

PART-TIME WORK

The portion of total employment occupied by part-time jobs rose sharply. The increase accelerated in the 1980s and especially in the 1990s due to public policy incentives. After the abandonment of these measures in the early 2000s, growth continued at a less sustained but steady pace until today.

From 8.3% of total employment in 1975, part-time work increased to 17.9% in 2011

Now, structural factors determine the maintenance of part-time employment at a high level:

- the sectoral structure of employment where services predominate;
- the breakdown of the employment status;
- the persistent inequalities between women and men in the private and professional spheres.

The rise of tertiary activities has brought with it the rise of part-time

82.5% of part-time jobs are held by women and 31% of employed women work part-time compared with 6.6% of men.

employment. Part-time jobs in the trade-distribution, restaurant-hospitality, janitorial, and human services sectors, and in certain public services, are mostly occupied by women.

Part-time work is at the crossroads of the labour market transformations

and of gender inequality. The issue of the relationship between professional and family time has become more present than it was before due to the increasing integration of women into the labour market. Therefore this relationship is mainly a women's issue.

Part-time work is heterogeneous both in the reasons given by employees and in the form of the organization of enterprises by sector of activity. Time worked falls within a plurality of logic.

TPART-TIME WORK AND UNDER-EMPLOYMENT

Part-time work is often seen as a form of under-employment. Employees are likely to report working part-time due to not having found a full-time job. Unemployment in reduced activity, which concerns job seekers working on an involuntarily limited schedule, has increased dramatically over the long term. It represented a little more than one-fifth of job applications in 1996, it reached nearly half in 2013.

By its current characteristics, part-time work is frequently associated with poverty. Part-time jobs are for the most part occupied by low-skilled employees.

As a result of the crisis, short-term weekly contracts have increased substantially.

LOWER HOURLY WAGES

Part-time employees have hourly wages that are on average one quarter lower than those of full-time employees. They are also over-represented among employees

Almost a quarter of workers without a degree work part-time, compared to only 15% of those who have a degree greater than Bac + 2.

earning the minimum wage. The additional hours system, which allows part-time employees to be paid for hours worked beyond those noted in the employment contract, is less beneficial than the overtime enjoyed by full-time employees.



Françoise Milewski

est économiste à l'Observatoire français des conjonctures économiques (OFCE) et co-responsable de PRESAGE (Programme de recherche et d'enseignement des savoirs sur le genre) à OFCE-Sciences Po. Elle siège au CESE à la section du travail et de l'emploi en tant que personnalité associée.

Contact:

francoise.milewski@ofce.sciences-po.fr
+33(0)1.44.43.62.42

25.8% of part-time employees are paid on the basis of the minimum wage compared to 7.8% of full-time employees.

16.5% of part-time employees add to their working hours with a second job, which imposes specific constraints: fragmentation of working time; increased transportation time; long working hours.

Part-time employees' working conditions are in many cases less favourable than those of full-time employees. When schedules are atypical, that range is extended by multiple cuts, the organization of time is unpredictable and fluctuating, working conditions are degraded.

A STEADY INCREASE OF PART-TIME WORK IN EUROPEE

Part-time work has experienced a steady increase in Europe. In 2011, it accounted for 19.5% of employment compared with 16% a decade earlier. The situation is different in each country, resulting from the various means of women's access to the labour market, specific historical developments, and particular social consensus. The development of this form of employment in the Member States of the Union mitigates the contraction of full-time employment. But poverty in employment is growing in Europe and it reverberates upon poverty in retirement. Part-time work is one of the components of this evolution.

A FORM OF EMPLOYMENT AS SUCH

Part-time work rarely appears today as a transitional integration

modality for categories that are the most removed from the labour market (youth, unskilled persons acquiring a first experience, women returning to the labour market after a hiatus). This form of employment often corresponds to lasting situations.

In fact it is an important component of the recent transformations of the labour market in Europe and in France. Forces oppose between on the one hand, the development of poorly codified and poorly protected jobs and on the other hand, a tendency to entrench and enhance part-time jobs.

AN ISSUE AT THE HEART OF THE INEQUALITIES BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN

Economic growth in the post-war period facilitated the integration of French women into the labour market, inasmuch as this was an effect of the growth. But the slowdown of economic growth and rising unemployment, have diminished this link to employment. The breakdown of the forms of employment mainly concerns women, both because they are employed in the sectors that originated this change, and because, as they found themselves in a situation of inferiority in the labour market, they often did not have the choice but to accept undervalued jobs.

THE CURRENT DEBATES ON PUBLIC POLICY

Public policy, at the intersection of objectives in terms of employment and/or measures concerning families, has at times encouraged part-time work and at others, sought to limit its effects. Faced with growing instability and the spread of poverty in employment,

the management of part-time work has now become a priority of public policy. However, it is faced with a choice between two options: offset the negative impact of part-time work and/or limit the growth of this form of employment.