

Short-term employment transitions of women in the Israeli labor force.

by Haya Stier

Using data on Jewish Israeli women aged 25 to 55, the author examines patterns and determinants of women's transitions among four employment categories: regular full-time employment, reduced-hours full-time employment, part-time employment, and non-employment. Israeli women are not trapped in part-time employment. Departures from reduced-hour and part-time employment occur at higher rates than departures from full-time jobs. Women who have just given birth have an increased likelihood of moving from full-time employment to reduced-hour or part-time employment. Women in female-type occupations and those in "peripheral" jobs (jobs outside core industries) are more likely than other women to reduce their work hours or exit the labor force. The author argues that although part-time work is a valuable short-term option for many women, in the long run it preserves labor market institutions that are disadvantageous to women.

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In most industrialized countries, the female proportion of the labor force has increased dramatically during the past 50 years - from a small minority to almost half. This pattern has been particularly pronounced for women with children: young women are now less likely to interrupt their market activity in response to family events (Moen 1985; Main 1988). Accompanying the increase in female labor force participation, whether as a cause or as a consequence, has been a significant rise in part-time and reduced-hour employment among women.

While women have increased their involvement in paid employment, little change (if any) has taken place in the division of household responsibilities. Women still carry the major responsibility for child-care and housework. The problem of women's multiple roles has not been solved yet in most industrialized societies, either by way of public policy or through cultural accommodation. Women are still considered, by themselves and by others, as secondary breadwinners, and are expected to give priority to the family over a career in the labor force (Alwin, Braun, and Scott 1992). Part-time employment of women is thus often seen, at both the behavioral and the normative levels, as an "ideal" solution for incorporating women into the labor force, and it is not surprising to find that in many countries large proportions (up to 40%) of wage-employed women hold part-time jobs (Beechey and Perkins 1987; Robinson 1979), as opposed to a small minority (less than 10%) of men. If this type of employment allows many women to combine home and market activities, however, it may also have long-term adverse effects on their opportunities in the labor market and life-time careers.

This study explores the ramifications of part-time employment for Jewish women in Israel, using data for the years 1987-90 from the Israeli Labor Force Survey. I focus mainly on women's transitions among four labor force states: regular full-time employment, reduced-hours full-time employment, part-time employment, and nonemployment. The rates and determinants of such transitions can yield insight into such matters as what percentage of women who are working part-time at any given time are doing so willingly, and the extent to which family responsibilities and labor market institutions constrain women's career opportunities.

Consequences of Part-Time Employment

Part-time employment is generally seen as detrimental to the career prospects of workers, male and female alike (see, for example, Beechey and Perkins 1987; Duffy and Pupo 1992). Part-timers are concentrated in low-skill, dead-end occupations; they have limited access to lucrative jobs; and their pay and fringe benefits usually are inferior to those of full-time workers (Long and Jones 1981; Ermisch and Wright 1992). Students of part-time employment argue that these characteristics fit the general description of marginal jobs in which workers are trapped with little chance of improving their position (Beechey and Perkins 1987; Duffy and Pupo 1992). The evidence concerning lack of mobility from part-time employment, however, is not conclusive (Natti 1995).

It has also been argued that the transition of women into part-time employment is often accompanied by a decline in occupational status: because women frequently have to leave the occupations or jobs for which they have accumulated skills, training, and experience, they experience a double disadvantage - a loss of money income, and a loss of skills (Elias 1988; Dex and Shaw 1988; Buchtemann and Quack 1989). Moreover, employers perceive part-time workers as less committed to work than full-time workers (Kishler and Alexander 1987), a stereotype that affects part-time workers'

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chances for higher wages, promotion, and mobility into full-time employment.

As opposed to this negative assessment of part-time employment, researchers who have studied women's work behavior over the life cycle argue that part-time employment allows women to maintain continuous employment, especially when they have young children at home (Main 1988; Sundstrom 1992; Buchtemann and Quack 1989). While in the past it was common for women to interrupt their employment or to withdraw from paid employment when family demands were high, today they are more likely to return to the labor force shortly after the birth of a child, although to a part-time job. This point of view is in line with the neoclassical tradition, which sees part-time employment as a strategy allowing women to maintain their attachment to the labor force, and thus to preserve their skills; to accumulate resources; and to return easily to full employment later in life (Main 1988; Polachek 1975).

Two assumptions are at the heart of the neoclassical perspective on women in part-time employment. First, it assumes that women are free to choose any type of employment they want, that is, part-time employment is voluntary. Second, it assumes that mobility channels between part-time and full-time jobs are open. Studies show that although most women who are engaged in part-time work voluntarily chose that option (Natti 1995; Stier 1995), the rate of involuntary part-time employment is growing and in fact accounts for the recent increase in part-time employment, both in the United States (Berkovitch 1990) and in Israel (Hacohen-Jacobs 1994).

This study focuses mainly on the extent to which part-time work is a forced choice for women. Specifically, it examines the patterns of mobility between different employment statuses and offers some preliminary answers to the question of whether part-time employment is a trap for workers, and under what conditions mobility into full-time employment is possible.

The Transition Between Full-Time and Part-Time Employment

For all workers, but especially for women, mobility into and from full-time employment is determined by factors that operate at three different levels: the individual, the family, and the market. At the individual level, skills, especially those obtained on the job, increase the stability of employment (Stolzenberg 1975; Stier and Grusky 1990). Workers who have invested in job-specific skills are less likely than other workers to leave their jobs. To the extent that full-time jobs require higher investments in job-specific skills, their occupants are less likely to move into part-time employment or to exit the labor force. By the same token, part-time workers who have high skill levels are more likely to move into full-time employment in order to better use their skills, while the less-skilled have higher rates of employment interruptions (Moen 1985).

Women's employment decisions are determined, for the most part, by factors at the family level. The most salient constraint on full-time employment is the presence of pre-school children (Moen 1985; Lehrer and Nerlove 1986; Desai and Waite 1991). Women experience a variety of transitions among different employment statuses over their family life cycle, and not many of them work continuously in full-time jobs. Some women drop out of paid employment when they have babies or preschool children at home, while others maintain their attachment to the labor market by moving into part-time employment (Moen 1985; Main 1988).

The move out of a job is also conditioned by the occupation one holds and by the structure of the labor market. From a dual economy perspective (Averitt 1968; Beck et al. 1978), high-paid, high-skilled jobs are concentrated in the industries that constitute the core segment of the market, while the less stable, lower-skilled jobs are more likely to be in the periphery. The segmented structure of the economy constrains mobility between and within sectors (Tolbert 1982; Jacobs and Breiger 1988; Stier and Grusky 1990). Core workers, who are usually high-skilled and most attractive to employers, have a high holding power over their jobs, and for them mobility thus takes place predominantly within internal, vertical ladders. In the secondary segment, job stability is lower; workers move between occupations and jobs, but are less likely to enter the primary sector (Spilerman 1977; Tolbert 1982; Jacobs 1983). The general expectation is that core workers, who have high wages, good working conditions, and prospects for promotion in the future, are less likely than non-core workers to leave their jobs. Thus, above and beyond family constraints, women employed in core industries are expected to have below-average rates of transition into part-time jobs and out of the labor force, because of the high opportunity costs involved in such moves.

In addition to market segmentation, occupational sex segregation presents another kind of barrier to certain types of

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mobility (Rosenfeld 1983; Rosenfeld and Spenner 1995). Not only are women concentrated in relatively few occupations, but these occupations are more likely to offer reduced-time employment, usually to accommodate women's time demands (Elias 1988). One can thus argue that the sex-typing of an occupation is not exogenous to women's labor supply decisions. In other words, women who intend to lower their hours of employment may choose to work in these occupations; occupations that offer reduced-time employment may become female-dominated because they attract those who are interested in a shorter working day. Whether a cause or a consequence, working in female-type occupations is related to being in part-time employment. In addition, Polachek (1979, 1981) argued that because the depreciation of wages while staying out of the labor market is minimal in female-type occupations, women employed in such occupations are more likely to leave the labor force when family demands are high. It is important to note, however, that his proposition has not gained empirical support (England 1982; England, Farkas, Kilbourne, and Dou 1988; Stier 1996).

Transitions to and from full-time employment, and the stability of different employment statuses, are at the center of the current study. Following the above discussion, the study focuses on the role individual skills, family events, and market structures play in determining changes in women's status of employment in the Israeli labor market. Three general hypotheses are examined:

(a) Higher education (as a proxy for one's skill level) increases the stability of full-time employment for those holding such jobs, and increases the likelihood of entering full-time employment for those in part-time employment. For all employed women, the likelihood of leaving the labor force declines as the level of skills rises.

(b) Employment in the primary segments of the market (the core sector and the public sector) lowers the chances of exiting the labor force. Workers in the core sector are less likely to move into part-time employment, while the opposite is expected in both the public and the secondary sectors. Employment in the secondary sector and employment in female-type occupations reduce the opportunity to move from part-time to full-time employment (and increase the likelihood of moving from full-time to part-time jobs). In addition, secondary sector employees are more likely than others to exit the labor force.

(c) The presence of young children increases the likelihood of moving from full-time to part-time employment, and of leaving the labor force.

Each of the three dimensions (individual, family, and labor-market levels) is expected to affect the likelihood of transition independently of the others.

Women in the Israeli Labor Market

The labor force participation of Israeli women is similar to that of women in many industrialized countries (Ben-Porath and Gronau 1986). As of 1996, 45% of all women (15 years of age and older) were participating in the paid economy. This figure is somewhat lower than the comparable figures in the United States and some European countries, such as Sweden, and similar to the figures in other countries, such as Germany and France (Kraus and Hodge 1990). The majority of employed women (more than 60%) hold full-time jobs (Stier 1995). Gender segregation in the labor market is high, and most women work in a few female-dominated occupations (Cohen, Bechar, and Raijman 1987). As in most western countries, women work in white-collar occupations and thus enjoy relatively high prestige but low income (Semyonov and Kraus 1993).

About half of all employed women work in the public sector. The public sector in Israel is of special importance for female employment. It is comprised mainly of social services, and most female-type occupations (for example, teachers, nurses, social workers) are concentrated in this sector (Lewin-Epstein and Stier 1987). The Israeli public sector is characterized by high stability of employment and a high level of professionalism. It is also the sector in which labor laws, especially those concerning women's work, are most strictly observed.

Unionization is higher in Israel than in any other industrialized country, and this fact has implications for the labor rights of all workers, including those in part-time employment. Contrary to what is argued in the literature (Beechey and Perkins 1987; Long and Jones 1981), part-time workers in Israel (as in some European countries - see Natti 1995) have rights and work conditions similar to those of full-time workers. The similarity of full-time and part-time employment in terms of workers' rights and duties provides an interesting setting in which to test the theoretical propositions, because in this

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setting mobility between the two segments of the economy is expected to be relatively unrestrained by employers' interest in keeping workers in less than full-time employment (see, for example, Ashibata 1992; David and Starzec 1992).

Sample and Research Method

The study is based on data from the Israeli Labor Force Survey conducted by the Israeli Bureau of Statistics. The survey, which is carried out every year, contains a representative sample of the Israeli adult population (15 years and over). Each individual is interviewed four times within a period of 18 months. The current study uses information from the surveys conducted between 1987 and 1990. It is based on the first and third panels for each individual. The time span between these panels ranges between 9 and 12 months, and thus it is possible to analyze short-term transitions between employment statuses. The analysis is limited to include Jewish women aged 25 to 55 who were employed in the labor force at the time the first panel was taken. Most women in this age group had already graduated from school, had formed their families, and had established a market position. Focusing on this age group allows us to study how skills, family events, and market characteristics affect the work behavior of women. The sample contains 6,018 women.

The main focus of the study is on transitions between full-time employment, part-time employment, and non-employment. Part-time employment is commonly defined according to the number of hours the individual works. Those who work less than 35 hours a week are considered part-time workers. However, some jobs offer full-time positions that are shorter than 35 hours. For example, most of the teaching occupations in Israel define full-time employment at about 24 hours per week. Another feature of the Israeli labor force is that some collective agreements based on industries allow mothers of young children who work full-time to reduce their work day by one hour. In some cases, their work week amounts to less than 35 hours. This arrangement is particularly prevalent in the public sector. Reduced-hour full-time jobs could be seen as the perfect arrangement for mothers because they are sheltered from the penalties usually associated with part-time employment. It is therefore important to differentiate among the different types of shorter-hour employment. In the Israeli Labor Force Survey, respondents who reported working less than 35 hours per week were asked whether their job was considered full-time or part-time. Based on this information, it is possible to distinguish between full-time regular-hour jobs, full-time reduced-hour jobs, and part-time jobs. Using the panel data, the study focuses on the pattern of transitions among the different types of employment and on the determinants of each transition.

Women in the Three Types of Employment

Table 1 presents selected characteristics of women, based on the information provided in the first wave of the labor Force Survey, and according to the three types of employment. More than half of all employed women worked full-time, and another 13% held reduced hours (full-time) positions. The remaining 32% were employed in part-time jobs.⁽¹⁾ Full-time and part-time workers are similar in most of their characteristics: they have a similar age distribution and they differ only slightly in their education. The main difference is in the family characteristics of the female workers: among the full-time workers, about a quarter are single or divorced, compared to only 10% of the women in the other employment categories. Also, 37% of the full-timers had no children present in the household, compared to about a quarter of the women in the two other types of employment. However, the proportion of women in full-time employment who had young (preschool) children at home is similar to that of the part-timers.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Jewish Women Aged 25 to 55 by Employment Status.

Group	Full-Time	Reduced Hours	Part-Time
Age Group			
25-34	35.0	36.7	31.5
35-44	42.6	45.1	43.0
45-55	22.4	18.3	25.5

Education

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Less Than H.S.	9.5	3.9	12.3
High School	48.0	24.6	44.7
Post-H.S.			
Non-Acad.	18.6	40.0	21.2
Academic	23.9	31.5	21.8
Marital Status			
Married	77.5	88.8	89.3
Divorced	7.6	4.7	4.7
Single	14.9	6.5	6.0
Family's Life Cycle			
% No Children Present	37.1	22.0	27.8
% Children Age 0-1	12.6	19.5	12.9
% Children Age 2-4	20.6	30.0	24.8
% Children Age 5-9	33.0	46.1	41.8
N	3,328 (55.3)	783 (13.0)	1,907 (31.7)

In comparison with these main groups of workers, women in reduced-hour employment have unique endowments. First, they are the most educated group in the labor market - 71.5% have post-high school education, compared to about 42% of both full- and part-timers. This group of workers is also somewhat younger than the other groups, and is more likely to have preschool children. The latter characteristic is partly related to the work arrangements of mothers with young children in Israel, especially in the public sector.

In terms of their market attributes, which are presented in Table 2, reduced-time employees tend to be concentrated in the public sector and in female-type occupations. The occupational distribution of the three groups shows clearly that reduced-hours employees tend to be in the professional and semi-professional occupations - two-thirds of them hold high-level white-collar jobs, compared to only a third among the full- and part-timers. A more detailed analysis (not shown here) reveals that most women in this category are teachers at different school levels. The table also suggests that part-time workers are more likely than others to hold service jobs (which are predominantly low-skill), although a non-negligible number of them work in high-skill white-collar occupations. A larger proportion of the full-timers work in the core sector of the economy and in male-type occupations. It is interesting to note that the sex-type distribution of occupations in reduced-time jobs is similar to that of the part-time segment. This pattern indicates that in general, women in female-type occupations are more likely than women in other occupations to reduce their hours of employment.

Because the labor force survey does not include information on wages, I calculated monthly income and hourly wages for full-time and part-time workers using the Israeli 1990 Income Survey.⁽²⁾ The figures indicate that although the monthly income of full-time workers is higher than that of part-timers, the hourly wages of the latter are somewhat higher (although the difference is not statistically significant). This finding reflects the general employment policy in Israel, which does not

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discriminate part-time workers from full-time workers in any formal way.

To summarize, women in the three employment categories differ in their education, the stage of the family's life cycle, and market characteristics. It appears that family demands constrain women's ability to work full-time: the non-married women and those with no child obligations are more likely to participate in full-time employment, although the presence of children is not related to the type of employment in a straightforward way. Especially important is the fact that there are no differences between full- and part-timers in the proportion of women who had babies the year prior to the survey. That pattern indicates that family responsibilities are not alone in affecting women's employment decisions.

The "reduced-hours" category stands out as a unique type of employment. The high level of education and the high proportion of mothers with babies in this category indicate that while many women with young children at home drop out of the labor force, there is a structural solution for the highly educated in the form of reduced hours full-time jobs. This interpretation is strengthened by the occupational distribution of the women in the three employment statuses, which indicates that most reduced-hour (full-time) jobs are in the high-skill (professional or semi-professional) occupations, as opposed to the higher concentration of part-timers in low-skill, services occupations.

The next stage of the analysis examines the moves out of and into the different employment statuses. Analysis of mobility will allow a test of whether part-time employment constitutes a barrier to mobility into full-time employment and under what conditions such a move is possible for women.

Table 2. Market Characteristics of Jewish Women Aged 25 to 55 by Employment Status.

Group	Full-Time	Reduced Hours	Part-Time
Economic Sector			
% in Public Sector	46.3	73.3	50.4
% in Core Sector	27.7	13.7	20.1
% in Periphery	25.9	13.0	29.6
Sex-Type of Occupation			
% in Female-Type	56.2	70.1	67.2
% in Mixed-Type	21.5	22.8	22.0
% in Male-Type	22.3	7.1	10.8
Occupational Distribution			
Professional and Managerial	13.1	19.6	9.2
Semi-Professional	22.4	48.1	28.6
Clerical	35.8	16.7	25.3
Trade	6.4	2.4	7.9
Services	13.6	10.8	24.1

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Manual Worker (Skilled and Semi- Skilled)	6.1	2.1	3.0
Unskilled (Incl. Agriculture)	2.7	0.4	1.9

Earnings

Monthly Income	2,001 (1,132)	1,410 (861)
Hourly Wage(a)	11.4 (7.7)	12.8 (7.9)

a Monetary unit: NIS (New Israeli Shekel).

Transitions Among Employment Statuses

Using the panel data, I analyzed short-term transitions between the different employment statuses. Although the time period is short (about a year), it is possible to identify the major correlates of mobility. Figure 1 presents the rates of mobility from the different types of employment. The figure also reports the destination for those who changed their type of employment. The data suggest that full-time employment is the most stable: 77% of the women who had been in full-time jobs at the first time period were still in the same type of employment a year later. This is in contrast to only 39% of reduced-time employees and 55% of part-timers.

The figure clearly suggests that workers in reduced-time and part-time jobs are highly mobile. The question is: what is their destination? Almost one-half of all women who left a reduced-time job moved into full-time employment, another third moved into part-time jobs, and only 18% left the labor force. The pattern of transition is different for both full- and part-timers. Among the former, about a quarter of all workers who left full-time positions moved into reduced-time employment, a third entered part-time jobs, and 43% exited the labor force. Among those who left part-time work, a third entered full-time employment, 24% moved into reduced-time employment, and another 41% left the labor force. Thus, it appears that the pattern of transition is similar for full-time and part-time employees, and that part-time workers are not necessarily "trapped" in this mode of employment, although overall 16% of them, compared to only 9% of full-timers, exited the labor force within a year. Reduced-time employment stands out again: it is highly unstable. However, most transitions are toward full-time employment, and relatively few interrupt their economic activity.(3)

The next stage of the analysis examines the factors that influence the transition from one employment status to another, using a multinomial logit framework. For each employment group, the probability of shifting from the initial employment status to each of three other statuses is estimated.(4) Following the hypotheses presented above, the independent variables indicate the three dimensions that are expected to affect the move: educational level, family constraints, and market conditions. Education, which serves as a proxy for skills, is differentiated into three levels: high school or less, post-secondary vocational, and academic education (as the omitted category). Family demands are indicated by whether the woman gave birth during the interval under study. Other family events (including marital status, the number and age of children, and changes in these events) did not systematically affect the pattern of transitions and were excluded from the final model. Market characteristics are denoted by the sex-type of occupation and by the economic sector. The study distinguishes between female-type occupations (occupations with 60% or more female employees), [TABULAR DATA FOR TABLE 3 OMITTED] mixed-type occupations (40% to 60% women), and male-type occupations (the omitted category).

To define the economic sectors, I used a typology developed for the Israeli economy (Stier and Lewin-Epstein 1988), which identifies three segments: the public sector, the core, and the periphery (as the reference category). The public sector is an important component of the market (O'Connor 1973; Hodson 1978). While this sector shares many similarities

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with the core (for example, internal career ladders and high stability of employment), it also differs from the core in some respects (for example, the public sector has less developed technology and higher labor intensity). Being a female-dominated sector, it is likely to have reduced-hour jobs that are available to female employees as a means to increase their employment stability (O'Connor 1973; Hodson 1978). I further added a dummy variable indicating whether women are employed in the teaching profession. This control was added because teachers in Israel have special employment arrangements. The vast majority of them work in the public sector, and their jobs are defined as full-time although they work less than 30 hours a week.(5)

Table 3 presents the multinomial logit regression analyses. The first two columns present the likelihood of entering full-time employment for those who left reduced-time (column 1) and part-time (column 2) jobs. Column 1 suggests that, above and beyond the effect of being a teacher, those who had a birth during the time interval were less likely to move into a full-time job. For part-timers, such a move is constrained by the occupation's sex type - women in female-type and in mixed-type occupations are less likely to move into full-time employment than are those in male-type occupations.

As stated above, reduced-time employment can be seen as the best solution for mothers with heavy family demands, since it offers convenient working hours with the benefits and rewards associated with full-time employment. According to the findings, it is mainly teachers and women who had a birth during the time interval under study who enter this type of employment, independent of their status of origin. These findings suggest that reduced-hour employment is a special arrangement designed to encourage recent mothers and women with high skills to enter the labor force, but mainly in one particular occupation - the teaching profession.

The move from full-time into part-time employment is influenced by family constraints, as expected, but this effect is largely mediated by structural arrangements. A move is more likely to take place in female-type and mixed-type occupations than in male-type ones. Also, full-time workers in the public and core sectors are less likely to move into part-time employment. These findings suggest that structural characteristics of the labor market may set the conditions for part-time employment: women who prefer this type of employment are forced to enter female-type occupations or to work in the periphery. This conclusion is supported also by the pattern of transition from reduced-hours to part-time. Core workers are less likely to change their status of employment and to move into part-time employment.

Last, women who gave birth recently are more likely not only to reduce their hours of employment but also to leave the labor force altogether. The last three columns of the table present the log-likelihood of transition out of the labor force from each type of employment. The findings again underscore the important role of the structural attributes of the labor market in determining women's employment pattern. As hypothesized, workers in the public and core sectors, independent of their status of origin, are less likely than secondary sector workers to drop out of the labor force. Also, women who work full-time in female-type and mixed-type occupations are more likely to exit the labor force than are their counterparts in male-type occupations. It is important to note that education's effects on the rate of transition out of the labor force are mixed: having a post-secondary non-academic education reduced the likelihood of exiting the labor force among part-time workers, while having high school or lower level of education increased that likelihood among reduced-hour workers.

To summarize, the findings suggest that recent childbirths affect women's likelihood of exiting full-time employment and of either entering jobs that offer shorter working hours or withdrawing from the labor force. However, above and beyond family constraints, market conditions determine whether a move takes place, and in what direction. Workers in the core sector of the economy are sheltered from job interruptions and from having part-time employment. On the other hand, the Israeli labor market offers two ways to encourage women, mostly mothers, to participate in the labor force. For the more educated, the teaching profession allows participation in market activity on a full-time basis but with reduced hours. This arrangement is also open, in some cases, to mothers of young children through employment laws and regulations. Others, when they decide (or are forced) to shorten their working hours, have to move into part-time employment. Finally, the sex type of the occupation is also related to the likelihood of mobility. Employment in female-type occupations increases the likelihood of moving out of a full-time job, either to part-time work or out of the labor force, whereas workers in male-type occupations are more likely to stay in full-time employment.

Discussion

Part-time employment has become an important feature of the female labor force. It is commonly argued that this type of employment is "appropriate" for women, and especially mothers, because it allows them to combine family and market

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activities. However, part-time jobs are frequently characterized as low-level, marginal positions in the market, in which women are trapped with little chance of improving their standing. Using data on a sample of Jewish Israeli women aged 25 to 55, in this study I have examined the rates and determinants of mobility into and out of part-time employment.

The major conclusion of the study is that part-time workers in Israel are not "trapped" in this type of employment. On the contrary, short-term mobility rates from part-time employment are similar to those observed for full-time positions. Women in reduced-hour jobs experience the highest level of mobility into full-time employment and the lowest level of employment interruption. Moreover, the moves among employment types are symmetrical: moves from short-hour to full-time jobs are as likely to take place as are moves in the opposite direction. The study indicates that structural characteristics of the labor market condition the mobility pattern above and beyond the effect of family constraints.

The Israeli female labor market is structured according to women's responsibilities at home. Part-time jobs are available for women, and especially in female-type occupations. Moreover, special arrangements allow women to stay in full-time employment but shorten their working hours. This type of employment is not open to all women; it is especially designed for teachers and for women with young children. In the latter case it allows women to stay in the labor force when family demands are high, and to move into full-time employment when they diminish. Similar to what is found in other countries (Beechey and Perkins 1987; Duffy and Pupo 1992), the findings suggest that women are viewed as the main care-takers of children and the household. However, contrary to the claim that part-time employees are marginal workers, in Israel employers and, even more so, the state treat these workers as an integral part of the labor force, and thus there are no special barriers to mobility into full-time employment. This pattern may indicate tolerance and understanding of women's multiple roles in what is decidedly a family-oriented society: Israel's fertility rate is the highest among the industrial societies, and the family is strong and central as a social institution in Israel (Peres and Katz 1981).

The high rates of mobility indicate also that, at least for women, hours of work do not crucially influence acquired skills and accumulated experience. Consequently, for the short run, part-time employment seems to be the ideal solution for women who are committed to market activity but still carry most household responsibilities. For the long run, however, it preserves the gendered division of labor in society, and perpetuates the sex-segregation and ghettoization of women in a small number of occupations. These occupations are predominantly female and fall far short of male occupations in monetary rewards and chances for promotion. The teaching profession is an excellent example of extreme feminization on the one hand, and the loss of social and economic rewards (Kraus and Hartman 1994) on the other.

Furthermore, it is unclear whether the move into reduced-hour employment (either full- or part-time) has additional consequences for women's achievements in the labor market. Given the nature of the data used in the current study, I have not been able to examine women's career lines and the extent to which they are able to maximize life earnings and use their investments in human capital. It is therefore important for future research to examine work histories of women in order to reveal the costs and benefits of movement not only into and out of the labor force but also between the different types of employment.

1 Only as many as 6% of all part-time workers said that they would have liked a full-time job but were unable to find one. Due to sample size limitations, it was impossible to analyze this group separately. Excluding it from the analysis did not change the major findings.

2 The Income Survey allows differentiation between full- and part-time workers, but there is no information on reduced-hour employment. Adding weekly hours in order to identify these workers yielded an extremely small sample. Hence, it is impossible to refer to this group as a separate category. Nonetheless, an alternative distinction between full-timers and part-timers based on weekly hours produced the same results.

3 A closer look at the detailed occupations of those who have changed their employment status reveals that some of the women also changed their occupation (about a third of full-time workers who moved to part-time jobs, 28% of part-timers who moved to full-time jobs, and 18% of those in reduced-time employment who moved to full-time employment). However, most of the new occupations were similar in nature to the old ones, and there was no systematic decrease (or increase) in occupational status following the move.

4 The analysis considers moves into the two other types of employment and also out of the labor force.

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5 Although most teachers are employed in reduced-hour jobs, about 6% worked more than 35 hours per week (and hence were categorized as full-time) and another 14% worked on a part-time basis.

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