

THE MOBILITY PATTERNS OF PART-TIME WORKERS

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ABSTRACT

What are the mobility rates of workers employed in part-time jobs? What are the destinations of those who leave part time jobs? How have exit rates and destinations changed during the 1970s and 1980s? Do these jobs constitute a separate segment of the labor market? These questions are addressed with data from the March Current Population Surveys (CPS) spanning the period 1970-1990. Data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) are employed as a check on the validity of the results. The results indicate that nearly 60 percent of individuals who were usually employed in a part-time job remained in part-time employment one year later. Entry into full-time jobs was less frequent than was exit from the labor force. The proportion of individuals remaining in part-time jobs for one year increased over the last 20 years, despite an increase in entry into full-time jobs, because exits from the labor force dropped substantially.

INTRODUCTION

The proportion of the labor force employed in part-time jobs has steadily increased during the 1970s and 1980s, from 11.9 percent in 1968 to

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24.1 percent in 1990 (Blank 1990; Employment and Earnings 1991). In 1990, 26.9 million workers in the United States labor force were employed for fewer than 35 hours per week. The United States ranked fifth highest of fifteen industrial countries included in a recent study of the level of part-time employment (Thurman and Trah 1990). Part-time workers, then, are a sizable and growing component of the labor force, a trend observed in other countries, such as Britain, as well (Beechey and Perkins 1987).

The proportion of part-time workers who are involuntarily part-time has also grown (Ichniowski and Preston 1986; Blank 1990; Tilly 1990). (We refer to this group as underemployed, specifically referring to individuals who worked part-time despite seeking full-time jobs.)¹ In 1970, 11.4 percent of part-time workers were underemployed, while in 1990 18.9 percent of part-time workers were underemployed. While the rate of underemployment is related to the business cycle, there has been a clear secular trend toward increasing rates of underemployment. The rise in underemployment is not due to a change in the sex composition of part-time workers, but rather reflects rising rates for both men and women. Blank (1990) presents time-trend data indicating that men's rates of involuntariness are consistently higher than women's, yet both sexes have experienced sharp rises in involuntary part-time employment in the 1980s. This effect persists even after cyclical fluctuations are controlled.

Workers in part-time jobs earn little money on an annual basis, although the ratio of part-time to full-time earnings increased by a small amount since 1969 overall and for women in particular. In 1990, 69 percent of part-time workers earned less than \$5,000, with another 20 percent earning between \$5,000 and \$10,000. The low earnings of part-time workers puts individuals at risk of poverty unless the earnings of other family members are available. Part-time workers are far more likely to live in families with incomes below the poverty line than are families with full-year, full-time workers (Tilly 1990).

On an hourly basis, part-time workers earn less than full-time workers. Cross-national research indicates that the wages of part-time workers, relative to full-time workers, are lower in the United States than in the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia (Gornick and Jacobs 1996; but see Blank 1990 for partly contrary evidence). In addition to lower wages, part-time work also results in the loss of benefits, job security, and chances for training and advancement (Callaghan and Hartmann 1991; Gornick and Jacobs 1996; Lukens and Useem 1996).

The increasing numbers, increasing involuntariness and low earnings of part-time workers suggest that part-time employment may be a problem sector of the labor force. Yet an analysis of mobility patterns into and out of part-time jobs is needed for an assessment of the social consequences of this type of employment. Mobility rates clearly have bearing on our evaluation of the distributive consequences of part-time jobs. Our assessment of the plight of part-time workers depends in part on how long these individuals remain in

part-time jobs. Our concern for the economic vulnerability of part-time workers should be greater if such positions were permanent than if they were temporary. Similarly, we would be more concerned about these trends if exit rates from part-time employment were decreasing over time than if such employment were becoming increasingly temporary. In other words, the widespread availability of part-time jobs might be considered a virtue of a flexible labor market if such employees rarely stayed in part-time jobs for more than a year. Policymakers might be more concerned about the low wages of this group if these workers remained employed in low-wage, part-time jobs for many years at a time.

The mobility of part-time workers is also relevant to contemporary public policy debates. Numerous proposals seek to reform the welfare system by requiring individuals receiving welfare to work. An especially contentious aspect of this reform is whether part-time jobs will fulfill the employment mandate. Many women receiving welfare already "package" their income by combining work with welfare and income from other family members (Spalter-Roth and Hartmann 1994; Edin 1994). Some analysts have specifically argued that single mothers with small children should be encouraged to work part-time rather than being obligated to work full-time (Skocpol and Wilson 1994). In the context of this debate, it would be helpful to know whether part-time jobs are often used as a stepping stone to full-time employment. Evidence in this paper on the duration of part-time jobs is thus pertinent to this debate.

In this paper, we ask what proportion of individuals remain in part-time jobs for one year? Do workers use part-time jobs as stepping stones to full-time employment? How have mobility rates changed over the last 20 years? Who is most likely to remain in part-time jobs?

This paper explores whether the changing attributes of part-time workers or the changing location of part-time jobs contribute to any observed changes in the rates of mobility out of part-time employment. The procedure involves the examination of Current Population Survey (CPS) data from the 1970s and 1980s.

We focus exclusively on part-time employment here and do not group this status together with other statuses, such as contingent jobs (Callaghan and Hartmann 1991) or low-paid work. We do so for both practical and theoretical reasons. Since the CPS data from the 1970s and 1980s do not include measures of contingent work over this period. Moreover, we believe that it is conceptually more satisfactory to consider each of these issues—part-time employment, contingent status and low pay—separately, in order to ascertain the nature of the relationships among these different dimensions of the labor market.

PART-TIME JOBS AS A DISTINCT SEGMENT OF THE LABOR MARKET

Over the last 15 years, career mobility has taken its place along side inter-generational mobility in the sociological study of inequality. While Blau and Duncan (1967) included both first job and current job in their pathbreaking study of social mobility, contemporary research seeks a more comprehensive account of the trajectories of individuals' careers. Baron and Bielby (1980) gave this a theoretical framework by outlining job-level and organization-level factors that could complement individual attributes as determinants of career development.

Much of the early work focused on issue of labor market segmentation, often defined as a simple dichotomy between core and peripheral industries (Averitt 1968; Tolbert, Horan and Beck 1980), with sometimes a government sector added as well (Schervish 1983). A series of studies showed that this schema was not particularly powerful in its characterization of career patterns (Hodson and Kaufman 1982; Jacobs and Breiger 1988). Much subsequent work focused on the segmentation of careers within organizations, based on analyses of personnel data files (see Baron 1984; Kalleberg 1988; and Stewman 1988 for reviews).

In this paper we assess whether part-time constitute a form of labor market segmentation, typically found within firms rather than between the "core" and "periphery" of the economy. We employ this term in much the same sense that Doeringer and Piore (1985 [1971]) used in their noted work on this topic. They suggest that companies distinguish their treatment of different positions within their organizations according to an economic logic of expendability. Firms seek to maintain enduring relations with valued workers, whose positions are secure during economic downturns, and those who are more readily expendable. The former positions constitute what they term "the primary market possess several of the following characteristics: high wages, good working condition, employment stability, chances for advancement, equity, and due process in the administration of work rules. Jobs in the secondary market, in contrast, tend to have low wages and fringe benefits, poor working conditions, high labor turnover, little chance of advancement, and often arbitrary and capricious supervision" (1985, p. 163). While Doeringer and Piore apply these notions to the men working full time in manufacturing jobs, this distinction can be easily extended to the include part-time workers, as do Pfeffer and Baron (1988).

Pfeffer and Baron review a number of developments in the U.S. workplace during the 1980s that they characterize as "externalizing" workers, by "diminishing the administrative, temporal and/or locational attachments between employees and organizations" (1988, p. 263). They suggest that "part-time workers are demographically different than the workforce as a whole and receive substantially different treatment on the job in terms of wages, benefits, training and promotion opportunities" (1988, p. 271). Part-time jobs, along with

sub-contracting, temporary employment, and other forms of contingent work, reduce the security of employees by restricting their claims to stable employment.

We suggest that mobility constitutes an important, if not definitive, test of whether a classification such as part-time employment constitutes a distinct labor market segment. Immobility is an essential part of the concept of a labor market segment. The very notion contains an implication of employment barriers that define the boundaries to the segment undermined. In this case, employers would have to bid up wages in order to keep part-time workers. The lack of mobility is an essential pre-condition for significant differentials in the attractiveness of jobs. Our analysis of changes in mobility patterns during the 1970s and 1980s will assess whether the segmentation of part-time workers has increased as their numbers have increased.

Our emphasis on mobility as a criterion is in keep with much sociological research on stratification. For example, Esping-Andersen and his colleagues (1993) make the same claim regarding the emerging service economy. In their terms, service jobs cannot be said to constitute a separate class of workers without a demonstration that these jobs are set apart from others in terms of mobility patterns.

MOBILITY OF PART-TIME WORKERS

A great deal has been written on the growth of inequality in the United States during the 1970s and 1980s. Much of this research has examined only full-time, full-year workers, or, alternatively, has estimated the "full-time equivalent" earnings that part-time and part-year workers could be expected to earn if they worked at a full-time schedule over the course of the year (Levy 1988; Harrison and Bluestone 1988; Blackburn, Bloom and Freeman 1990). While part-time workers have not been the subject of sustained scrutiny. Indeed, the analyses which include part-time workers (e.g., Levy 1988) generally show a greater trend toward wage inequality than identical analyses restricted to full-time, full-year workers.

Some media commentators have claimed that part-time jobs serve as a convenient points of entry into the labor market, and help individuals begin the path toward stable and successful careers. For example, a recent article in the New York times (1994) suggests that part-time jobs often serve as stepping stones to full-time employment. Yet few social science research studies have examined the mobility patterns of part-time workers.

Williams (1991) examines trends in the "gross flows" between various labor force states. He finds that among women part-time workers there has been a decline in the rate of labor force exits and a smaller increase in the rate of entry into full-time jobs during the 1980s. This analysis is conducted at the aggregate level and includes no information on the mobility patterns of individuals.

Blank (1989) analyzes the rates of mobility between part-time and full-time work for women in the Panel Study of Income Dynamics. Her analysis is the closest to that conducted here, and we will discuss below how our results compare to hers. However, we are able to pursue the mobility of part-time workers in more detail than Blank by examining trends over time and by comparing the mobility patterns of men and women.

A Bureau of Labor Statistics report (U.S. Department of Labor 1992) also examined the mobility patterns of part-time women workers. It reported results obtained from the National Longitudinal Survey of Young Women. This analysis examined mobility over a five year period, from 1978 through 1983. We also compare our results to those presented in this report.

Poterba and Summers (1984) investigated flows between employment, unemployment and being out of the labor force, but they did not include part-time employment as one of the origin or destination categories (see also Flaim and Hogue 1985). Lichter, Landry and Clogg (1991) also conducted a similar analysis, but in this case they unfortunately combined voluntary part-time workers and full-time workers, both of which were distinguished from low-income full-time jobs. Thus, a move from involuntary part-time work in their analysis. We are not aware of any multivariate analysis of trends over time in the determinants of exits from part-time employment.

HYPOTHESES

Our expectation is that mobility out of part-time jobs is related to the degree of individuals' labor-force attachment. While individuals' commitment to the labor force in part reflects the desirability of their jobs (Halaby and Weakliem 1989), we explore variation in the expressed intentions of those who share a common employment status. We expect that those groups with relatively low attachment to the labor force will be more likely to leave the labor force and less likely to enter full-time jobs. In contrast, those groups with relatively high attachment to the labor force will be more likely to enter full-time jobs and less likely to leave the labor force. This expectation means that underemployment should be a powerful predictor of movement to full-time jobs. In other words, those who are involuntarily working part-time should be more likely to move to full time jobs than those who are employed in part-time jobs by choice.

What does the above reasoning imply about changes over time in mobility patterns? The growth of underemployment means that there is a growing proportion of part-time workers who seek full-time work. Thus, we would expect an increase in the rate of mobility from part-time to full-time jobs. Also consistent with this reasoning is the expectation that changes in women's roles would contribute to increasing mobility between part-time and full-time jobs.

We expect that women's increasing attachment to the labor force has reduced the rate of exit from the labor force and increased the rate of entry into full-time positions.

An alternative, but not necessarily mutually exclusive, hypothesis is that the changing structure of the labor market has influenced mobility patterns. For example, part-time work is concentration in service occupations. As these occupations represent a growing share of the labor market, part-time employment increases. Persistence in part-time jobs should also reflect the changing occupational distribution of part-time workers. If service jobs facilitate movement into full-time work, then the growth in these occupations should contribute to an increased rate of mobility into full-time jobs.

METHODS

This paper analyzes March Current Population Survey data from 1970, 1980, and 1990. Data for 1976 are also included for certain analyses, in part because more complete information on hours worked and underemployment are available in the CPS since 1976.

In this paper we focus on the extent of mobility of part-time workers. We define part-time work as less than 35 hours per week, and full-time work as more than 35 hours per week. The movement of an individual from a job involving less than 35 hours to one requiring more than 35 hours would be judged to be mobility from part-time to full-time employment. Another possibility is that the individual lost his or her job but continued to look for work. This would constitute a move from part-time employment to unemployment. A third possibility would be leaving the labor force, that is leaving one's part-time job for housework, school, retirement, or other reasons. Individuals are not in the labor force when they are not employed and are not looking for work. The last possibility is that the individual remains in a part-time job. Our analysis of the mobility patterns of part-time workers, then, consists of four exhaustive and mutually-exclusive destinations: part-time employment, full-time employment, unemployment and labor force exit.

As we note earlier, most part-time workers choose to work less than 35 hours a week, perhaps because they have small children at home to attend to, or because they are also in school, or for other reasons. We refer to those who are involuntarily employed part-time as under-employed, and conduct additional analyses directed at this group of part-time workers.

The principal issue we confronted with respect to measuring part-time employment was the time frame used. The March CPS asks individuals to report on the job they held during the survey week, as well as on the longest job they held during the previous year. The most direct way to analyze occupational mobility with the CPS, then, is to compare the part-time status

of the longest job held last year with the job held during the survey week. This measure, however, is not ideal for mobility analyses because it does not describe the individual's "origin" status at a specific point in time, and it does not contain complete information on all jobs held in the past year. In short, the retrospective CPS data may well understate the rate of mobility for those employed in part time jobs because they do not include part-time jobs held for short periods during the last year.

To provide an additional measure of the mobility of part-time workers, data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) for the 1987-1988 period are compared with CPS data. The SIPP data represent interviews with a sample of about 6,000 households conducted every four months for two and a half years. We selected Wave 2 of the 1987 SIPP panel in order to have data pertaining to the same period as the March 1988 Current Population Survey. The principal difference between CPS and SIPP is that the CPS data are based on a retrospective question about the respondent's longest job held last year, whereas the SIPP data refer to the respondent's job during the survey week. Analyzing both sets of data enables us to increase our confidence in the results, or alternatively, to pinpoint what patterns are the result of a certain method of data collection.

As we will see below, the CPS and SIPP results match in most respects, but differ in one crucial way, namely the rate of mobility into full-time jobs. To further investigate this discrepancy, we created a prospective matched CPS sample. CPS respondents are in the survey for 4 consecutive months, then they are out of the survey for 8 months, and finally return for 4 more months. It is thus possible to follow individuals for one year by matching data on the respondent's month in the survey with household identifier information. We checked the accuracy of the match by discarding all matches in which age, sex, and race data were not consistent. Data on all part-time workers during the survey week were obtained from the March 1987 CPS. We then identified the same individuals in the March 1988 CPS with a retrospective questions, and the SIPP and matched CPS data, both with a prospective panel design. To check the accuracy of our time trend analysis, we also constructed matched CPS samples for the 1969-1970, 1979-1980, and 1989-1990 periods.

Employing these multiple measures allows for a check on the accuracy of the more straightforward CPS analysis. The questions pertaining to the longest job held last year provide retrospective information on an individual's short-term career mobility. By matching two successive annual CPS surveys, we obtain two contemporaneous reports. Having this additional information will help to increase our confidence in the validity of the results reported. The virtue of the retrospective CPS analysis is that the large sample sizes produce reliable results; the prospective matched samples, while in some ways conceptually preferable, are much smaller in size and consequently have higher sampling variability.

The first set of analyses are designed to identify the factors that contribute to a change over time in mobility patterns. The procedure employs regression analysis to identify the contribution of: (1) the demographic attributes of part-time workers; and (2) the age and educational composition of: (1) the demographic attributes of part-time workers; (2) the age and educational composition of part-time workers; (3) shifts in employment across occupations and industries; and (4) change which is net of these factors.

The multivariate analysis is divided into two parts, one designed to explain time trends in the mobility of all part-time workers, and the other which focuses on the trends for underemployed workers. The statistical approach employed for the analysis of time trends is a pooled logistic regression analysis with tests for period terms. For all part-time workers, data from 1970 and 1990 are pooled. For underemployed workers, data from 1976 and 1990 are combined. This is a standard technique for the analysis of time trends, employed, for example, by Blackburn, Bloom and Freeman (1990) in their analysis of increasing earnings gap associated with skill differentials. Consider the following sequence of models:

1. mobility = year
2. mobility = year, vector of demographic attributes
3. mobility = year, vector of demographic attributes, education and age
4. mobility = year, vector of demographic attributes, education, age, and a vector of occupation and industry dummies

By comparing models 1 and 2, the extent to which individual attributes explain the observed changes in the mobility of part-time workers (i.e., a reduction in the size of the "year" term) can be ascertained. Similarly, a comparison of subsequent models allows a determination of the impact of industrial and occupational shifts on the mobility of part-time workers. Initially all part-time workers are included in the analysis, and then the analysis is restricted to underemployed workers.

The control variables included in the analysis are as follows. Demographic control variables: married, presence of own children under age 1; presence of own children under 18 and race. Education measures: 12 years of school completed; some college attended; 4 years of college completed. Age measures: 16-19, 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64. Occupation Categories: Managers, Professionals, Sales, Clerical Service, farming, Craft, Operatives, and Laborers. Industry Groups: Extractive, Construction, Manufacturing, Transportation, Wholesale, Retail, Business Services, Consumer Services, Social Services, and Public Administration.

Censoring is an important issue to be confronted by event-history analyses (Allison 1984), but we feel this problem is not particularly pertinent to our

analysis. We do not attempt to estimate the typical length of a spell in a part-time job. We set for ourselves the more modest goal of assessing the proportion of individuals who remain in a part time job over a relatively short period, that is, one year. We recognize that extrapolation from these data to characterize the full spells of all part-time workers is not appropriate, and we only make only brief suggestions about more likely contours of the more complete picture. Nor is this analysis vulnerable to the problem of sample attrition that confronts most event history analyses. The principal data analyses here—the March CPS—are retrospective data. Individuals were asked in the survey week about their employment in the previous year. In other words, we do not lose respondents as a result of the non-response follow-up surveys that plagues panel studies. Consequently, we do not confront the problem of selective attrition. As noted above, we do recognize that certain short-lived part-time jobs might begin and end between our observations. These would be missed by our analysis and consequently we may overstate the persistence of individuals in part-time jobs.

RESULTS

The observed rate of mobility from part-time jobs depends on how employment in a part-time job is defined. If the analysis includes all individuals who work part-time during the survey week, many of whom are working part-time for temporary reasons, then a significant rate of mobility into full-time jobs will be observed. (Workers may be temporarily working part-time for many reasons, such as bad weather, illness, vacation or because their job started or ended during the week.) In contrast, if one focuses only on those who are usually employed part-time, the rate of mobility into full-time jobs is much lower. The lowest rate of mobility into full-time jobs is observed for those who worked part-time in the longest job they held last year. In other words, the longer the time period required in order to be considered a member of the pool of part-time workers, the lower will be the observed rate of mobility into full-time jobs.

Table 2 presents results for different definitions of part-time employment with the March 1990 CPS data. It also compares results obtained from SIPP data to those obtained with the CPS. As noted above, four destinations are examined: they may move to full time employment; individuals may stay in their part-time jobs; they may become unemployed, or they may leave the labor force.

The first row in Table 1 reports results for all those who were employed part-time during the survey week in March 1989. As explained above, these individuals surveyed in the March 1989 CPS were matched to those surveyed a year later in the March 1990 CPS. The most common destination is to remain part-time, as did nearly half of the respondents. Almost 3 in 10 (29.7%) moved

Table 1. Measuring the Mobility of Part-Time Workers

	Percentage of Part-Time Workers Moving to Each Destination By March of Follow-Up Year				
	Full Time	Part Time	Unemployed	Not in the Labor Force	N
1. CPS 1989-1990 Matched March Data Status Last Week	29.7	49.2	1.0	20.1	5,437
2. CPS 1989-1990 Matched March Data Usually Part Time 1989 All	18.6	57.5	0.8	23.1	4,061
3. CPS 1989-1990 Longest Job Last Year Less than 35 Hours/Week	11.9	59.2	1.3	27.7	17,504
4. CPS 1987-1988 Longest Job Last Year Less than 35 Hours/Week	14.8	58.2	4.8	22.2	17,032
5. CPS 1987-1988 Matched March Data Job Last Week Less than 35 Hours	30.9	49.0	3.7	16.3	5,520
6. SIPP 1987-1988 Job in Survey Week Less than 35 Hours	27.5	55.5	2.3	14.7	2,652

to full-time jobs, with another 2 in 10 (20.1%) leaving the labor force. If one views moving into full-time employment as a positive result, then the most optimistic summary of these data is that nearly one third of part-time job holders move into full-time jobs within one year.

However, we believe this result overstates the rate of movement into full-time work because it includes individuals who were only working part-time temporarily. A more realistic estimate is reported in the second row of Table 1 in an analysis of those who were usually employed part-time part as of the survey week in March 1989. Our analysis of this group finds that less than one in five (18.6%) moved into full-time jobs by the following March. Nearly six in ten (57.5%) remained in part-time jobs, while nearly one in four (23.1%) left the labor force. Thus, mobility into full-time jobs, while hardly uncommon, is the third most common destination for part-timers, trailing persistence in part-time jobs and leaving the labor force.

An even lower rate of mobility into full-time work is observed among those whose longest job in 1989 was fewer than 35 hours per week. Among this group, barely more than one in ten (11.0) moved into full-time work. Six in ten remained in part-time jobs, and three in ten left the labor force.

The results in Table 1 indicate quite a close correspondence between the SIPP data and the matched CPS data when similar definitions are imposed. The SIPP data include information on all those employed part-time during the survey week. These results match quite closely to the CPS data collected at the same time with the same population definition. The similarity of results for these two independent data sources strongly supports the reliability of our estimates.

What do we learn substantively from these data about the mobility of part-time workers? The first striking finding in Table 1 is that part-time employment tends to be a short-term endeavor for most people rather than an enduring career choice. About half of those working part-time in 1989 remained in part-time jobs in 1990. An extrapolation of these results over a two or three year period implies that only a distinct minority of part-time workers would be so employed for several consecutive years. (Of course a simple extrapolation would probably overstate overall mobility, because those that remain in part-time jobs may differ from those who left.) Although the growth of part-time employment poses a variety of public policy concerns, most part-time workers do not remain in part-time jobs for extended periods of time.

Table 2. Trends in the Mobility of Part-Time Workers, 1969-1970; 1979-1980; 1989-1990

	Percentage of Part-Time Workers Moving to Each Destination By March of Follow-Up Year				N
	Full Time	Part Time	Unemployed	Not in the Labor Force	
1. CPS: Longest Job Last Year					
1969-1970	9.9	52.6	2.9	34.6	12,869
1979-1980	13.0	55.8	5.1	26.1	19,018
1979-1990	11.9	59.2	1.3	27.7	17,504
2. CPS: Matched March Data; Usually Part Time in Origin Year					
1969-1970	16.2	53.8	0.8	29.5	3,050
1979-1980	18.8	56.1	3.7	21.4	4,081
1979-1990	18.6	57.5	0.8	23.1	4,061

A second clear pattern in Table 1 is that moves to full-time jobs are less likely than are exits from the labor force among those who usually work part-time. The utilization of part-time employment as a stepping-stone to a full-time job is not the most common pattern in these data. The tabular results, of course, do not allow us to answer the *ceteris paribus* question of whether part-time employment facilitates entry into full-time jobs relative to other options individuals might pursue, such as being unemployed or enrolling in school.

Table 2 presents results on trends over time in the mobility of part-time workers. We present results for the matched CPS data on workers who were usually employed part-time, as well as the retrospective data on those who were employed part-time in the longest job they held in the previous year. While the levels of mobility into full-time jobs differ across these two time series, the time is quite consistent for both measures. Substantively, the results in Table 2 indicate that there has been remarkable consistency over the last 20 years in the mobility patterns of part-time workers. In all three points considered, persistence in part-time employment was the most common outcome.

There has been a modest but consistent increase in the proportion remaining in part-time jobs for one year. For those who usually worked part-time, the persistence rate in part-time jobs increased from 53.8 percent in the 1969-1970 period to 57.5 percent in the 1989-1990 period. This outcome is the by-product of two countervailing shifts: (1) a sharp drop in exits from the labor force, which offsets (2) a more limited increase in entry into full-time jobs. Exits from the labor force declined by more than 6 percentage points for those usually working part-time (from 29.5% in 1969-1970 to 23.1% in 1989-1990), which more than offset the 2.5 percentage point increase in moves into full-time jobs. (Despite these changes, exits from the labor force remained the more common destination.) These results make clear that an analysis of the length of spells in part-time jobs needs to consider both flows from the labor force as well as flows into full-time jobs. Despite the fact that entry into full-time work has become a bit more likely over the last 20 years, the typical part-time worker found herself more likely to remain in a part-time job because she was likely to leave the labor force.

Table 3 reports mobility rates by sex. Table 3 also presents both the matched CPS data and the retrospective CPS data. As we have seen, the two time series differ, principally with respect to the level of movement into full-time jobs, but the trends over time are consistent across the two types of data. The results presented in Table 3 indicate many similarities between men and women. For both groups, persistence in part-time jobs is the most common outcome, followed by exits from the labor force and entry into full-time jobs. However, there has been more change over time in mobility rates for women than for men. For women, there has been a clearer trend toward a lower rate of exit from part-time jobs, because of a sharper drop in exits from the labor force.

Table 3. Trends in the Mobility of Part-Time Workers, By Sex

	Percentage of Part-Time Workers Moving to Each Destination By March of Follow-Up Year				
	Full Time	Part Time	Unemployed	Not in the Labor Force	N
CPS Longest Job Last Year					
1. Women					
1969-1970	8.8	52.7	2.4	36.2	8,199
1979-1980	12.2	57.0	4.4	26.5	12,980
1989-1990	11.3	61.3	0.7	26.7	11,758
2. Men					
1969-1970	11.9	52.5	3.7	31.9	4,670
1979-1980	14.7	53.2	6.7	25.5	6,038
1989-1990	13.0	54.8	2.4	29.8	5,746
Matched CPS Sample					
1. Women					
1969-1970	14.8	55.2	0.4	29.6	2,037
1979-1980	17.2	59.0	3.0	20.8	2,850
1989-1990	18.2	60.1	0.5	21.2	2,799
2. Men					
1969-1970	18.9	50.9	0.9	29.2	1,013
1979-1980	22.6	49.5	5.3	22.6	1,231
1989-1990	19.5	51.7	1.5	27.3	1,262

In the 1969-1970 period, there was little difference in the mobility patterns of men and women. By the 1989-1990 period, women were experiencing lower rates of exit from part-time jobs than men, due in part to a slightly lower rate of entry into full-time jobs and a slightly lower rate of exiting the labor force.

Women increasingly remain in part-time jobs because they are likely to leave the labor force. This tendency more than offsets the contrary trend toward women's increased entry into full-time work. The persistence rate in part-time jobs for women increased from 52.7 percent in 1969-1970 to 61.3 percent in 1989-1990 (as measured with the retrospective data), while for men the persistence rate remained virtually unchanged. Women's persistence increased despite a slight rise in entry into full-time work, which increased by about two percentage points for both men and women. (Since they began at a lower starting point, the rate of increase was faster for women, although women continue to lag behind men in the rate of entry into full-time jobs.)

However, the increased entry into full-time work was more than offset by a reduction in the rate of exit from the labor force. Among women, the proportion of part-timers who left the labor force in a year's time declined from

more than one in three to just over one in four (a ten percent decline), while for men there was a much smaller decline in labor-force exit. The net effect was a reduction in the rate of exit from part-time work for women, with almost no net change for men. As we discuss below, this increased persistence reflects the greater commitment of part-time workers (especially women) to the labor force and a concomitant reduction in the flows of part-time workers out of the labor force.

As a result of these trends, women now exhibit a lower rate of exit from part-time jobs than do men, a gap not evident in 1970. In 1970, men and women exited part-time work at a nearly identical rate, although women were more likely to leave the labor force and men were more likely to enter full-time work. By 1990, women's persistence in part-time work surpassed men's because women's rate of leaving the labor force declined sharply, and because women trailed men in their ability to move into full-time work. (On a more positive note, women were also less likely to become unemployed upon leaving part-time work.)

This summary of results based on the relatively large retrospective CPS samples, are generally mirrored in the smaller matched prospective CPS panels. As noted before the matched data exhibit higher rates of entry into full-time jobs, and lower rates of exit from the labor force. Yet the trends and the sex differentials just discussed for the retrospective data hold for the matched data as well.

Our results match those of Blank's (1989) quite closely. She analyzed data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics over the 1976 through 1984 period for women. The best comparison, then, would be to our results for the matched CPS data from the 1979-1980 period. She found that 62.2 percent of women remained in part-time jobs in two consecutive years. We found 59.0 percent of women working part-time in March 1979 remained in part-time jobs in March 1980 (see Table 3). Blank also reports that 20.6 percent moved into full-time jobs, while 17.1 percent were not working (she combined those who left the labor force with those who are unemployed). Our CPS results are again quite close, although they indicate slightly less movement into full-time jobs (17.2 percent) than exits from the labor force (20.8%). (An additional 3 percent became unemployed.)

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (1992) reports that half of young women aged 29-33 in 1978 who were employed part-time in 1978 remained part-time in 1983. One in three (30.9 percent) had moved into full-time jobs and 16.4 percent had left the labor force. They also examined data spanning the 1983-1988 period, and found a somewhat higher (39.2%) rate of entry into full-time jobs. They consider the entire five year period as a single transition, and do not take note of moves that women may have made in the interim.

At first glance, the BLS data would seem to depict a much more persistent situation for part-time workers. We have shown that roughly half leave after one year, whereas the BLS data show that roughly half remain after five years. The two sets of results, however, are not as different as they might at first appear. One might expect to find more movement out of part-time jobs over a five year period, simply by extrapolating from a one-year transition rate. But the BLS data undoubtedly include many who left part-time jobs—perhaps to leave the labor force—and subsequently returned to them. We examine here the exit rates from part-time jobs with no suggestion that such departures are permanent. Considered in this light, the two data series are not fundamentally inconsistent. Moreover, the BLS data focus on women during part of their child-bearing years. We found that mobility out of the labor force was higher among mothers of small children, and that entry into full-time work was lower (detailed tabulations available from the authors).

The results of other analyses (not shown) indicate that the majority of workers who move into full-time jobs remain with the same employer. The matched CPS data do not directly indicate mobility across employers. Instead, we relied on a question indicating the number of employers in the previous year. The majority of both men and women who moved from part-time to full-time jobs between 1989 and 1990 reported that they only had one employer in the previous year (61% and 71%, respectively). A smaller majority also indicated that they remained in the same detailed occupation and industry categories (56% of men, 61% of women). In this sense, the “stepping stone” thesis does receive some support: the principal route through which part-time workers move into full-time jobs is by moving up with their own employer, rather than jumping from one part-time job to a full-time job with another employer.

Mobility rates for part-time workers were analyzed for a range of individual attributes and labor market locations. Results (not shown) indicate a broad consistency across groups in the rates of mobility. For example, for women, persistence rates in part-time jobs are quite similar across individual attributes, such as age, education, marital status, and across labor market location, such as industry, and occupation. Women in sales and service jobs were a bit less likely to move into full-time jobs than those in clerical and managerial positions, but the differences across occupational groups was minor. There are exceptions. For example, mothers of young children are twice as likely to leave the labor force as those without young children. Yet the patterns documented above—persistence the most common outcome, followed by labor force exit and finally by entrance into full-time work—are characteristic of nearly all sub-groups analyzed.

The trends documented above are also remarkable consistent across groups. For women, with one important exception noted below, the increase in entry into full-time work pertains to all races, age groups, marital statuses (except individuals who were not relatives of the household head), educational levels,

employment classes (except not for pay), industries, and occupations. The decline in exits from the labor force is also quite general, with only one exception (craft workers). However, because the overall change in persistence in part-time work is the product of countervailing trends, and because the extent of change varied for particular subgroups, the net change sometimes cancels out. For women, there is no net change in overall persistence in part-time work for heads of households, and widows and divorcees, and for selected occupations and industries. For only one group of women was there a substantial decline in exit rate from part-time work, namely mothers with a child under one year of age, for whom almost none of the above generalizations apply. These women, who represented fewer than 4 percent of women employed part-time, were the only ones less likely to persist in part-time work in 1990 than in 1970. This was due in equal measure to increased unemployment and increased exits from the labor force. This group did not experience an increase in moves to full-time jobs.

Since these trends are principally driven by changes for women, there are more exceptions to the above generalizations for men. For men, the increased rate of entry into full-time work was not evident in age-specific rates: a compositional decline in the proportion of 16-19 year old part-time workers, who had the lowest rate of entry into full-time work, accounts for the increased entry into full-time jobs. For men, declines in labor force exit were evident in all groups excepting those over age 65. For most groups of men, there was no net change in persistence rates, although a number of groups experienced modest increases or declines.

Additional analyses were conducted on mobility between 1975 and 1979 and 1980 (data not shown). These analyses indicate that the observed time trends occurred gradually, with the 1975-1976 and 1979-1980 results generally falling between those in 1969-1970 and 1987-1988.

The bi-variate results suggest that the three notable changes observed during the 1970s and 1980s—increasing persistence in part-time jobs, due to less labor force exit and greater entry into full-time work—are general changes in the nature of part-time work for women (who constitute two-thirds of part-time workers in the United States) and are not simply due to changes in the attributes of workers or shifts in the composition of occupations and industries. The multivariate analyses presented in Table 4 reinforces this conclusion for part-time workers.

Table 4 presents results of logistic regression analyses for all exits from part-time work, entry into full-time work and exits from the labor force. This analysis compares mobility during the 1969-1970 period to that observed during the 1989-1990 period. The first panel of Table 4 presents analyses of all exits, followed by results for moves into full-time jobs and exits from the labor force. Table 4 presents an analysis of change, and thus only the year coefficient is presented. (The full regression results are available from the authors.)

Table 4. Explaining Trends in Exits from Part-Time Jobs, 1969-1970 through 1989-1990 (Coefficients Reported are Net Time Trend Measure)

	Model 1. Controls: None	Model 2 Controls: Demographic Variables	Model 3. Controls: Demographic, Age, Education	Model 4. Controls: Demographic, Age, Education, Occupation, Industry
1. All Exits				
Total	-.30** (.02)	-.39** (.03)	-.28** (.03)	-.19** (.03)
Women	-.38** (.03)	-.46** (.03)	-.35** (.04)	-.25** (.04)
Men	-.14** (.04)	-.17* (.06)	-.10 (.07)	-.06 (.07)
2. Moves to Full-Time Jobs				
Total	.17** (.04)	.19** (.05)	.15** (.05)	.20** (.06)
Women	.18** (.05)	.17** (.06)	.18** (.06)	.22** (.07)
Men	.19** (.06)	.29* (.09)	.10 (.10)	.17* (.11)
3. Exits from the Labor Force				
Total	-.47** (.03)	-.061** (.03)	-.44** (.04)	-.34** (.04)
Women	-.56** (.03)	-.67** (.04)	-.53** (.04)	-.41** (.04)
Men	-.23** (.04)	-.41** (.07)	-.21** (.08)	-.19** (.08)

Notes: Demographic Control Variables: Married, Presence of Children Under 1, Presence of Own Children Under 18.

Education and Experience Measures: 12 Years of School Completed; Some College; College Graduate; Age Measures: 16-19, 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64.

Occupation Measures: Managers, Professionals, Sales, Clerical Service, Farming, Craft, Operative, and Laborers.

Industry Measures: Extractive, Construction, Manufacturing, Transportation, Wholesale, Retail, Business Services, Consumer Services, Social Services, and Public Administration.

*p < .05;

**p < .01

The results in Table 4 indicate a marked decline in exits from part-time jobs. The coefficients reported in the first panel of Table 4 are negative, which indicates that the log-odds of exits from part-time jobs declined over the period studied. In other words, the likelihood of leaving a part-time job declined, and

consequently the proportion of part-time workers experiencing spells of part-time employment of one year or longer increased.

The multivariate results indicate that this trend is not simply due to the changing demographic attributes of part-time workers nor the occupations and industries in which their jobs are located. Controlling for all these factors reduces the time trend by about one third (the negative coefficient declines from -.30 to -.19). The coefficient of -.19 indicates that the odds of leaving a part-time job were 82.5 percent as high in 1990 as they were in 1970. In short, the increased persistence in part-time jobs affected the average part-time worker, and is not simply a reflection of a different mix of part-time workers or a different set of part-time jobs.

These changes were larger and more consistent for women than for men. For all exits, the time trend coefficient for men becomes statistically insignificant after controls are imposed. In particular, the introduction of age as a control accounts for the time trend, a result foreshadowed in the bi-variate results referred to above. For women, in contrast, roughly two-thirds of the time trend persists after individual and job controls are included in the analysis.

The second panel of Table 4 examines the increased likelihood of movement into full-time employment. Here we see that the increased chances of movement into full-time work persists after controls are imposed. Indeed, controls hardly alter the picture of increased movement into full-time jobs. In other words, the net coefficients closely resemble the gross coefficients. Exits from the labor force also persist after controls are imposed on the analysis. As was the case with total exits, roughly one third of the time trend is due to changing attributes, but two-thirds remains after controls are included.

The mobility rates of underemployed workers are presented in Table 5. In this analysis, the initial period is 1975-1976 because of the lack of available data on underemployment during the preceding year in earlier surveys. Not surprisingly, underemployed individuals are more likely to move into full-time jobs than other part-time workers who are not seeking full-time employment. These results parallel those documented in Table 1, but at higher rates of mobility. Among women who were underemployed in March 1989, just under one in three (29.5%) obtained a full-time job by March 1990. Half (49.4%) remained in part-time jobs, and nearly one in five (18.7%) left the labor force, perhaps becoming discouraged workers. For underemployed men, entry into full-time jobs was more common (37.1%), and persistence in part-time jobs was corresponding lower (41.2%).

It may be useful to compare the persistence in underemployment to that for unemployment. It should be noted that this evidence clearly indicates that the proportion of individuals with long spells of underemployment are much larger than for spells of unemployment. In 1990, unemployed workers remained unemployed an average (median) of 6.1 weeks, and only 5.9 percent remained

Table 5. Trends in the Mobility of Underemployed Workers, By Sex

	Percentage of Part-Time Workers Moving to Each Destination By March of Follow-Up Year				
	Full Time	Part Time	Unemployed	Not in the Labor Force	N
CPS Longest Job Last Year					
1. Women					
1975-1976	16.5	43.9	11.6	27.9	1,513
1979-1980	16.2	45.9	9.2	28.7	1,980
1989-1990	23.0	49.2	2.0	25.9	1,721
2. Men					
1975-1976	24.9	35.3	14.9	24.9	1,147
1979-1980	20.3	40.4	13.3	26.0	1,146
1989-1990	24.5	44.4	7.2	23.9	1,249
Matched CPS Sample					
1. Women					
1975-1976	23.1	45.5	1.7	27.8	121
1979-1980	27.6	50.7	5.9	15.7	286
1989-1990	29.5	49.4	2.4	18.7	332
2. Men					
1975-1976	27.2	46.9	2.5	23.5	81
1979-1980	33.6	35.0	13.9	17.5	137
1989-1990	37.1	41.2	3.2	18.6	221

unemployed for more than one year (U.S. Department of Labor 1991). Thus, since over 44 percent of underemployed individuals remain in part-time jobs for more than one year, more than seven times as many underemployed individuals remained in this status for a year compared with unemployed workers. We should also not that the data do not capture the start date of spells of underemployment. If we assume that the initial observation is in the middle of the spell, then we would expect that roughly 16 percent of individuals experienced spells of unemployment of two years in duration. (If 40% of underemployed remained in this status one year after the initial survey, we may infer that 40% had been so employed a year earlier, producing 16% with spells of a two year duration.)

A second striking finding in Table 5 is that the proportion with long spells of underemployment is increasing. As we saw in the case of all part-time workers, this increasing persistence is the product of two contradictory trends. Underemployed workers became more likely to obtain full-time jobs, yet, because they also became less likely to leave the labor force, the percentage remaining in part-time jobs increased by 6.6 percent between 1976-1976 and

Table 6. Explaining Trends in Exits From Under Employment, 1975-1976 through 1989-1990 (Coefficients Reported are Net Time Trend Measure)

	Model 1. Controls: None ^a	Model 2 Controls: Demographic Variables	Model 3. Controls: Demographic, Age, Education	Model 4. Controls: Demographic, Age, Education, Occupation, Industry
1. All Exits				
Total	-.29** (.05)	-.37** (.07)	-.20** (.07)	-.17** (.08)
Women	-.21** (.07)	-.31** (.09)	-.14** (.10)	-.10** (.10)
Men	-.41** (.09)	-.46* (.10)	-.29** (.11)	-.25** (.11)
2. Moves to Full-Time Jobs				
Total	.03 (.07)	.05 (.08)	.16 (.09)	.23** (.10)
Women	.23** (.10)	.26** (.11)	.36** (.13)	.47** (.14)
Men	-.25** (.11)	-.19 (.12)	-.05 (.14)	.05 (.15)
3. Exits from the Labor Force				
Total	-.40** (.05)	-.36** (.08)	-.14** (.09)	-.12 (.10)
Women	-.17* (.09)	-.41** (.11)	-.24* (.12)	-.19 (.13)
Men	-.32** (.11)	-.34** (.13)	-.06 (.14)	-.04 (.15)

Notes: Demographic Control Variables: Married, Presence of Children Under 1, Presence of Own Children Under 18.

Education and Experience Measures: 12 Years of School Completed; Some College; College Graduate; Age Measures: 16-19, 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64.

Occupation Measures: Managers, Professionals, Sales, Clerical Service, Farming, Craft, Operative, and Laborers.

Industry Measures: Extractive, Construction, Manufacturing, Transportation, Wholesale, Retail, Business Services, Consumer Services, Social Services, and Public Administration.

* $p < .05$;

** $p < .01$

1989-1990. As we will see, these changes are due in large part to the changing attributes of underemployed workers.

A multivariate analysis of the trends in mobility rates of underemployed workers is presented in Table 6. For women underemployed workers, the

increase in movement into full-time work is not accounted for by their changing attributes. Indeed, the net time trend grows once education, age, occupation and industry are controlled. For women, the decline in exits from the labor market does not remain statistically significant after controls were imposed, although the size of the net coefficient is very close to that of the gross coefficient. For men, both the increase in entry into full-time jobs and the decline in exits from the labor force are accounted for by changes in the attributes of this group of workers. The results for men contribute more to the total results in this analysis because men constitute a larger share of the underemployed than they do of other part-time workers.

We now examine the experiences of those who moved from part-time to full-time jobs. Do they attain desirable occupations? Are their wages comparable to those of other full-time workers? Table 7 presents data on the occupational origins and destinations of those who moved from part-time to full-time jobs. The occupational distribution of all part-time workers in the origin year is also provided for purposes of comparison. Women who moved into full-time jobs were employed in slightly more advantageous occupations than were part-time workers as a whole. This difference was less marked in 1989 than in earlier years, but remains evident. Women who moved

Table 7. Occupations of Individuals who Moved from Part-Time Jobs

	All			All			All		
	PT	Moved to Full Time	1970	PT	Move to Full Time	1980	PT	Move to Full Time	1990
	1969	1969	1970	1979	1979	1980	1989	1989	1990
<i>Women</i>									
Managers	1.9	4.3	4.2	2.9	4.5	5.7	4.1	6.3	7.4
Professionals	10.8	12.1	13.4	12.0	15.1	15.3	14.9	15.8	17.0
Clerical	26.3	30.7	35.1	28.3	30.2	33.2	22.1	21.3	23.9
Sales	13.0	13.3	8.0	11.6	13.0	10.0	20.5	19.2	16.7
Craft	0.5	0.5	0.7	1.3	1.5	1.4	1.1	1.4	1.6
Operatives	7.0	11.2	12.0	5.4	6.6	8.3	3.9	5.1	6.0
Service	34.8	24.3	23.2	34.1	27.0	23.7	30.1	27.6	23.6
Farm	5.2	3.4	2.8	2.7	1.7	1.5	1.6	1.4	1.1
Laborers	0.5	0.3	0.6	1.8	1.5	1.0	1.9	2.6	
<i>Men</i>									
Managers	3.9	3.3	6.8	3.9	5.5	7.3	5.2	7.1	8.0
Professionals	7.6	11.0	13.9	9.3	13.7	15.9	9.9	12.2	14.2
Clerical	8.9	10.3	13.9	8.3	9.3	9.5	6.8	5.8	7.5
Sales	9.2	8.8	7.2	7.6	6.3	6.0	12.8	11.3	10.6
Craft	8.4	12.1	12.2	10.8	13.3	15.0	10.2	16.1	17.0
Operatives	15.2	20.4	20.9	10.8	12.0	14.0	9.0	13.8	14.9
Service	17.0	8.8	7.2	24.8	21.1	17.2	22.7	16.8	11.4
Farm	9.8	7.2	5.9	6.7	5.1	4.6	8.8	5.1	4.2
Laborers	20.1	16.9	12.9	17.8	11.3	10.4	14.6	11.8	12.3

to full-time jobs were more likely to be managers, professional and technical workers, or clerical workers, than were other part-time employees. They were also less likely to be employed in sales or service jobs.

Was the move to full-time employment accompanied by an upward shift in occupation? The results presented in Table 7 make it clear that this is not usually the case. Once the advantaged occupational origins of these movers is taken into account, relatively little occupational change accompanies movement between part-time and full-time jobs. In other words, women working part-time do not generally make significant occupational moves in the process of moving to full-time employment. The movement that does occur generally involves a net upward shift in occupations. The ranks of managers, professionals, and clerical workers grow, while those of sales and service workers shrink. As noted above, the majority of individuals who move from part-time to full-time jobs remain in the same occupation and industry.

For men the same patterns hold. Men who move into full-time jobs were better positioned than other part-time workers; they are more likely to be in professional, managerial, craft and operative occupations, and less likely to be in service jobs or employed as laborers. Upward mobility among movers is slight, with managerial, professional, and clerical and operative occupations growing, and sales, service, farm, and laborer positions shrinking.

We compared the earnings of those who moved into full-time jobs to those who had been in full-time jobs in both the origin and destination year. We wanted to see if part-time earners caught up to full-time workers in terms of earnings. In other words, is there a lingering effect of part-time employment on subsequent earnings?

The results of our analysis are presented in Table 8. Women working full-time in 1990 who had been employed part-time in 1989 garnered hourly wages that were 27 percent less lower than women who had consistently worked full time. Among women, those who moved to full. Once demographics, education and experience, and occupation and industry differences were taken into account, this gap narrowed to 14 percent. In other words, controlling for other factors that influence earnings, women who previously worked part-time earned 14 percent less than other full-time workers. (We added control variables in this analysis in the same manner as in the mobility analysis presented in Table 6).

This wage differential may be over-stated by many factors, including inadequate controls for experience, and relatively crude occupation and industry controls. This effect may also fade with time. In this analysis, we measure this differential just after these women have entered full-time employment, and consequently are capturing it when it is likely to be at its largest. Nonetheless, these results suggest that part-time employment not only depresses wages and benefits during the time women are working part-time, but also have enduring effects after they re-enter the full-time labor force.

Table 8. Regression Analysis of Log of Hourly Wages of Full-Time Workers, 1990

	Model 1. Controls: None	Model 2 Controls: Demographic Variables	Model 3. Controls: Demographic, Age, Education	Model 4. Controls: Demographic, Age, Education, Occupation, Industry
1. Women	-.27** (.03)	-.26** (.03)	-.17** (.03)	-.14** (.03)
R ²	.04	.05	.33	.40
2. Men	-.21** (.04)	-.14** (.04)	-.10** (.04)	-.08* (.040)
R ²	.01	.07	.26	.35

Note: Controls are the same as those described in Table 6.

* $p < .05$;

** $p < .01$

The enduring wage differential for part-time workers is also evident among men who have joined the ranks of the full-time labor force. Initial gap for men is somewhat smaller than for women, and once controls are included in the analysis, is reduced to an 8 percent differential.

DISCUSSION

About three in five of those who are usually employed part-time and about half of underemployed workers remain so employed after one year. These results can be viewed as good news and bad news for those concerned with the economic status of part-time workers. The good news is that part-time employment does not constitute a permanent status for most part-time workers. For example, substantial proportions of women with young children do not remain in part-time jobs for extended periods of time. Most exits, however, involve departures from the labor force rather than movement into full-time employment.

The notion of these jobs as stepping stones to full-time work is supported by the finding that most of those who move into full-time jobs do so without changing employers. On the other hand, less than one in five of all part-time workers and less than one third of those seeking full-time jobs succeeded in obtaining such employment after one year. The balance either remain in part-time jobs, leave the labor force, or become unemployed. The proportion with long spells of underemployment are much larger than is the case with spells of unemployment. And those that move to full-time employment are unlikely

to be upwardly mobile in occupational terms or to reap the full earnings benefits of full-time employment. We thus conclude that part-time jobs do constitute a distinct segment of the labor market with restricted mobility to full-time jobs and enduring economic consequences of those on welfare.

Our results do not include specific information on the experiences of those on welfare. However, we feel it is reasonable to infer that former welfare recipients who find part-time jobs are likely to have as difficult a time in moving to full-time employment as others who seek full-time employment. If the majority of underemployed individuals are unable to move into full-time jobs within one year, it is probable that an even greater majority of former welfare recipients will be unable to secure full-time employment in that time frame. As a result, welfare reform that successfully addresses the needs of former welfare recipients will have to attend to the experiences of those who may spend substantial periods of time—more than one year—employed in part-time jobs while seeking full-time employment.

This paper documents an increase in the proportion of workers, particularly women, remaining in part-time jobs for a one-year period over the last 20 years. While more workers are moving into full-time jobs, fewer are leaving the labor force. Thus, there is a net increase in persistence in part-time jobs. We interpret this result as evidence of an increased attachment to the labor force among part-time jobs. We interpret this result as evidence of an increased attachment to the labor force among part-time workers, particularly women. These findings persist when controls for workers' demographic characteristics and occupational and industry employment opportunities are controlled.

The trends in part-time work described here are a part of a general transformation of the structure of the U.S. labor market. The increasing attachment of women to the labor market paradoxically increases their underemployment and the proportion with long spells in part-time work, as their labor force exits decline faster than do their moves into full-time work increase. For men, the deteriorating situation of new labor market entrants is associated with a significant proportion of the low labor force attachment of part-time workers.

The results of this analysis also suggest caution regarding too strong a distinction between underemployed workers and other part-time workers. Nearly twenty percent of those who usually work part-time obtained a full-time job within one year, which is only ten percentage points less than the rate for those seeking full-time work. At the same time one of six part-time workers left the labor force after one year, which is only five percentage points higher than for underemployed workers. Perhaps the availability of opportunity to move into full-time jobs changed the minds of some of those who were not especially seeking full-time work, just as the lack of opportunity for obtaining full-time work may have led some underemployed workers to become

discouraged and to leave the labor force. Although these results show a clear effect of underemployment on mobility patterns, it is important to note that there is also a great deal of overlap between the two groups.

The analysis presented here focused on economically prosperous years. A reexamination of the same issues for periods including recessions might be revealing. The workers and the shifting occupational and industrial structure. A more complete analysis would go beyond a one-year transition to examine the full duration of part-time employment spells. Finally, a detailed examination of the process of entry into part-time jobs is also in order.

NOTE

1. Some researchers refer to underemployment in a broader sense, including any situation where workers are not employed to their full potential (e.g., Clogg 1979; Smith 1986; Fechter 1993). In this approach, college graduates who are employed in unskilled jobs would be underemployed. In this paper, we focus on the question of hours worked, and use the term underemployment solely to characterize those who are employed part-time despite preferring and seeking full-time work. These individuals include those who were employed part time because of material shortages, work stoppages, or inability to find full-time employment. This last reason is the most common one given.

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