

**NONSTANDARD WORK:  
DEFINITIONS, TRENDS AND POLICY RELEVANCE**

**FINAL REPORT**

Submitted to National Welfare Grants  
by



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# CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES .....	ii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
II. NONSTANDARD WORK: BAD, GOOD, OR SIMPLY DIFFERENT?.....	2
1. Nonstandard Work Meaning Not Standard and Less Desired.....	2
2. Nonstandard Work Meaning Work Opportunities with More Flexible Hours and Career Path Possibilities .....	3
3. Nonstandard Meaning Different and Necessitating Changes in Public Programs and Regulations.....	6
III. NONSTANDARD JOBS, OR NONSTANDARD WORKERS?.....	7
1. Use of the Term "Nonstandard" in a Current Government Report.....	7
2. Classifying Four Hypothetical Workers.....	8
3. Attributes Often Mentioned for Nonstandard Jobs and Workers.....	11
IV. INTERVIEW INSIGHTS.....	16
1. Introduction to the Direct Interview Study .....	16
2. Those Who Did versus Did Not Need More Income.....	16
3. The Importance of Fringe Benefits .....	17
4. Balancing Work and Children.....	17
5. Job-Related Insecurities .....	18
6. Doubts About What Might Help.....	20
7. Uncertainty as a Barrier to Planning for the Future .....	21
8. Emotional Problems .....	22
V. NONSTANDARD WORK AS A SOURCE OF ECONOMIC INSECURITY .....	23
VI. NONSTANDARD EMPLOYMENT: TRENDS AND ASSOCIATED CHANGES IN OTHER LABOUR MARKET OUTCOMES.....	24
1. The Definitions Used in Our Tables.....	24
2. Trends in Part-Time Employment.....	25
3. Increases in Involuntary Part-Time Employment .....	27
4. Part-Time Work and Moonlighting.....	33
5. Other Evidence on Part-Time Employment.....	34
6. Part-Time versus Full-Time Earnings.....	35
7. Part-Time Work, Low Wages and Economic Need.....	41
VII. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AXWORTHY SOCIAL SECURITY REFORM EFFORT .....	43
1. The Need of Many Workers with Nonstandard Jobs for UI Coverage.....	43
2. Education and Training for Nonstandard Workers.....	47
3. Balancing Nonstandard Work and Children .....	48
4. Financial Help for the Children of the Working Poor.....	49
5. Towards a Fairer World for Custodial Mothers.....	50
VIII. LONGER RUN REFORM ISSUES.....	51
REFERENCES.....	52
DATA APPENDIX.....	55

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	SUMMARY INFORMATION FOR OUR FOUR HYPOTHETICAL WORKERS .....	10
Table 2	ATTRIBUTES OFTEN USED TO CATEGORIZE REGULAR VERSUS NONSTANDARD WORK AND WORKERS.....	14
Table 3	PROPORTIONS OF WORKERS BY PART-TIME/FULL-TIME AND PART-YEAR/FULL-YEAR STATUS.....	26
Table 4	PART-TIME WORK AMONG FEMALE AND MALE WORKERS, 15-24, CANADA, 1975-1993 .....	29
Table 5	PART-TIME WORK AMONG FEMALE AND MALE WORKERS, 25 AND OVER, CANADA, 1975-1993.....	30
Table 6	PART-TIME WORK AMONG FEMALE AND MALE WORKERS, 20 AND OVER, UNITED STATES, 1968-1987.....	32
Table 7	EMPLOYMENT FACTS FOR 1993.....	36
Table 8	AVERAGE EARNINGS IN 1990 DOLLARS FOR MEN AND WOMEN EMPLOYED FULL TIME AND FULL YEAR, 1980, 1985 AND 1990.....	38
Table 9	AVERAGE EARNINGS IN 1990 DOLLARS FOR MEN AND WOMEN EMPLOYED PART TIME AND/OR PART YEAR, 1980, 1985 AND 1990.....	39
Table 10	AVERAGE EARNINGS RATIOS FOR WORKERS EMPLOYED PART TIME HOURS AND/OR PART YEAR COMPARED WITH THOSE EMPLOYED FULL TIME AND FULL YEAR, 1980, 1985 AND 1990.....	40

# **Nonstandard Work: Definitions, Trends and Policy Relevance**

## **Executive Summary**

### **Synopsis**

This report addresses issues surrounding nonstandard work in Canada, an area which accounted for 44% of all job growth in the 1980's in Canada. Our ever-changing economic and social fabric has resulted in many different meanings of the word "work." This report looks at the different ways one of those meanings - "nonstandard" - can be interpreted and the ways these differing interpretations can personally impact Canadian citizens. Through an examination of the forms nonstandard work can take, through interviews, through an assessment of what nonstandard work implies in past and present labour markets, and through trying to understand how nonstandard work ties in with current social security reform initiatives, we hope to arrive at a better understanding of what nonstandard work means to the lifestyle of Canadians and the expectations of personal freedom we have traditionally enjoyed.

### **I. Introduction**

In recent years developed countries have used the term "nonstandard" to refer to jobs that fall outside the traditional axis of full-time, permanent, single employer jobs. These include part-time work, contracts, and multiple job holders. Nonstandard is a value-neutral term, and this study examines its contextual nature, that is, its definition as either positive or negative depending on a number of factors such as personal choice, security, flexibility, pay, and others. This study considers many of the nonstandard job contexts which seem to result in a loss of economic security for workers. Canadian trends are analyzed, as are implications for social and federal policy.

## **II. Nonstandard Work: Bad, Good, or Simply Different**

There are three basic ways in which nonstandard employment is valued. As an undesirable alternative to standard employment, as a desirable alternative, and as simply a different alternative. Choosing one value interpretation over another will obviously alter statistical interpretations, and therefore it is crucial to understand the value attached to the term prior to interpreting data.

Nonstandard employment is considered contingent and insecure, hence, an undesirable alternative to standard employment. The demand side perspective on the growth of this form of employment dictates that it has occurred due to the needs and preferences of employers. Workers increasingly appear to have no choice but to take nonstandard jobs. Case studies show that employers are adopting strategies that call for fewer "standard" (meaning full-time, permanent) employees, and a greater number of nonstandard employees, though there is little research which addresses the relation between such management methods and personnel and non-personnel needs.

There are advantages, of which much has been written, that nonstandard employment brings to employees, such as greater parental freedom, increased ability to balance one's lifestyle, and so on. These may be seen as the supply side perspective. Yet, regardless of the manner in which one views nonstandard work, it is undeniably a different and growing mode of employment. Many of the existing regulations and social security programs are geared towards standard modes of employment, and there is a need to examine such regulations and programs to account for the changing nature of the workforce.

## **III. Nonstandard Jobs or Nonstandard Workers**

When considering nonstandard employment, there is a great need for clarity about the unit of definition. In other words, is a worker with three jobs considered one unit of nonstandard employment or three? Much of the extant research in this field has failed to take this into account, which has led to confusion surrounding the state of nonstandard employment. This differentiation can affect the number of weeks worked, the applicability of UI coverage, fringe benefits, and of course, the level of pay.

#### **IV. Interview Insights**

Of obvious relevance are the perceptions of the very people who work or have worked in nonstandard jobs. Interviews were conducted with 174 people who have held at least one nonstandard job since completing their full-time education, and many of these 174 participated in subsequent focus groups.

In both the interviews and the focus groups a common theme was that most participants felt that they were not well off financially, and that their income was not keeping pace with expenses. The lack of benefits, and the difficulty of assimilating work and family life were also common concerns. A number of participants spoke critically about the relations between employers and nonstandard workers. Areas of concern included increasing demands at work, with less pay and training, as well as the lack of security involved in a nonstandard job, the lack of status and seniority in the event of job reclassifications or layoffs, and the overall decrease in employer loyalty to the nonstandard workforce. Participants suggested that establishing contacts and increasing one's marketable skills were of considerable importance to a nonstandard employee, but that the general lack of security in such positions made future planning difficult, and often even resulted in a sense of powerlessness and lowered self-esteem.

#### **V. Nonstandard Work as a Source of Economic Insecurity**

It certainly appears that the growth in nonstandard work is contributing to economic insecurity for many families and individuals, but again it is important to note that nonstandard work is value-neutral: its value to an individual rests in the relation between employee and employer, and between the individual's work and life. Introducing policy measures to balance worker freedom with the employer's potential to manipulate nonstandard positions would facilitate more stability and positive career growth for those in such positions.

## **VI. Nonstandard Employment: Trends, and Associated Changes in Other Labour Market Outcomes**

Data taken from 1970 to 1990 show a significant growth in part-time work, as well as an increase in the number of people holding two or more jobs. Current data also show a steady success rate for those seeking part-time work, and that the number of people working part time is growing much faster than the number of people working full-time. Yet the growth in part-time work is not necessarily positive, in that growing proportions of part-time workers report a preference for full-time work. This would indicate a loss in individual freedom across all age and gender categories.

Further examination of the data reveals that more involuntary part-time workers (those forced to work part-time) hold multiple jobs than do voluntary part-time workers. Part-time workers are also more likely than full-time workers to have recently looked for work. Given the instability of the economy during the period in which the data were collected, it seems clear that the increase in involuntary part-time workers is a reflection of these economic uncertainties.

Finally, the data also reveal that during the period 1980-1990 the value of male part-time work declined against the value of male full-time work, at the same time that the proportion of men working part-time as opposed to full-time increased. Under these circumstances - more men working at less valuable jobs - the growth of nonstandard employment dictates a net loss in individual freedom for Canadian citizens.



## **VII. Implications for the Axworthy Social Security Reform Effort**

Both the self-employed and nonstandard workers whose jobs are less than 15 hours per week are excluded from the Unemployment Insurance program. However, despite historical legitimacy for this policy, there is no present reason for excluding these workers from UI coverage, especially in light of evidence showing that employers are manipulating job situations to keep employees under 15 hours per week. It is recommended that these workers, as well as the self-employed, be included in UI coverage. Such a policy change would restrict employers from exploiting nonstandard workers, and would therefore provide all employees with greater stability.

Nonstandard workers have also traditionally had less access to employer funded training and education, with employers more willing to invest in full-time, long-term employees. Downsizing has meant smaller firms, and smaller firms have fewer reserves to spend on employees, particularly part-time. The result is a hampered ability to rise within the company.

Another issue that must be considered in any future reform effort is the irregularity facing nonstandard workers in the area of child care and general child welfare. Not only are there the obvious financial difficulties involved in finding good child care, but also the difficult-to-quantify social costs that attend situations of inadequate child care must be considered. Reform efforts that focus on appropriate use of the Child Tax Benefit and the Working Income Supplement will assist low-income families with children.

## **VIII. Longer Run Reform Issues**

Many straightforward reforms could be implemented immediately to improve the position of the nonstandard worker. UI coverage, more education and training, appropriate child care options, and some relief from the financial burdens of raising children are all recommended, but any reform effort must not end at this stage. Proposed reforms can only be expected to result in modest improvements to the position of nonstandard workers, and will not alter the fact that the fundamental problem is one of inadequate work. The present study on the growth of involuntary employment and its implications highlight the more pressing and global matter, namely, the employment deficit.



## I. INTRODUCTION

This is a study of nonstandard work in Canada. We begin in Section II by raising the question of what is meant by the term nonstandard work. These days, the term appears even in newspaper articles. Yet, as we seek to establish, the term takes on different meanings in different contexts: meanings that differ in both conceptual and operational respects. Section II discusses different uses of the term that range from not standard and not desired, to not standard and desired, to simply different in ways that must be accommodated administratively. Section III points out the confusions that can arise when the term is used interchangeably for jobs and for workers holding nonstandard jobs. Input from direct interviews and focus group discussions on how those who have held nonstandard jobs feel about them is presented in Section IV. As explained in Section V, in the remainder of this report we focus on aspects of nonstandard work that appear to be resulting in economic insecurity.

Relevant statistical information on the prevalence of and trends in certain sorts of nonstandard employment is summarized in Section VI. Selected information on related labour market outcomes is also presented.

In Sections VII and VIII we step back from the data-related complications and evidence to consider policy implications. There are immediate practical implications. As discussed in Section VII, our social programs need to be reformed to allow for the present day realities of nonstandard work. Longer run issues having to do with the evolving social order and quality of life in this country are taken up in Section VIII.

## II. NONSTANDARD WORK: BAD, GOOD, OR SIMPLY DIFFERENT?

"Nonstandard" is an every day word used in three quite different ways. Sometimes it is used to refer to *undesirable* alternatives to what is "standard." Sometimes the word is used for *desired* alternatives. And sometimes the term simply stands for *different*, as with special order forms for "nonstandard" services. In this section we substantiate that the "nonstandard" in the term nonstandard work is used in all three of these ways. Not surprisingly, the attributes of nonstandard work that are focused on in various studies differ depending on which meaning of nonstandard is adopted. This is one reason for widely differing findings in statistical analyses of the prevalence of and trends in nonstandard work.

### 1. Nonstandard Work Meaning Not Standard and Less Desired

A 1991 study by the Economic Council of Canada reports that 44 percent of all employment growth in Canada in the 1980s was in "non-standard forms": part-time, short-term, temporary contract, self-employment, and employment with temporary help agencies (p. 81). Commenting on those Economic Council findings, Osberg, Erksoy and Phipps (1994, p. 2) state that "The common characteristic of these employment forms is their contingent and insecure states." The implication of this remark is that most of the growth of nonstandard employment is involuntary in the sense that the workers in these jobs would have preferred "standard" jobs. This is a demand side perspective on the growth of nonstandard employment. It is a view that the availability of nonstandard versus standard job opportunities has been shifting in favour of the former because of the needs and preferences of employers, with workers having *no choice* but to take the nonstandard jobs when they are unsuccessful in competing for the standard ones.

Some case study evidence seems to corroborate the demand side perspective of the recent growth of nonstandard employment. For example, Osberg, Wien and Grude (1994) report on firms that are explicitly adopting "just-in-time" labour strategies and are shrinking their continuing employment to small cores of full-time workers, supplemented by short-term and part-time workers when the workload is heavier than usual and for special purpose tasks.

The reason that case study data are being used to corroborate this view of the growth of nonstandard employment is that most of the available data bases for studying the employment and earnings of Canadian workers have no information on whether more hours of work were desired, and at what wage when information is available on preferences for more hours. For example, in the Canadian Labour Force Survey, those working part time are asked why. One of the possible responses is that they wanted, but were unable to find, full-time work. However, those classified as involuntary part-time workers because they report that they wanted full-time work are not asked to clarify whether they would have worked full-time if this had been possible at lower wages. More fundamentally, most of the data available for studying Canadian labour markets is survey data for individuals rather than employers, and provides no direct information on why employers offer part-time and other types of nonstandard work. In particular, these data sets provide no direct information on whether employers are responding to problems *they* face that are unrelated to, or even in conflict with, worker needs and preferences, and what these problems are.

## **2. Nonstandard Work Meaning Work Opportunities with More Flexible Hours and Career Path Possibilities**

The 1994 federal Discussion Paper titled *Improving Social Security in Canada* (published by the Government of Canada, and referred to hereafter as the Discussion Paper) sums up the changing nature of Canadian labour markets using demand side language:

... work is becoming less permanent, providing less security but potentially also more individual freedom. Indeed much of the job creation over the past fifteen years has been part-time. Today, about four of every ten jobs in Canada fall outside the traditional full-time 40 hours a week mould. This contrasts with the situation as recently as 1976 when over 70 per cent of jobs offered standard work hours.

(p. 16, the Discussion Paper)

This is a demand side perspective of employment growth in the sense that workers are pictured as the ones needing to adjust to sweeping and technologically driven changes in the economy of Canada. However, the changes are described as offering the potential advantage of "more individual freedom," though it is also acknowledged that they will result in "less security" of employment.

In fact, a great deal has been written about the *advantages* of nonstandard work in terms of

"more individual freedom," particularly for parents who are trying to balance family and job demands.

The American feminist economist, Barbara Bergmann (1986, p. 306) claims that "Some, perhaps most, women workers with part-time jobs prefer part-time work." Similarly, the American labour economist Rebecca Blank (1990, p. 154) concludes that "Many workers who select part-time jobs are making a preferred choice that leaves them better off than they would be in full-time employment."

The Canadian researchers Duffy, Mandell and Pupo agree that many workers prefer part-time employment:

Part-time work ... is seen as allowing the flexibility required in the domestic sphere, as well as the personal satisfactions and independence derived from paid work. Women who work part-time often feel that they have 'the best of both worlds.'

(Duffy, Mandell and Pupo, 1989, p. 74)

They support their perspective with observations from in-depth interviews with 50 part-time women workers in urban Ontario. They write:

Literature on part-time work often emphasizes such disadvantages as low pay, scarcity of benefits and opportunities for advancement, lack of job security, and lack of on-the-job training.... Although our respondents discuss those problems and clearly see them as important, what they emphasize is ... that part-time work, for all its drawbacks, is a strategy for maintaining a balanced life situation.

(Duffy, Mandell and Pupo, 1989, p. 92)

Logan reaches a similar conclusion for Canada based on Labour Force Survey data and the responses of part-time workers to a Labour Force Survey question about why they worked part time. He writes:

For a large group of workers, part-time work is the option that best fits their responsibilities and lifestyle. A part-time job enables students to go to school, earn money, and gain work experience. Women in their child-bearing years are able to combine employment and child-rearing, and thereby maintain their place in the workforce. Similarly, part-time employment permits some people who are ill or disabled to continue working. For men aged 55 and over, working part time may ease the transition to retirement.

(Logan, 1994, p. 23)

Women's advocates have often criticized employers for not offering *enough* part-time work. For example, in assessing the employment practices of Crown Corporations, the Abella Commission Report criticizes their meagre use of part-time employment:

Part-time work is almost nonexistent in the corporations that had relevant data. Such part-time work as was available was mainly accounted for by Canada Post. In the other corporations, availability varied between two per cent and none. One in every four women working in Canada works part-time, yet in these corporations few such options exist.

(Abella, 1984, p. 116)

These authors are reflecting a feminist push in the 1970s and early 1980s for more alternatives to "regular" 9-to-5 jobs: alternatives that would make it easier for women, and men as well, to combine market work with child rearing responsibilities. From the perspective of those interested in work opportunities for women, in a world where most women have children, increases in the availability of part-time jobs has been judged to be basically good. There is a substantial body of labour economics literature that explicitly or implicitly views the growth of part-time and other forms of nonstandard work as a *response* to the increasing supply of workers preferring these forms of employment. (See, for example, Nakamura and Nakamura 1983, 1994.) These studies do not substantiate their supply-side perspective. They are based on supply side data for individuals, or for labour market outcomes; not on direct or even indirect demand side evidence for employers on their recruitment behaviour.

From the perspective of nonstandard work offering more "individual freedom," hours of work per week is a key attribute. More flexibility of working times is also important. Bergmann (1986, p. 311) writes: "Flexitime programs -- giving workers the right within limits to define their own hours -- would also contribute to the easier and more equitable organization of family life."

None of the major Canadian data sets used for studying labour market conditions and work behaviour has information on whether workers were covered by flexitime programs. This is true as well for U.S. data sources. (See Holden and Hansen 1987, p. 236.) Nor is there information on job sharing in data sources such as the Canadian Censuses of population. The lack of information on alternative working time arrangements coupled with the availability of information on hours of work per week probably explains the focus on trends in part-time work that is evident in empirical studies and commentaries on nonstandard employment.

### **3. Nonstandard Meaning Different and Necessitating Changes in Public Programs and Regulations**

Many of our current labour relations regulations and employment benefit provisions were put in place when nonstandard forms of employment were far less common. In many cases, the special needs of nonstandard workers are ignored or certain types of nonstandard workers are excluded. For example, jobs for less than 15 hours per week are excluded from our Unemployment Insurance (UI) program. So too are hours of work for earnings above the UI cap on insurable earnings, which at present is \$780 per week. No UI taxes are paid on hours of work for earnings over the cap amount. The self-employed are also excluded from UI coverage. Lin (1994) finds that, by 1990, UI coverage was denied to almost 1 million paid jobs with less than 15 hours per week, and nearly 2.2 million self-employed jobs.

Whether the growth of nonstandard employment is a curse or a blessing, and whether it is labour demand or supply driven, there is a need to revamp our government regulations and social security programs to allow for the modern reality of widespread nonstandard employment.



### III. NONSTANDARD JOBS, OR NONSTANDARD WORKERS?

Regardless of the reasons for concern and interest in nonstandard work, an operational definition is required for measuring the prevalence and trends. Some studies of nonstandard work begin with an explicit statement of defining attributes. In others, the definitions being used are left unstated and must be deduced from how the analyses are carried out and which aspects of work are discussed. However, one basic detail that is almost *never* explicitly stated is whether it is *jobs* or *workers* that are being classified. It is this distinction that we consider first in this section. We then go on to consider some of the specific attributes used in distinguishing regular and nonstandard jobs and workers.

#### 1. Use of the Term "Nonstandard" in a Current Government Report

To demonstrate the relevance of the distinction made in this section, we use as the context for this discussion a quote from the Discussion Paper. The section heading in the portion of the Discussion Paper that this quote is taken from is "Insurance coverage for nonstandard work." The text that follows this heading provides an example of the failure to be clear about whether it is *jobs* or the employment of *workers* that is being considered. The text states:

Whichever reforms are made, the UI program will need to consider the needs of workers in 'nonstandard' employment, who have increased significantly over the last decade. This includes part-time, temporary, self-employed or multiple job holders. Most of these workers are women. In 1993, more than 60 per cent of all jobs created were part-time. Many of these nonstandard workers are not fully covered by unemployment insurance for all the hours worked, and some are excluded from coverage entirely. Some firms adopt such working arrangements specifically to avoid paying insurance premiums.

(p. 49, the Discussion Paper)

The first sentence in the above quote seems to categorize *jobs* as being nonstandard, and states that the number of workers in nonstandard jobs has increased significantly. The passage continues with the term nonstandard being used for jobs: "This includes part-time, temporary, self-employed or multiple job holders.... In 1993, more than 60 per cent of all jobs created were part-time." But then the next sentence switches to using the term nonstandard with regard to the *workers*: "Many of these nonstandard workers are not fully covered by unemployment insurance for all the

hours worked and some are excluded from coverage entirely." There is no mention of the data sources on which the assertions about the growth of nonstandard employment are based.

Lately, Statistics Canada has begun to try to make users of their data more aware of the distinction between counting jobs and workers. For example, Ian Macredie, the Editor-in-Chief of the Statistics Canada publication *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, writes:

Clearly, jobs can be classified as full- or part-time based on hours of work usually required per week. However, the Labour Force Survey (LFS) counts people. For example, the LFS defines a person with two part-time jobs working a total of 30 or more hours as one full-time worker, while someone whose total hours at all jobs amount to less than 30 is considered a part-time worker. Since 1 in 20 workers are multiple jobholders, the number of part-time workers will not equal the number of part-time jobs.

(Macredie, 1994, p. 3)

Much of the empirical research that has been published on nonstandard work, in Canada and elsewhere, needs to be reevaluated and, in some cases, redone taking account of the distinction between nonstandard jobs and workers who hold nonstandard jobs.

## **2. Classifying Four Hypothetical Workers**

The policy importance of noting whether the term nonstandard is being applied to jobs or to workers may be clarified by considering four hypothetical workers, each with a part-time job.

Worker A is hectically shuttling back and forth, with four part-time jobs of 12 hours each. He would greatly prefer one full-time job, but could not find this. His jobs are all minimum wage, so he needs all four to support his family. He lives in fear of being laid off from one or more of his jobs, since he has no continuing contractual rights for any of them. Nor do his jobs provide employer-subsidized fringe benefits, or opportunities for training or advancement. Each of Worker A's jobs is for under 15 hours per week, so all of them are excluded from UI coverage.

Worker B has two concurrent jobs. One is full-time, 40 hours per week, high paying, UI-covered, and provides generous nonwage benefits and prospects for advancement. The other is a short-term, after-hours, part-time consulting job for about six hours per week. It pays well per hour, but is not UI-covered and provides no pension or other nonmandated fringe benefits. The lack of UI

coverage and other benefits for the second job does not worry Worker B since, in fact, he and his family could get by comfortably on just his earnings from his main job.

Worker C had two jobs last year. The first one was full time, high paying, UI-covered and an excellent job in most other respects, like Worker B's main job. Worker C lost that job when the firm he was with restructured and laid him off eight months into the previous year. He was unemployed and collected UI for the next two months. Then, in the tenth month, he got hired as a part-time consultant by another firm to do the very same job tasks that he used to do as a full-time employee. As a consultant, he earns less per hour and has no year-to-year salary increases. So far, he has only managed to get part-time amounts of work -- usually about 20 hours per week; but at least he continues to have this. Worker C's family has had to adjust to a lower standard of living. Moreover, Worker C now lives in fear of losing the consulting work he has. As a self-employed worker, he has no UI coverage or any other nonwage benefits.

Worker D is a married woman whose husband has a well-paid, secure job. She teaches piano to neighborhood children for six hours each week. She does not get paid particularly well for the lessons she gives, and has no UI coverage or other nonwage benefits. Actually though, she has no interest in being covered by the UI program since she teaches piano mostly because she enjoys this, and her family does not rely on her earnings for their daily living needs.

Table 1 summarizes the basic hours of work and income attributes for our four hypothetical workers.

Table 1

**SUMMARY INFORMATION FOR OUR FOUR HYPOTHETICAL WORKERS**

	Worker A	Worker B	Worker C	Worker D
One or more part-time jobs last year	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
One or more full-time jobs last year	No	Yes	Yes	No
Total hours of work last week	48	46	20	6
Worked part-time total hours (i.e. hours on all concurrent jobs) for most weeks of work last year	No	No	No	Yes
Own income last week	Low	High	Low	Low
Family income last week	Low	High	Low	High

If *jobs* are classified, the four workers held a total of nine jobs over the previous year, of which seven might be classified as nonstandard on the grounds that they were for part-time hours per week. That is, 78 percent of the jobs were nonstandard. On the other hand, all four of our hypothetical workers have a part-time job. Thus, all four are nonstandard workers if *workers* are classified, and if one of the attributes for being classified as a nonstandard worker is having a part-time job.

Note that the above job and worker classifications for hypothetical Workers A-D assume we have information about hours of work for *each* job held over the survey period. However, as Meccredie notes for the Labour Force Survey, most of the data sets available for labour market research in Canada provide information for workers, and little or no information on jobs. For example, the 1991 Canadian Census provides information on the number of weeks worked in the calendar year of 1990 *at all jobs*, and on whether these weeks of work were "mainly" full-time or part-time adding up all work activity in each week. It provides no information on the jobs held, unlike the Labour Force Survey which does at least have information on the "main" jobs and limited

information on second jobs held by respondents though, as Macredie notes, it is workers rather than jobs that are counted in most analyses of the Labour Force Survey data too.

If the information for our hypothetical workers were dealt with as in the 1991 Canadian Census, based on "usual" hours of work in the previous calendar year, only Worker D would be classified as nonstandard. But it is Worker A with his four mini jobs and Worker C who lost a regular job and who has only been able to find contract, part-time work since then who are the ones suffering the undesirable employment conditions often attributed to nonstandard work -- job insecurity, low earnings, no benefits, and no advancement possibilities. Workers B and D are the ones who are *benefitting* from the hours flexibility that nonstandard jobs can sometimes provide.

There is some job-based data for Canada. For example, the Labour Market Activity Survey (LMAS) does provide certain information for each job held by a surveyed worker in the designated time period. The Lin (1994) study cited earlier uses LMAS data. However, this sort of data is not available going back in time. We cannot document trends in nonstandard work since, say, World War II, or even over the last decade, with job-based data for Canada. Moreover, analyzing the individual jobs held by Workers A-D in terms of just their hours and remuneration for each of their jobs would not get at why nonstandard work is of interest either.

### **3. Attributes Often Mentioned for Nonstandard Jobs and Workers**

Not only does the decision to focus on nonstandard jobs versus workers who are employed in nonstandard jobs -- nonstandard workers -- affect the computation of measures of prevalence and trends, but it also affects the attributes of nonstandard work that it makes sense to consider, from any normative perspective. As a context for considering this issue we use the same passage quoted above from the Discussion Paper.

In that passage, nonstandard employment is said to include "part-time, temporary, self-employed or multiple job holders." Three different sorts of employment attributes are touched on: working time, the permanence of the employment relationship, and the number of jobs held. The number of jobs held is a worker, not a job, attribute. The other attributes could be applied to either

jobs or workers, and often are.

With respect to working time, in official statistics the term "part-time hours" usually refers to part-time hours per week for most of the weeks worked, or in some designated reference week. Another dimension of working time often alluded to in statistical analyses is weeks of work in the survey year. No direct mention of weeks of work is made in the Discussion Paper definition of nonstandard work quoted above. But temporary employment is included as being nonstandard. Of course, those who want, or are only able to find, temporary jobs rather than continuing ones are more likely to end up working only part of the weeks in a year. That is, the workers who work part-year rather than full-year weeks are more likely to have temporary than continuing jobs.

Self-employed is the third attribute included in the Discussion Paper list. This, like whether a job is continuing, has to do with the formal contractual nature of the work relationship for a job; or for a worker's main or longest job if workers rather than jobs are being characterized, since then there is a need to be able to classify all workers including those who have multiple jobs.

Other formal and informal aspects of the nature of the work relationship often mentioned in discussions of nonstandard work have to do with the rate of remuneration. Remuneration for employees involves take-home pay, mandated fringe benefits such as UI and Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) coverage, and nonmandated benefits such as supplemental insurance and pension plans. Sometimes it is simply noted that nonstandard workers, such as those in part-time jobs and the self employed, tend to earn less and often have little in terms of either mandated or nonmandated fringe benefits.

Membership in a labour union or representation by some other collective bargaining association, and opportunities for employer provided training and for career advancement are other attributes often mentioned as more common for regular than for nonstandard work. In fact, some discussions of nonstandard work focus on attributes like this in an almost definitional sense, with nonstandard work being taken to mean work which is dead end with no opportunities for advancement, and which offers poor compensation in terms of both wage and non-wage benefits. Some of these discussions also note that nonstandard work is more likely to be partially or wholly in

the underground economy.

Discussions of the attributes of nonstandard work and further related references can be found in Applebaum (1987), Economic Council of Canada (1990, 1991), Green, Krahn and Sung (1992), and Krahn (1991). An effort has been made to confine the reference list for this report to the most up to date and relevant material for Canada for each topic covered in the report. The economics, sociology, women's studies and other discipline-based literature on nonstandard work are truly vast.

Table 2 summarizes the attributes commonly used in defining nonstandard work and in characterizing how it differs from regular employment. The available data sources each provide information on only some of the attributes listed in Table 2.

As already noted, the 1991 Canadian Census provides information for workers on weeks of work in the previous calendar year (1990), and on whether those weeks of work were mostly full-time or part-time. There is information as well on total hours of work in the 1991 Census Reference Week, the week prior to enumeration. In the 1991 Census, part-time work is defined as less than 30 hours per week. (Other Canadian Censuses use other definitions of part-time work such as less than 35 hours per week, as noted in the Data Appendix to this report.) For the previous calendar year, we also have information for the worker on total earnings from wages and salaries, self-employment income, and unemployment benefits received. There is information on whether a worker is either a paid wage and salary earner or an unpaid family worker, or a self-employed person who is incorporated or is unincorporated with or without paid help. Thus there is information on the first and some of the second group of attributes in Table 2: working time and remuneration.

Table 2

**ATTRIBUTES OFTEN USED TO CATEGORIZE REGULAR  
VERSUS NONSTANDARD WORK AND WORKERS**

	Regular	Nonstandard
1. Working Time		
Weeks per year	50 - 52	Substantially less than 50, or variable, or discretionary when work is available
Hours per week	Approximately 30 - 40	Less than 30, or variable, or discretionary when work is available
2. Remuneration		
Regular pay	Anything from minimum wage on up	Anything from minimum wage on up
Mandated benefits	UI, WCB	Often none
Fringe benefits	Benefits often include pension funds, insurance of various sorts, and maternity or parental leave supplements	Uncommon
3. Contractual Nature of Work Relationship	Continuing employee	Temporary employee, or supplied on contract from some other firm (including the worker's own firm in the case of the self employed)
4. Union Job	Often	Rarely
5. Opportunities for Advancement	Often	Usually none
6. Legal Status	Fully declared	Often partially or wholly undeclared and in the underground economy



What is missing in most data sources under the remuneration heading is information on whether the person has a UI-covered job, and information on other fringe benefits. For instance, all that is known in the 1991 Census is whether UI benefits were collected, and the amount for the previous calendar year. If the person did not collect benefits, there is no way of knowing whether the person had UI-covered employment.

For the other attribute categories listed in Table 2, the Canadian Census provides no information for either workers or jobs. There are special surveys that do provide information on fringe benefits, on union status, and on the legal status of jobs. However, none of these surveys provide enough years of information to allow a picture of change over time to be built up.

These data limitations must be borne in mind in considering assertions about trends in the prevalence of nonstandard work. If the information in available data sets is insufficient to analyze patterns in nonstandard work that reflect the stated definitions and concerns, it is useless at best and misleading at worst for statistical results based on the available data to be presented as evidence relevant to the concerns. Yet there are numerous scholarly, popular, and government articles and reports in which this is done.

## **IV. INTERVIEW INSIGHTS**

In considering the relevant attributes of nonstandard work, we have examined how the term is used in a recent federal report and by selected academic researchers. But what about those in the sorts of jobs often classified as nonstandard? What do *they* see as the most important attributes of these jobs? The direct interview study reported on in this section was conducted to try to gain better insight into how those who have held nonstandard jobs view them.

### **1. Introduction to the Direct Interview Study**

Over the early months of 1993, Alison MacDonald of the Edmonton Social Planning Council interviewed 174 people about their jobs and their perceptions and feelings about current employment trends. The focus of the study was on people who are or have been involved in nonstandard employment defined as part-time, temporary or contract work. The respondents had all been employed in at least one such nonstandard position since completing their full-time education. Out of this pool of 174 people who agreed to be interviewed, a number also agreed to participate in focus groups that were set up to discuss the issues in greater detail. The following is primarily based on the responses of the focus group participants.

Almost half of the focus group participants were women with children at home. One third was single men and women, some living on their own and others living with family or friends. Only eleven percent of the sample were married fathers, while seven percent were married women without children. One of the married fathers and all but one of the married women were the secondary earners in their households.

When asked to discuss the impacts of nonstandard employment on their day-to-day lives, several areas of concern stood out.

### **2. Those Who Did versus Did Not Need More Income**

Numerous comments were made about incomes not keeping pace with expenses. Whether a person was part of a family unit, a single person on his or her own, or one of a group sharing costs,

most of the focus group members did not consider themselves to be well off.

An interesting note here is that among those few who did not feel a need for additional income, most said they would prefer to work fewer hours and take a cut in pay. However, the opportunity to do so was not available.

Thus, the focus group participants could be divided into two distinct groups by whether or not they felt a need for more income, with those who did not being very much in the minority. We cannot say to what extent the proportions of these two groups in this study reflect the selection mechanisms, self selection on the part of those contacted, or simply the economic conditions prevailing in Edmonton, Alberta in early 1993. (The selection procedures and sample characteristics are discussed more fully in MacDonald 1994a, b, c, d.) This is a limitation of the resources available for conducting this portion of the study and associated methodological limitations. Here, however, we are using the focus group comments simply to sketch out the range of perceptions and concerns; not to test hypotheses or draw inferences about the prevalence or trends for particular perspectives.

### **3. The Importance of Fringe Benefits**

In households where there was more than one income, there was usually one person working full-time, full-year. It was considered important by these participants for the full-time, full-year earner to have a decent benefit package with family coverage. It was noted that this rarely came with the nonstandard positions. A number of people commented on their fears that no position is really secure these days and their worries that the primary breadwinners in their families might lose their jobs and the nonwage benefits tied to these jobs.

### **4. Balancing Work and Children**

A number of the participants reported conflicting feelings over whether their children benefit more from having a second income in the household or a parent at home with them full time. There was a sense among the respondents that the violence and youth crime we are seeing these days is partly a result of the difficult choices families are being forced to make. The difficulties of parents

all working are compounded by the high cost of quality day care and the lack of suitable day care options for people working nonstandard hours. Participants felt that too often young children are left to fend for themselves, or with an older sibling who is not capable of providing the care needed.

One woman's solution was to work part time at her children's school while they were attending their school classes. She did not earn much of an income, but this arrangement allowed her to pay for some things that the family needed and could not afford on just her husband's income. In order to get her children into recreational programs without adding to the family expenses, she was doing volunteer work for the community league.

## **5. Job-Related Insecurities**

A number of participants commented on the attitudes of employers who know that, in the present job market, there are hundreds of applicants looking for work. Competition in the workplace was described as fierce. Those who currently had work reported that they are constantly having to do more and further improve their qualifications by means such as attending night school and participating in projects outside of regular working hours. Many seemed to share the feelings of one worker who said, *"If I'm not perfect at what I do, there are seven people behind me waiting for the job."*

Another hardship that many of the participants mentioned, and attributed to the present labour market conditions, is a reduction in support from their employers for continuing education and training. Many of the workers who participated in the focus groups reported that they are expected to keep up with the latest developments in their fields, and that they get little help from their employers in doing this. One man's comment was, *"You're left in the dust if you don't put a lot of energy into developing yourself. Only the young ones without families can do it realistically."*

Respondents in health care and related fields seemed particularly discouraged, probably as a result of recent and impending employment cutbacks in those areas in the province of Alberta. Many of these workers had been laid off, while others had been forced into part-time positions. Workers said they are being moved between units and that patient care is suffering, which they find

demoralizing. One nurse described her situation as follows: *"My position has been reduced to .8. I could well be bumped when the next round of layoffs comes. I had to take a position I didn't want. I was coerced by my supervisor when I was already under stress. I didn't feel that I had any choice. It was a complete loss of control. You have to do what they tell you if you want to keep your job."*

Even among those respondents who had been with one employer for many years, there was a feeling that jobs are no longer secure. It was reported that many full-time jobs have been transformed into contract positions, and some people have been forced to reapply for their old positions with reduced remuneration. Some workers stated they are now prepared to remain in jobs that a few years ago they would have viewed as only stepping stones to better jobs.

A number of people cited examples from their places of employment of hours being reduced or of jobs are being reclassified. One man employed by the federal government stated that more employees are moving down in the organizational structure than up, while a woman who does much of the hiring for her organization said, *"The policy of my department is to hire people for three months, then let them go."* A hospital employer referred to this trend as the creation of "McJobs".

In many cases, benefits are directly connected to the length of employment or the number of hours worked, so employees lose both the pay they need to live on and their security for the future. In one organization, it was reported that full-time workers are granted seniority based on their years of service, while for part-time workers seniority is credited on the basis of hours worked. The part-time workers in this organization are at a disadvantage when layoffs occur, even if they have been with the organization for many years.

People stated that the job tasks they are performing are no less demanding than before, and that these tasks are no more likely than before to cease to be needed. A number of focus group participants commented on the frustration and anger they feel because their employers hold all the power. An example was given of one major corporation that asked all employees to put in extra effort, got the results wanted in terms of an increased profit, and responded by giving bonuses to management while laying off hundreds of the employees who had helped make the increased profits possible. There was a strong sense of betrayal. Many people used the term "loyalty" in the

discussions: *"The trust is gone. Employees should have the right to some basic respect and get the same loyalty from employers that is demanded of workers."*

One result of these trends is a higher level of stress among employees. A few focus group members mentioned increased sick time within their organizations that they attributed to the increased job demands and insecurity in the workplace. People who previously would have quit an unsatisfactory job are not in a position to do that now. It was suggested that both the quality of the work and the personal health of employees is suffering.

Another result that was noted by participants is an increase in anger directed at other people, including immigrants, ethnic minorities, single parents, welfare recipients, and women in general. Even among those in the focus groups, comments were made about *"immigrants taking our jobs," "women who should be home with their children," "women who shouldn't have children they can't afford to support,"* and the like. The amount of misinformation among some people was notable as well. One woman commented on the "fact" that immigrants are all given a place to live and money to start a business when they come to Canada.

## **6. Doubts About What Might Help**

There was considerable discussion in each of the focus groups about what people must do to survive in today's economy. In describing their current situations, participants mentioned a number of ways in which they are changing their approaches to adapt to perceived economic realities. Many felt very strongly that the economy is likely to get worse before it gets better, that government is unable or unwilling to deal with employment issues, and that it is up to each individual to strive to survive.

A number of people said their workloads have been increased beyond what can be accomplished in eight-hour days. These participants believe that if they aren't capable of completing all the tasks required, someone else will be brought in who can. Therefore, they are taking work home or working longer hours without additional pay. While most of the participants who reported doing things like this expressed some resentment -- there were many comments such as *"I don't really*

*get a weekend anymore" -- they also expect that this situation will continue.*

People who work in fields that depend largely on contract work stated that it is very important to develop wide networks of contacts. One woman who is currently unemployed said she is taking on a number of volunteer activities so that people will get to know who she is. Another spoke of remaining in a contract position at half the salary she used to receive so that she would be known to those responsible for hiring if and when another regular position opens up.

A number of people commented on the need to have a variety of marketable skills in order to succeed at contract work. Each new contract adds to the value of the employee, but the level of demand for contract work and the lack of openings for regular jobs still leave people feeling vulnerable. One participant admitted, *"At one time I thought I was in trouble if I went without a contract for two weeks. More recently there have been times when I have had one week's work in a two month period."*

People with less marketable skills have resorted to other ways of earning money besides working as employees. Examples included knocking on doors to offer such services as lawn mowing, shopping, and snow shovelling. One woman put up an advertisement on a drugstore notice board. She told the focus group, *"I got three hours at \$8 an hour so I was able to buy a few more groceries."* Her search for work continues.

## **7. Uncertainty as a Barrier to Planning for the Future**

Most of the focus group participants commented on the difficulties nonstandard employees face in trying to plan for the future. Few felt they could make any long-term commitments. Among the younger group members, questions were raised about whether they would ever be able to afford to have children or to go back to school. Some considered even taking out a student loan to be quite risky, since they have little confidence about finding jobs that will enable them to pay the loans back.

Some participants expressed concerns about the feelings their children were picking up because of the tight financial times. Several pointed out that when parents fear getting laid off or worry about how they will pay the bills, their children sense this and often react.

A major worry for many parents is what kind of future their children will face. As one stated, *"We don't know what's ahead for our children. It used to be assumed that kids would grow up and leave home in their late teens, but with the current economy they may have nowhere to go."* At the same time, some of these participants noted that the family income may not be enough to support the children as they get older.

## **8. Emotional Problems**

Several participants who felt they had little opportunity to find full-time, continuing positions spoke of the impacts of their nonstandard employment statuses on their emotional states. These participants mostly fell into two categories. The first category consists of people from two-earner households in which the other earner was the primary breadwinner. These participants commented on their feelings of powerlessness and inadequacy. Some stated that the person who makes the money is the one who gets to make the decisions. For others, what bothered them were expectations placed upon them by themselves or their spouses that they should be looking for better jobs or doing more with their lives.

The second category of participants who commented on self-esteem issues are people whose feelings of personal value seem to be directly linked to their employment statuses. These individuals spoke of difficulties on the job, where they felt they had few rights and little opportunity to address problems. They also spoke of uncomfortable feelings between jobs, when they were trying to find new positions. As one man who had worked in several contract positions put it: *"The impact is very high. I have been unemployed for more than seven months with low-income and low self-esteem. I'm trying to cope."*



## V. NONSTANDARD WORK AS A SOURCE OF ECONOMIC INSECURITY

In the remainder of this report we focus primarily on ways in which it appears that the growth of nonstandard work is contributing to economic insecurity for individuals and families, and public policy measures that might help to lessen this insecurity. (See Nakamura, Cragg and Sayers, 1994b.)

In Section VI, we examine statistical evidence of the expansion of particular types of nonstandard work. Evidence that increasing numbers of workers are taking nonstandard jobs because they cannot find full-time, continuing ones is presented. We show that the average earnings of part-time or part-year male workers have fallen relative to full-time, full-year working men for most occupations. This statistical evidence, together with the conceptual material and evidence covered in Sections II-IV, is the motivation for the policy issues raised in Sections VII and VIII.

Before proceeding, however, it seems important to note that the presentation in the remainder of this paper is not rooted in evidence or a belief that nonstandard jobs are fundamentally bad jobs. Surely the Discussion Paper, as well as feminist and other proponents of nonstandard work opportunities, are right in arguing that a greater variety of types of employment can expand individual freedom. However, it should be borne in mind that the expansion of types of employment can also be accompanied by a *loss* of individual freedom if, along with this expansion, the routes of access into alternative forms of employment close down for many labour force participants. For example, if younger workers and less educated labour force participants increasingly are barred from jobs that are full-time and continuing, and from job ladders leading to those sorts of "standard" jobs, as part of the expansion of nonstandard employment, then this expansion will represent a loss of individual freedom for those closed out of regular employment opportunities.

Some policy measures which might help to redress problems of diminishing access to standard jobs would also help -- or, at least, would not harm the interests of -- those preferring nonstandard jobs. This is not the case, however, for measures aimed at removing inducements for employers to transform standard into nonstandard jobs, since measures of this sort, if successful, would serve to stem the growth of nonstandard employment opportunities. There is a conflict of interests here that must be recognized.

## VI. NONSTANDARD EMPLOYMENT: TRENDS, AND ASSOCIATED CHANGES IN OTHER LABOUR MARKET OUTCOMES

### 1. The Definitions Used in Our Tables

Many view part-time employment as the most important form of nonstandard work. For example, a report by the Economic Council of Canada asserts:

"Nonstandard" work forms -- those which differ from the traditional model of a full-time, full-year job -- have increased their share of total employment in recent years. The most important of these is *part-time employment*, conventionally defined as including jobs with less than 30 working hours per week. Part-time work rose from 4 per cent of total employment in Canada in 1953 to 15 per cent by the mid-1980s....

(Economic Council of Canada 1992, p. 11)

Note the lack of clarification in the above quote as to whether the growth figures for part-time employment are for part-time jobs; workers who have part-time jobs as their main jobs, or simply have at least one part-time job; or workers employed part-time in most weeks of work counting their work hours from all jobs held in each week. The latter of these measures is what applies for the tables in this report.

In particular, in our Tables 3 and 8-10 that are based on Canadian Census data, *full-year work* is 49-52 weeks of work at all jobs, *part-year work* is 1-48 weeks of work at all jobs, and full-time versus part-time hours of work per week are also defined for all jobs held in each week. Contrary to the impression conveyed in the above Economic Council of Canada quote, although part-time work is currently defined by Statistics Canada as less than 30 hours per week, going back in time other definitions were used. These are noted in the Data Appendix at the end of this report for the 1971, 1981, and 1986 Canadian Censuses.

Tables 4, 5 and 7 are based on Canadian Labour Force Survey data for various years. In tables, part-time work is less than 30 hours of work in a week, counting all jobs. Table 6 is based on U.S. Labour Force Survey data, and part-time work is defined as it is for the Canadian Labour Force Survey.

## 2. Trends in Part-Time Employment

Table 3 shows trends from 1970 through 1990 for male workers, for female workers, and for all workers in the proportions working part-time, part-year; part-time, full year; full-time part-year; and full-time, full-year. The levels and trends in part-time work are different for those working part-year versus full-year. For both male and female workers, larger proportions are part-time and part-year compared with part-time and full-year workers for all four census years for which figures are shown in Table 3. However, the percentage figures have been falling somewhat over time for those who are part-time and part-year, and increasing for those who are part-time and full-year. This is important, since it indicates that the growth of part-time work, at least through 1991, was not accompanied by increasing proportions of part-time workers who either could not or did not find employment year round.

A second point to note in Table 3 is that the increases in the percentages of male workers and of female workers employed part time and full year are quite modest.

However, the Table 3 figures for part-time versus full-time total hours of work per week mask upward movements in the number of part-time jobs and the number of workers holding at least one part-time job. There has been an increase over time in the percentage of workers holding two or more jobs. Based on job-specific information in the Labour Force Survey, Cohen finds:

In 1977, moonlighters were a rare breed, just 1 out of every 40 workers. In the ensuing years, the rate or incidence of multiple jobholding more than doubled, so that by 1993, fully 1 in 20 workers had a second job.

(Cohen, 1994, p. 31)

Also using Labour Force Survey data, Pold finds that the percentage of part-time jobs is higher than the percentage of workers employed in total for under 30 hours per week:

In 1993, 17% of workers were part-timers, but 23% of jobs were part time.

(Pold, 1994, p. 14)

Table 3

**PROPORTIONS OF WORKERS BY PART-TIME/FULL-TIME  
AND PART-YEAR/FULL-YEAR WORK STATUS<sup>a</sup>**

Work Status	1970	1980	1985	1990	Change			
					1970 to 1980	1980 to 1985	1985 to 1990	1970 to 1990
Men								
Part-time and part-year	9.2	8.2	9.5	8.8	-1.0	+1.3	-.7	-.4
Part-time and full-year	1.9	2.7	3.4	3.3	+.8	+.7	-.1	+1.4
Full-time and part-year	29.3	31.5	29.5	29.2	+2.2	-2.0	-.3	-.1
Full-time and full-year	59.4	57.4	57.6	58.8	-2.0	+.2	+1.2	-.6
Women								
Part-time and part-year	22.4	21.6	21.2	18.7	-.8	-.4	-2.5	-3.7
Part-time and full-year	6.1	9.2	11.3	10.9	+3.1	+2.1	-.4	+4.8
Full-time and part-year	31.5	29.4	26.0	25.0	-2.1	-3.4	-1.0	-6.5
Full-time and full-year	39.9	39.7	41.3	45.5	-.2	+1.6	+4.2	+5.6
Men and Women								
Part-time and part-year	13.9	13.8	14.6	13.3	-.1	+.8	-1.3	-.6
Part-time and full-year	3.4	5.4	6.8	6.7	+2.0	+1.4	-.1	+3.3
Full-time and part-year	30.1	30.7	28.1	27.3	+.6	-2.6	-.8	-2.8
Full-time and full-year	52.4	50.1	50.5	52.7	-2.3	+.4	+2.2	+.3

Source: Computed using the information on employment in the previous year from the 1971, 1981, 1986 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

<sup>a</sup> The figures are for total employment from all jobs held by each worker. See, the Data Appendix for further details on the definitions of part-time and part-year work.

When the numbers of jobs are taken as the measures of part-time and of full-time employment, Pold finds that the growth of part-time employment is spectacularly greater than for full-time employment. Pold reports:

Since 1975, the number of part-time jobs has increased every year (at an average annual rate of 4.5%), reaching 2.9 million in 1993, for a total growth of more than 120%.... The number of full-time jobs, while also generally increasing over the two decades (1.2% annually) fell sharply during each of the last two recessions. By 1993, the number of full-time jobs was only 23% higher than in 1975. As a result of the different growth rates, part-time jobs accounted for 23% of all jobs in 1993, compared with only 14% in 1975.

(Pold, 1994, p. 15)

### **3. Increases in Involuntary Part-Time Employment**

By itself, the growth in the proportion of workers employed part-time and in the proportion of jobs that are part-time need not indicate any increase in economic insecurity. The picture changes, however, once it is recognized that growing proportions of part-time workers say they would have preferred full-time work if they could have found that. Logan explains:

Part-time workers, that is, people who usually work less than 30 hours a week at all jobs, are customarily divided into two groups: "involuntary" and "voluntary." Those who work part time because they cannot find full-time employment are involuntary part-time workers. The rest, who have various motivations for their part-time schedules, are voluntary part-timers....

While voluntary part-timers still account for the majority of part-time workers, their share has fallen relative to involuntary part-timers. In 1993, they made up 65% of all part-time workers, a considerable drop from 89% in 1975.

(Logan, 1994 pp. 18-19)

Logan's observations on the voluntary nature of part-time employment are for workers who are employed part-time taking account of *all* their jobs. These are the workers who are asked why they are working part-time in the Labour Force Survey. Those holding two or more part-time jobs whose hours of work per week total more than 30 are not asked whether their choice of part-time jobs was voluntary or because they could not find full-time positions. Thus the true involuntary component of part-time job holding could be considerably larger than calculations based on Labour Force Survey data show.

The figures in the left half of Table 4 are for women 15-24 years of age, while the right of the Table 4 gives figures for men 15-24 years old. Table 5 is set up in the same way, except that it gives figures for women 25 and over and for men 25 and over. Each half of Table 4 and of Table 5 has a column of employment rate figures for 1975 through 1993. The second column gives figures for the percentage of workers in each designated sex-age group with part-time hours (for all jobs held). The third and fourth columns give the percentage breakdown of part-time workers between the voluntary and involuntary categories.

Notice that there are large average differences in the percentage figures by sex and the age group of the respondents. For instance, only 1.7-4.7 percent of men 25 and over worked part-time over the period of 1975-1993 compared to 19.4-23.6 percent for women 25 and over, 17.1-39.2 percent for men 15-24, and 38.2-77.4 percent for women 15-24. Thus, figures for all workers, or even for all male workers and for all female workers separately, without taking account of age, are potentially misleading.

Table 4

**PART-TIME WORK AMONG FEMALE AND MALE WORKERS, 15-24,  
CANADA, 1975-1993**

Year	Percent of Women Working	Percent of Employed Women Working Part Time	Percent of Female <u>Part-Time Workers</u>		Percent of Men Working	Percent of Employed Men Working Part Time	Percent of Male <u>Part-Time Workers</u>	
			Voluntary	Involuntary			Voluntary	Involuntary
1975	60.9	38.2	86.2	13.8	60.2	17.1	90.6	9.4
1976	60.8	40.8	85.1	14.9	58.9	17.5	88.6	11.4
1977	60.8	41.5	81.3	18.7	58.7	18.2	86.2	13.8
1978	62.2	42.7	78.8	21.2	59.3	18.2	83.6	16.4
1979	63.9	45.1	78.0	22.0	61.9	18.6	84.4	15.6
1980	65.2	45.8	77.5	22.5	62.0	19.4	82.2	17.8
1981	65.6	46.9	76.6	23.4	62.1	21.0	81.9	18.1
1982	62.6	50.5	70.1	29.9	54.7	24.3	75.2	24.8
1983	62.8	52.4	67.2	32.8	53.8	26.3	73.6	26.4
1984	64.0	53.3	66.9	33.1	56.3	26.8	72.2	27.8
1985	65.5	55.5	69.8	30.2	57.2	27.3	73.4	26.6
1986	66.9	56.8	71.8	28.2	59.4	28.2	76.1	23.9
1987	67.9	58.9	74.9	25.1	61.1	27.7	79.0	21.0
1988	68.6	61.0	77.8	22.2	62.9	29.1	82.3	17.7
1989	70.2	62.9	80.7	19.3	64.0	29.1	84.5	15.5
1990	68.5	65.2	81.8	18.2	61.2	31.3	84.4	15.6
1991	66.2	71.0	77.7	22.3	56.0	35.2	79.7	20.3
1992	64.2	73.0	73.9	26.1	53.4	37.4	73.9	26.1
1993	62.8	77.4	71.8	28.2	52.3	39.2	73.8	26.2

Source: The percentages were computed from unadjusted monthly average figures in thousands reported in the *Historical Labour Force Statistics*, 1993, Statistics Canada, pp. 69, 70, 78, 86, 93, 99, 374 and 385.

Table 5

**PART-TIME WORK AMONG FEMALE AND MALE WORKERS, 25 AND OVER,  
CANADA, 1975-1993**

Year	Percent of Women Working	Percent of Employed Women Working Part Time	Percent of Female Part-Time Workers		Percent of Men Working	Percent of Employed Men Working Part Time	Percent of Male Part-Time Workers	
			Voluntary	Involuntary			Voluntary	Involuntary
1975	37.4	19.4	90.6	9.4	78.4	1.7	83.6	16.4
1976	38.4	19.8	90.2	9.8	77.7	1.7	83.6	16.4
1977	39.0	21.0	88.4	11.6	76.9	1.9	81.8	18.2
1978	40.7	21.3	86.9	13.1	76.9	2.0	78.1	21.9
1979	41.9	21.7	85.7	14.3	77.3	2.0	78.2	21.8
1980	43.4	22.3	85.7	14.3	76.9	2.1	77.4	22.6
1981	44.9	22.5	85.7	14.3	76.9	2.2	74.8	25.2
1982	44.2	22.8	79.5	20.5	73.0	2.6	65.7	34.3
1983	44.9	23.6	74.9	25.1	71.8	3.2	61.0	39.0
1984	45.9	22.7	73.4	26.6	71.5	3.1	55.1	44.9
1985	47.0	23.0	73.5	26.5	72.0	3.0	52.5	47.5
1986	48.2	22.4	73.2	26.8	72.3	3.2	55.0	45.0
1987	49.4	21.7	73.3	26.7	72.5	3.1	58.9	41.1
1988	51.0	22.0	76.0	24.0	73.0	2.9	61.5	38.5
1989	51.7	21.0	76.3	23.7	72.8	3.0	64.4	35.6
1990	52.6	20.7	76.1	23.9	71.8	3.4	63.1	36.9
1991	51.8	21.4	71.1	28.9	69.2	3.9	54.3	45.7
1992	51.2	21.7	66.7	33.3	67.6	4.2	49.0	51.0
1993	51.3	21.9	62.9	37.1	67.5	4.7	45.2	54.8

Source: The percentages were computed from unadjusted monthly average figures in thousands reported in the *Historical Labour Force Statistics*, 1993, Statistics Canada, pp. 69, 71, 81, 87, 94, 99, 377 and 386.



The increases in the proportions of involuntary part-time work were particularly high around 1984 and 1985 and subsequently dropped back some. Nevertheless, the involuntary percentages are considerably higher by 1993 than for 1975, for all four of our sex-age groupings. By 1993, the percentages of part-timers who claimed they wanted but could not find full-time work were 28.2 percent for women 15-24, 26.2 percent for men 15-24, 37.1 percent for women 25 and over, and 54.8 for men 25 and over compared with 13.8, 9.4, 9.4 and 16.4 percent, respectively, for 1975. The increases for the men -- from 9.4 to 26.2 percent for those 15-24 and from 16.4 to 54.8 for men 25 and over -- are particularly steep. When people are working part-time, and saying this is because they wanted but could not find full-time work, surely this is evidence of a loss rather than an increase in individual freedom.

Table 6 documents the U.S. trends in part-time work, and in the proportions of part-timers who are classified as voluntary versus involuntary. These figures are for persons 20 and over, and hence are not directly comparable to the figures for Canada for those 15-24 and for those 25 and over that we are able to compute. Nevertheless, the evidence of growth in the proportions of part-timers who would have preferred full-time work is unmistakable in Table 6 as well. For U.S. female part-timers 20 years of age and over, those classified as involuntary rose from 13.9 percent in 1968 to 23.6 percent in 1987. Likewise, for U.S. male part-timers 20 years of age and over, the percentage classified as involuntary rose from 31.2 in 1968 to 43.4 in 1987.

Using the Canadian Labour Force Survey data, Noreau finds that the numbers of part-timers who are involuntary is sensitive to the state of the economy. Noreau reports:

When economic growth is weak, or in times of recession, the number of full-time jobs generally decreases, while involuntary part-time employment increases....

For example, during the 1981-82 recession, the number of involuntary part-time workers grew by 111,000, while full-time employment declined.... And between 1982 and 1985, despite the economic recovery and a general improvement in the employment situation, an additional 131,000 people became involuntary part-timers. It was not until 1986 that the number of involuntary part-timers began to decline.

Table 6

**PART-TIME WORK AMONG FEMALE AND MALE WORKERS,  
20 AND OVER UNITED STATES, 1968-1987<sup>a</sup>**

Year	Percent of Employed Population Working Part Time	Percent of Employed Women Working Part Time	Percent of Female Part-Time Workers		Percent of Employed Men Working Part Time	Percent of Male Part-Time Workers	
			Voluntary	Involuntary		Voluntary	Involuntary
1968	11.9	23.4	86.1	13.9	5.3	68.8	31.2
1969	12.3	23.5	86.4	13.6	5.6	69.0	31.0
1970	13.2	24.6	84.8	15.2	6.3	64.7	35.3
1971	13.5	25.0	83.4	16.6	6.5	63.5	36.5
1972	13.3	24.7	84.1	15.9	6.4	66.8	33.2
1973	13.2	24.6	85.0	15.0	6.2	68.3	31.7
1974	13.8	25.0	83.1	16.9	6.7	63.9	36.1
1975	14.9	25.9	79.9	20.1	7.8	56.8	43.2
1976	14.5	25.3	81.4	18.6	7.3	60.0	40.0
1977	14.5	25.1	81.1	18.9	7.3	62.8	37.2
1978	14.2	24.7	81.6	18.4	6.9	65.0	35.0
1979	14.2	24.5	81.4	18.6	6.9	64.5	35.5
1980	15.1	24.8	79.5	20.5	8.0	58.7	41.3
1981	15.5	25.3	77.7	22.3	8.1	56.2	43.8
1982	17.1	26.8	73.2	26.8	9.7	48.9	51.1
1983	17.0	26.4	72.1	27.9	9.6	50.1	49.9
1984	16.0	25.2	73.7	26.3	8.8	52.9	47.1
1985	15.8	25.0	74.6	25.4	8.6	54.8	45.2
1986	15.8	24.6	75.2	24.8	8.7	55.1	44.9
1987	15.4	24.1	76.4	23.6	8.5	56.6	43.4

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Labor Force Statistics Derived from the Current Population Survey, 1948-1987* (August 1988), Table B-19.

<sup>a</sup> Persons at work in nonagricultural industries.

However, the decline was short-lived. In 1990, with the beginning of the second recession, the number of involuntary part-time workers started to rise: a small increase of 13,000. This was followed by substantial jumps of 129,000 in 1991 and 107,000 in 1992, again accompanied by a decline in the number employed full time. In 1993, the growth of involuntary part-time employment eased to 92,000.

(Noreau, 1994, p. 26)

Noreau also finds that the proportions of male part-timers stating that they would have preferred full-time work are more sensitive to economic conditions than the proportions of female part-timers:

... the men's rate is more sensitive than the women's to the business cycle, rising sharply in recessions and declining substantially as the economy recovers. In 1984 and 1985, the involuntary part-time rate for men was 33%, compared with 29% for women; the continuing expansion brought both rates down to 22% in 1989. But by 1993, the percentage of male part-timers who were involuntary was 38%, whereas the figure for women was 34%.

(Noreau, 1994, p. 27)

#### **4. Part-Time Work and Moonlighting**

The correspondences between part-time work and multiple job holding -- often called moonlighting -- are also indicative of losses rather than gains in individual freedom for many of those in part-time jobs. Using the information that is available on main and second jobs in the Canadian Labour Force Survey, Cohen finds that moonlighting is much more common for those whose main job is part time:

In 1993, the incidence of moonlighting was 8.4% among part-timers, but only 4.3% among full-timers. In fact, nearly one-third of moonlighters in 1993 (200,000) had a part-time main job, and fully one-half of these moonlights remained part-time workers despite holding more than one job....

(Cohen, 1994, p. 34)

Cohen finds that many of those whose main job is part-time and who have a second job are still working only part-time hours per week (that is, under 30 hours) when their hours of work for both jobs are counted. Is this an expression of more individual choice in working hours, or does this reflect difficulties for many in finding enough employment? How does this fit with the existence of multiple job holders who work extra long hours? Webber notes:

On the whole, multiple jobholders tend to work long hours. In 1988, nearly half of them put in 50 or more hours a week. However, about 15% worked less than 30 hours a week even when all jobs were considered....

(Webber, 1989, p. 27)

Labour market experts Sunter and Morissette of Statistics Canada acknowledge that we do not yet have well established explanations of the reasons for the simultaneous growth of the proportions working short and long hours per week:

The overall stability of the standard work week masks changes in the distribution of hours, especially since the 1981-82 recession.... As yet, explanations for the simultaneous growth in both short and long work weeks are little more than anecdotal.

(Sunter and Morissette, 1994, p. 12)

Note, however, that the observed patterns seem consistent with the hypothesis that employers are seeking to save on labour costs by using labour that is not UI covered: jobs of under 15 hours per week, so that even two add up to less than 30 hours, and longer hours for workers whose earnings were already over the UI weekly earnings cap so that additional hours for them are not UI covered.

## **5. Other Evidence on Part-Time Employment**

Evidence on job search behaviour further adds to the picture of losses rather than gains in individual freedom for many of those now working part time. Based on Canadian Labour Force Survey data, Cohen finds:

... many workers are less than fully satisfied with part-time jobs. In 1993, workers (both men and women) with a part-time main job were much more likely to have recently looked for work than workers with a full-time main job. And among workers with a part-time main job, moonlighters, especially women, were more likely than single jobholders to have looked for work.

(Cohen, 1994, p. 34)

Also, Logan finds that very few of the voluntary part-timers are multiple job holders. More specifically, using the jobs information in the Labour Force Survey data, Logan (1994, p. 19) finds that "in 1993, less than 5% of voluntary part-time workers had more than one job."

Table 7 shows summary labour market information for the calendar year of 1993 for Canada as a whole and for the 10 provinces. The proportions of part-timers wanting full-time work -- the involuntary part-timers -- are particularly high for Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia

and New Brunswick: four provinces with widely acknowledged shortfalls in employment.

Findings that the proportions of involuntary part-timers increase greatly in economic downturns, and are higher for provinces with poor economic conditions; that involuntary part-timers are particularly likely to be multiple job holders while voluntary part-timers are not; and that part-timers are more likely than those with full-time main jobs to have recently looked for work seem clearly to point toward the conclusion that the secular growth in the involuntary component of part-time employment is a reflection of economic hard times and growing economic insecurity for many workers. This conclusion is in accord with the direct interview observations summarized in Section IV, for those participants who felt they needed more income.

## **6. Part-Time versus Full-Time Earnings**

Information on annual earnings is available in the Canadian Censuses, but not the Labour Force Survey. In particular, average earnings by detailed occupation are published for full-time, full-year and for all other workers for the calendar years of 1980 and 1985 (from the 1981 and 1986 Censuses, respectively) in 1985 dollars, and for 1985 and 1990 (from the 1991 Census) in 1990 dollars. Using the 1985 and 1990 earning information in 1990 dollars and converting the 1985 dollar figures for 1980 earnings to 1990 dollars using a multiplicative cost-of-living adjustment of 1.2477, and then aggregating into broader occupational groups, yields the earnings information presented in Table 8 for full-time, full-year workers and in Table 9 for those who worked part-time hours per week or part-year weeks.

Table 7

**EMPLOYMENT FACTS FOR 1993**

	Participation Rate	Unemployment Rate		Percent of Employed Population Working Part-Time	Percentage of Part-Timers Wanting Full-Time Work
		Full-Time Labour Force	Part-Time Labour Force		
Canada	65.2	13.9	14.4	17.3	35.5
Newfoundland	52.8	24.0	21.5	14.2	63.8
Prince Edward Island	65.3	21.6	13.0	17.2	43.5
Nova Scotia	59.8	18.3	18.0	17.8	47.7
New Brunswick	59.0	16.1	15.7	16.0	50.4
Quebec	62.2	15.8	16.8	15.7	41.9
Ontario	66.9	13.1	14.0	18.1	32.0
Manitoba	66.6	12.6	12.3	19.4	34.3
Saskatchewan	66.6	11.3	10.9	18.4	38.2
Alberta	71.5	11.7	14.5	17.1	31.7
British Columbia	65.7	12.0	12.5	17.8	30.0

Source: Taken from the data tables at the back of *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, Autumn, 1994, Statistics Canada.

In Tables 8 and 9, the occupational groups are ordered according to the proportions of full-time, full-year male employment in 1970. Thus, for the occupations listed in Tables 8 and 9, in 1970 the largest proportion of full-time, full-year male workers were in the Sales occupation and the smallest proportion were in the Fishing occupation. (See Cullen, Murphy and Nakamura for further details.) This means that the occupations toward the top of the list were the traditional mainstay of full-time continuing male employment.

What we see from Tables 8 and 9 is that for the eight most important occupations in terms of full-time, full-year male employment in 1970, average earnings for men in constant 1990 dollars, declined so severely from 1980 to 1985 that they were still lower in 1990 than in 1980 despite general improvements in earnings from 1985 to 1990. This too is evidence of worsening labour market conditions over the 1980s.

Table 10 shows the ratios of the average earnings figures for those who worked part time or part year (Table 9) to the average earnings for the full-time, full-year workers (Table 8). What we see from Table 10 is that from 1980 to 1985, the average earnings of men working part time or part year fell relative to the earnings for full-time, full-year male workers for all of our occupational groups except Teaching. These ratios rise again from 1985 to 1990 for most occupations, but not by enough in most cases to fully offset the decline from 1980 to 1985.

Thus, over the 1980s for men at least, part-time or part-year work became less attractive relative to full-time, full-year work in terms of earnings. However, the proportions of men working part time continued to rise. This is consistent with an underlying reality of increasing numbers of workers struggling to cope with worsening labour market conditions rather than with growing individual freedom of choice in employment opportunities.

Table 8

**AVERAGE EARNINGS IN 1990 DOLLARS FOR MEN AND WOMEN EMPLOYED  
FULL TIME AND FULL YEAR, 1980, 1985 AND 1990**

	Men		Changes for Men		Women		Changes for Women	
	1980	1985	1980	1985	1980	1985	1980	1985
1. Sales	37,019	35,758	-	+	20,963	21,394	+	+
2. Service	30,545	30,008	-	+	17,254	16,617	-	+
3. Fabricating	32,772	32,335	-	+	18,551	18,704	+	+
4. Clerical	31,131	30,633	-	+	22,345	22,622	+	+
5. Managerial	51,962	51,078	-	+	31,335	31,353	+	+
6. Farming	23,353	19,661	-	+	13,174	12,075	-	-
7. Construction	36,529	34,751	-	+	27,301	28,175	+	+
8. Transport	35,139	34,337	-	+	23,913	22,825	-	+
9. Processing	33,557	33,757	+	-	20,979	21,300	+	-
10. Natural Sciences	46,243	45,776	-	-	32,389	33,368	+	+
11. Machining	34,095	33,538	-	-	21,096	21,590	+	+
12. Teaching	47,900	47,695	-	+	36,858	37,275	+	+
13. Materials Handling	31,981	31,850	-	-	20,025	20,422	+	+
14. Other Crafts	37,154	37,770	+	+	21,965	22,288	+	+
15. Other Occupations	28,958	29,709	+	+	19,816	21,055	+	+
16. Medicine	60,569	63,909	+	+	29,508	30,697	+	+
17. Mining	42,601	43,895	+	+	33,189	32,763	-	+
18. Artistic	35,216	34,955	-	+	27,081	26,509	-	+
19. Social Sciences	54,449	55,400	+	+	31,185	31,634	+	+
20. Forestry	37,920	35,203	-	+	26,768	19,734	-	+
21. Religion	22,698	23,580	-	+	21,353	20,786	-	-
22. Fishing	27,839	29,497	+	+	13,866	17,253	+	+
All Occupations	38,189	37,971	-	+	24,382	24,890	+	+
		38,647			26,033			

Source: Computed using information on employment in the previous calendar year from the 1981, 1986 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.



Table 9

**AVERAGE EARNINGS IN 1990 DOLLARS FOR MEN AND WOMEN  
EMPLOYED PART TIME AND/OR PART YEAR, 1980, 1985 AND 1990**

	Men			Changes for Men			Women			Changes for Women		
	1980	1985	1990	1980	1985	1990	1980	1985	1990	1980	1985	1990
				to	to	to				to	to	to
1. Sales	16,490	13,542	13,813	-	+	-	7,757	7,449	8,414	-	+	+
2. Service	11,485	9,932	10,232	-	+	-	6,543	6,379	7,119	-	+	+
3. Fabricating	19,682	17,242	19,038	-	+	-	10,331	9,632	10,699	-	+	+
4. Clerical	13,263	11,789	11,993	-	+	-	10,201	9,984	10,868	-	+	+
5. Managerial	35,855	29,901	31,576	-	+	-	18,123	16,770	18,342	-	+	+
6. Farming	12,575	9,735	9,949	-	+	-	7,031	6,342	7,414	-	+	+
7. Construction	21,053	17,951	19,894	-	+	-	11,749	10,086	11,685	-	+	-
8. Transport	22,422	19,402	19,964	-	+	-	10,302	10,003	10,718	-	+	+
9. Processing	17,833	16,792	17,607	-	+	-	8,661	8,059	8,853	-	+	+
10. Natural Sciences	22,233	20,013	22,487	-	+	+	13,547	14,061	16,386	+	+	+
11. Machining	22,424	20,064	22,543	-	+	+	11,533	11,417	12,662	-	+	+
12. Teaching	22,896	24,667	23,567	+	-	+	13,229	13,921	15,668	+	+	+
13. Materials Handling	15,641	13,953	14,040	-	+	-	9,431	8,978	9,283	-	+	-
14. Other Crafts	21,129	19,161	20,116	-	+	-	9,090	8,791	10,287	-	+	+
15. Other Occupations	11,180	10,154	12,044	-	+	+	8,001	7,682	9,292	-	+	+
16. Medicine	51,850	48,706	49,856	-	+	-	15,763	16,463	18,282	+	+	+
17. Mining	27,835	26,250	26,886	-	+	-	13,382	15,464	12,721	+	-	-
18. Artistic	15,859	13,751	15,263	-	+	-	9,758	9,449	11,422	-	+	+
19. Social Sciences	25,173	21,108	23,412	-	+	-	11,924	11,321	13,675	-	+	+
20. Forestry	20,210	17,439	17,799	-	+	-	6,340	6,499	7,672	+	+	+
21. Religion	16,342	14,047	16,482	-	+	+	13,648	10,957	11,606	-	+	-
22. Fishing	17,180	16,004	16,931	-	+	-	6,490	7,047	8,692	+	+	+
All Occupations	19,227	16,716	17,826	-	+	-	9,986	9,936	11,185	-	+	+

Source: Computed using information on employment in the previous calendar year from the 1981, 1986 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

Table 10

**AVERAGE EARNINGS RATIOS FOR WORKERS EMPLOYED PART TIME HOURS AND/OR  
PART YEAR COMPARED WITH THOSE EMPLOYED FULL TIME AND FULL YEAR,  
1980, 1985 AND 1990**

	Men		Changes for Men		Women		Changes for Women	
	1980	1985	1980	1985	1980	1985	1980	1985
1. Sales	44.5	37.8	-	+	37.0	34.8	-	+
2. Service	37.6	33.0	-	+	37.9	38.3	+	+
3. Fabricating	60.0	53.3	-	+	55.6	51.4	-	+
4. Clerical	42.6	38.4	-	+	45.6	44.1	-	+
5. Managerial	69.0	58.5	-	+	57.8	53.4	-	+
6. Farming	53.8	49.5	-	+	53.3	52.5	-	+
7. Construction	57.6	51.6	-	+	43.0	35.7	-	+
8. Transport	63.8	56.5	-	+	43.0	43.8	+	+
9. Processing	53.1	49.7	-	+	41.2	37.8	-	+
10. Natural Sciences	48.0	43.9	-	+	41.8	42.1	+	+
11. Machining	65.7	59.8	-	+	54.6	52.8	-	+
12. Teaching	47.8	51.7	-	+	35.8	37.3	-	+
13. Materials Handling	48.9	43.8	+	-	46.1	45.8	-	-
14. Other Crafts	56.8	50.7	-	+	41.3	39.4	-	+
15. Other Occupations	38.6	34.1	-	+	40.3	36.4	-	+
16. Medicine	85.6	76.2	-	+	53.4	53.6	+	+
17. Mining	65.3	59.8	-	-	40.3	47.2	+	-
18. Artistic	45.0	39.3	-	+	36.0	35.6	-	+
19. Social Sciences	46.2	38.1	-	+	38.2	35.7	-	+
20. Forestry	53.2	49.5	-	+	23.6	32.9	+	+
21. Religion	71.9	59.6	-	+	63.9	52.6	-	+
22. Fishing	61.7	54.2	-	+	46.8	40.7	-	+
All Occupations	50.3	44.0	-	+	40.9	39.9	-	+

Source: Computed using information on employment in the previous calendar year from the 1981, 1986 and 1991 Censuses of Canada.

## 7. Part-Time Work, Low Wages and Economic Need

Available data show that part-time employment tends to be low wage employment. For example, Akyeampong demonstrates for 1986 that those working part-time hours (at all jobs) are far more likely to be low wage workers:

Part-time employment (less than 30 hours a week) features very prominently in low-paying jobs. Approximately 46% of jobs paying the minimum wage or less in 1986 were part-time, compared with 22% for all paid positions.

(Akyeampong, 1989, p. 13)

We also know that those moonlighting tend to report economic need as the reason for holding multiple jobs, and moonlighters are more likely to have a main job that is part-time rather than full-time. Cohen finds this using Survey of Work Arrangements data for Canada for 1991:

Financial concerns are the main motivation for moonlighting. According to the Survey of Work Arrangements (SWA), in November 1991, one-third of moonlighters who were paid workers in their main job needed a second job in order to meet regular household expenses. A somewhat smaller group (29%) were saving for the future, paying off debts, or planning to buy something special. Some 15% of multiple jobholders stated that they held a second job because they "enjoyed the work," while 11% were "gaining experience" or "building up a business."

(Cohen, 1994, p. 35)

He also finds this using 1993 Survey of Consumer Finances data for Canada.

Information from the Survey of Consumer Finances (SCF) seems to confirm the relationship between economic need and moonlighting. The April 1993 SCF showed that moonlighting was most prevalent among workers who had earned less than \$20,000 in 1992. Indeed, these "low-earners" accounted for 43% of multiple jobholders, compared with 38% of single jobholders. In addition, the incidence of moonlighting generally declined as earnings rose.

(Cohen, 1994, p. 35)

Further evidence of a link between part-time work and poverty comes from consumer expenditure studies. In the economic consumer demand analysis literature, work behaviour is considered only indirectly by taking account of family income. Nicol and Nakamura (1992, 1994) used a methodology for incorporating work status variables directly into consumer expenditure equations to examine how part-time work affects budgets share for different expenditure categories including food. Large expenditure shares for food are often interpreted as an indication of economic need. Controlling for a large number of other factors they do find that families where the

wife works have higher budget shares for food than those where the wife does not work, and that those where the wife works part-time have larger expenditure shares than those where the wife works full-time. This is consistent with the growing proportion of women who report involuntary part-time work, and who are in very low wage jobs.

## VII. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AXWORTHY SOCIAL SECURITY REFORM EFFORT

What we have learned about nonstandard workers through this project has had, and continues to have, a number of important implications for the Axworthy Social Security Reform initiative. The measures discussed in this section are ones that did find their way into the recently released federal Discussion Paper titled *Improving Social Security in Canada*. In addition to reviewing what is in the Discussion Paper, this section provides more of the background reasons for why these measures are important for nonstandard workers and emphasizes some added program aspects that would enhance the value of the proposed reforms for those in nonstandard jobs.

### 1. The Need of Many Workers with Nonstandard Jobs for UI Coverage

The original purpose of UI was to provide short term income replacement for those suffering unexpected bouts of unemployment. The insurable risk was specified to be total job loss, with any supplementary earnings while collecting UI benefits being taxed back -- "clawed back" is the common expression -- essentially dollar for dollar. This largely closes out the possibility of a worker who has multiple jobs and is laid off from one collecting UI benefits to help replace the income loss due to this *partial* unemployment. This is a problem for nonstandard workers who are multiple job holders. As was documented in Section VI, the number of workers holding multiple jobs has been rising over time.

A second problem which affects nonstandard workers holding part-time jobs is that jobs for under 15 hours per week are not covered at all by the UI program. Hence those workers who *only* have jobs of under 15 hours per week have no UI coverage at all. This would not be a problem, for these workers at least, if holding jobs of under 15 hours was a choice. But what both the direct interview evidence presented in Section IV and the statistical evidence in Section VI reveal is that many of those working part-time hours wanted, but were unable to find, full-time jobs. This is all the more troubling since there is concern that the UI payroll tax is contributing to a loss of full-time jobs. The fact that jobs under 15 hours a week are excluded from the UI program means that employers

need not pay the UI payroll tax for these workers. There is considerable anecdotal evidence -- even within universities -- of employers striving to keep the hours of work for their employees under the 15 hour limit for UI coverage, though shifting of this sort in the *types* of jobs employers offer is difficult to demonstrate (or disprove) with existing data.

There were many reasons for the original exclusion from UI of jobs for less than 15 hours per week. Including these mini jobs was thought to place an undue record keeping burden on employers and on the UI system. Prior to the advent of modern electronic data storage and processing capabilities, this was undoubtedly a serious constraint. A second reason is that it was felt that most of those taking jobs for under 15 hours per week were secondary earners in families -- mostly wives and older children -- who did not need or want UI coverage, and would be better off themselves not having to pay UI premiums. A third, and related reason, was that it was felt that making employers pay the UI payroll tax for jobs under 15 hours a week would reduce the availability of this sort of employment.

The world has changed. These days, it would be possible to have accounts for individual workers, perhaps identified by their Social Insurance numbers, into which employers could make payments for all hours of work. This is well within modern record keeping capabilities. Second, jobs for under 15 hours are no longer held only by secondary earners, and the incomes of many secondary earners are crucial for the ongoing support of their families. Along with rising unemployment, there has also been a steady rise in underemployment: those who want full-time work but are only employed part time. And there is also believed to have been a rise in the number of workers who are employed full-time in terms of total hours, but with part or all of their employment from jobs under 15 hours per week that are not UI covered. Finally, it is a serious problem if the exclusion of jobs under 15 hours per week has become a widespread reason for creating these mini jobs at the expense of UI-covered, full-time jobs. No one would wish to give grocery stores a financial incentive to do away with casual employment for tasks like bagging for which high school students and others explicitly seeking part-time work have often been hired. This is the sort of employment-related concern that was a motivation for excluding jobs under 15 hours

from UI coverage. On the other hand, though, we probably do not want to create an added incentive for grocery stores and other businesses to layoff their full-time workers and then transform those jobs into a larger number of under-15-hour jobs. This does help spread the available employment around. But it also leaves many more workers without the financial security of full-time jobs and UI coverage and other fringe benefits that traditionally have been available primarily to full-time workers.

Self employment is another gap in coverage for our present UI program, and this too has been an important growth area for nonstandard employment. Self employment is not covered because of the difficulty of defining what is meant by unemployment for those who are self employed. A self employed person is in a position to seek or not seek work opportunities, and may be able to shift work forward or backward in time. There would be an obvious potential for creating unemployment spells that are essentially subsidized vacation periods if self employed persons were included in the existing UI program.

However, the problem with not covering the self employed is that, with no UI taxes being paid on self-employment earnings, this too becomes an incentive for businesses to lay off regular UI-covered workers and then expand their use of contract, self-employed labour that is not UI covered. Both the direct interviews reported on in Section VI and anecdotal evidence from other sources suggest this type of labour shifting to avoid paying UI taxes is becoming a widespread phenomenon.

The importance of these UI-coverage gaps for nonstandard workers is recognized in the Discussion Paper:

Whichever reforms are made, the UI program will need to consider the needs of workers in 'nonstandard' employment, who have increased significantly over the last decade. This includes part-time, temporary, self-employed or multiple job holders. Most of these workers are women. In 1993, more than 60 per cent of all jobs created were part-time. Many of these nonstandard workers are not fully covered by unemployment insurance for all the hours worked, and some are excluded from coverage entirely. Some firms adopt such working arrangements specifically to avoid paying insurance premiums.

(p. 49, the Discussion Paper)

Getting this coverage problem on the policy agenda is a first step toward correcting it. Operational details for alternatives ways of broadening UI-type coverage to include jobs for under 15

hours per week and the self-employed are beyond the scope of this present report. However, a better understanding of the nature of nonstandard employment has greatly influenced some of the coverage mechanisms being considered, as is explained at length in Nakamura, Cragg and Sayers (1994d). This must be done in ways that are compatible with the insurance or other basic principles for the reformed UI program. Otherwise this will create a variant of the present problem of frequent UI claimants. (See Nakamura, Cragg and Sayers 1994b for further discussion of these issues.)

Suppose that the UI program is split, as proposed in the Discussion Paper, into a Basic Insurance program that is based on insurance principles and an Adjustment program for those with serious employability problems. Access to Adjustment program job finding, training and other employment development services could be open to all those in need of the help -- not just those eligible for or collecting income support benefits under either the Basic Insurance or Adjustment program. The challenge for the Basic Insurance program is to find ways of defining the insurable risks for nonstandard as well as standard workers that do not invite uses of the program which are abuses from the perspective of the program objectives. For example, ways must be found to provide insurance protection for the unexpected loss of a part-time job for a multiple job holder without inviting the abuse of workers intentionally taking second part-time jobs they know they will be laid off from, and then collecting the unemployment insurance benefits for the loss of the part-time jobs in addition to their regular earnings. This way, workers could supplement their regular earnings without having to work more hours per week beyond the weeks needed to gain the right to collect benefits for losses of their part-time jobs. It is these sorts of program design problems that must now be solved, recognizing the need to find ways of providing insurance coverage for nonstandard workers.

When nonstandard workers are asked what is wrong with their jobs, they often mention the lack of fringe benefits. One implication is that if UI-type insurance protection were available for more nonstandard jobs, these would become better jobs from workers' perspectives. In other words, this would increase the numbers of relatively good jobs by "rehabilitating" less good ones. In our present economic circumstances, rehabilitating bad jobs may be a cheaper and more feasible way of



creating more good jobs than direct job creation.

## **2. Education and Training for Nonstandard Workers**

Employers typically provide little education and training for nonstandard workers. This is partly because these employment relationships are so ephemeral. Employers cannot count on being able to recoup their expenditures on worker learning through the higher productivity of these workers in coming years, as is the case with continuing regular employees. Even when part-time workers *are* in continuing positions, the expected number of subsequent *hours* these part-timers will be working for their employers are obviously less than for full-time workers. The arithmetic on recouping expenditures on education and training is simply less favourable. The situation is similar for self-employed workers hired on occasional contracts, rather than on a full-time, ongoing basis.

Changes in the distribution of employment by company size is another contributing factor. Firms have been responding to increased marketplace risk by contracting to small cores of permanent workers and taking care of their other labour needs through shorter-term contracts, or the purchase of intermediate goods and services from other firms. What were once large firms have been downsizing and breaking into smaller pieces. Government policies have encouraged this by providing a variety of subsidies and tax breaks for smaller firms. Also, when experienced, laid off workers cannot find new regular jobs, some of them decide instead to start their own small companies. This too has been encouraged by government programs providing advice, and even financial assistance to help cover start-up costs. But, on average, smaller businesses have never provided much education and training for their employees. In large measure, this probably reflects the reality that few smaller businesses have the financial reserves to make longer term education and training investments.

The implication of all this is that the increasing numbers of nonstandard workers have little access to employer subsidized learning opportunities. These workers are on their own in this respect. But many of them are lacking in the personal financial resources to pay for education and training. So they have no way of bettering their employment situations over time. The days when a young

person entering a company as a stock room clerk might rise, through ability and hard work, to better positions within that company are a fading dream for many young workers. They find only nonstandard jobs that are dead end in the sense that there are no opportunities for job-related learning and upward mobility.

This problem is recognized in the Discussion Paper. A central objective of the proposed Adjustment program is to provide career development opportunities for all those labour force participants who currently have little or none, including the growing numbers of nonstandard workers.

The program design challenges being wrestled with in this case include the problem of paying for and rationing employment development services, and the problem of better insuring that the employment development services offered do, in fact, improve the employability and earnings of those who get this help. Further details of alternative ways of meeting these challenges can be found in Nakamura, Cragg and Sayers (1994d).

### **3. Balancing Nonstandard Work and Children**

Many nonstandard jobs involve nonstandard hours of work, or irregular work schedules. Day care arrangements for children have primarily evolved to meet the child care needs of regular workers.

On page 53, the Discussion Paper reiterates the Liberal Party's campaign pledge to provide increased funds for child care:

The federal government is committed to supporting the provinces with ... \$720 million over three years to provide for the subsidization or creation of up to 150,000 spaces.

(p. 53, the Discussion Paper)

Some of this funding could be explicitly directed toward encouraging experimentation with and an expansion of desirable alternative ways of meeting the child care needs of nonstandard workers.

Few would disagree with the Discussion Paper's assessment of the importance of good quality child care for families where the parents work:

It is a critical support for employment, because it provides working parents with the assurance of quality care for their children. But child care is more than an employment measure if it also provides children with a good environment in which to grow and learn. Effective child care can help ensure the future employment success of children who might otherwise be at risk.

(p. 53, the Discussion Paper)

The challenge is to find affordable ways of helping nonstandard workers meet their child care needs. It is fundamentally harder to provide group care for children on irregular bases. It plays havoc with the establishment of routines that are vital when children are looked after in groups.

#### **4. Financial Help for the Children of the Working Poor**

Increasingly, the working poor are nonstandard workers. Measures to provide financial support to poor children would help relieve some of the financial pressure and insecurity for poor families with children, including those headed by a lone parent. One possibility is to enrich the Child Tax Benefit for low income families.

The Discussion Paper outlines how the Child Tax Benefit is currently administered:

Today, the Child Tax Benefit provides qualifying families, based on an income test, with monthly payments resulting in a basic annual benefit of \$1,020 for each child aged 17 or under, and additional benefits depending on the number and ages of the children. All families with income under \$60,000 receive some Child Tax Benefit payments. The total cost of the program in 1994 is \$5.1 billion.

A Working Income Supplement of up to \$500 is added for families earning between \$3,750 and \$25,921 annually. This supplemental incentive is aimed at making work pay, and at offsetting some of the costs associated with employment, thus helping parents to move from welfare to employment. The motivating idea is that parents who have jobs are better able to keep their children out of poverty. Twenty-three per cent of the 3 million families who receive the Child Tax Benefit also qualify for the Working Income Supplement.

(p. 72, the Discussion Paper)

This explanation of the existing Child Tax Benefit program and the Working Income Supplement to that program draws attention to one of the areas of challenge in seeking ways to enrich the financial support provided to the children of the working poor, including increasing numbers of nonstandard workers. Ways must be found to provide the support without undermining, or giving the *appearance* of undermining, work incentives. Those who see many nonstandard workers as being less committed to working view this work incentives design problem as particularly difficult.

There is another way of thinking about this work incentives problem, however. If poor parents could have a choice between putting their children in subsidized child care arrangements while they work or staying home and caring for their children themselves, many might choose to do the latter. Working parents who cannot find affordable, good quality child care often end up leaving their children in situations that are worrisome to them and may lead to later costs for society because of resulting child development problems. An enhanced Child Tax Benefit for low-income families might allow more of these families to care for their children themselves, with benefits for both these families and society. Good quality out-of-home care is an expensive undertaking for families with two or more small children, regardless of who picks up the bills for this. Providing financial incentives for the primary care givers -- usually the mothers -- of small children to work may not be in anyone's best interests. Increasing the Child Tax Benefit, and leaving the Working Income Supplement as is or phasing it out, would let low income families with children decide for themselves whether the money would be better spent on child care while parents all work or to enable the parents to care for their children themselves.

## **5. Towards a Fairer World for Custodial Mothers**

Many lone mothers end up trying to support both themselves and their children on part-time or other sorts of nonstandard jobs. As adult rights to leave their partners have expanded, our ability to insure that parents support their children financially has not kept pace. The Discussion Paper notes:

Currently federal and provincial governments are discussing the possibility of instituting standardized guidelines for calculating awards, based on the non-custodial parent's income, and the number of the children....

(p. 78, the Discussion Paper)

These measures would also help to take some of the financial pressure off low income parents who are no longer living with the partners they had their children with.

## VIII. LONGER RUN REFORM ISSUES

If nonstandard workers can have UI-type coverage for unexpected losses of employment and income, better access to education and training, more suitable child care options, and some relief from the financial burdens of raising their children, they will be better off. These are worthwhile reforms if they can be achieved.

However, it is vitally important that the reform effort must not end with the sorts of measures Minister Axworthy views as within the scope of his mandate. Education and training programs prepare workers for jobs; they do not create jobs, though capital may sometimes be attracted to areas with well trained workers. Child care programs free parents so they are able to work; that is, they contribute to the *supply* of labour. They do not create a *demand* for labour, except insofar as more demand for child care expands employment for workers in the child care field. And UI-type insurance can help tide workers and their dependents over unexpected spells of unemployment. These programs were never meant to replace employment income in the longer run. That is, they were never meant as a substitute for work opportunities.

In short, the Axworthy reform proposals are worthwhile, but can be expected to result in only modest improvements in the availability of employment, as is explained in Nakamura, Cragg and Sayers (1994a). The more fundamental problem of inadequate work opportunities is explored in Nakamura and Lawrence (1994). In a sense, general employment problems are beyond the scope of this present project on nonstandard work. Yet the research on nonstandard employment was, in fact, the motivation for the 1994a Nakamura-Cragg-Sayers paper and the Nakamura-Lawrence one. A better understanding of the growth of involuntary part-time employment, including the holding of multiple part-time jobs with long total weekly hours, underscores the extent of our current employment deficit: a deficit that demands as urgent attention as our fiscal debt and deficits.

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## DATA APPENDIX

Census data from one period to another are not directly comparable because of changes in both the definitions of variables and the questions asked on the census form. As a result, our data can only be used to show patterns of changes; it cannot be used to show absolute changes. In all cases, our proportions are calculated from the "total who worked in the previous year" and the "total who worked full time" (1971) and the "total who worked mostly full time" (1981, 1986, 1991). In 1971, but not in subsequent years, this figure includes institutional residents. "Work" is working for wages, salary, tips or commission (including payment in kind), working in one's own business, farm or professional practice, and working without pay in a family farm or business; it does not include volunteer work, housework or maintenance and repairs on one's own house.

"Weeks worked" includes any week in which the person worked, even if only for a few hours; it includes weeks of self-employment, paid vacation and paid sick leave. Persons who were paid for a full year even though they worked for less than a full year (e.g., teachers) were instructed to indicate that they had worked for a full year. In 1981 and subsequent years, respondents wrote in the number of weeks they had worked; in 1971, they marked a response category. The definition of "full year" is 49-52 weeks.

Respondents were asked to indicate whether most of the weeks they worked were full time or part time. In 1971 and 1981, these terms were not defined in the guide; in 1986, part-time work was defined as "that work which is less than the normally scheduled weekly hours of work performed by persons doing similar work"; in 1991, "part time" was explicitly defined as "less than 30 hours per week."

