more likely than men in this age bracket to work part time.¹⁸

15. Sar A. Levitan & Elizabeth A. Conway, *Part-Timers: Living on Half Rations*, in *WORKING PART-TIME: RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES* 45, 51 (Barbara D. Warne et al. eds., 1992).

16. *Id.* at 51.

17. Chris Tilly, *Short Hours, Short Shrift: The Causes and Consequences of Part-Time Employment*, in *NEW POLICIES FOR THE PART-TIME AND CONTINGENT WORKFORCE* 15, 18 (Virginia L. duRivage ed., 1992).

18. Levitan & Conway, *supra* note 15, at 50.

- work in *sales, clerical, service, and unskilled labor occupations*. Nearly 78% of part-time jobs, compared to 55% of full-time jobs, are in these relatively low-paying occupations.¹⁹
- work in *wholesale trade, retail trade, and in service industries*. In 1990, part-time workers comprised 29.5% and 23.6% of wage and salary workers in trade and service industries, respectively.²⁰

II. *The Work Motivations of Part-Time and Full-Time Workers*

People work part time for many reasons: to have more time to study, to meet family obligations, to supplement income, to ease into retirement, and so on. The most common way of classifying these motivations is by whether people work part time *voluntarily* or *involuntarily*. *Voluntary* part-time workers are generally assumed to choose to work short hours, either because they do not want or are not available for full-time work.²¹ Examples of voluntary part-time workers include persons who want reduced work schedules in order to care for young children and students who desire less than full-time employment so that they can attend school. By contrast, the Bureau of Labor Statistics classifies as *involuntary* part-time workers those who work less than 35 hours because of demand-related reasons such as slack work or inability to find a full-time job.²² The distinction between voluntary and involuntary part-time workers is, however, often murky and quite problematic. For example, some women who are classified as working part-time "voluntarily" might well prefer full-time work if adequate and affordable child care were available. Moreover, an unknown number of "voluntary" part-time workers are employed for shorter hours not because they do not want to work full-time, but because disability or inadequate transportation prevents them from doing so.

The ambiguities surrounding the distinction between voluntary and involuntary part-time employment suggest the need to go beyond such arbitrary classifications and to examine more directly the work motivations of part-time versus full-time workers. Such an investigation may help to dispel many of the stereotypes and negative connotations associated with part-time work, such as weak commitment to work and lack of ambition.²³ Our analysis focuses on two dimensions of work motivation: the role of work in

19 *Id.* at 45.

20. Callaghan & Hartmann, *supra* note 3, at 23-25.

21. Levitan & Conway, *supra* note 15, at 48.

22. *Id.*

23. Barbara D. Warne et al., *Introduction* to WORKING PART-TIME: RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES 1, 3 (Barbara D. Warne et al. eds., 1992).

a person's life and the importance a person places on the various facets of work. Table 1 presents some evidence from the 1989 GSS on these two aspects of work motivation.²⁴

Table 1. *Work Motivations of Male and Female Part-Time and Full-Time Workers, 1989 & 1991 GSS*

	Men		Women	
	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time
WORK COMMITMENT				
Work is CLI	3.03	2.95	2.65	2.83
Work if Rich	3.42	3.45	3.60	3.62
Richwork	0.71	0.67	0.57	0.56
WORK VALUES				
Job Security	4.49	4.38	4.49	4.53
Income	4.09	4.08	3.83	3.94
Advancement	4.15	4.23	4.24	4.29
Interesting Work	4.31	4.33	4.42	4.44
Independent Work	3.74	3.88	3.74	4.11***
Leisure Time	3.46	3.15**	3.10	3.02
Flexible Work	3.66	3.65	3.70	3.64

Part-time v. Full-time difference significant at: * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$ (Two-tailed t-tests).

Predicted Mean Values Reported (based on equations controlling for Age, Education, Race, Self Employment, and Supervisory position). "Work is CLI" and "Work if Rich" are scored from 1="strongly disagree" to 5="strongly agree." See Figure 3 for wording of "Richwork." Work Values measures are scored 1="not at all important" to 5="very important."

A. *Work as a Central Life Interest*

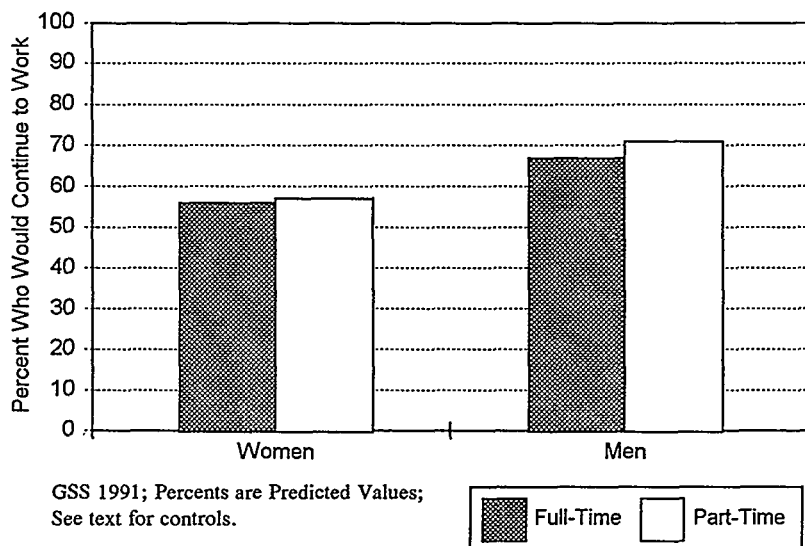
In 1989, part-time workers appeared to be just as likely as full-time workers to agree that "work is a person's most important activity" ("Work is CLI"). Men were more likely than women to agree with this, but part-timers and full-timers of each sex did not differ. Moreover, part-time and full-time workers were equally likely to agree that they "would enjoy having

24. The mean values presented in Table 1 and Table 3 are adjusted for differences among subsamples in their age, education, race, self-employment, and supervisory position.

a paid job even if they did not need that money" ("Work if rich"). Figure 3 indicates that there was no difference in 1991 between part-timers and full-timers in a similar but differently worded item asking whether they would continue to work if they did not need the money ("Richwork"). Men were again more likely than women to agree with this statement, further suggesting that males view work as more of a central life interest than women. These results are consistent with the observation that "[e]mployment is no less central to the lives of part-time workers than it is to their full-time counterparts."²⁵

Figure 3.

"If you were to get enough money to live as comfortably as you would like for the rest of your life, would you continue to work or would you stop working?"



B. Work Values: The Importance People Place on Various Job Rewards

Why do people work? What do people find desirable in their jobs? Table 1 reports data from the 1989 GSS on the importance that male and female part-time and full-time workers placed on various aspects of work. There were only two significant differences in (adjusted mean) work values

25. Warme, *supra* note 23, at 3.

between part-time and full-time workers. First, women who worked full time were more likely than women who worked part time to place greater importance on having "a job that allows someone to work independently" ("Independent Work"). Second, males, but not females, who worked part time placed greater importance than their full-time counterparts on having "a job that leaves a lot of leisure time" ("Leisure Time"). This reflects the desire for flexibility that is often assumed to be a major reason why individuals choose to work part time.

In summary, our analysis of work motivations indicates that part-time and full-time workers are similar in both the role of work in their lives and the kinds of things they find important in a job. Work appears to be a central life interest for both part-time and full-time workers, and both groups place considerable importance — the average score is greater than four on a five point scale — on having a job that provides both security and opportunities for advancement and is interesting.

III. *The Nature of Part-Time Work*

The quality of part-time jobs differs. Tilly distinguishes among *short-time*, *secondary*, and *retention* part-time jobs.²⁶ In short-time jobs, which make up less than 10% of all part-time employment, employers temporarily reduce employees' hours rather than lay them off.²⁷ Secondary part-time jobs, which constitute the bulk of part-time work, are characterized by relatively low skill, low pay, low fringe benefits, no security, few opportunities for advancement, low productivity, and high turnover.²⁸ By comparison, retention part-time jobs are generally offered by employers to valued and usually highly skilled employees whose life circumstances prevent them from working full time, e.g., women with young children.²⁹ Retention part-time jobs may also provide fringe benefits on a prorated basis as well as relatively high earnings and other job rewards.³⁰

26. Tilly, *supra* note 17, at 19-20.

27. *Id.* at 20.

28. *Id.*, see also Kahne, *supra* note 14, at 303 (labelling these as "old concept" part-time jobs, in which firms have weak commitment to part-time workers and provide them with little training and rewards).

29. See Tilly, *supra* note 17, at 20 (discussing retention part-time jobs); see also Kahne, *supra* note 14, at 297 (labelling this type of part-time job as "new concept").

30. Retention part-time jobs are thus not really forms of "contingent" employment. They are neither uncertain nor unpredictable. Their incumbents often work part time on a more-or-less permanent basis and have long-term, stable relations with their employers.

Table 2 compares the job rewards of part-time and full-time workers.³¹ Full-time men were significantly more likely than part-time men to agree that their "job [was] secure" (3.87 versus 3.58 on a five-point scale, where 5 = "strongly agree"). The difference between full-time and part-time women is not statistically significant. A possible operational definition of retention versus secondary part-time jobs might be the extent to which part-time workers feel that their jobs are "secure." We will not, however, pursue this line of analysis further here. Instead, we focus on differences between part-time and full-time men and women, not on differences among part-time workers themselves.

A. Earnings

Studies have repeatedly shown that full-time workers earn more than part-time workers. Levitan and Conway found that part-timers in 1987 earned 59% of what full-timers did — a median hourly wage of \$4 42 for part-time workers compared to \$7 43 for full-time workers.³² Callaghan and Hartmann note that part-time workers earn about 60% of the hourly wages that full-time workers earn — \$5.06 per hour for part-timers in 1990 compared to \$8.09 per hour for full-timers who were paid by the hour.³³ The earnings differential between part-time and full-time workers has not changed much over the past several decades. Moreover, only about one-half of this differential can be explained by the fact that part-time workers have different observed characteristics than full-timers, such as sex, race, age, education, and experience, and are concentrated in industries and occupations with below-average wages, such as sales or food service jobs.³⁴

31. The means reported in Table 2 for "job security," "flexible work," and "leisure time" come from the 1989 GSS; the means are adjusted for differences among samples in their age, education, race, self-employment, and supervisory position. The other mean values presented in Table 2 come from the 1991 GSS; the means are adjusted for sample differences in age, education, experience with current employer, race, organization size, occupational prestige, and supervisory position.

32. Levitan & Conway, *supra* note 15, at 52.

33. Callaghan & Hartmann, *supra* note 3, at 11.

34. See Chris Tilly, *Two Faces of Part-Time Work: Good and Bad Part-Time Jobs in U.S. Service Industries*, in *WORKING PART-TIME: RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES* 227, 228 (Barbara D. Warne et al. eds., 1992) (discussing wage differential between part-time and full-time workers).

Table 2. *Job Characteristics and Work Attitudes of Male and Female Part-Time and Full-Time Workers, 1991 GSS*

	Men		Women	
	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time
EARNINGS	16624.88	30645.69***	9532.49	21786.70***
FRINGE BENEFITS (=1)				
Medical Insurance	0.49	0.89***	0.46	0.83***
Dental Care	0.40	0.70***	0.36	0.62***
Life Insurance	0.35	0.76***	0.41	0.76***
Sick Leave	0.41	0.65***	0.42	0.75***
Maternity Leave	0.42	0.55	0.45	0.77***
Flexible Hours	0.46	0.40	0.65	0.52**
Cash/Stock Bonus	0.14	0.26*	0.25	0.37*
Pension/Retirement Plan	0.41	0.67***	0.38	0.69***
Profit-Sharing/Stock	0.28	0.33	0.13	0.31***
AUTONOMY (1-4)	2.55	2.82*	2.63	2.72
Work Independently	2.81	3.06	3.08	3.10
Lot To Say	2.35	2.58	2.35	2.50
Decides about Job	2.55	2.86*	2.50	2.59
ADVANCEMENT				
Been Promoted (=1)	0.31	0.46*	0.22	0.34
JOB SECURITY (1-5)	3.58	3.87*	3.67	3.81
FLEXIBILITY				
Flexible Work (1-5)	3.42	3.01**	3.70	3.08***
Leisure Time (1-5)	3.30	2.78***	3.24	2.74***
UNIONS				
Union Member (=1)	0.20	0.26	0.09	0.17
Union Preference (=1)	0.54	0.46	0.39	0.38
ORGANIZATIONAL				
COMMITMENT (1-4)	2.69	2.72	2.68	2.79
Effort	3.01	3.16	2.97	3.26***
Loyalty	3.03	2.93	2.93	3.03
Proud	3.01	3.08	3.03	3.16
Stay With Organization	2.26	2.18	2.15	2.22
Any Job	2.23	2.24	2.21	2.25

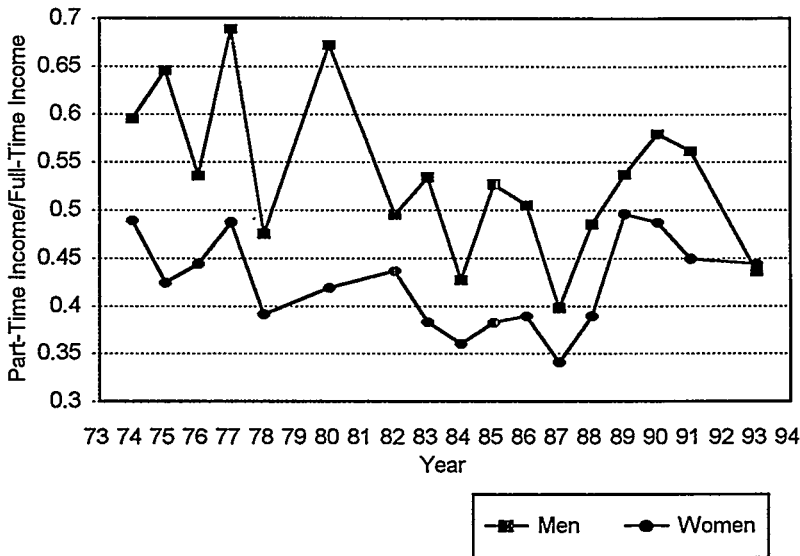
Part-Time v. Full-Time differences significant at: * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$ (Two-tailed t-tests).

Predicted Mean Values Reported (based on equations controlling for Age, Education, Race, Organization Size, Occupational Prestige, Self Employment, Supervisory Position, and Time with the Organization). Measures of job security and flexibility are coded from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree." Autonomy variables are coded from 1 = "not at all true" to 4 = "very true." Organizational commitment measures are coded from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 4 = "strongly agree."

The GSS earnings question refers to annual income, not the theoretically more preferable wage rates. This may explain why the ratios of part-time to full-time incomes presented in Figure 4 are generally less than the 60% figure reported by the studies cited in the previous paragraph. Nevertheless, the GSS results also show that there are fairly large and consistent earnings

Figure 4. Income Ratios: Part-Time/Full-Time

1974-1993 GSS



gaps between part-time and full-time workers. The ratios between these groups vary from 40% to near 70% for men and from nearly 35% to 50% for women. The gaps between part-time and full-time workers tend to be larger for women than men, i.e., the ratios are smaller for women. Table 2 indicates that in 1991, the ratio of part-time to full-time incomes — controlling for the variables listed at the bottom of the table — was about 54% for men and 44% for women.

B. Fringe Benefits

The pattern of disadvantage for part-time workers with regard to nonmandated³⁵ fringe benefits is clear. Persons working part time obtain

35. See Maria O'Brien Hylton, *The Case Against Regulating the Market for Con-*

fewer fringe benefits than those working full time, even after controlling for their education, age, race, length of experience with their employer, occupational level, authority position, whether they are self-employed, and the size of their employing establishment.

Figure 5. Respondent is eligible for Medical or Hospital Insurance.

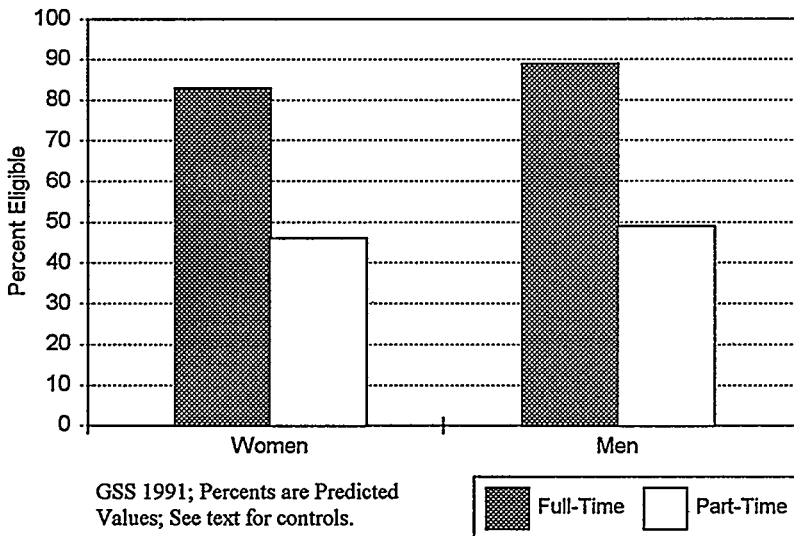


Figure 5 shows that only 49% and 46% of part-time men and women, respectively, were eligible for medical or hospital insurance. These figures are significantly lower than the corresponding percentages for full-time men (89%) and women (83%). Figure 6 indicates that only 41% of part-time men, and 42% of part-time women, were eligible for sick leave with full pay. These percentages are significantly less than those for full-time men (65%) and women (75%). Moreover, Figure 7 shows that only 41% of part-time men and 38% of part-time women were eligible for a pension or retirement plan at their workplace. These percentages are also significantly less than those for full-time men (67%) and women (69%).

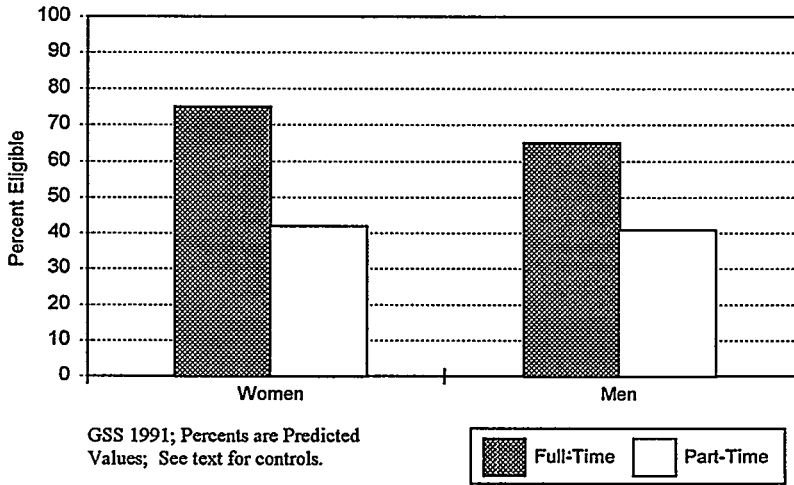
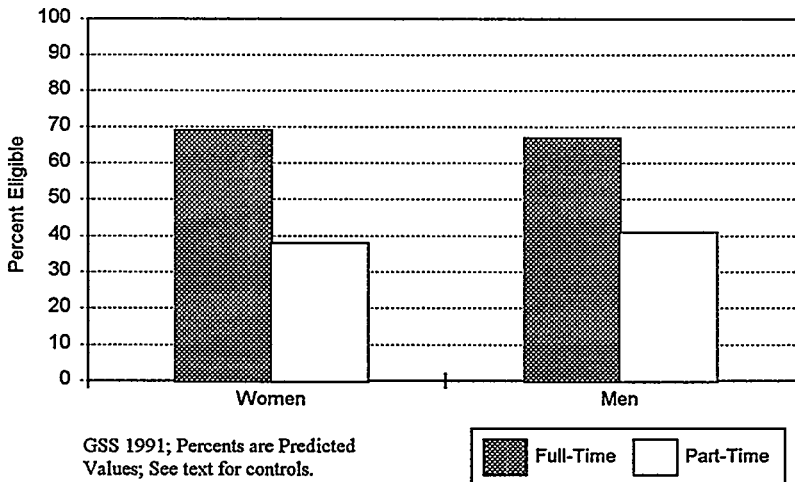
Figure 6. Respondent is eligible for sick leave with full pay.**Figure 7.** Respondent is eligible for a pension or retirement plan.

Table 2 also indicates that male and female part-timers were significantly less likely than full-timers to be eligible for dental care benefits, life insurance, and cash or stock bonuses for performance or merit. Female part-timers, but not male part-timers, were also significantly less likely than full-

timers to be eligible for maternity leave with full re-employment rights and a profit sharing or stock option program. Conversely, women who work part time were more likely to have flexible hours.

C. *Autonomy*

Autonomy is a worker's ability to exercise discretion and judgment on the job. Figure 8 shows that male full-timers had more autonomy than part-timers.³⁶ The difference between women who worked full time and women who worked part time is not statistically significant. This suggests that men's jobs may be more heterogeneous and polarized than women's jobs.

Figure 8. Autonomy

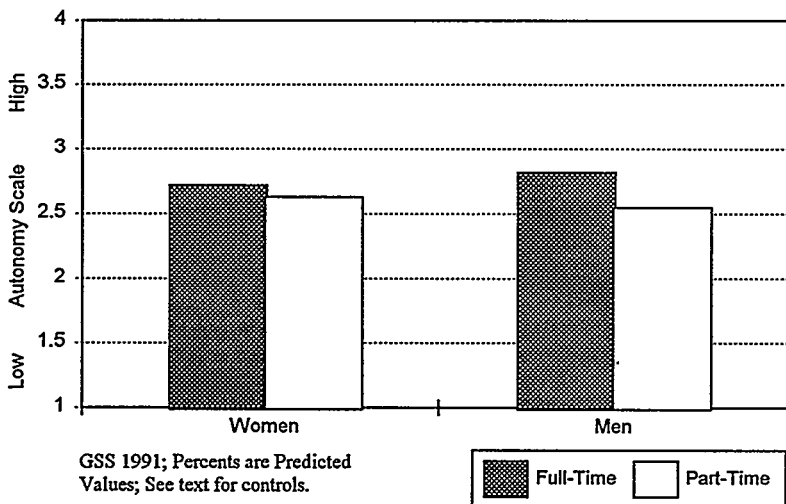


Table 2 provides information on the three items that make up the autonomy scale. The only significant difference is between male full-time and part-time workers on the item which asked whether the job "allows the respondent[s] to take part in making decisions that affect [their] work" ("Decides About Job").³⁷ Men and women part-timers were also less likely than full-timers to feel that they "have a lot to say over what happens on their job" ("Lot To Say"), but these differences are not statistically significant.

36. See also *supra* p. 781 tbl. 2 (listing autonomy rates for part-time and full-time workers).

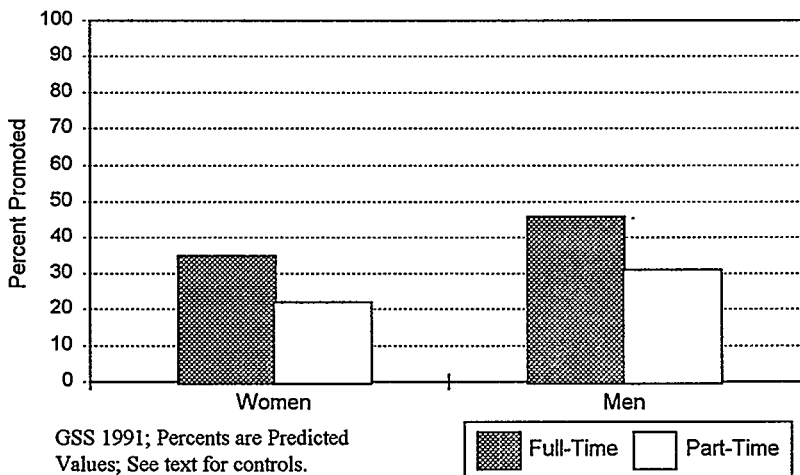
37. We should keep in mind that these means are adjusted for organization size, education, supervisory position, and the other variables listed at the bottom of Table 2.

There is also no statistically significant difference between part-time and full-time workers on the third item: whether they are able to work "independently" ("Work Independently"). The latter result is reinforced by a similar item from the 1989 survey, not shown here, which indicated that part-time and full-time workers did not differ much in their ability to work independently.³⁸ In interpreting these results, we should recognize that working independently does not always imply having more autonomy. For example, working independently could mean that one is not working in a team, or that one is working on a piece-work basis (sewing operator in apparel), or on a commission basis (sales clerk in a department store). Employers are probably more apt to assign full-timers to work in teams, thus giving them less opportunity to work independently.

D Advancement Opportunities

The opportunity for advancement is a widely coveted reward in American society and is one that is often used to differentiate "good" jobs from "bad," "dead-end" jobs.³⁹ Figure 9 shows that male part-time workers were

Figure 9. "Have you received any promotions while working for your present employer?"



38. See generally JAMES A. DAVIS & TOM W. SMITH, GENERAL SOCIAL SURVEYS, 1972-1993: CUMULATIVE CODEBOOK (1993) (describing 1989 GSS).

39. See Tilly, *supra* note 34, at 227-28, 238.

significantly less likely than full-time workers to say that they had been promoted in the past with their current employer.⁴⁰ Women part-time workers were also less likely than their full-time counterparts to say that they had been promoted, but this difference is not statistically significant.

E. Flexibility

Both male and female part-time workers were significantly more likely than full-time workers to agree that their job "leaves a lot of leisure time" ("Leisure Time") and "has flexible working hours" ("Flexible Work").⁴¹ This underscores what is often considered to be a major advantage of part-time work: It gives people the flexibility to engage in activities associated with their nonwork social roles.

In summary, our analyses in this section have shown that part-time workers receive fewer job rewards than full-time workers. This difference is especially pronounced with regard to earnings and fringe benefits. In addition, men who work part time are also disadvantaged with regard to autonomy and advancement opportunities.

IV The Work Attitudes of Part-Time and Full-Time Workers

A. Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction — the most commonly studied work attitude — is an overall affective orientation on the part of workers toward jobs they presently occupy. Theoretically, workers' overall evaluations of their jobs depend on their assessments of the fit between their work values and job rewards.⁴² Our analyses in previous sections have indicated that part-time workers have similar work motivations and values to full-time workers; yet, part-time workers obtain significantly fewer economic and noneconomic job rewards. This suggests that the gaps between what people want and actually receive are greater for part-timers. Thus, we might expect part-timers to be less satisfied with their jobs than full-timers.

Figure 10 compares the job satisfaction levels of part-time and full-time male and female workers in each of the GSS surveys.⁴³ The horizontal line

40. See also *supra* p. 781 tbl. 2 (listing advancement rates for part-time workers).

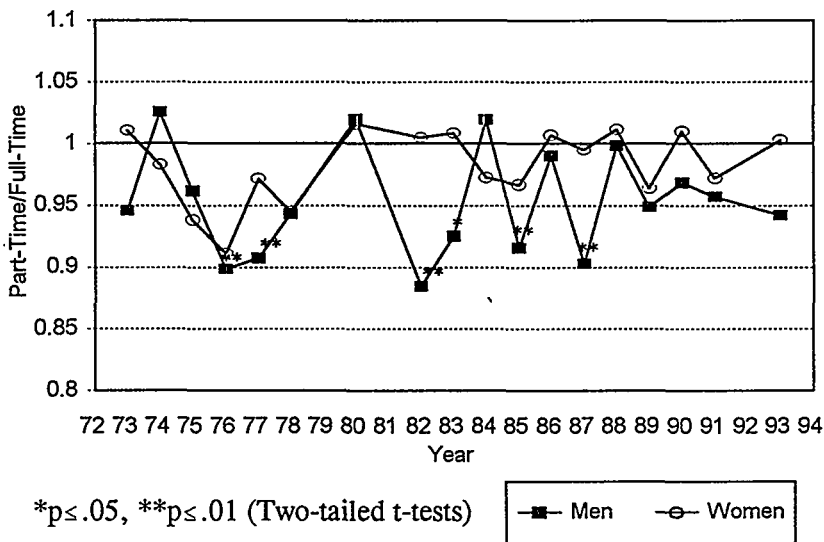
41. See *supra* p. 781 tbl. 2 (listing flexibility rates of part-time workers).

42. See generally Arne L. Kalleberg, *Work Values and Job Rewards: A Theory of Job Satisfaction*, 42 AM. SOC. REV. 124 (discussing theory of job satisfaction which incorporates differences in work values and job characteristics).

43. The job satisfaction question was: "On the whole, how satisfied are you with the work you do — would you say you are satisfied (=4), moderately satisfied (=3), a little dissatisfied (=2), or very dissatisfied (=1)?" The ratios presented in Figure 10 were formed

at "1" indicates the point at which the average job satisfaction of part-timers and full-timers is equal; the lower the ratio, the greater the satisfaction gap between part-time and full-time workers. In 1989 and 1991, the gaps in job satisfaction between part-time and full-time workers, male as well as female, were relatively small and not statistically significant. In only one year — 1976 — was the job satisfaction of part-time women lower than that of their full-time counterparts. In contrast, part-time male workers had significantly lower job satisfaction than men who worked full-time in six years — 1976, 1977, 1982, 1983, 1985, and 1987. Moreover, the ratios of part-time to full-time workers' job satisfaction also appear to fluctuate more widely for men than for women. The relatively low ratios for men at certain time periods are consistent with the view that men tend to place greater importance than women on having a full-time job. Hence, working part time — and thereby receiving lower pay, fringe benefits, and other job rewards — may seem more problematic to males.

Figure 10.
Job Satisfaction Ratios: Part-Time/Full-Time
1973-1993 GSS



by dividing the average (mean) job satisfaction score of part-time workers by the corresponding score of full-time workers.

To examine further some possible reasons for the absence of a gap in job satisfaction between part-time and full-time workers in 1989 and 1991 (the two years for which we have data on both rewards and values), we constructed indicators of "fit" between various work values and job rewards. These are presented in Table 3. We created these measures of "fit" by subtracting the reward level from the importance that the GSS respondent placed on the reward. The value and corresponding reward were both scored on a five point scale: 1 = low reward availability or importance and 5 = high reward availability or importance. A positive score indicates that the value exceeds the reward — people are not getting what they want. A negative score indicates that the value is fulfilled.

Table 3. Fits Between Work Values and Job Rewards for Male and Female Part-Time and Full-Time Workers, 1989 GSS

	Men		Women	
	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time
Job Security	0.91	0.49**	0.77	0.64
Income	1.38	1.21	1.48	1.34
Advancement	1.32	1.39	1.70	1.48
Interesting Work	0.53	0.66	0.65	0.59
Independent Work	0.15	0.10	0.09	0.17
Leisure Time	0.18	0.36	-0.20	0.24**
Flexible Work	0.25	0.64**	-0.05	0.56***

Part-Time v Full-Time difference significant at: * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$ (Two-tailed t-tests).

Predicted Mean Values Reported (based on equations controlling for Age, Education, Race, Self Employment, and Supervisory Position).

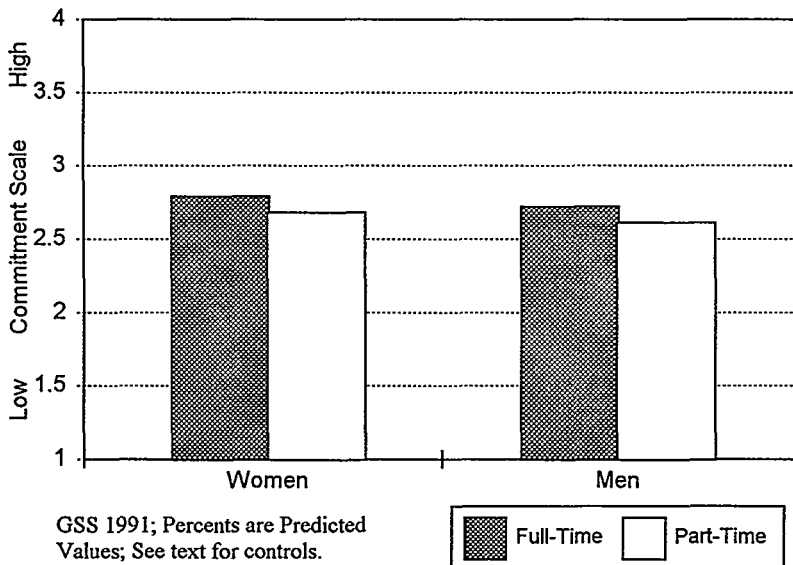
Table 3 indicates that part-time men were more apt than full-time men to have unfulfilled values with regard to job security. This gap is due primarily to the greater availability of job security among full-time male workers. Conversely, full-time men and women were more likely than part-time workers to have significantly more unfulfilled values with regard to having jobs that provide flexible working hours. Full-time workers were also more likely to have poorer fits with regard to having jobs that leave a lot of

leisure time, but this difference is statistically significant only for women. The advantages of flexibility associated with part-time work may partly offset some of its disadvantages, and this may explain in part the absence of an overall satisfaction gap between full-time and part-time workers, at least in 1989 and 1991.

B. Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is an overall indicator of workers' loyalties, of their attachments to their employers, and of the extent to which workers are motivated to expend efforts on an organization's behalf. Figure 11 shows that full-time and part-time workers were about equally committed to their employers.⁴⁴

Figure 11
Organizational Commitment



The "effort" dimension is the only item, out of the six items that comprise the organizational commitment scale used in Figure 11, on which there is a significant difference between part-time and full-time

44. See also *supra* p. 781 tbl. 2 (listing rates of organizational commitment).

workers. Female full-timers were more likely than part-timers to say that they were "willing to work harder than they ha[d] to in order to help their companies succeed."⁴⁵ (Full-time males were also more likely to agree with this than part-time males, but the difference is not statistically significant.) This is an important difference because "effort" is the dimension of commitment that has been shown to be most closely linked to job performance.⁴⁶ This difference in (reported) effort points to a drawback of employers' reliance on part-time and other forms of contingent work. The "low road" approach to decreasing labor costs by reducing payroll may lower worker effort, thereby resulting in less productivity and poorer product quality

C. Attitudes Toward Union Representation

The 1991 GSS data indicate that part-timers were less likely than full-timers to be union members.⁴⁷ The differences, however, are not statistically significant. This result may be specific to the 1991 GSS data, or it may be due to our having controlled for organization size, occupational prestige, supervisory position, and the other variables listed at the bottom of Table 2.⁴⁸ In any event, other surveys of the U.S. labor force have shown that unionization rates for part-time workers are considerably lower than those for full-time workers.⁴⁹ More importantly, there was no difference by work status in the proportion saying that they would vote for a union in a representation election. Figure 12 shows that 54% of male part-timers and 46% of male full-timers would vote for having a union represent them; the corresponding percentages for women are 39% and 38%, respectively. This finding suggests that part-timers are as equally likely as full-timers, if not more likely than full-timers, to want union representation. Thus, unions in the United States should not overlook part-time workers as a source of new recruits. Indeed, the lower pay, fewer benefits, lesser job security, and lack

45. *Id.*

46. See Arne L. Kalleberg & Peter V. Marsden, *Organizational Commitment and Job Performance in the U.S. Labor Force*, 5 RES. IN THE SOC. OF WORK 235, 247-48 (1995) (illustrating that effort is most closely linked to job performance).

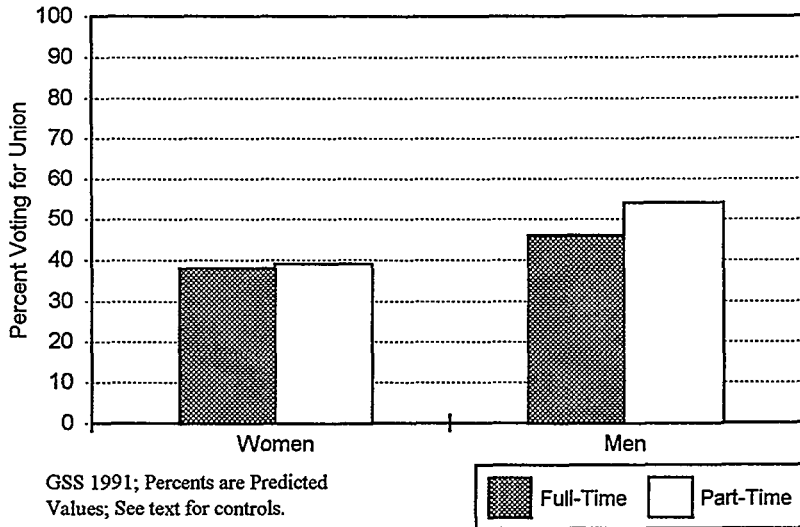
47. See *supra* p. __ tbl. 2 (showing that 20% of part-time males compared to 26% of full-time males are union members and that corresponding percentages for women are 9% and 17%).

48. The unadjusted proportions of union members are 10% and 18% for part-time and full-time men, respectively, and 6% and 13% for part-time and full-time women, respectively.

49. See Warne, *supra* note 23, at 6-7 (discussing relationship between unions and part-time work).

of advancement opportunities given to part-time workers may signal both the opportunity and need for unions to increase their representation of this group.

Figure 12. "If an election were held with secret ballots, would you vote for or against having a union represent you?"



V Policy Implications

The growth of part-time and other contingent employment relations raises important and far-ranging questions about organizations' management of human resources and about their employees' experiences of work. The increase in part-time workers has simultaneous positive and negative aspects. Part-time work provides opportunities for greater flexibility for both employers and employees. However, increases in part-time work also contribute to growing polarization in income, benefits, advancement opportunities, autonomy, and other job rewards. These contradictory trends call for more enlightened public policies, greater accountability by employers, and a more inclusive perspective by unions.⁵⁰

50. See Kahne, *supra* note 14, at 306-08 (discussing needed changes in contingent employment area).

From an employer's point of view, contingent work provides greater flexibility and lower labor costs, especially with regard to fringe benefits. On the negative side, contingent workers may have little basis for loyalty to the organization and thus few reasons to work hard and perform well. From the point of view of individuals in the labor force, there may be other disadvantages. Many do not work part time voluntarily, and so it is not by choice that they are working in jobs with greater employment uncertainty, relatively low wages, few — if any — fringe benefits, low chances for career advancement and autonomy, and few opportunities to develop and use job skills.

The voluntary-involuntary distinction has important implications for our thinking about many policy and legal regulatory issues. If people voluntarily choose to work part time, then presumably they are getting what they want and there are fewer problems in need of legislative and regulatory remedies. Involuntary part-time work is potentially more problematic because people who do not choose to work part time are presumably less able to satisfy their needs and wants. In any event, the ambiguities associated with the voluntary-involuntary distinction noted earlier make it a less than satisfactory basis for deciding whether or not a worker has chosen to work part time or has been constrained to do so.

The expansion of part-time, especially involuntary part-time, and other forms of contingent work has been described as the "dark side" of flexible production that has created a new form of industrial dualism.⁵¹ The polarization in both economic and noneconomic job rewards has sharpened the division between permanent insiders and contingent outsiders, often within the same firm.⁵² A consequence of this dualism is greater inequality of earnings among working Americans. Tilly estimates that 42% of the inequality growth in annual wages and salaries between 1978 and 1984 was due to the increase in part-time employment.⁵³

Inequalities and inequities experienced by contingent workers — in earnings, fringe benefits, and the lack of workplace protection — place a heavy burden on our welfare system and the taxpaying public who, in part, subsidize the cost of part-time work through mechanisms such as social welfare and health care. In addition, by aiming benefit programs such as

51. See BENNETT HARRISON, *LEAN AND MEAN: THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF CORPORATE POWER IN THE AGE OF FLEXIBILITY* 189 (1994).

52. See generally Vicki Smith, *Institutionalizing Flexibility in a Service Firm: Multiple Contingencies and Hidden Hierarchies*, 21 *WORK & OCCUPATIONS* 284 (1994) (reporting results of in-depth case study and discussing hierarchies of workers).

53. Tilly, *supra* note 17, at 21-22.

unemployment insurance, health care protection, and pensions at full-time workers, large gaps are growing in the social safety net. The use of contingent work may also signal problems with productivity and long-term competitiveness. These goals may best be served by high-wage, low-turnover productivity strategies; not the low-wage, high-turnover staffing strategies often associated with contingent work.

In light of the advantages of part-time work — especially with regard to flexibility — for both employers and employees, it is not a good idea to discourage the part-time alternative in favor of full-time employment. Instead, policies need to address some of the more negative features of the contingent employment relation, particularly the unequal treatment of part-timers and the effects of the part-time practice on other workers. For example, companies should be discouraged from using poorly paid part-time positions to undermine labor unions, to lower the earnings of full-timers, or to change full-time work to cheaper, lower-skilled, part-time work. Legislation and legal regulation should be directed at areas in which there are large deficiencies in job rewards — such as fringe benefits — as well as in autonomy and effort, which is related to quality of work produced and to productivity. We briefly consider some policies associated with these areas.

A. Pay

Part-time workers constitute more than half of the persons working for minimum and subminimum wages in the United States. In 1987, females working part time made up 44% of such workers; males working part time constituted 22%.⁵⁴ Twenty-eight percent of all part-time jobs pay the minimum wage or less, compared to 5% of all full-time jobs.⁵⁵ The low wages associated with part-time work have implications that extend beyond the workplace. For example, low wages help to make workers ineffective consumers. Thus, one needed policy would be to increase substantially the minimum wage, perhaps indexing it to the rate of inflation.⁵⁶

In addition, the presence of part-time workers can depress the earnings of full-time workers because employers may substitute cheaper part-timers for more expensive full-timers. Tilly reports that full-timers working in an industry where one-third of the workers are part-timers earn less (\$1.21 less

54. Levitan & Conway, *supra* note 15, at 52.

55. Kahne, *supra* note 14, at 297.

56. Virginia L. duRivage, *New Policies for the Part-Time and Contingent Workforce*, in *NEW POLICIES FOR THE PART-TIME AND CONTINGENT WORKFORCE* 89, 93 (Virginia L. duRivage ed., 1992).

per hour, on average) than identical full-timers working in an industry where there are no part-timers.⁵⁷

Social welfare policies related to low pay for part-timers also need to be addressed. In most states, unemployment insurance requires a minimum earnings threshold that excludes many part-time workers.⁵⁸ Most state unemployment insurance laws require that recipients be available for full-time work.⁵⁹ In addition, Social Security caps the income that is subject to payroll taxes, which means that part-timers and other low income groups are taxed at a higher rate.⁶⁰

B. Health Care Coverage

We have documented the gap in health insurance and medical benefits between full-time and part-time workers. Even those engaged in the most favorable form of part-time employment — "retention" part-time workers — generally do not receive the same benefits as those granted to full-time workers, even though their work may provide job security and other benefits not available to other part-time workers.⁶¹ Section 89 of the Tax Reform Act of 1986⁶² required that part-time workers receive a benefits package that was equivalent to that received by full-time workers (prorated to reflect differences in hours worked), but this was repealed in 1989⁶³ after a concerted employer campaign against it.⁶⁴ Legislation such as Representative Patricia Schroeder's "Part-time and Temporary Workers Protection Act" would, among other things, require employers to offer health benefits on a prorated basis to part-time workers where such benefits are currently extended to full-time workers.⁶⁵ One alternative, and in some ways a preferable alternative, might be to provide health benefits to *all* workers,

57. Tilly, *supra* note 17, at 24.

58. *Id.* at 35.

59. *Id.*

60. *Id.*

61. See BARNEY OLMSTEAD & SUZANNE SMITH, CREATING A FLEXIBLE WORKPLACE: HOW TO SELECT AND MANAGE ALTERNATIVE WORK OPTIONS 63 (1989) (discussing benefits for regular part-time workers).

62. Pub. L. No. 99-514, § 1151, 100 Stat. 2085 (1986) (codified as amended at I.R.C. § 89 (1988)) (repealed 1989).

63. See Pub. L. No. 101-140, § 202(a), 103 Stat. 830 (1989) (repealing I.R.C. § 89).

64. See Tilly, *supra* note 17, at 38 (discussing section 89 of Tax Reform Act).

65. See H.R. 2188, 103d Cong., 1st Sess. § 4 (1993). U.S. Representative Patricia Schroeder, from Colorado, introduced this bill. See also Kahne, *supra* note 14, at 306 (observing that some benefits, such as holiday, vacation and sick leave, are easier to prorate than others, such as pension and health benefits).

regardless of how many hours they work or the nature of their employment relationship. Part-time workers are also generally excluded from benefits of the Family and Medical Leave Act,⁶⁶ which covers individuals who are employed by an eligible company for at least a year and who have worked more than 1,250 hours during the previous year.⁶⁷

C. Retirement and Pension Plans

Differences in retirement and pension benefits between part-time and full-time employees underscore the need to extend the Employment Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA)⁶⁸ to prohibit the exclusion of part-time workers from pension plans where full-time workers are covered. One commentator has suggested that "Congress should amend [ERISA] to require employers who provide pension benefits to include 100 percent of their workers in a single line of business and to prohibit the exclusion of part-time workers from pension plans where full-time workers are covered."⁶⁹ Representative Schroeder's legislation would reduce the ERISA requirement for pension eligibility from 1000 hours per year to 500 hours per year, where a pension plan exists.⁷⁰ In addition to lowering this minimum hours threshold, ERISA's scope might well be extended to other key benefits such as health insurance.⁷¹ Moreover, "quicker vesting and more pension portability between jobs would expand coverage to women in particular and ease the economic strain of retirement."⁷²

D Career Advancement

Down-sizing and other forms of "re-engineering" make it increasingly difficult for even full-time workers to obtain career advancement in the modern corporation. But systematic differentials in advancement opportunities between part-time and full-time workers should be avoided. In

66. Pub. L. No. 103-3, 107 Stat. 6 (codified as amended at 2 U.S.C. §§ 60m-60n; 5 U.S.C. §§ 2105, 6381-6387; 29 U.S.C. §§ 2601-2654 (Supp. V 1993)).

67. See 29 U.S.C. § 2611(2)(A)(i)-(ii) (defining eligible employees for Family and Medical Leave Act).

68. 29 U.S.C. §§ 1001-1461 (1988 & Supp. V 1993).

69. duRivage, *supra* note 56, at 102.

70. See H.R. 2188, 103d Cong., 1st Sess. § 4 (1993).

71. See Tilly, *supra* note 17, at 38 (discussing recommended policy changes).

72. Lonnie Golden, *Employment and the Marginalization of Older Workers in the United States*, in WORKING PART-TIME: RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES 205, 219 (Barbara D. Warne et al. eds., 1992).

particular, failure to provide promotion opportunities to part-time workers may be a form of discrimination against women and minorities.

E. Union Representation of Part-Timers

Unions in the United States historically have opposed part-time work and have done little to extend contract provisions to part-time workers.⁷³ This is unfortunate because part-time workers who do not belong to unions both need and want to be represented by them.⁷⁴ Congress should amend the labor laws to ensure that all types of employees have an effective right to organize. For example, Tilly suggests that Congress should reform the National Labor Relations Act to make it fairer to unions seeking to organize part-time workers.⁷⁵ He reasons that if unions are better able to organize, they could help to lower wage differentials and other disparities between part-time and full-time workers without the need for governmental legislation.⁷⁶

Unions with high proportions of women membership, unions based in public or private service sector industries, and unions based in industries that have high proportions of part-time workers have taken the lead in representing part-time and contingent workers.⁷⁷ Examples of unions that are making notable efforts in this area include: United Food and Commercial Workers Unions (UFCW); Service Employees International Union (SEIU); and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).⁷⁸ These unions are including part-time workers in the bargaining unit, are responding to the need for parity in pay and working conditions, and are responding to concerns for making the employment relationship less precarious for workers who need flexible schedules and those who are permanent part-timers.

Conclusion

Our analysis has shown that the work motivations of part-time and full-time workers are similar. Work is just as much a central life interest for part-timers as for those who work full time. With a few exceptions, part-time and

73. See Eileen Appelbaum & Judith Gregory, *Union Approaches to Contingent Work Arrangements*, Discussion Paper FS I 88-8, at 10 (Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung, 1988) (describing union responses to contingent work relations).

74. See *supra* p. 792 fig. 12 (showing part-time workers' attitudes toward unions).

75. See Tilly, *supra* note 17, at 40 (proposing changes to National Labor Relations Act).

76. *Id.*

77. See Appelbaum & Gregory, *supra* note 73, at 11.

78. *Id.*

full-time workers value the same things about their jobs. The main differences between part-time and full-time workers lie in the rewards and benefits that they obtain from their jobs. Part-timers are paid less and receive fewer fringe benefits. Male part-timers also exercise less autonomy and have fewer opportunities for advancement than their full-time counterparts.

These inequalities between part-time and full-time workers in job rewards suggest the utility of seriously considering regulatory reform and other policies designed to enhance the quality of part-time work. Treating part-time workers more equitably by implementing these kinds of policies and regulations may make the option of creating contingent part-time jobs more expensive for employers. This may discourage employers from creating excessive numbers of contingent part-time jobs and help to curb tendencies toward greater polarization and the further development of a two-tier labor market in the United States.