

Growth in Part-Time Employment in Canada: Labour Market and Equity Issues

by

Antonio Pantieras

(SI# 686937)

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Supervisors: Professor Gilles Grenier
Professor David Gray

ECO 7997

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Με μεγαλη αγαπη για σας,

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1. Introduction

One of the most striking changes in the structure of the labour market in Canada in recent years has been the growth in part-time employment. Part-time work, as in many other industrialized countries, has been the most rapidly expanding form of non-standard work arrangement and is considered to be an important ingredient in the new "flexible" work force of today.

Many factors have contributed to this upward trend, which has seen part-time employment grow at an annual pace of 4.5 percent since 1975, reaching over 2 million workers in 1995 (Pold, 1994; Statistics Canada, 1996). The expansion of the service economy, over the last twenty years, has been a major determinant of growth in part-time employment. Service sector industries have generated new jobs in stores, restaurants, hotels, as well as in hospitals, schools, and government offices, stimulating a demand for part-time employment. On the supply side, a higher proportion of women have entered into paid employment, and a significant share of these women are participating in part-time employment. Also, an increase in the amount of younger students and older workers wanting to work part-time has had a significant impact on the growth of part-time employment.

The rise in part-time employment in Canada has resulted in an increased interest into this type of employment arrangement. Especially when, it is known that non-standard work arrangements (including part-time employment) are rapidly emerging and have altered the structure of Canada's labour market.

The aim of this paper is to explore labour market and equity issues with regards to the part-time employment phenomenon. In particular, we will examine the underlying factors which have led to growth in part-time employment in Canada during the last two decades, and we will analyze part-time employment within the context of segmentation theory to determine where part-time work is categorized within the theory. Finally, we will discuss policy issues aiming at improving the conditions of part-time employment. The paper is organized as follows:

The next section discusses part-time employment in the more general context of nonstandard employment and provides a brief overview into various non-standard work arrangements that have emerged in Canada. Several definitions and key statistics are presented with emphasis on part-time employment.

Section 3 discusses the economic factors underlying the upward trend in part-time employment over the last two decades. It includes an analysis of growth in the service sector and on the Neo-classical approach of labour demand and labour into part-time work.

Section 4 provides a brief overview of segmented labour market theory and discusses the issue of part-time employment and where it is situated in terms of the theory.

Section 5 examines policy issues on how improvements can be made on the conditions of part-time employment in general. The analysis includes a discussion on the impact of unionization, improved labour standards legislation, and the new Employment Insurance program on the conditions of part-time employment.

Section 2

Non-Standard Work and Part-time Employment

In recent decades, the emergence of non-standard work arrangements has altered the structure of employment in the Canadian economy and other advanced capitalist market economies. Although the majority of jobs in the Canadian labour market still remain standard full-time, full-year, permanent, paid jobs, there has been a significant increase in the share of employed Canadians working in non-standard employment. Consequently, as the share is further expected to rise, it has been suggested that the non-standard job of today could very likely become the “standard” job of tomorrow (Report of the Advisory Group, 1994).

Non-standard or contingent work takes on a variety of forms. Part-time employment has been considered to be the most common form of non-standard work and, more recently, own-account self employment, short-tenure employment, and temporary help-agency work have become more apparent in the labour market. In some cases, multiple jobholding and part-year employment have been treated as additional forms of non-standard employment, thus, creating a broader spectrum of non-standard work classes.

Part-time employment, in surveys such as Statistics Canada’s Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the General Social Survey (GSS), has been defined as an employment arrangement in which an individual works less than 30 hours a week at one or more jobs. This definition is a quantitatively oriented definition and is part of the various definitions

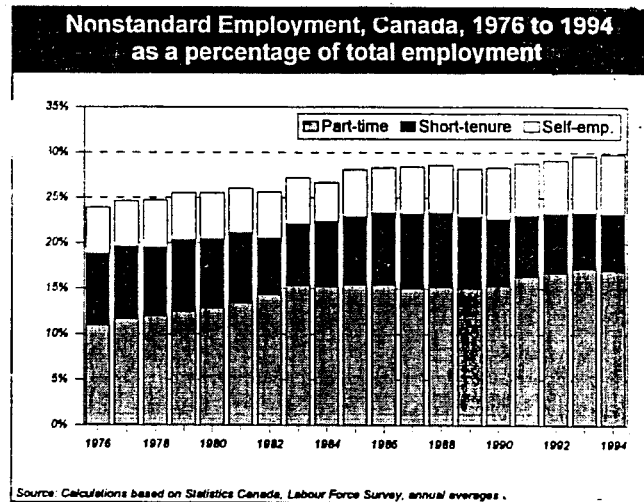
which have been associated to part-time employment. On the other hand, *own-account self employment* refers to self-employed workers (working full-time or part-time) who do not themselves have employees. Typically, own-account self employment has been concentrated among agricultural and construction industries, where many individual entrepreneurs are found. *Short-tenure employment* is defined as workers holding jobs for fewer than three months and, similarly, *temporary employment* refers to employment for a fixed period of time, for either full-time or part-time hours.

The literature on non-standard work arrangements has stressed the difficulty in obtaining concrete results or estimates on the extent of non-standard work in Canada. Krahn (1991) emphasizes that “limited data and a lack of consensus regarding operational definitions” has resulted in insufficient or vague estimates regarding the growth of non-standard work arrangements (Krahn, 1991:35). However, it is clear that growth in non-standard employment is essentially a result of the transition to a service-dominated economy, the increased participation of younger workers in the labour force, and the increased difficulty in finding full-time permanent jobs (Report of the Advisory Group, 1994).

According to figures in the LFS, between 1976 and 1994, 46 percent of total employment growth was due to growth in non-standard employment. In 1994, 71 percent of jobs were considered “standard”, meaning employment where a worker has one source of employment from which that individual earns all or the majority of his or her income, while non-standard employment accounted for 29 percent of total employment, an increase from 24 percent in 1976 (Krahn 1991; HRDC, Applied Research, 1995). Furthermore, during this time period, 80 percent of growth in non-standard employment

was due to growth in part-time employment (HRDC, Applied Research Branch, 1995). As Figure A illustrates, part-time employment encompasses the largest share of total employment of all other non-standard work arrangements.

Figure A



Source: HRDC, Applied Research, 1995.

2.1 Part-time Employment Defined

As in the case of other non-standard work arrangements, a major issue regarding the study of part-time employment involves the confusion over how part-time employment should be defined. In general terms, a work arrangement is considered to be “part-time” when a schedule is less than what one would consider a normal full-time, permanent schedule. A Canada Employment and Immigration Advisory Council (CEAIC) study in 1981 defined part-time employment as “a work schedule other than regular full-time, year-round employment offered by an employer and accepted by an employee” (Baker, 1988: 2;

Wheeler, 1990). Thus, the extent to which a work schedule is considered full-time or part-time varies along several dimensions: number of hours worked, number of days worked per week, number of weeks worked per month, and number of weeks worked per year (Pierce, Newstrom, Dunham, and Barber, 1989; Coates, 1988).

In many studies, *permanent* or *regular* part-time employment has been the most commonly adopted definition of part-time employment. This definition refers to employment for less than a "normal" schedule with employees having a continuing attachment to the employers. Although it is similar to the one outlined by the CEAIC, the continuing commitment on the part of employers and employees differentiates the two.

Part-time employment may also be on a casual, temporary, or contract basis. *Casual employment* refers to the situation in which an individual works on an 'as-needed' or 'on-call' basis usually for brief periods of time depending on the requirements of the employer. *Contract employment* is generally employment on a full-time basis for a limited duration of time. Similarly, *seasonal employment*, defined as part-year employment based on the seasonal requirements of the employer, is another form of scheduling that could be considered part-time (Coates, 1988; Canada, Commission of Inquiry into Part-time Work, 1983). More recently, alternative work arrangements related to part-time work have slowly emerged as the demands of work and changing family structures have shifted work patterns from the traditional nine-to-five job. Job sharing and flex-time¹ are variants of part-time work which "have been introduced not to create jobs but to limit the human cost of down-sizing and restructuring" (Report of the Advisory Group, 1994:38).

Analyzing the range of definitions regarding part-time work, we find that there are many similarities among them. Definitions tend not to be mutually exclusive, and it is quite likely that issues involved in one form of part-time employment could overlap with those discussed under other types of part-time work. As a result, estimates have varied given the lack of differentiation among the types of part-time employment. Nevertheless, part-time employment has been referred to as permanent or regular and has excluded casual, temporary, and contract part-time employment (Coates, 1988). This definition, however, is general, and empirical studies have used the number of working hours as the standard with which to measure part-time employment. For example, the Current Population Survey (CPS) in the United States defines part-time employment as steady work of less than thirty-five hours per week. Statistics Canada, in its monthly Labour Force Survey (LFS), measured part-time employment in the same manner but revised their definition in 1975 to include part-time workers as those employees who usually worked less than 30 hours per week.

While studies have used the LFS for empirical research, the survey possesses some limitations and drawbacks. In particular, the survey tends to underestimate the actual number of workers in part-time employment. In 1993, for example, 17% of workers were part-timers but 23% of jobs were part-time (Pold,1994). This questionable difference has been attributed to the manner in which the LFS defines a part-time worker. Namely, individuals who work 30 hours or more per week at two jobs (for instance, 23 hours at one job and 9 at the other) are counted as full-time workers. Also, individuals working fewer than 30 hours a week in jobs where shorter hours are characteristics of their occupational group and consider themselves to be employed full-time are not

classified as part-timers². Hence, it is evident that a serious statistical presentation problem occurs in the counting of part-time workers. Pold (1994) has suggested that counting workers with two jobs twice would provide a more accurate estimate of the total number of occupied jobs in the Canadian economy. Despite these limitations, many researchers still have employed the LFS for empirical labour market studies and, in particular, estimates of trends regarding part-time employment.

2.2 Growth in Part-Time Employment in Canada

Figure A revealed that, over the last two decades, non-standard work arrangements have had a significant impact on the changing structure of the Canadian labour market with part-time employment playing a major role in this change. Table 1A presents some key statistics on the trends in part-time and full-time employment since 1975.

In 1995, two million Canadians, or about one in every six employees, worked part-time, compared to approximately 1 in 9 in 1975. That is, part-time employment, as a share of total employment increased from 10.6 percent in 1975 and reached 16.7 percent in 1995. In addition, part-time jobs accounted for approximately one quarter of all jobs in Canada in 1994 (HRDC, Applied Research, 1995). Since 1975, part-time jobs increased at an average annual rate of 4.5 percent, reaching close to 3 million in 1994, a rate significantly higher than full-time jobs which grew only at a pace of 1.2 percent annually -see Table 1B. Looking at the distribution in annual growth rates by province, again we find that the rates were much higher for part-time jobs than full-time ones. For

Table 1A

Part-Time and Full-Time Employment in Canada, 1975-1995

Year	Total Employment	Part-Time Employment		Full-Time Employment	
		Total (000's)	As a %age of Total Employment	Total (000's)	As a %age of Total Employment
1975	9,284	988	10.6	8,296	89.4
1976	9,478	1,047	11.0	8,431	89.0
1977	9,652	1,128	11.7	8,524	88.3
1978	9,986	1,206	12.1	8,780	87.9
1979	10,395	1,301	12.5	9,094	87.5
1980	10,708	1,392	13.0	9,316	87.0
1981	11,006	1,487	13.5	9,519	86.5
1982	10,644	1,534	14.4	9,110	85.6
1983	10,734	1,651	15.4	9,083	84.6
1984	11,000	1,689	15.4	9,311	84.6
1985	11,312	1,757	15.5	9,555	84.5
1986	11,634	1,810	15.6	9,824	84.4
1987	11,861	1,804	15.2	10,057	84.8
1988	12,245	1,882	15.4	10,363	84.6
1989	12,485	1,888	15.1	10,597	84.9
1990	12,572	1,932	15.4	10,640	84.6
1991	12,340	2,023	16.4	10,317	83.6
1992	12,240	2,058	16.8	10,182	83.2
1993	12,384	2,143	17.3	10,241	82.7
1994	13,093	1,894	14.5	11,199	85.5
1995	13,513	2,257	16.7	11256	83.3

Source: Statistics Canada, Historical Labour Force Statistics (Cat. no. 72-201),
Statistics Canada, The Labour Force, Cat. no. 71-001 Monthly.

Table 1B

Compound annual growth rates: 1975-93

	Employment	All jobs	Full-time jobs	Part-time jobs
	%			
Canada	1.6	1.8	1.2	4.5
Newfoundland	1.2	1.2	0.7	4.9
PEI	1.4	1.4	1.0	3.0
Nova Scotia	1.1	1.2	0.6	4.0
New Brunswick	1.5	1.6	1.1	4.3
Quebec	1.1	1.2	0.5	4.9
Ontario	1.6	1.8	1.2	4.1
Manitoba	0.9	1.2	0.4	4.1
Saskatchewan	1.0	1.4	0.4	4.6
Alberta	2.6	2.8	2.2	5.3
BC	2.5	2.7	2.2	5.0

Source: Statistics Canada, *Perspectives on Labour and Income* Cat. 75-001E (Autumn).

example, Ontario and Quebec had full-time annual growth rates of 1.2 percent and 0.5 percent on average while part-time yearly growth rates were 4.1 percent and 4.9 percent respectively. In all provinces, the part-time annual growth rate was at least twice that of the full-time annual growth rate in jobs. Hence, during the last two decades, it is evident that part-time work has been growing at a much faster pace than full-time employment.

The analysis of growth in part-time employment also must take into consideration trends in “voluntary” and “involuntary” part-time work. Statistics Canada, in its counting of part-time workers, employs these two categories as a way of differentiating between part-time workers. *Voluntary* part-timers work fewer full-time hours for a variety of reasons. Reduced hours can enable individuals to study, train, or retrain, meet family responsibility, to supplement income or to pursue other personal preferences. Thus, voluntary part-time employment can take on many forms, making it a difficult term to define accurately. Also, the extent to which voluntary part-time employment is actually a desired option has been questioned by researchers. Warne, Lundy, and Lundy (1992) have argued that the unfavourable situation and conditions to which part-time workers are subjected, has resulted in a misinterpretation of the voluntary part-time worker. Voluntary part-time jobs do not always particularly match a workers needs. Warne, Lundy, and Lundy (1992) explain that there could be a significant increase in the participation of voluntary part-time work if some of the disadvantages attached to part-time jobs were removed. Thus, despite the fact that the majority of part-time workers are “voluntary”, this does not necessarily mean that people are necessarily content with their situation. Incidentally, the extent to which voluntary part-time work is considered a “want” or a desire can be debated.

In 1994, according to the definition employed by Statistics Canada, approximately 66 percent of part-time employment was voluntary. The total number of voluntary part-time workers numbered almost 1.4 million, and it represented 11 percent of all employment in 1994 versus 9.5 percent in 1975 (Logan, 1994; HRDC, Applied Research, 1995; LFS). However, most of the increase in part-time employment has been attributed to a rise in "involuntary" part-time work. *Involuntary* part-time employment refers to workers working part-time due to slack workloads or because of their inability to find full-time, permanent employment. Over the last two decades, involuntary part-time employment accounted for over half (56 percent) of the growth in total part-time employment (HRDC, Applied Research, 1995). The ratio of part-time workers who would rather work full-time increased from 17 percent (109,000 workers) in 1975 to 34 percent (760,000 workers) in 1994 (HRDC, Applied Research, 1995; Noreau, 1994, LFS). Thus, growing numbers of Canadians have been entering part-time work involuntarily given the difficulty in obtaining full-time jobs.

2.3 Profile of Part-Time Employment

Currently, a part-time worker in Canada is more likely to be female, married, and employed in the service sector. In 1993, 69.3% of all part-time workers totalling 1.6 million were women compared to 30.7% for men. As the trends indicate in Table 2, this figure has remained consistent since 1975 (HRDC, Applied Research, 1995). Furthermore, the share of women employed part-time increased from 20.3 in 1975 to 26.4

in 1993. Women also represent the majority of voluntary part-time workers, with most of them working in service oriented occupations (see table 3). Namely, 71 percent of voluntary part-timers were women, and many were concentrated in managerial and professional occupations, clerical, sales, and service occupations. In terms of age, younger workers (15-24 years) had by far the highest rates of part-time employment. Specifically, over the last two decades, the rates more than doubled for both young men and women (Table 4). In 1993, 48.3 percent of women and 39.1 percent of men between the ages of 15-24 years were working part-time. For people aged 25-44 years, the rate was much lower than the younger category at 20.7 percent for women and 4.0 percent for men. Hence, men in their prime working years are much less likely to be working part-time than their female counterparts. For older workers, the trend was similar to those aged 25-44 years.

Table 2

Women and Part-time Employment, 1975-1993

Year	Women employed part-time (000's)	% of women employed part-time	% of men employed part-time	Women as percent of total part-time employment
1975	687	20.3	5.1	69.5
1976	741	21.1	5.1	70.8
1977	800	22.1	5.4	70.9
1978	867	22.6	5.5	71.9
1979	938	23.3	5.7	72.1
1980	1,011	23.8	5.9	72.6
1981	1,074	24.2	6.3	72.3
1982	1,100	25.1	6.9	72.0
1983	1,169	26.1	7.6	71.3
1984	1,187	25.7	7.6	71.2
1985	1,251	26.1	7.6	72.0
1986	1,274	25.7	7.8	71.2
1987	1,294	25.1	7.6	71.7
1988	1,355	25.2	7.7	72.0
1989	1,352	24.5	7.7	71.6
1990	1,371	24.4	8.1	71.0
1991	1,425	25.4	8.8	70.4
1992	1,440	25.9	9.3	70.0
1993	1,485	26.4	9.7	69.3

Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogues 71-001, 71-220, 75-507, and 71-529.

Table 3

**Total employment and voluntary part-time workers,
selected characteristics, 1993**

	Total Employment	Voluntary Part-time Workers
Number ('000)	12,383	1,383
Average usual weekly hours	38	15
	%	%
Increase (1975-1993)	33	57
Both Sexes	100	29
Men	55	29
Women	45	71
All ages	100	100
15-24 years	16	44
25-34 years	27	15
35-44 years	28	16
45-54 years	19	11
55 years and over	10	13
All occupations	100	100
Managerial and professional	32	23
Clerical	16	22
Sales	10	16
Service	14	26
Primary	5	5
Processing, machining and fabricating	11	2
Construction	5	1
Transportation	4	1
Material handling	3	3

Source: Logan, 1994, Statistics Canada LFS.

Table 4
 Percentage employed part-time, by age group, 1975-1993

Year	People aged							
	15-24		25-44		45 and over		Total	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
1975	22.2	17.1	18.9	0.9	20.4	2.9	20.3	5.1
1976	24.0	17.4	18.8	0.9	21.3	2.9	21.1	5.1
1977	24.8	18.2	19.9	1.1	22.8	3.1	22.1	5.4
1978	25.7	18.2	20.1	1.1	23.7	3.4	22.6	5.5
1979	26.8	18.6	20.4	1.0	24.2	3.6	23.3	5.7
1980	27.3	19.4	20.8	1.1	25.3	3.6	23.8	5.9
1981	28.3	21.0	21.0	1.3	25.7	3.7	24.2	6.3
1982	31.4	24.3	21.1	1.7	26.4	4.1	25.1	6.9
1983	33.6	26.4	21.9	2.2	27.2	4.7	26.1	7.6
1984	34.7	26.8	20.9	2.3	26.7	4.5	25.7	7.6
1985	35.8	27.3	21.4	2.3	26.7	4.4	26.1	7.6
1986	36.4	28.2	20.8	2.4	26.4	4.7	25.7	7.8
1987	37.0	27.8	20.0	2.3	25.6	4.6	25.1	7.6
1988	37.3	29.1	20.1	2.1	26.4	4.4	25.2	7.7
1989	38.1	29.3	19.3	2.1	25.0	4.8	24.5	7.7
1990	39.4	31.3	19.0	2.4	24.9	5.1	24.4	8.1
1991	43.4	35.2	19.9	3.0	24.9	5.6	25.5	8.8
1992	45.4	37.4	20.4	3.4	24.4	5.7	25.9	9.3
1993	48.3	39.1	20.7	4.0	24.5	5.8	26.4	9.7

Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogues 71-001, 71-220, 75-507, and 71-529.

Section 3

Forces Behind the Rise in Part-time Employment

It is important, given the increase in part-time employment, to consider the underlying forces which have led to the expansion of part-time employment over the last two decades in Canada. This section will focus on demand- and supply-side determinants which have led to growth in part-time employment. Emphasis will be placed on the service sector, the demand for labour, and supply of labour into the rise in part-time employment

3.1 The Service Sector

An examination of the increase in part-time work and its subsequent effects must take into account the role of the changing employment structure. If one were to look at the early post-war years, the majority of the paid labour force were men employed as blue collar workers, earning hourly wages in the goods-producing sector (Report of the Advisory Group, 1994:25). Manufacturing, resource, and transportation industries generated much of the national output. However, as the growth of demand for products was falling, productivity was increasing, and strong competitive pressures from labour-intensive industries abroad was growing, the proportion of the national work force directly employed in these sectors was diminishing (Economic Council of Canada, 1990; Report of the Advisory Group, 1994).

While these industries continued to decline³ in relative terms, “another important long-term social and economic change was taking place” (Report of the Advisory Group, 1994:25). From the 1960s to the late 1980s, service industries including retail, business and communications, tourism, and entertainment were growing in terms of their share of the total labour force (Economic Council of Canada, 1990; Advisory Group, 1994). Between 1967 and 1988, service employment increased each year by 3.4 percent while work in the goods producing sector grew by only 0.9 percent . By 1989, the service sector employed 71 percent of Canadian workers and accounted for 64.2 percent of overall economic output, while the goods sector only employed 29 percent with economic output of 35.8 percent (see Table 5A). This growth in the service sector stimulated a demand for part-time employment because the types of jobs that were available in these industries included clerical, sales, and service jobs in offices, restaurants, stores and hotels. Typically, many of these jobs have been of part-time nature. Thus, the shift of employment from goods-producing industries to services fuelled the expansion of part-time employment in Canada as is the case in many other OECD countries (Economic Council of Canada, 1990; Little, 1986).

Presently, part-time employment is still concentrated among service sector industries in Canada. The majority of *non-standard employment* is concentrated among the Trade and Community, Business and Personal Service sectors (Economic Council of Canada, 1990). Table 5B shows that almost 80 percent of part-time employment, in 1994, was concentrated within these two service industry groups. Namely, community, business, and personal services accounted for 53.5 percent of part-time employment while wholesale and retail trade accounted for 25.4 percent (HRDC, Applied Research, 1995

TABLE 5A**Employment Shares and Employment Growth, by Industry, 1967-1988**

	Industry Employment		
	As a share of total employment		Annual growth rate,
	1967	1988	1967-88
	%	%	%
Service Sector	59.4	70.9	3.4
Dynamic services	19.7	23	3.2
Transportation, communication, and utilities	9	7.4	1.5
Wholesale trade	4.5	4.6	2.7
Finance, Insurance, and real estate	4.3	5.9	4.1
Business Services	1.9	5.1	7.3
Traditional services	21.7	25.7	3.3
Retail trade	12.1	13.1	2.8
Personal services	9.6	12.6	3.8
Nonmarket services	18	22.2	3.5
Health and social services	6.2	8.9	4.3
Education	5.8	6.6	3.2
Public administration	6	6.7	3
Goods Sector	40.6	29.1	0.9
Primary industries	10.3	6	-0.1
Manufacturing	23.9	17.2	0.9
Construction	6.5	5.9	2.1
Both Sectors	100	100	2.5

Source: Economic Council of Canada, 1990

TABLE 5B**Distribution of Non-Standard Employment by Industry Group, 1994**

	Part-time Employment	Short-tenure Employment*
	%	%
Primary	3.7	6.6
Manufacturing	3.8	12.2
Construction	3.1	10.1
Trans. Comm. and Other Utilities	3.4	4.9
Wholesale and Retail Trade	25.4	18.1
Finance, Ins. and Real Estate	4.7	3.2
Comm. Bus and Personal Service	53.5	41
Public Admin.	2.6	4.1

Source: HRDC, Applied Research Branch, Human Resource Development Canada, 1995. Statistics Canada, LFS 1994.

*Jobs lasting less than 3 months

LFS 1994). Furthermore, looking at each industry individually, part-time jobs were most common in consumer-oriented industries with the highest incidence of part-time jobs belonging to service and sales occupations and the lowest to processing, machining and fabricating (Table 6). The industries with the highest percentage of employment which is part-time belonged to Accommodation/Food/Beverage services at 41 percent followed by Other Services⁴ and Retail Trade at 37% and 35% respectively. In contrast, Government Services (12.5%), Other Primary (8.5%), and Manufacturing (8.5%) offered the fewest part-time jobs (Pold 1994, LFS 1993).

TABLE 6			
Incidence of Part-Time Jobs by Industry, 1993			
(percent)			
Manufacturing	8*	Business Services	20
Other Primary	8.5	Educational Services	28
Government Services	12.5	Agriculture	29
Transportation	14	Health/Social Services	32
Wholesale Trade	14	Retail Trade	35
Construction	14.5	Other Services	37
Finance	19.5	Accommodation/Food/Beverage	41

Source: Pold 1994, Labour Force Survey, 1993.

*Figures are rounded.

The increase in part-time jobs with the expansion of the service industries has been well documented. The service sector is now a vital component of the Canadian

economy; however, traditional industries still generate much of our national output and still employ many on a full-time basis (Report of Advisory Group,1992). Nevertheless, the growing contribution of the service sector in today's economy has stimulated a demand for part-time employment as this type of employment arrangement is more adaptable to this sector.

3.2 The Demand for Part-time Labour

It is without question that the service sector has been a major determinant in the growth of part-time employment in Canada in recent years. However, greater importance has to be placed on understanding the underlying reasons behind this sector's demand for part-time labour. As a result, we turn to Neo-classical theory of the firm and labour demand to provide an insight into growth in part-time employment .

Neo-classical theory in its explanation of labour demand assumes that the goal of a firm is to produce the level of output that maximizes profits. To accomplish this, the firm must decide on the least-cost production method and, in particular, on the appropriate combination of capital and labour to be used. This decision is influenced by two factors: first, is the constraints that technology places on the mix of capital and labour, and second, is the relative prices of the factor inputs.

The technology of production is embodied in a firm's specific production function which expresses the relationship between the level of capital (K) and labour (L) inputs and the maximum obtainable level of output (Q), given the current state of

technology. It is represented in the form $Q=f(K,L)$ and thus, the production function shows the relationship between increases in capital and labour and increases in output.

In terms of labour input, firms in the service sector tend to incorporate full-time and part-time labour into their respective production functions (Osberg, 1994). Since the demand for labour by a firm is a *derived demand*, meaning that the demand for labour is dependent on the strength of the demand for its product, changes in the level of sales and production of the firm will cause some change in the firm's desired level of employment (Gunderson and Riddel, 1993). As a result, part-time employment can be regarded as one of the labour inputs which enables firms to achieve optimal output levels at the least cost. This is true for many reasons:

One major reason behind employer's demand for part-time workers is that part-time employment offers flexibility in staffing and scheduling of work. Flexibility can be seen as "the freedom for employers to lay off workers in response to changed economic conditions, the freedom to deploy labour as desired within the firm, and the effort to convert a more traditional and hierarchal corporate structure into a form that can quickly and efficiently respond to changing economic conditions" (Wheeler,1990:13 ; Bratton, 1986; Little 1986). Moreover, Pollert (1988), Hunter, McGregor, and Macinnes (1993), have analyzed the issue of flexibility in *the theory of the flexible firm*.

The theory of the flexible firm addresses the issue of flexibility and its ability to accommodate expansions, contractions, and/or changes in the product market (Hunter, McGregor, and Macinnes, 1993). In particular, the theory explains an emerging system which incorporates three different types of workers within the labour process of an organization. Namely, those offering functional flexibility, wage flexibility, or numerical

flexibility. *Functional flexibility* refers to “variations in the work performed by permanent full-timers to reflect changing requirements of production” (Rosenberg, 1989:393). Workers in this group cross occupational boundaries (i.e. multi-skilling) and are also closely linked to production demands (Osberg, 1994). *Wage flexibility* refers to the adjustment of wage levels to prevailing labour market conditions or the state of the economy. *Numerical flexibility* refers “to varying the number of hours of work and the size of the workforce in response to cyclical or structural variations in demand and/or technological changes” (Duffy and Pupo, 1992b: 98). Hence, given the dynamic nature of the economy, where there exists fluctuations in the business cycle, there is a need for establishing functional, wage, and numerical flexibility in organizations.

Part-time employment tends to be categorized among the numerical flexible workforce. Profit maximizing firms, in perfectly competitive markets, are incorporating numerical flexibility into their employment strategies in order to minimize production costs. Alternatively, employers in the service sector are employing a *just-in-time labour* strategy (a form of numerical flexibility), and part-time employment represents a means in establishing a variable workforce in an organization. As Osberg (1994) states:

“...as employment has shifted to the service sector, the institutional nature of the employment relationship has changed substantially. Increasingly, firms are restricting their offers of the traditional job - full time employment with a continuing expectation of future employment - to a subset of permanent ‘core’ workers” (Osberg, 1994: 162).

It is evident that firms, in their labour decision, are moving away from a permanent worker labour strategy to a *just-in-time labour* strategy in which only a core group of workers receives full-time work. Casual employees (i.e. part-timers, workers on short-term and temporary employment contracts), on the other hand, are less central to

an organization's core business and are hired during short waves of peak activity on a daily, weekly, and seasonal basis.

A secondary reason for employer's motives with respect to part-time work is that part-time employment represents a reduction in labour costs to employers in terms of reduced worker benefit and salary costs (Coates:1988, 27-28). Wages paid to part-time workers, traditionally, have been lower than those paid to full-time workers, *ceteris paribus*. In 1987, average hourly wage rates for part-time workers were less than 75 percent of the rates paid to full-time employees, and, these differences have remained (Economic Council of Canada, 1991 :75 ; Evenson, 1996). Furthermore, the report of the Advisory Group (1994) stressed that "many part-timers are excluded from the benefits plans that regular full-time workers take for granted" (Report of the Advisory Group, 1994: 31). *Non-wage benefits*, or indirect labour costs such as pensions and insurance coverage are major expenses foregone by employer's by hiring part-time employment (Gunderson and Riddell, 1993: 228; Advisory Group: 1994: 31; Akyeampong, 1987:26; Coates, 1988:61). Studies in the United States have indicated that seventy-five percent of part-time, year-round workers received no health insurance and only 20 percent of part-time workers were included in pension plans (Negrey, 1993; Beechey and Perkins, 1987). Studies in Canada have documented similar findings, and have shown that part-time employment represents a significant reduction in payroll cost from the standpoint of wages and benefits (Coates 1988, 27-28, 61-77).

Another factor which has stimulated employer's demand for part-timers is competition and restructuring. The intensification of business competition, both, domestically and internationally, along with inflationary pressures and technological

advances, has led enterprises to re-examine their labour needs, especially when labour comprises a large share of the expenses incurred by employers. "Maintaining profitability is going to continue to be dependent on keeping costs down especially in the face of unrestricted competition... In many industries this could require major rethinking of staffing policies" (Little 1986: 20). In recent years, many larger companies and governments have contracted out services that used to be performed in-house (Report of the Advisory Group, 1994; Economic Council of Canada,1990). Thus, employers are substituting under-utilized full-timers with part-time workers and are, therefore, paying only for actual hours worked.

Other reasons for employers using part-time help include the weak association of part-timers with respect to labour codes and union contracts. Although the position of part-time workers is improving, part-time workers generally have not been well respresented in collective agreements and in labour relations legislation. Full-time employees are much more likely to be covered by the terms of a union collective agreement than are temporary, contract, or part-time workers. Part-time workers are, therefore, easier to dismiss or fire, do not receive overtime pay for working outside regular hours, and do not always require employer contributions to benefits (Duffy and Pupo, 1992a; Baker,1988).

It is also suggested that part-time work increases productivity. Coates (1988) stresses that part-time employment enhances productivity in jobs which are "routine" or "monotonous" (Coates, 1988: 61). Shorter hours and flexible work arrangements have proved beneficial to the organizations. Studies show that the ability to match a work force with demand can maintain or increase productivity while reducing the net outlay to

employers (Pierce, Newstrom , Dunham, and Barber, 1989, 77-85 ; Little 1986:20). However, opposers of this view find part-time employment to be less productive because of marginal employee commitments to the organizations, as in the case of the Ontario Nurses Association (ONA), where full-time nurses indicated that their workplace was deteriorating as more part-time jobs were added (White, 1992) .

3.3 Labour Supply Perspectives

Growth in part-time employment has also been attributed to the increase in the number of individuals entering part-time employment. Namely, over the last twenty years, there has been an increase in the labour supply of workers participating in voluntary and involuntary part-time employment. This section considers the neo-classical approach of labour supply to explain the rise in part-time employment. In particular, income-leisure choice theory will be used to explain the supply of labour into part-time employment. Again, the analysis will employ the definition put forth by Statistics Canada's LFS regarding voluntary and involuntary part-time employment.

3.3.1 The Voluntary Part-Time Workers

There are three groups in particular that might be expected to have strong preferences for part-time work: young persons, older workers, and married women, especially with children. Reasons for voluntarily working part-time vary with age. Young part-timers,

the fastest growing part of the part-time workforce, are most likely to be students reflecting both a rise in school enrollment and an increasing tendency for students to work (Sunter,1992, Logan, 1992 Akyeampong,1992). Lowe and Krahn (1992) stress the importance of part-time employment as a key element in the development of a strong work ethic and a way of shaping students' general values with respect to work⁵. Hence, the part-time option allows students to combine school with paid employment and an opportunity to gain valuable experience in a working environment.

At the other end, older aged workers are encouraged to partake in part-time employment mainly because it provides them an opportunity to slowly phase into retirement, thus, minimizing the shock of entering into a reduced working pattern while enjoying more leisure activities⁶. This alternative is known as the "phased", "gradual" or "transition" retirement scheme which allows older employees to reduce their working time in stages -ie. weekly, or monthly (Little, 1986 ; McDonald and Wanner, 1992). These retirement schemes, for some, have been met with some resistance because they have resulted in significant reductions in status and wages; however, attitudes towards working patterns have been slowly changing, and part-time employment has played a significant role in the re-evaluation of lifestyles of the elderly in the workforce (McDonald and Wanner, 1992 ; Little, 1986). Moreover, it is suggested that the transition of the elderly into part-time employment enables firms to draw talented new workers (especially younger workers) into their organizations without having to pay high front-end training costs or losing its experienced staff in a "golden handshake" staff reduction (Little, 1986: 20; Bratton, 1986).

Prime aged workers (25-44) participating in part-time employment are most likely to be married women with children. The high participation rate among women reflects their preference in combining family responsibility with careers. A Statistics Canada Survey (1993) reported that virtually all part-timers who entered part-time employment due to family ties, indeed, were women and were concentrated in their prime childbearing and rearing years (Logan, 1994). Many women feel that it is in their best interest to provide care for their own children while economic pressure and financial need causes them to demand jobs which fit around their domestic responsibilities. In more general terms, Duffy and Pupo state:

“Financial necessity appears to be a common denominator in women’s participation in full or part-time work, and certainly this offers the most straightforward explanation. Yet, most women do not cite financial need alone as the primary motivation for their part-time work...Women’s personal description about their reasons for undertaking part-time work invariably point to the interconnectedness of life’s spheres: family, domestic work, paid work, personal satisfaction and fulfillment, and financial and other accommodations” (Duffy and Pupo, 1992b: 73-74).

Therefore, part-time employment is an option which allows women to supply weekly hours below the full-time norm along with supplying labour in the home to carry out child-rearing, domestic responsibilities, and other personal goals.

Others choose part-time employment simply because they are not interested in working full-time. In 1994, approximately 576,000 people indicated that they worked part-time because they were not interested in a full-time job (Logan, 1994:22). However, it has been suggested that this figure could be overestimated as the categories, again, are not mutually exclusive from one another. The Labour Force Survey categorizes voluntary part-time workers by reason with selected characteristics and individuals reporting they were not interested in full-time work could have also given school attendance or another

reason for working part-time. As a result, there is likely a misrepresentation of the number of individuals exclusively not wanting a full-time job.

3.3.2 Neo-Classical Theory of Labour Supply

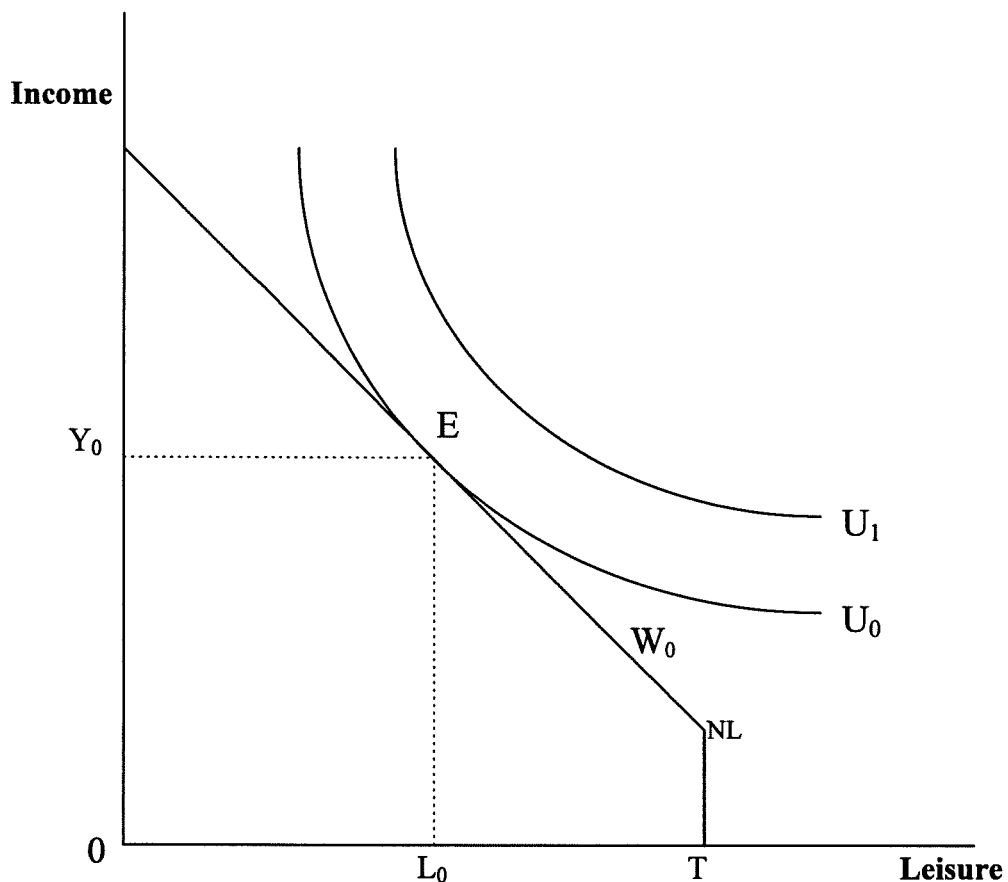
The previous section on voluntary part-time employment revealed that there are many reasons for individuals undertaking part-time work, and these reasons differ by age and sex. In terms of neo-classical theory of labour market labour supply, the participation in part-time employment reflects the different tastes and preferences for alternative work arrangements in the labour market. In other words, given the constraints that individuals are faced with (which differ by age group and sex), part-time employment can be regarded as the optimal choice of hours of work in the labour market which yields them the highest level of satisfaction and well-being. This phenomenon can be explained within the confines of Income-Leisure choice theory and, in particular, the basic income-leisure model.

The Income-Leisure model

Income-leisure choice theory provides a theoretical framework explaining an individual's optimal preference level of **income** and **non-labour market activities**, at the prevailing wage, yielding the individual the highest attainable level of satisfaction or utility (Gunderson, Riddell, 1993). Income is generated through the number of hours an individual spends working in the labour market at the given wage rate, while activities such as household work, education, leisure, and other forms of non-paid employment, are treated as non-labour market activities. It should be noted that the literature, in many cases, has phrased all non-labour market activities as "leisure".

Applying the theory to part-time employment, we are interested in determining the combination of hours of work and leisure which maximizes an individual's utility given the existing constant wage rate and the extent of the individual's non-labour income. In general, the point of tangency between the individual's highest indifference curve and the budget or income constraint, represents the optimal work or labour supply. Alternatively, utility maximization occurs where the marginal rate of substitution between income and leisure is equal to the slope of the income or wage constraint. The wage rate is assumed to be constant since any change in work time would yield the same additional income throughout the range of worktime (Gunderson, Riddell, 1993). Graphically, figure B shows that an individual's optimal combination of income and leisure is at E_0 given a wage rate of W_0 with non-labour income represented by the vertical distance between point 0 to NL.

Figure B



Analyzing labour supply for those individuals between the ages of 25 and 44, we find that women are far more likely to consume more leisure to a large extent because of household and child care responsibilities, the cost of childcare, and the extent of non-labour income (i.e. spouses earnings). However, the financial necessity and the relative stagnation of wages, gives rise to an income effect inducing a demand for employment on the part of women in this age group. Given their constraints, their optimal decision with

regards to paid working hours is to work part-time represented by point E in Figure B with work hours at point L_0 and income Y_0 (Gunderson, Riddell, 1993:147).

In addition, it is important to consider the effects of a change in the *wage rate*, and *non-labour income* with regards to the choice of hours of work. Neo-classical theory states that changes in wages and non-labour income elicit a change in the equilibrium amount of work. For example, an increase in the wage rate could induce mothers with young children to either enter the labour force into part-time employment⁷ or increase the number of part-time hours worked. The presence of children, given the increase in the wage rate, induces a **substitution effect** in that the part-time worker buys less leisure and increases hours worked. Alternatively, the opportunity cost of leisure or the income foregone by not working is higher, making the person substitute away from leisure (Gunderson, Riddell, 1993:20). However, given the resulting increase in wage or income, the part-time worker has the opportunity to spend more time at home for childcare. That is, the individual is able to reach a desired target level of income quicker-allowing them the opportunity to work less hours. Thus, the increase in wage also gives rise to an **income effect**. The **net effect**, or difference between the income and substitution effects of a change in the wage, really depends on the magnitude of the offsetting forces. Namely, it is possible that the income effect outweighs the substitution effect, resulting in a net effect of an increase in leisure, or, it could be possible that the opposite occurs, resulting in a net effect of increased hours of work on the part of the individual. In this light, it would seem that the net effect of an increase in the wage would not result in a drastic change in the optimal choice of hours on the part of mothers

working part-time if one were to consider the relatively low wages that have continued to be associated with part-time employment.

Another factor which accounts for the large voluntary participation of women aged 25-44 in part-time employment is the effect of *non-labour income*. Empirical evidence shows that increases in family income (spouses' income) result in more leisure on the part of women with children⁸ (Gunderson, Riddell, 1993: 95). As spouses' earnings increase, women's working patterns tend to change in favour of tending to the home, thus, giving rise to an income effect. Furthermore, as dual-family incomes are becoming more common among families, there is a preference for alternative work arrangements and for part-time employment during childbearing years. Therefore, part-time employment represents the optimal working decision for this particular group of women given their constraints, including the extent of their non-labour income.

For the elderly, participation in voluntary part-time employment reflects an achieved level of wealth along with a desire to remain in the labour force. The income effect is evident. Older individuals tend to have a level of wealth (derived from working in the labour market and from private and public pension funds) which results in them having the opportunity to buy more leisure which could be in the form of early retirement or movement away from full-time employment and into part-time employment.

Younger individuals, on the other hand, are faced with different constraints with the major one being their participation in educational activities. Hence, part-time employment represents their optimal choice of hours in the labour market given the length of the school year.

In general, we have seen that participation and choice of hours of work in the labour market reflects the varying preferences and constraints different individuals face. Moreover, given the varying constraints among the different age and sex classes, one consistent element among the young, elderly, and women in their prime childbearing years, is their common preference for part-time employment.

3.3.3 The Involuntary Part-Time Workers

The recent growth in part-time employment in Canada is accounted for in large part by the increase in involuntary part-time employment. In this era of economic restructuring and increased downsizing in both the public and private sectors, individuals who prefer full-time employment are able only to find part-time jobs as employers are trying to reduce labour costs and maximize flexibility (Economic Council of Canada, 1990; Duffy and Pupo, 1992b ; Akyeampong 1986). Furthermore, the increasing numbers of individuals entering into paid employment has resulted in a larger supply of available workers and an increased "mismatch" between work schedules preferred by the workforce and those offered by employers (Warne Lundy, and Lundy, 1992). A survey of 1,501 Canadians conducted by the Angus Reid Group in 1996 concluded that one-third of the respondents expected to lose their jobs within the next five years with a quarter of them feeling that they were underemployed and unable to get work in the area of their specific skills. Many of these workers were part-time, clerical, or low income workers (Evenson, 1996).

3.3.4 Hours Constraints and Labour Supply

The existence of involuntary part-time employment in Canada raises an important question with regards to the issue of labour supply. Namely, to what extent is part-time work involuntary? In other words, when are people constrained with their labour supply?

Kahn and Lang (1995) have conducted extensive studies on the issue of hours constraints in Canada, and their empirical research has revealed that over 50 percent of all employed Canadians would like to work a different number of hours. In particular, two-thirds desire more hours of work and one-third desire fewer hours at their usual hourly rate of pay (Kahn and Lang, 1995: 916). Their research also indicates that low wage earners are more likely to desire more hours of work while high wage earners are less often constrained to work. That is, low wage workers tend to be underemployed more often, as employers require these workers to work fewer hours than desired. High wage earners, on the other hand, are able to work additional hours resulting in a situation of overemployment. Kahn and Lang (1995) explain this phenomenon in terms of differences in workers' marginal productivities. Namely, 'the productivity of better (and therefore higher) wage workers may decline less rapidly than the productivity of other workers', inducing employers to favour additional work from key workers while constraining hours of work for lower paid employees who are perceived to have low marginal productivities (Kahn and Lang, 1991: 611). Hence, in terms of part-time work, involuntary part-time employment, to some degree, represents hours constraints placed on workers by their employers. Involuntary part-time workers are perceived to be less productive to an organization, and thus are not offered their desired level of working

hours. This view is supported by the figures on hours constraints, which indicate that service sector industries, on average, have close to one third of workers wanting more work (Table 7).

Industry	Wants More	Wants Less	Wants Same
	Work	Work	
Primary	36.5	19.4	44.1
Manu. Non-Dur.	29.3	19.1	51.6
Manu. Durable	36.2	16.1	47.7
Construction	44.6	15.2	40.2
Transport	36.5	18.8	44.7
Wholesale Trade	34.5	15.4	50.1
Retail Trade	37.8	13.2	49
Finance, etc.	30.7	19.6	49.7
Community Services	26.7	20	53.3
Personal Services	43.3	8.6	48.1
Bus. & Misc. Serv.	34	22.6	43.4
Total	34.2	17.3	48.5

Source: Kahn and Lang, 1995.

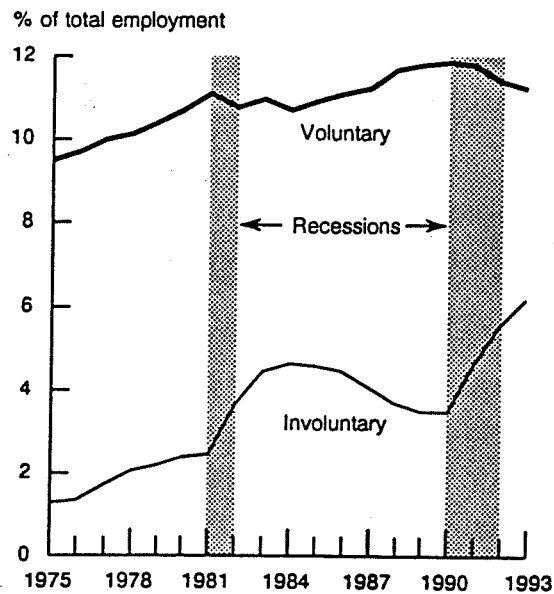
Given that a considerable amount of part-time employment is found in service sector industries, a significant share of individuals wanting more work could be among those participating in involuntary part-time employment. In particular, looking at the retail and wholesale trade sectors, 34.5 percent and 37.8 percent of the workers desired increased working hours.

3.3.5 The Effects of the Business Cycle on Voluntary and Involuntary Part-Time Employment

The demand and supply of part-time employment tend to fluctuate with the prevailing state of an economy. Studies conducted by Noreau (1994) and Logan (1994) concluded that economic conditions affect the relative shares of voluntary and involuntary part-time employment. When economic growth is weak, or in times of recession, involuntary part-time employment, on average, tends to rise and voluntary employment tends to fall (Logan, 1994). Alternatively, during boom periods, the rate of involuntary part-time employment tends to fall, and the rate of voluntary part-time employment rises. Figure C presents trends in the rate of part-time employment from 1975 to 1993⁹.

Figure C

Economic conditions affect the relative shares of voluntary and involuntary part-time workers.



Source: *Labour Force Survey* Logan, 1994

The trend in part-time employment indicates that involuntary part-time employment tends to have a higher sensitivity to the business cycle than voluntary part-time employment in times of high unemployment. During each of the last two recessions, the rate of change of involuntary part-time employment as a percentage of total employment was much more significant than the one for voluntary part-time employment. However, the rate of change of involuntary part-time employment was not as prominent in times of economic recovery¹⁰ (Noreau 1994, Devereaux, 1992). That is, the share of involuntary part-time employment decreased gradually during lower levels of unemployment.

3.4 Summary

A number of factors can be identified as having contributed to the growth of part-time employment. First, there has been a substantial growth in the service sector of the Canadian economy, and it is this sector that makes major use of part-time employees. Growth in part-time employment is also a reflection of labour demand and, in particular, the efforts being made by employers to introduce and establish flexibility into their organizations. In the face of unrestricted competition and changing market situations, organizations are striving to raise productivity, lower costs, particularly labour costs, and want to increase their control over the labour process. Second, there are the demographic and structural factors. The composition of the labour force now includes more women and teenagers entering into paid employment and, in particular, part-time employment. The preference for part-time work, deriving from an individual's ability to accommodate various demands on their time, provides an insight into the continuing labour supply of individuals participating in part-time employment voluntarily. However, one must not overlook the fact that growth in part-time employment in the past decade is attributed to hours constraints placed on low wage employees and the resulting underemployment represented by involuntary part-time employment.

Section 4

An Alternative Theoretical Perspective into Part-Time Employment

The discussion in the previous section indicated that there exists many advantages to part-time work for employers and employees and some disadvantages, particularly, for employees. The analysis included a Neoclassical perspective explaining the continuing demand for and supply of part-time labour in Canada. However, to some researchers, conventional Neoclassical theory has been considered a weak tool in its explanation of labour market behaviour. Opponents of the theory have tried to explain labour market behaviour by applying theories of segmented labour markets (SLM) to understand the persistence of high and low wage employment in the labour market. Contrary to the orthodox approach, which regards one's success in the labour market as dependent upon the individual and the inherent choices that are made, post-Keynsiens/Institutionalists point to the segmentation of labour demand and the internalization of a set of values or anthropogenic approach to labour supply to explain differences in wage levels. In this light, this section will focus on understanding the continuing low wages which have continued to be associated with part-time employment within the segmentation framework.

4.1 Segmented Labour Markets

In terms of labour demand, post-Keynsien/Institutional theory stresses the existence of a segmented labour market in which there exists a primary and secondary labour market.

The primary segment, linked to the core, manufacturing industries (capital-intensive process of production), offers high wages to highly skilled workers, good working conditions, employment stability, chances of promotion, and a relatively unionized labour force. SLM theorists have deemed the primary labour market as one that is oligopolistic in nature, given that it is dominated by skilled workers with high labour productivities and high wages (Seccareccia, 1991; Cornwall, 1977; Applebaum, 1979; Ryan, 1981). In contrast, the secondary labour market, linked to service sector (labour-intensive) industries and smaller competitive firms, contains those jobs that generally offer low wages, little in the way of promotion prospects and job security. This peripheral labour market is characterized by low levels of productivity, low unionization rates, low skill requirements, and much greater employment flexibility. Secondary workers, for SLM researchers, are seen to be part of a peripheral more competitive sector which acts as a sort of buffer for the monopoly sector (Seccareccia, 1991).

Contrary to the neoclassical argument which regards employment, productivity, and wage outcomes as functions of individual investments in human capital, institutionalists emphasize that differences in productivity and wages between the primary and secondary sector are not dependent on prior characteristics of workers entering these sectors. "Rather, it has mostly to do with the fact that the job characteristics and requirements, to which workers must adapt, are very different in the two segments of the labour market" (Seccareccia, 1991). Seccareccia (1991) and other SLM researchers emphasize that many of the skills are obtained once on the job.

In the core sector, technology requires highly skilled workers having specific training (mostly obtained once on the job) and whose necessary job attachment would be stronger than the attachment of those in the secondary low-wage sector. In much the same way, the existence of a more rigid wage structure patterned along specific seniority ladders and an internal distribution of employment that

minimizes overall employment variability within the primary segment is mostly explained by the existing technological requirements which have transformed labour into a quasi-fixed input in production... Within the low-wage segment, on the other hand, the skill requirements as well as the need to transmit these skills would be low. It is a sector in which a wage structure is non-existent and employment variability and labour turnover is high (Seccareccia, 1991).

From the statement expressed above, it is evident that the lack of product market power (and low levels of profitability) on the part of the peripheral firms, constrains their ability to invest in improved technology. As a result, low levels of training required on the job, lack of internal labour markets, and high labour turnover rates are characteristics which reflect the low productivity levels associated with the smaller firms and employees in the secondary market.

4.2 The theory's relevance to part-time employment

In terms of part-time employment and SLM theory, part-time employment represents many of the characteristics that have been detailed within the secondary labour market description of the theory. An empirical study conducted by Wheeler (1990) revealed that part-time workers required less training, were less unionized, had high turnover rates, and were less likely to attain managerial or supervisory positions than full-time workers. Furthermore, the study concluded that women, married women, and younger individuals were more likely to work part-time. However, although these conclusions provide an insight into the characteristics of part-time employment, they do not provide a coherent explanation as to why part-timers are deemed secondary labourers? Thus, we need to

determine why most part-timers are considered to have lower productivities than their full-time counterparts?

In terms of the theory, the answer to this question lies in the amount of paid labour hours an individual works. For part-timers, limited hours worked in paid employment can have a negative effect on their performance levels. With a large share of part-time employment being voluntary, lower performance levels could be attributed to the various demands on their time away from paid employment. As discussed earlier in section 3.3, reasons for undertaking part-time employment varied by age group and sex, therefore, it is these reasons which prove inimical to greater productivity. Women, for example, made up a large share of part-time employment reflecting their personal experiences and features of social structure limiting their employment (Duffy and Pupo, 1992b: Beechey and Perkins, 1987). Seccareccia (1991) states:

“Moulded by their social and institutional environments, individuals are intergrated into the workforce by a process that involves various stages of affiliation. Beginning with the family affiliation which is then extended to the school, human beings become ultimately attached to a workforce not only for the particular wage that they earn from their productive activity, but also because it allows them to acquire skills, competence and, above all, the relative economic autonomy necessary for the maintenance and development of their underlying social affiliations” (Seccareccia, 1991:48-49).

Thus, given their early childhood socialization, the internalization of a set of values, motivations, beliefs, and capacities about familial roles, women are channelled into specific occupations allowing them to maintain and develop their social affiliations. These social affiliations, in turn, affect productivity levels and wage structures as there exists a weaker attachment to the paid labour force on the part of these individuals. Similarly, for young part-timers, time spent in acquiring an education has an effect on their immediate performance in the labour market as more importance is placed on

improving their education for improved future employment prospects. Hence, from these examples, one can see how the labour market is segmented into a primary and secondary labour market. SLM theorists have pointed to this segmentation by applying an anthropogenic approach to labour supply. Namely, the existence of a secondary labour market exists as a result of an individual's various demands away from paid employment. Part-time employment is considered to be among the secondary labour market as limited hours in the paid labour force result in a weak attachment to the labour market and, therefore, lower levels of productivity and performance.

Section 5

Policy Issues: Can the Condition of Part-time Employment Improve?

Throughout the discussion of part-time employment, it has been determined that, in many cases, part-time employment represents a peripheral form of labour. As a result, it is necessary to discuss whether or not the situation of part-time workers can or will ever improve, especially for those individuals who are involuntary part-time workers. To answer this question, we look at the impact of unionization, government labour standards legislation, and the new employment insurance program into part-time employment .

5.1 The Impact on Unionization

At first glance, it would be logical to assume that the situation of part-time workers would improve by unionizing. However, the solution is not as simple as it appears. Part-time workers present a complex set of issues for unions- many of which have led their an opposition in supporting part-time employment. As Coates (1988) states “traditionally, unions have placed a low priority on negotiating provisions for part-time employees in collective agreements” (Coates1988:70). This view is premised on a number of objections on the part of union officials. First and foremost, unions have feared that improved collective agreements regarding part-time work would threaten or be at the expense of full-time jobs, especially, in times of high unemployment levels. This view is

justified by the high rates of involuntary part-time employment that have existed during times of economic hardship . Second, as unions are striving for a shorter work week and fewer work years, without loss of pay, a focus on part-time work could have an negative effect on these preferred goals. Unions have also stressed the extreme difficulty and cost in organizing part-time labour given the real or perceived disunity among part-timers, their high turnover rates, and their marginal commitments to the workplace (Duffy and Pupo 1992a:107). Moreover, with part-time employment characterized as a ghettoized form of labour, union support could diminish the standards achieved through collective bargaining practises - thus, hurting union goals. Therefore, it is these preconceptions about part-time workers which have influenced and “deflected” organizing efforts and, more important, encouraged unions to protect the bargaining strength of full-time workers workplace (Duffy and Pupo 1992).

Employers, in the past, have also made efforts to keep part-time employment at low levels of collective organization. Duffy and Puppo (1992) state that employers resistance towards unionization can be achieved through a variety of ways. Namely, by using intimidation practices, sustaining divisions by hiring temporaries and students, isolating part-time workers by incorporating different scheduling and different job tasks, and by using detailed performance evaluations¹¹; they further state that the success of these measures rests on four general factors:

1. the financial necessity of the part-time job;
2. the constraints on women part-timers’ energy and time for unionizing;

3. the presumed temporariness of the part-time job; and,
4. the relatively low level of commitment among trade unionists toward organizing the part-time labour force.

Hence, it is suggested that labour's conflict regarding part-time employment can also be generated from tactics adopted by employers, who use part-timers as a union-eroding strategy.

More recently, however, there has been an increasing tendency for unions to have a more accepting attitude towards part-time employment. Unions have gradually become less opposed to part-time work eventhough unions still regard part-time employment as an inequitable form of labour or reserve supply of cheap labour (Wheeler, 1990; Coates,1988). Many unions see the potential offered by part-timers and, thus, are attempting to negotiate equal pay and benefits for the part-time worker. For example, the Ontario Nurses Association (ONA), the Canadian Union of Public Employees¹² (CUPE), and the Service Employees' International Union (SEIU) are aiming at improving the pay, benefits, work schedules, and regulations governing seniority and overtime pay to protect the growing participation of part-time workers (Jostman, 1990). It is suggested that these efforts could lead to a reduction in the financial incentive for employers in using part-time employment. Thus, unions are striving to take a more flexible and supportive approach towards the issue of part-time work given changing economic and social circumstances. It should be noted, however, that there still remains significant differences in unionization rates between part-time and full-time employees (Report of the Advisory Group,1994). A report by Evenson (1997) based on a Statistics Canada

survey, revealed that only 23 percent of part-time jobs, in 1997, were unionized. Given the relative stagnation (and even decline) of unionism presently in Canada, one has to consider whether, in reality, unions will have a major influence in the improvement in the conditions of part-time employment.

5.2 Labour Standards Legislation

Labour standards legislation in Canada establishes minimum standards for certain conditions of work such as minimum wages, hours of work, statutory holidays, vacations, maternity leave and termination of employment notification. Part-time workers tend to be adversely affected and often do not receive equal treatment with regards to employment standards legislation. Although employment standards legislation have not legislated explicitly to deny protection to part-time workers, the definition of "employee" and the requirements of time worked for entitlement to standard protection have operated to deny equal protection to part-time workers. As Coates (1988) stresses, part-timers "are not specifically excluded from such legally required social security arrangements as Unemployment Insurance, Workers Compensation, and the Canada/Quebec Pension Plan. However, they may fail to meet certain criteria for the benefits available under such programs" (Coates, 1988:44). Eligibility for these benefits and others, such as annual vacations, and paid holidays, require a continuity of employment for a specified minimum time period. Therefore, given that approximately half of all part-timers work less than a period of one year, many part-time workers are receiving unequal treatment (Drummond, 1992). Thus, it is evident that there exists a significant difference between

the benefits available between full-time and part-time workers¹³. Moreover, casual, seasonal and temporary part-time workers tend to be at a greater disadvantage than permanent part-time employees because of their irregularity of work schedules and interrupted periods of employment (Negrey, 1993). A Labour Canada (1987) survey, mainly of large employers in federally regulated industries, found that in 1985, 60 percent of part-timers were not covered by extended health and dental plans, 70 percent were not covered in the case of long-term disability, and 80 percent did not belong to a pension plan¹⁴ (Canada, Labour Canada, 1987). Furthermore, coverage was much lower for non-regular part-timers working for smaller organizations (Report of the Advisory Group, 1994). In fact, the majority of temporary and casual workers received no benefits whatsoever (Coates, 1988). By contrast, the majority of full-time workers (95 percent) were eligible to receive benefits. Therefore, the examination of relevant statistics show that there existed a lack of explicit legislation to protect the part-time workforce (Canada, Commission of Inquiry into Part-Time Work, 1983).

More recently, employers, including the federal government, have recognized the need to extend pension and other benefits to part-timers and have made amendments in favour of including part-timers in their pension plans (Wheeler, 1990). Reasonable minimum standards protecting this group would add stability to a segment which traditionally has been under-represented in employment standards legislation. It has been suggested that the implementation of *prorating* benefits would be a feasible solution allowing benefits to reflect the actual hours worked by a part-time worker. The Labour Canada study concluded that half of the companies interviewed felt that prorating benefits was feasible for permanent part-time workers, while approximately two thirds of the

companies thought that prorating benefits for seasonal and temporary work was impractical (Coates,1988). Zeytinoglu's (1992) study found that part-time and occasional teachers were receiving, on a prorated basis, the same salary and benefits as their full-time colleagues. However, part-time teachers are more advantaged than other part-time workers¹⁵, and the prorating initiatives have been met with resistance as employers are making it clear that there are "unthinkable" amounts of costs associated with such a change¹⁶.

5.3 Employment Insurance

On July 1, 1996, Bill C-12, the new Employment Insurance (EI) System was implemented, replacing the Unemployment Insurance System in Canada. EI represents a broad policy response to the continuous structural unemployment problems stemming from growing skill mismatches, rapid technological change, high payroll taxes, and other causes, in the effort to provide more stable employment in the Canadian economy. The new system provides Canadians with income protection, plus a range of Active Re-employment Benefits and support measures to help unemployed workers get jobs.

In terms of income protection, a major change provided by the EI program is the new *Redesigned Income Benefits* where every hour of work, not weeks, is counted towards eligibility for EI benefits. Under the old UI system, almost 90 percent of paid workers were covered by Unemployment Insurance; however, many individuals engaging in non-standard employment did not receive benefits to the same extent of full-time

permanent employment or received no benefits whatsoever. In the case of part-time workers, UI coverage was provided to all paid workers who:

- worked 15 hours per week or more; or
- earned 20 percent or more of the maximum weekly insurable earnings per week- which was \$156 in 1994 (HRDC,1994).

Hence, an individual working 14 hours or less at a wage of approximately \$11 dollars or less would not be eligible for UI benefits. In many cases, part-time workers were excluded from benefits given their irregular work schedules, turnover rates, and low levels of hours worked.

The new hours-based system takes into account all work including full-time, part-time, seasonal, and work on and off throughout the year. Every hour of work is counted towards eligibility for EI benefits up to an annual maximum of earnings¹⁷. Given the extent of non-standard work arrangements in Canada , the move to an hours-based system is the fairest way of counting the amount of work a person does. As a result, workers engaged in part-time employment, under EI, are no longer excluded from qualifying for benefits¹⁸. This, without question, improves the situation of part-time workers and to some extent can even attract individuals into part-time employment. In my opinion, the new EI program is a major step taken in the right direction because the program places a value on all types of work arrangements that exist in the Canadian economy, including part-time employment..

5.4 Summary

Can the situation of part-timers improve with increased unionization and prorated benefits in labour standards legislation? On the basis of the evidence, increased unionization and prorated benefits would improve the condition of part-timers. However, the recent decline in unionism, arising from the relative stagnation, can invalidate unionization as a measure in which part-time employment can be improved. Similarly, prorated benefits would establish better conditions for part-time workers, but, given the small share of regular part-time workers and large percentage of workers in seasonal and intermittent part-time employment, it would be increasingly difficult for part-time workers to bargain collectively for prorated benefits. On the other hand, the new EI program, under the new hours-based system, considers all types of employment. Thus, the elimination of weekly minimum standards improves the situation of part-time workers.

Section 6

Conclusion

Part-time employment has grown at a dramatic pace over the last two decades in Canada. Forces behind the growth of part-time employment include the service economy and the shift to a post-industrial economy, technological and organizational change, and the intensification of competition in national and international markets.

Employers are striving to achieve flexibility in their respective organizations, and part-time employment is an attractive option representing significant cost reductions to them. Low wages, few benefits, and little or no job security are characteristics of part-time employment which serve to provide employers with an increase in the variability in staffing and scheduling of work and a reserve supply of cheap labour. These financial incentives, combined with discriminatory labour policies against part-time employment, have been regarded as forces which have acted to increase the 'segmentation' in the labour market. Union complacency, together with problems with Unemployment Insurance provisions and other legislation that limit the benefits of part-time workers, have contributed to the perpetuation of "bad" jobs in Canada eventhough many workers desire part-time employment to accommodate other demands on their time (Economic Council of Canada,1990). Thus, as part-time jobs become more common, labour policies must better reflect this new diversity if they are to provide security for growing numbers of Canadians in part-time employment. In particular, unions and governments should introduce, at the forefront of action, new policies aiming at reducing or eliminating

incentives for employers in developing and maintaining “bad” jobs. A good policy response could be to work towards providing the same privileges and compensation to part-timers that full-timers enjoy. The new EI program, implemented recently, is one significant step towards improving the conditions of part-time employment and further policies are needed. In this respect, enhanced conditions of part-time employment would lead to a decrease in the rate of involuntary part-time employment and an improvement of women’s status in the labour market.

Notes

¹ Job sharing refers to two persons filling in the single job. Flex-time refers to a person choosing their own hours of work.

² Occupational groups can include entertainers, nurses, airline personnel etc. Furthermore, prior to 1975, Statistics Canada defined part-time employment as work less than 35 hours. (Statistics Canada, The Labour Force, 1996, Cat.71-001.

³ Although employment in manufacturing industries has declined, these industries still generate a large share of national output (Advisory Council; 1994).

⁴ Other services comprises amusement and recreational services, personal and household services, and miscellaneous services. Amusement and recreation is by far the largest component.

⁵ Lowe and Krahn's Canadian study of high school students claim that part-time employment can lead to higher wages, better work attitudes and a reduced risk of unemployment; however, other studies indicate that part-time work has a negative effect on younger students which is reflected in their lower grades and their reduced educational aspirations.

⁶ Canadians aged 55 and over comprise a growing share of the total population but a decreasing proportion in the labour force. However, for those who do remain there is an increasing tendency to work part-time.

⁷ For an individual not participating in the labour force, the wage rate must be atleast equal to the person's reservation wage in order to participate in the labour force.

⁸ An increase in non-labour income may result in one's decision to leave the labour market entirely. Empirical evidence shows that labour force participation drops with an increase in non-labour income (Gunderson, Riddell, 1993: 95).

⁹ Although there were fluctuations, part-time employment generally grew over time.

¹⁰ In times of economic recovery, involuntary employment has tended to change slowly reflecting a situation of persistent underemployment.

¹¹ These tactics on the part of employers are in accordance with the theoretical formulations presented earlier. Low unionization among part-time workers facilitates less institutionalized management/employee relations resulting in the capriciousness of management.

¹² The settlement of the case acknowledged the disadvantaged status of the part-timers and provided a 50 percent pay increase for the part-time employees.

¹³ There is also an underlying premise that part-time workers have only a tenuous connection or commitment to the labour force, and as a result, work-related benefits need not be provided to them (Drummond, 1992).

¹⁴ In some cases, workers can receive pay in lieu of benefits.

¹⁵ Part-time teaching is predominately a unionized profession.

¹⁶ Employers have argued that prorating benefits for part-time employees would cause scheduling problems and would be administratively difficult and costly. The costs of prorating would be much higher for part-time employees who were only covered by statutory benefits only. As Coates (1988) states, flat rate

benefits such as life insurance, major medical or drug and dental insurance would be more costly and difficult to prorate.

¹⁷ The annual maximum under the new EI system is \$39,000.

¹⁸ Required number of hours are needed for eligibility of benefits. Most people will need between 420 and 700 hours of work within 52 weeks, or since the start of their last claim to qualify for benefits.

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