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## In search of good quality part-time employment

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Inclusive Labour Markets, Labour Relations  
and Working Conditions Branch

## ***In search of good quality part-time employment***

**By Colette Fagan,<sup>1</sup> Helen Norman,  
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INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE - GENEVA

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## Table of contents

	Page
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. An overview of the conditions of part-time work and the associated gender equality issues</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1 <i>International variations in the definition and prevalence of part-time employment</i>	4
2.2 <i>Part-time work and gender equality issues</i>	7
2.3 <i>Government policies towards part-time work</i>	10
2.4 <i>Part-time work and the informal and formal economy in developing countries</i>	14
2.5 <i>Employers' policies and the conditions of part-time work</i>	17
2.6 <i>Concluding summary</i>	19
<b>3. The employment conditions of part-time workers and the state-of-play in the implementation of equal treatment principles</b>	<b>19</b>
3.1 <i>Equal treatment principles and their implementation</i>	20
3.2 <i>Social security protection and part-time employment</i>	24
3.2.1 <i>Unemployment insurance systems</i>	25
3.2.2 <i>Retirement pensions</i>	28
3.2.3 <i>Health care</i>	28
3.3 <i>Legal frameworks that give employees the right to request part-time hours</i>	29
3.4 <i>The employment conditions of part-time workers</i>	30
3.4.1 <i>Job security and employment protection</i>	30
3.4.2 <i>Training opportunities</i>	31
3.4.3 <i>Intrinsic job quality</i>	32
3.4.4 <i>Earnings and earnings progression</i>	32
3.4.5 <i>Exposure to hazards and health risks</i>	35
3.4.6 <i>Working-time quality</i>	35
3.5 <i>Transitions from part-time into full-time work</i>	36
3.6 <i>Part-time traps in tax and benefit systems</i>	38
3.7 <i>Concluding summary</i>	38
<b>4. Barriers to part-time work and policies to improve access to quality part-time work to meet the needs of employers and workers</b>	<b>41</b>
4.1 <i>Quality part-time work</i>	42
4.2 <i>The barriers that can deter workers from seeking part-time employment</i>	43
4.3 <i>Barriers that can deter employers from using part-time work arrangements</i>	46
4.3.1 <i>The structure of employers' contributions to statutory social security and pension systems</i>	47
4.3.2 <i>Labour law and employment protection coverage</i>	48
4.3.3 <i>Per capita fixed labour costs of employing two or more part-time workers instead of one full-time worker</i>	48
4.3.4 <i>Work organization, job design and productivity concerns</i>	49
4.3.5 <i>Organizational culture and norms that attach more value to full-time work arrangements</i>	50
4.3.6 <i>Other flexible arrangements that can substitute for part-time working</i>	53
4.4 <i>Conclusions</i>	53

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<b>5. Conclusions</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Appendix 1: List of ILO data sources on part-time work</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Appendix 2: Statutory rights to part-time work</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Conditions of Work and Employment Series</b>	<b>77</b>

## List of Tables

Table 2.1	The proportion of employed men and women (aged 15+) working part-time (i.e. less than 30 hours per week) in selected countries, 2011	6
Table 2.2	Average, usual part-time hours worked in main job	7
Table 2.3	The percentage of part-timers who are women, 2011	8
Table 2.4	The rate of part-time employment by age group for employed women and men, 2011	9
Table 2.5	Typical categories of part-time work in France	19
Table 3.1	Unemployment benefit coverage for part-time workers – OECD survey	26

## List of Boxes

Box 2.1	Part-time work in Japan	13
Box 2.2	Part-time work in South Korea	14
Box 2.3	Part-time work in Chile	15
Box 2.4	Part-time work in China	17
Box 2.5	Part-time work in Indonesia	17
Box 3.1	European Union Part-time Work Directive (97/81/EC)	21

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## Executive Summary

In the International Labour Organization (ILO) Part-Time Work Convention, 1994 (No. 175), “part-time work” is defined as hours of work that are shorter than those for comparable full-time work (in the country, sector, and occupation). This report provides a synthesis of the international evidence on developments in part-time work and the situation of part-time workers. It addresses the major issues, which were identified in the conclusions of the ILO’s Tripartite Meeting of Experts on Working-time Arrangements (TMEWTA) in October 2011 (ILO, 2011), and extends the discussion in a previous working-time report (Fagan et al., 2012) that was an input to the TMEWTA.

This report:

- Assesses the current employment conditions of part-time workers in comparison with those of comparable full-time workers across a range of countries.
- Investigates the barriers to mutually agreed and freely chosen part-time work that meets the needs of both employers and workers.
- Identifies those government policies and enterprise policies and practices regarding working hours and working-time arrangements, which appear to be likely to improve both access to, and the quality of, part-time work arrangements, while also advancing gender equality.
- Reviews and analyses those government and enterprise policies, practices and overall conditions that may help workers to successfully transition between full- and part-time work.

Chapter two identifies seven issues concerning the quality of part-time employment:

- There is a labour-market mismatch between the preferences for, and the availability of, part-time work, and it is important to differentiate between voluntary and involuntary part-time work.
- Many part-time jobs are of poorer quality than full-time jobs at most levels.
- The definition and incidence of part-time employment varies nationally, as does the available information.
- Part-time employment is undertaken largely by women with family responsibilities. This can reinforce gender inequalities unless wider measures are put in place to enhance its quality and to provide other working-time options and infrastructure to support these workers. The recent increase in male part-time employment is mainly among younger and older workers.
- Government policies have shaped the quality of part-time work that has emerged in different countries.
- In many developing countries, part-time employment is strongly associated with working in the informal economy, and so its quality is closely bound up with measures directed at improving working conditions and social protection in the informal economy, and more importantly, measures promoting formalization.
- Employers use part-time employment to retain certain categories of workers: by responding to their expressed working-time preferences; to secure optimal staffing and operational flexibility; or, to create a secondary, cheaper and more “precarious” pool of workers. Better quality part-time jobs are usually generated from a “retention” strategy.

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Many governments have promoted part-time work as a tool to mobilize labour-market groups with lower participation rates, such as women with young children, individuals with health problems and older workers. However, there are national differences in how government policy promotes part-time employment. For example, it has not been promoted as actively in the United States compared with many European countries. These different approaches have led to divergences in its quality across countries.

The quality of part-time employment also varies among firms. The amount and quality of jobs available depends largely upon the way employers use part-time working in their personnel and working-time policies, within the context of national policy frameworks. Where part-time employment is marginalized as a secondary form of employment, penalties are incurred in the form of lower hourly pay rates and inferior social protection or opportunities for progression over a working life. Conversely, it can be considered as integrated alongside full-time employment when the difference is simply that of reduced hours of work. It is this latter scenario of integration that usually offers the greater prospect of opportunities for good quality part-time work.

Chapter three opens with a discussion of the implementation of the principle of Equal Treatment, detailed in the ILO Part-Time Work Convention, 1994 (No. 175), intended to protect against the contractual penalties that may be incurred from part-time employment. Where this has been implemented, it has helped to promote equality in the employment conditions and social protection coverage for part- and full-timers with similar jobs. However, it has little direct impact on building equal treatment between full- and part-timers employed in different occupations or with different job titles. Moreover, its implementation and subsequent impact varies among countries. For example, one of the most concerted attempts to develop equal treatment for part-time workers is in the Netherlands.

The magnitude of the gap in employment conditions between full- and part-timers thus varies considerably across countries. On average, part-time jobs incur a penalty in terms of inferior job security, average hourly earnings and opportunities for training and promotion. Even if part-time workers receive equal treatment, in terms of current hourly wages and other contractual elements, in most countries a period of part-time employment has a scarring effect on subsequent labour market advancement and career progression. Part-time workers also have less access to unemployment benefits and job search assistance programmes if they become unemployed. They are also more at risk of poverty, not only because of their lower weekly earnings due to shorter work hours, but also because their jobs are less stable and they are less likely to be covered by unemployment insurance systems. There are some benefits from part-time work, such as better working-time quality and reduced exposure to hazardous working conditions and work-related stress. Whether this is sufficient to offset lower hourly pay, poorer job security and career progression is, however, not clear.

Chapter four examines what types of part-time employment meet the needs of employers and workers, identifies barriers to the expansion of mutually agreed and freely chosen forms of part-time work, and discusses the types of policies that improve access to it and its quality in order to meet their needs. Although part-time employment has the potential to enhance the working life of some workers, and to benefit employers through gains in flexibility and productivity, there are a number of barriers that can inhibit the development of mutually beneficial part-time work. These barriers, which may deter workers from taking part-time employment, include: the lack of equal treatment; the inferior pay and social protection coverage (including pensions); the tax and benefit trap; and, the negative impact that part-time work often has on career progression because of reduced access to training and promotion, or limited opportunities to resume full-time employment at a future date. The time schedule in some part-time jobs is not always compatible with care responsibilities; therefore, it is not always a “family-friendly” form of employment.

Employers may also be deterred from introducing or expanding part-time work arrangements by a range of barriers. For example, there are direct additional costs in employing two or more part-timers rather than one full-timer in some countries; notably in the structure of employers’ social security contributions and in the organization of labour law and employment protection. There may also be fixed per capita labour costs to take into account for some occupations. The employer may also be

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deterred from using part-time employment schedules because of limited experience, and concerns about how it may impact negatively on work organization and productivity.

Despite these barriers, encouraging part-time work remains on the policy agenda in many countries, primarily as a means of: mobilizing women's employment while they have care responsibilities; prolonging the working life of older workers; facilitating the growth of youth employment, combined with education and training; and, enhancing organizational flexibility in the more global, complex and uncertain operating conditions that many employers have to contend with in the twenty-first century.

The concluding chapter notes that while policy efforts have been made to improve the quality of part-time work in some countries, more needs to be done to address the inferior employment conditions associated with part-time as opposed to full-time work. This includes:

- extending equal treatment with full-timers to part-time workers in labour law and in collective agreements;
- taking steps to modernize social protection systems, including pensions, in order to extend coverage to part-time workers and to ensure a fair adjustment to contribution-based benefits for periods of part-time work; and
- opening up the opportunity to work part-time in a wider range of jobs by introducing the right to request a switch to part-time schedules.

Alongside these initiatives, it is also important to remove barriers limiting transitions from part-time into full-time employment, including in the tax and benefits system and in the provision of child and elderly care services, resulting in a wider set of working-time options open to those workers with family responsibilities.



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## 1. Introduction

Part-time work started to expand as one manifestation of the emergence of more flexible and de-standardized labour markets from the 1970s onwards and much has been written about this form of employment. This includes national and international studies, which focus upon part-time work (e.g. Warne et al., 1992; Blossfeld and Hakim, 1997; Tilly, 1996; O'Reilly and Fagan, 1998; Anxo et al., 2007a; OECD, 2010), or examine part-time work as one aspect of non-standard contracts (Houseman and Osawa, 2003; Vosko, 2009), or working-time developments (Messenger, 2004; Bosch and Lehndorff, 2005; Boulin et al., 2006; Lee, McCann and Messenger, 2007; Anxo et al., 2010).

This report provides a synthesis of the latest international evidence on developments in part-time work and the situation of part-time workers. It addresses the major issues regarding part-time work that were identified in the conclusions of the ILO's Tripartite Meeting of Experts on Working-time Arrangements (TMEWTA) in October 2011 (ILO, 2011), and extends the discussion of part-time work in our previous working-time report (Fagan et al., 2012) that was an input to the TMEWTA. It is designed to contribute to the ILO's *Global Product on Working Time in the Twentieth-first Century* that has been developed to implement the conclusions of the TMEWTA. It provides guidance on how to develop working time arrangements that can effectively balance workers' needs with organizational performance requirements under different circumstances (including different sectors and types of workers).

This report:

- Assesses the current employment conditions of part-time workers in comparison with those of comparable full-time workers across a range of countries.
- Investigates the barriers to mutually agreed and freely chosen part-time work that meets the needs of both employers and workers.
- Identifies those government policies and enterprise policies and practices regarding working hours and working-time arrangements, which appear to be likely to improve both access to and the quality of part-time work arrangements, while also advancing gender equality.
- Reviews and analyses those government and enterprise policies, practices and overall conditions that may help workers to successfully transition between full- and part-time work.

The applicability of policies and practices reviewed in the report, for countries other than those in which they have been developed and implemented, is explicitly addressed. Where available, sector and occupational differences and gender-disaggregated data are reviewed. The discussion reviews the studies available for a broad range of countries, including examples of countries with a high level of part-time work and where its quality is somewhat better than in other comparable countries (for example the Netherlands and Sweden), countries where there is a high rate of part-time work, but where much of it is of poor quality (for example the United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, United States and Japan), countries where part-time work is rare or has only recently started to develop (e.g. Spain), or where it is largely associated with peripheral employment or the informal economy (e.g. Mexico and Argentina).

The literature search focussed primarily on research published since 2005 in English, French and Spanish, in addition to findings from earlier key and influential studies.<sup>2</sup> Most of the research in this

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<sup>2</sup> María del Carmen González Menéndez reviewed the literature published in Spanish in Spain and Latin America and in English by nationals. The literature search for sources in Spanish was carried out mainly through three databases, google scholar and library catalogues. The three main databases are: Redalyc. Red de Revistas Científicas de América Latina y El Caribe, España y Portugal. <http://redalyc.uaemex.mx/>; Dialnet. Spanish based database (Universidad de la Rioja) artículos científicos hispanos en Internet. <http://dialnet.unirioja.es/>; Scielo Chile, Scientific Electronic Library Online <http://www.scielo.cl/>. Other relevant material was found searching directly on the websites of economic and social councils,

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field has been undertaken in the industrialized economies of Europe, North America, Australia and Japan. Relevant published studies covering other countries were searched for and those identified included. But, it was beyond the scope of the study to undertake a fully systematic worldwide review.

In Chapter two, an overview of the key issues in relation to the search for quality part-time work is provided. Chapter three summarizes the implementation of the equal treatment principle and examines the employment conditions of part-time workers. Chapter four discusses what types of part-time employment meet the needs of employers and workers, identifies barriers to the expansion of mutually agreed forms of part-time working and discusses the types of policies that improve access to it and its quality in order to meet their needs. In Chapter five, conclusions are drawn.

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women's institutes, government ministries, and several research centres in Spain and Latin America. Overall there was very little material for Latin America with sustained discussions of part-time work, even by organizations with a focus on women's employment conditions and gender equality, such as the Women's National Institute and the Council for the Prevention of Discrimination in Mexico. Mark Smith, with the assistance of Sophie Randon, was responsible for the French literature, drawn largely from France and Quebec, with a range of search terms being used, including "temps partiel", "égalité de traitements" and "conditions de travail" using databases from Grenoble Ecole de Management and University of Lyon III (google scholar, Cairn, Business Source Complete). The period 1995–2012 was used as a sample. Colette Fagan and Helen Norman led the English-language literature review. The primary databases used were: IBSS (International Bibliography of the Social Sciences) and the University of Manchester library catalogue. The search focussed on using research published since 2005 to update the results from earlier major studies.

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## 2. An overview of the conditions of part-time work and the associated gender equality issues

In the ILO Part-Time Work Convention, 1994 (No. 175) “part-time work” is defined as hours of work which are shorter than those for comparable full-time work (in the country, sector, and occupation), and a “part-time worker” is an employed person whose hours of work are fewer than those of comparable full-time workers.

A key distinction for defining different types of part-time work is between voluntary and involuntary. Voluntary refers to workers who have decided to work part-time rather than seek full-time employment, while involuntary refers to workers who cannot find full-time employment. Surveys of working-time preferences in industrialized countries reveal that many members of the labour force – men as well as women – would like to work part time at some stage during their life (Fagan, 2004).

Voluntary part-time employment may be a route into the following: full-time employment; a means of combining employment with studying, training or family care responsibilities; an adjustment enabling people with poor health to remain in employment; a partial retirement option enabling older people to prolong their working life; or, simply a working arrangement that frees up time for other activities. It can also be a means of enabling working-time adjustments across a lifetime in those labour markets where it is possible to make transitions between part- and full-time employment (Fagan and Walthery, 2007; Anxo et al., 2007b).

For many workers with care responsibilities their decision to work part-time is shaped by external constraints, such as a lack of childcare services or the work schedule demands of a partner in a two-parent household. Hence, they are voluntary part-time workers in the sense that they do not want full-time work given their current situation. However, they might prefer to work longer hours if they had access to good quality and affordable childcare. Furthermore, surveys of industrialized countries reveal that a large proportion of voluntary part-timers would like to work longer hours (Fagan, 2004). In 2005, on average nearly one in five women employed part-time on a voluntary basis in Europe would have preferred to work more hours while remaining part-time (Eurofound, 2009).

The preferences of some workers for part-time employment co-exist with involuntary part-time employment for others. For many households part-time earnings are simply not a feasible option. In most countries, involuntary part-time workers are identified based on their response to a question about their reasons for working part-time: they are those who state they could not find a full-time job, rather than those who are working part-time because of care responsibilities, health reasons or education. In a few countries (Australia, Japan, New Zealand), involuntary part-time workers are those who work part-time, but state they would prefer longer hours. Around one in five part-time workers is involuntary, although the rate fluctuates with labour market conditions. Men working part-time are more likely to be involuntary than women and older workers are less likely to be involuntary than other part-timers (OECD, 2010). Since the onset of the economic recession in 2007–08 in Europe, full-time jobs are being lost. The increased rate of part-time working includes an expansion in involuntary part-time by men and women unable to obtain full-time employment (Smith, 2009). In Sweden, over many years, the volume of “part-time unemployment” among women is as high, or higher, than full-time unemployment (Smith, 2009).

In developing and transition countries, much of the part-time work is involuntary, and working less than full-time hours on a voluntary basis is less common than in developed countries. Typically, part-time workers in these economies would prefer full-time employment because low wages mean it is impossible to secure an adequate income without it (Lee, McCann and Messenger, 2007; ILO, 2011). From the limited information available, it would seem that those who seek part-time employment for family reasons, often have to resort to self-employment or casual work in the informal economy (with all the disadvantages that entails), given the few opportunities for part-time employment within the formal economy (see Section 2.5).

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Therefore, in the search for good quality part-time employment, the first problem is a labour market mismatch between the preferences for, and the availability of, part-time work. So, it is important to differentiate between voluntary and involuntary part-time work.

The second and related problem is that, on average, many part- as opposed to full-time jobs are of poorer quality across a range of job quality dimensions. Part-time jobs are disproportionately concentrated in the lower-paid and lower-grade occupations, in a narrow range of low-paid female-dominated service jobs and certain intermediate clerical positions. They are often in those parts of the economy with the least regulatory protection of working conditions (O'Reilly and Fagan, 1998; Houseman and Osawa, 2003; Anxo et al., 2007a; Burchell et al., 2007; OECD 2010). Opportunities for part-time work are more limited in professional and managerial positions, and are usually confined to the lower grades. Even in countries with a high level of part-time employment, such as the United Kingdom, the amount and type varies by sector and nature of firm. Eligibility may be restricted to limited occupational levels and job areas (Kersley et al., 2006).

The other issues that must be considered in the search for good quality part-time employment are the following. These are discussed in the rest of this chapter.

- The definition and incidence of part-time employment varies nationally, as does the information available about part-time employment (Section 2.1).
- Part-time employment is largely undertaken by women with family responsibilities, which can reinforce gender inequalities, unless wider measures are put in place to enhance the quality of this work and to provide other working time options and infrastructure to support these workers (Section 2.2).
- Government policies have shaped the quality of part-time work that has emerged in different countries (Section 2.3).
- In many developing countries, part-time employment is strongly associated with the informal sector, and so its quality is closely bound up with measures directed at improving working conditions and social protection in this sector (Section 2.4).
- Employers use part-time jobs to retain certain workers: by responding to their expressed working-time preferences; to secure optimal staffing and operational flexibility; or, to create a secondary, cheaper and more precarious pool of workers. The better quality part-time jobs are usually generated from a “retention” strategy (Section 2.5).

## **2.1 International variations in the definition and prevalence of part-time employment**

While part-time work is broadly defined as being less than full-time, the threshold for defining it varies among countries (O'Reilly and Fagan, 1998). In the United States, it is generally defined as less than 35 hours a week, in Germany less than 36 hours, while in Canada and the United Kingdom 30 hours is normally used as the cut-off point. In France, it is defined as at least 20 per cent below the statutory level of working hours. Other examples of less than full-time employment are various forms of short-time work, including the zero-hour contract in the United Kingdom, or relay contracts in France, Italy and Spain where workers are hired for a few hours a day. In contrast, part-time employment in Japan is explicitly linked to status within the firm and not to hours worked. Several Japanese surveys have indicated that 20–30 per cent of those classified by their employers as part-timers actually work as many hours as full-timers (Kalleberg, 2006).

The rate of part-time work has risen in many countries over the last 35–40 years. However, precise information about the current rate, let alone historical trends, is unavailable for many parts of the developing world. The World Bank's latest 'Jobs' report (2012, p7) notes that “part-time and temporary wage employment are now major features of industrial and developing countries”, yet there is no comparative statistical information provided and part-time work is mentioned only on four

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separate pages in the 350 pages of the report. Analysis by the ILO (2011) for the period since 2000 shows that while part-time work has continued to increase in developed countries, the picture is mixed for developing and transition countries. For example, the rate of part-time employment has fallen in Argentina, Jordan, South Africa, Bulgaria and the Russian Federation; it has been stable or increased slightly in Brazil, Peru, Thailand and Turkey; while in Chile, Mexico and Peru there has been a more pronounced increase. Appendix 1 outlines the ILO database sources that might be used for additional country analysis.

Table 2.1 demonstrates the international variation in the rate of part-time work for those countries where comparable data are available. The Netherlands has by far the highest incidence, with just over one third of all employment and nearly two-thirds of women's employment now organized on a part-time basis. Around a fifth to one quarter of employment is part-time in Ireland, Australia, the United Kingdom, Germany, New Zealand, Japan, Norway and Canada. Just under a fifth of jobs are part-time in Mexico, Brazil and Chile. By comparison, part-time employment is less common in the United States, in several European countries, and in Korea and Turkey. These national differences have emerged due to a combination of different economic and labour market conditions and institutional frameworks that shape the working-time arrangements and the labour-use strategies adopted by employers. These institutions include labour law, collective bargaining agreements, and welfare state provisions including social protection and social care services for children, elders and other adults in need of assistance (O'Reilly and Fagan, 1998).

The volume of hours worked by part-timers also varies internationally (Table 2.2). For example, Germany, the Netherlands and New Zealand have a high incidence of part-time work in the economy and much of this is organized into short part-time hour arrangements, whereas longer part-time hours are the norm in Belgium and France. Earlier studies (for example, O'Reilly and Fagan, 1998) showed longer hours for part-time workers in the United States and in Japan. A 2010 survey of 11,010 employees from 1,610 business establishments in Japan found that around a third of part-time workers were working over 35 hours per week (Asao, 2011). In the United States, data from the Current Population Survey for 2011 shows that the majority of employees (80 per cent) work long part-time hours of between 15 and 34 per week compared to just a fifth of employees who work between 1–14 hours (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012).

The rate of part-time work is higher for women than men in all developed and developing countries with the exception of Trinidad and Tobago (Table 2.1). Among part-timers, women usually work slightly longer hours than men, although Mexico, Turkey and Korea are exceptions (Table 2.2).

**Table 2.1. The proportion of employed men and women (aged 15+) working part-time (i.e. less than 30 hours per week) in selected countries, 2011**

Country	Women (%)	Men (%)	All (%)
Netherlands	60.5	17.1	37.2
Australia	38.5	13.2	24.7
Ireland	39.3	12.6	25.7
United Kingdom	39.3	11.7	24.6
Germany	38.0	8.5	22.1
New Zealand	34.3	11.2	22.0
Japan	34.8	10.3	20.6
Norway	30.0	11.0	20.0
Canada	27.2	12.9	19.9
Denmark	25.2	13.8	19.2
Belgium	32.4	7.0	18.8
Mexico	27.7	12.5	18.3
Brazil <sup>1</sup>	28.1	10.1	17.8
Chile	25.5	11.8	17.2
Sweden	18.4	9.8	13.8
France	22.1	5.9	13.6
Korea	18.5	10.0	13.5
Spain	21.9	5.5	12.9
Finland	16.0	9.6	12.7
United States <sup>2</sup>	17.1	8.4	12.6
Turkey	24.3	6.6	11.7
Portugal	14.4	8.8	11.5
Poland	12.4	4.9	8.3
South Africa	11.2	5.0	7.7
Thailand <sup>3</sup>	7.5	6.5	6.9
Trinidad & Tobago <sup>4</sup>	18.1	22.2	40.3
Zimbabwe <sup>5</sup>	21.0	17.0	18.9
Indonesia <sup>6</sup>	31.0	16.7	21.0

Note: Part-time hours are defined as 30 or less in all countries except for: Indonesia (defined as 35 hours or less); Trinidad and Tobago (defined as 32 hours or less) and Zimbabwe (defined as 25 hours or less).

<sup>1</sup>data is for 2009; <sup>2</sup>based on data from the OECD; <sup>3</sup> data is for 2000; <sup>4</sup> data is for 2002; <sup>5</sup> data is for 2004; <sup>6</sup> data is for 2003.

Source: Key Indicators of the Labour Market database, ILO (except for the United States, which is based on data from the OECD employment database).

**Table 2.2. Average, usual part-time hours worked in main job, 2011**

Country	Women (%)	Men (%)	All (%)
Belgium	20.1	18.7	19.8
France	19.5	18.7	19.3
Turkey	18.5	19.3	18.8
Korea	18.3	19.3	18.7
Poland	19.0	18.1	18.7
Ireland	18.6	18.6	18.6
Spain	18.1	17.6	18.0
Mexico	16.8	18.1	17.4
United Kingdom	17.6	16.8	17.4
Finland	17.1	16.2	16.7
Australia	16.4	16.0	16.3
Sweden	16.8	15.4	16.3
Norway	16.9	14.4	16.1
Netherlands	16.9	13.1	15.9
New Zealand	15.9	15.2	15.7
Germany	16.1	13.7	15.6
Portugal	15.0	14.9	15.0
Denmark	14.8	12.7	14.0
Japan	n/a	n/a	n/a
United States	n/a	n/a	n/a
Canada	n/a	n/a	n/a

Note: Data are taken from the Labour Force Survey for each country with the exception of Ireland, where data is taken from the Quarterly National Household Survey, and Korea, where data is taken from the Economically Active Population Survey.

See [http://www.oecd.org/els/employmentpoliciesanddata/LFSNOTES\\_SOURCES.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/els/employmentpoliciesanddata/LFSNOTES_SOURCES.pdf) for more detail.

Source: OECD Employment database.

## 2.2 Part-time work and gender equality issues

The rate of part-time working is higher for employed women than men (Table 1.1) and women constitute the majority of part-timers in every country for which information is available, except in Trinidad and Tobago, Thailand and Indonesia (Table 2.3). Part-time employment is less female-dominated in some countries, for example less than 70 per cent in South Africa, Poland, Turkey, Chile, Mexico, some of the Nordic countries and the United States. The female share falls below 60 per cent in Korea and several other countries. The male share of part-time work has been increasing in some countries, such as the United Kingdom (now at 25 per cent), Mexico (now at 43 per cent), Canada (now at 33 cent) and Japan (29 per cent).



**Table 2.3. The percentage of part-timers who are women, 2011**

Country	% of part-timers who are women
The Netherlands, Germany, Belgium	>80
Australia, France, Spain, Ireland, UK, New Zealand	76–80
Japan, Norway, Canada, Brazil <sup>1</sup>	70–75
South Africa, Finland, Poland, Turkey, Chile, Mexico, Sweden, Denmark, USA <sup>2</sup>	60–70
Korea, Portugal, Zimbabwe <sup>3</sup>	50–60
Thailand, <sup>4</sup> Trinidad & Tobago, <sup>5</sup> Indonesia <sup>6</sup>	<50

Note: Part-time hours are defined as 30 or less in all countries except for: Indonesia (defined as 35 or less); Trinidad and Tobago (defined as 32 or less) and Zimbabwe (defined as 25 or less).

<sup>1</sup>data is for 2009; <sup>2</sup> based on data from the OECD; <sup>3</sup> data is for 2004; <sup>4</sup> data is for 2000; <sup>5</sup> data is for 2002; <sup>6</sup> data is for 2003.

Source: Key Indicators of the Labour Market database, ILO (except for the United States, which is based on data from the OECD employment database).

In countries where part-time employment is less female-dominated this is largely due to the age-related work patterns of men (Table 2.4). In all countries the rate of part-time working for men is highest for the youngest (under 25 years) and oldest labour market participants (65+ years), largely associated with labour market entry (including employment while a student) and retirement. It is still rare for men to opt for part-time employment as a means of combining it with family care responsibilities during their core working years. In contrast, in many countries at least one fifth of employed women aged 25–55 years are part-time workers, which exceeds the rate for younger women in some countries (for example France, Germany, Japan, Mexico). In many countries the rate of part-time work is higher still for older women in employment.

The increased involvement of men in part-time employment is associated with an evolving demographic profile for them and a sharp rise in involuntary part-time work in the current economic recession. In some countries young workers constitute a significant proportion of part-timers, due to an expansion of employment of students plus involuntary part-time employment when youth unemployment rates are high. In many OECD countries there has been an increase in part-time work among older workers associated in part with measures to prolong working life, such as flexible retirement schemes (Eurofound report cite, OECD, 2006).

**Table 2.4. The rate of part-time employment by age group for employed women and men, 2011**

Country	Age group											
	15–24			25–54			55–64			65+		
	M	W	All	M	W	All	M	W	All	M	W	All
Australia	35.1	52.1	43.4	6.7	33.8	19.0	12.9	39.9	24.8	39.6	61.5	47.0
France	10.7	26.4	17.6	4.5	20.6	12.1	9.1	27.2	17.9	41.1	54.1	46.4
Germany	15.1	24.1	19.3	5.8	38.3	20.9	8.9	42.6	24.1	61.1	79.0	67.7
Japan	26.6	32.3	29.5	4.5	30.6	15.4	11.1	41.8	23.6	35.8	53.4	42.7
Mexico	19.1	28.9	22.6	9.3	25.5	15.7	13.7	36.0	21.3	25.0	45.2	30.8
Netherlands	57.9	73.8	65.8	6.8	55.7	29.7	26.5	66.7	37.5	73.9	90.7	79.0
Norway	36.0	63.0	49.3	5.0	21.6	12.9	10.9	33.0	21.3	36.8	60.5	46.2
Poland	10.4	15.9	12.6	2.9	10.3	6.3	8.0	21.2	13.2	45.0	56.6	49.5
Spain	23.2	39.3	31.1	4.5	20.7	11.8	3.8	20.8	10.8	23.4	32.2	27.3
Sweden	26.5	47.0	36.6	4.8	12.2	8.3	10.2	18.3	14.1	60.9	75.5	65.9
United Kingdom	28.7	45.7	37.0	6.2	35.6	20.0	15.1	46.2	29.1	54.5	76.4	63.2
United States	30.3	39.0	34.6	3.8	12.2	7.8	5.4	14.9	10.3	24.8	33.4	28.9
New Zealand	30.9	49.3	39.6	5.3	29.4	16.7	10.1	34.4	21.4	33.9	63.3	45.4
Ireland	37.0	51.0	44.5	9.3	35.3	22.1	14.8	53.0	32.4	32.9	74.3	47.3
Belgium	12.2	30.9	20.8	5.2	30.8	17.2	11.7	44.3	25.4	66.5	71.6	68.2
Canada	40.6	55.6	48.1	6.1	19.8	12.8	11.6	27.8	19.4	38.2	55.8	44.9
Denmark	51.0	68.5	59.7	5.9	15.2	10.3	8.9	21.4	14.7	48.4	68.4	54.9
Portugal	10.7	20.2	15.0	3.8	9.3	6.5	13.6	25.5	19.2	54.6	66.0	58.8
Finland	25.8	42.1	34.2	4.9	9.8	7.2	14.3	20.4	17.4	53.3	62.0	56.5
Korea	26.0	26.5	26.3	7.0	15.2	10.3	12.4	18.8	14.9	30.9	41.0	35.3
Turkey	8.5	20.1	12.4	4.6	23.2	9.8	15.9	37.1	22.1	29.4	47.4	34.7
Brazil*	17.0	26.9	21.0	6.1	25.1	14.5	12.5	41.4	24.0	35.7	69.8	47.5
Chile	20.0	31.0	24.2	8.1	22.3	14.0	12.9	31.2	19.6	29.4	47.1	34.6

\*Data are for 2009

Source: OECD Employment database.

Most part-time workers are women with care responsibilities for children, elderly parents or other adult relatives. In part, this is associated with gender inequalities in family roles, which assigns the primary responsibilities for domestic work and raising children to women, thereby reducing their availability for full-time employment. Women are also employed part-time for other reasons – on an involuntary basis because they could not find full-time employment, or they are students, or have ill-health – but, in nearly every country, they are more likely than men to take part-time employment because of family care responsibilities.

There are two problems from a gender equality perspective. Firstly, women select part-time work in the context of limited work-family reconciliation options due to the combination of gender disparity in care responsibilities and inadequate child and elderly care services. Thus, many mothers are obliged to work part-time if there is a lack of access to affordable, good quality childcare and/or school hours are short or irregular. The rate of part-time working among employed women is generally greater in OECD countries with significantly higher childcare costs (OECD, 2012). Secondly, many part-time jobs are of poor quality. Switching from full- to part-time work may involve downward mobility if a job change is required in order to secure reduced working hours. Or, occupational positions may be maintained, but with reduced prospects for career advancement. That women are more likely than men to switch to part-time employment because of childcare responsibilities is, in part, due to widespread

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perceptions, valid or not, that it is easier, more acceptable at the workplace and less costly in career terms for them (OECD, 2007).

Thus, an expansion of part-time employment opportunities is one way to increase the employment rate for women in some societies, which can help to change norms and expectations concerning their roles. But, part-time employment provides only a weak challenge to the traditional gender division of labour. It may even reinforce or increase gender inequalities if it simply serves to channel women into low-paid jobs or confines them to the lower rungs of professional career ladders. In some countries a sizeable proportion of women remain in part-time employment long after the demands of raising young children have diminished. This is partly because demands on their time change to meet the needs of older children, or care responsibilities for ageing parents start to increase once women enter their forties and fifties. However, it may also be because women, who are employed part-time at this stage in their life, are no longer willing or able to obtain full-time employment. This can have adverse longer-term effects on their individual career prospects, earnings and retirement income (see Chapter three). Conversely, in countries where full-time employment has become the established norm for women, a reduction to part-time hours may be neither affordable nor desirable for many households.

Hence, if part-time employment is promoted as a means to facilitate work-family reconciliation and enhance work-life balance more generally, it is important that this policy is designed in a way that promotes gender equality. This means an integrated package of policy measures is needed that:

- enhances the quality of part-time working arrangements;
- provides other working time options (including parental leave, flexitime, shorter full-time hours) and infrastructure (including child and elderly care services) so that men and women have more options to organize their lives.

It is when both of these elements are in place that part-time employment is more likely to make a positive contribution to the progression of gender equality in the labour market and in family life. Without an integrated policy approach an expansion of part-time work fuels gender inequalities.

### **2.3 Government policies towards part-time work**

Most of the growth in part-time work since the 1980s has been due to labour supply changes rather than demand-side developments, such as service sector growth or regulatory reform to facilitate its use. Governments have increasingly sought to promote part-time work as a tool to raise the labour market participation rate of women with young children, individuals with health problems and older workers (OECD, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2012). However, there is still a debate, which emerged in the 1980s (for example OECD, 1983), as to whether its expansion is a desirable trend or not.

This expansion has generally served to integrate a larger proportion of the population into employment. The OECD countries with a high rate of part-time work have lower inactivity rates and higher employment rates, even if the latter is weaker when the full-time equivalent employment rate is calculated. More than half of the growth in part-time work in Western Europe and the United States is due to the increased labour market participation of women (Buddelmeyer et al., 2008 cited in OECD, 2010). However, there may be some substitution effect for mothers who might otherwise have sought full-time employment, thus reducing aggregate labour supply. This may result in a lower contribution to the tax base and an increased pressure on welfare expenditure for social assistance to tackle poverty among retired and low-income working households (OECD, 2010).

While part-time work has expanded in many countries, it has occurred in the context of national differences in whether government policy promoted part-time work per se and, if so, by what means, as well as the nature of part-time employment that they cultivated (Bosch et al., 1994; Tilly, 1996; OECD, 1998, Bosch, 1999, Vosko, 2009). This can be illustrated with the following examples from North America, Australia, Europe and Asia.

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In North America, the United States did not promote part-time employment as actively as many European countries in the post 1970 period – nor did it emphasize shorter hours full-time employment. Rather, it stressed having every available adult engaged in paid employment, preferably full-time, while still expecting women to retain the main responsibility for domestic and childcare (Appelbaum, 2002). Over this period, part-time employment declined in the United States, unlike in most other industrialized countries. Instead, flexitime or flexible scheduling increased, particularly common among women in occupations with high levels of socially recognized skills. However, when these schedules are combined with long hours of work they can create conflict and stress for workers with care responsibilities (Fagan et al., 2012).

Part-time employment expanded in Canada over the same period, also in the context of a limited supply of high quality public childcare. Following a federal commission of inquiry into part-time employment in 1983, several provincial governments initiated measures to improve its quality. These measures, combined with women’s growing militancy in public sector unions, led to a marked improvement in the quality in the public sector, making it a primary site of secure (i.e. permanent) part-time jobs for women.

In Australia, increasing recognition from the 1980s onwards that part-time casual employment was both gendered and precarious, led unions, union federations and NGOs to step up efforts to dislodge the connection between part-time and casual employment. The strategies pursued included challenging employer and industry-level practices, engaging in community-based campaigns and pursuing across-the-board legal changes through test-cases then permissible under the industrial relations machinery of the arbitral system. Within each strategy, their approach was two pronged: to confine casual employment to intermittent and irregular employment; and, to limit labour market insecurity among part-time workers (casuals) by increasing possibilities for part-time permanent employment (see Vosko, 2009, p.109 for details). Subsequent efforts to promote quality part-time work succeeded in the adoption of guidelines signed by the federal government and social partners in the Australian Federal Province of Victoria in the early 2000s (Charlesworth et al., 2002).

Some EU member States actively promoted part-time work as a means of raising women’s employment rates. The comparative example of the Netherlands and the United Kingdom – two European countries with a high incidence of part-time work and subject to a shared EU regulatory framework – illustrate the national differences in its quality, resulting from different European government policy trajectories during the 1980s and 1990s (Fagan et al., 1998). The part-time work that has developed in these two countries has occurred in the context of differences in government policies concerning employment and labour market flexibility, legal frameworks and collective bargaining agendas.

Part-time employment expanded in the United Kingdom in the context of a political emphasis on flexibility through labour market deregulation. Initially, few measures were introduced to regulate its conditions. Much of what emerged involved short hours, low pay and insecurity in routine service jobs, largely taken by mothers with limited childcare services available and preferably conducive to school hours; this premised on being a secondary wage to supplement the household income. The regulatory protection offered in the United Kingdom has increased, but remains much more limited (in both statute and collective bargaining coverage) than in the Netherlands. The penalty incurred through part-time employment is severe in the United Kingdom: there is a pronounced hourly pay gap between full- and part-time workers, and a period of part-time employment has a prolonged scarring effect on subsequent pay rates and labour market advancement (Francesconi and Gosling, 2005). In contrast, the Netherlands took a “two-track” policy push towards promoting part-time employment, while also enhancing its quality through extending equal treatment and related regulatory mechanisms. The Dutch model focussed on the “one and a half earner” model of dual-earner couples (or two three-quarter jobs) to enable both women and men to increase or reduce their hours for caring (Burri, 2006). The main result was a dramatic increase in the employment rate of Dutch women via part-time jobs; although it has also become increasingly common for Dutch men to work part-time, or compressed hours, conducive to care responsibilities. The quality of part-time work is generally better in the Netherlands compared to the United Kingdom on most levels. The Dutch model has emerged as one of the better practice models across Europe in terms of: implementation of the principle of equal

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treatment; penetration into higher occupational levels and organizational hierarchies; and, regulations giving employees the right to request an individual adjustment between full- and part-time working (Fagan and Ward, 2003; Yerkes and Visser, 2006; Anxo et al., 2007a).

Some European governments have been less concerned to promote part-time work or, have actively resisted it. In France, the government and the unions focussed on reducing full-time hours rather than part-time work, partly as a way to promote a more equitable distribution of paid work among men and women. This policy, combined with a comprehensive public childcare system, meant that many women, particularly those with young children, sought full-time jobs involving shorter hours to avoid the labour market peripheralization associated with part-time employment. In Denmark and Sweden, rates of part-time employment remained stable or fell, and Denmark experienced some convergence in the working hours of part- and full-time workers through a policy focussing on making full-time hours shorter or more flexible. There was little development of part-time employment in Italy or Spain due to a combination of trade union opposition and various prohibitions and disincentives created by the formulation of labour law and social security eligibility conditions (Cebrián et al, 2003). Similarly, in many of the post-Communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe there has been a long tradition of full-time employment for both men and women, underwritten by labour law regulations and social protection systems that support full-time working arrangements and discourage part-time employment (Anxo et al., 2007).

Japan stands out from other East Asian countries for its relatively high level of part-time working in the formal labour market (Chang and England, 2011). Lee and Eyraud's (2008) study of flexible working in the Asia and Pacific Rim underlines the particularities of part-time work in Japan compared to its neighbours. For example, an increase in non-standard working in Korea derived from temporary employment during the 1990s so that, by 2005, part-time work still only accounted for 7 per cent of employment. By comparison, in Japan, a similar steady increase in non-standard working occurred largely through part-time work, considered to be a subordinate status rather than a form of employment with reduced hours (see Box 2.1).

Even though South Korea has a relatively low level of part-time working (see Box 2.2), it is one of the pioneers in East Asia for its regulation, being one of the few countries to enact legislation banning discrimination against part-time workers (McCann, 2010). In 2006, legislation was introduced based on the principle of "equal treatment", as part of a batch of new laws to protect the position of non-standard workers, after many years of negotiations with social partners had failed to produce a negotiated pact. Lee and Yoo (2008), argue that the legislation was introduced as a result of the "unreasonable" discrimination faced by non-standard workers in the country, including part-timers. McCann draws parallels between this innovation in the Korean legislative framework and that first introduced in the Netherlands to improve the situation of part-time workers there. The promotion of part-time employment was one element of the Korean 2010 job strategy focussing on increasing the labour force participation and skills of women and young workers (The World Bank, 2012). One of the strategic objectives was to develop the option of permanent part-time jobs. This would allow parents to work and care for their children, seen as particularly important for sectors suffering from labour shortages and unable to fill full-time jobs.

### Box 2.1 Part-time work in Japan

The proportion of part-time workers in Japan has risen in recent years with an increasing number playing core roles in the workplace, as well as in the more conventional auxiliary role of part-timers (The Japanese Institute for Labour Policy and Training, 2012).

A number of studies have highlighted both the relatively poor working conditions and the gender dimension of part-time working in Japan (Wakisaka and Bae, 1998; Kamo, 2010). As elsewhere in the world, the poorer working conditions often associated with part-time work are linked to the particular labour supply groups that occupy such jobs. In Japan, this association is underlined by the use of the term “paata”, meaning married female employee. While “paata” may signify a part-time worker, it does not necessarily mean shorter hours as many work hours often associated with full-timers. Chang and England (2011) found that many of these non-regular job holders worked more than 40 hours per week. There has also been a growth in non-scheduled hours for part-time workers – there was a 40 per cent expansion in non-scheduled working hours for part-timers between 1993 and 2005, compared to less than 10 per cent for full-timers (Kubo, 2008). The traditional gendered division of labour in Japan means that women often leave work at marriage or the birth of a child and then return as part-time workers with low incomes, limited job security and few benefits (Kamo, 2010).

For student part-time workers the term “arubaito” is used. However, the collapse of the bubble economy in the 1990s has led to the increased use of recruitment by flexible contract for young people in Japan, including in part-time work (OECD, 2008:50). These young workers, known as “freeters” tend to have lower qualifications and fewer labour market resources than graduates recruited to the internal labour market system, but this type of contract is also linked to occupations characterized by intermittent work and lengthy trial periods (Honda, 2005). Oshio and Oishi (2004) find that the proportion of men working part-time rises sharply after retirement at the age of 60, typically to supplement their pension, while the opposite pattern applies for women. Older workers employed part-time are concentrated in jobs in the secondary labour market with lower wages and inferior working conditions.

There have been several policy initiatives that aim to improve the quality of part-time employment. In 1993, a specific measure on part-time work – the Guidelines for Part-Time Employment – was introduced. This was a non-binding regulation that encompassed several recommendations for the working conditions of part-timers, including that their treatment and working conditions be the same as those of full-timers; that employers endeavour to reach a “balance” in the working conditions of part- and full-time workers; and that part-timers performing the same work as full-timers should be treated equally with respect to bonuses and retirement pay. The Guidelines also suggested that employers should establish a procedure that enabled part-timers to enter full-time posts, as well as opportunities for education, training and skills development. However, due to their non-binding status, the Guidelines were not very effective (McCann, 2008). By 2007 however, they were converted into a legally binding act with the revised version of the Part Time Work Act passed on 1 April 2008. This ensured equal treatment between part-time and regular workers based on the work that they actually do. The Act also promoted part-timers’ movement into regular employment and so it helped to develop an employment environment in which part-timers could exhibit their skills and abilities more effectively (The Japanese Institute for Labour Policy and Training, 2012).

The recognition that part-time work is predominantly performed by women is acknowledged in Japanese policy, including as part of the recent interest in work/family measures fuelled by concern about the country’s low birth rates. These issues have also started to emerge in respect to overtime pay - in a debate over whether part-timers should have a right to pay premiums for additional hours worked prior to the overtime threshold for full-time work. This understanding of part-time work as a way to combine paid labour with family obligations was also present in the *Guidelines* and Revised Part Time Work Act discussed above, which suggests employers should give adequate consideration to the position of part-timers when scheduling working hours (McCann, 2008).

Since the implementation of the revised Part Time Work Act, Equal Opportunities offices in Prefectural Labour Bureaus across Japan provide consultation and support for part-timers, including administrative guidance, arranging visits to businesses and resolving disputes between workers and employers. Experts in personnel and labour management are deployed to these offices to give advice about ways of implementing balanced treatment between part-time workers and regular workers. Advice to enable companies to further promote a switch to

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regular employee status among part-time workers is also provided, as well as support for employment management improvement initiatives by employers, in line with the revised Part-time Work Act. Subsidies are provided to employers to help them achieve balanced treatment for part-timers, as well as switches to regular employment (The Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training, 2012).

### **Box 2.2 Part-time work in South Korea**

The rate of part-time working is much lower for women in South Korea compared to Japan, despite similar levels of participation on the labour market and similar growth rates in female participation to those observed in other more developed South East Asian countries (World Bank, 2013). Nevertheless, part-time work remains more common among employed women and men (Lee and Yoo, 2008).

One of the explanatory factors for the low rate of part-time working is that, unlike in Japan, part-time work in South Korea has not benefited from a tax and social security system that encourages women as second earners to take up relatively low-paid work (Wakisaka and Bae, 1998). Another important factor is the differing workforce strategies of large and small firms in South Korea. Wakisaka and Bae (1998) find a greater concentration of part-time workers in small companies than in Japan, a result that may help explain the less widespread use of these contracts. Lee and Yoo (2008), report an employer reluctance to use flexible working time arrangements more generally in South Korea. This is in contrast to Japan despite the rather similar models on which the standard employment relationship is based – lifetime working, seniority-based wages, and promotion based on length of service (McCann, 2008).

It is also important to look at the labour supply side of the equation since the proportion of Korean part-timers seeking longer hours or another job is relatively high, reflecting a limited appetite for this kind of working according to the 2005 South Korean Supplement Survey of the Monthly Economically Active Population Survey (reported by Lee and Eyraud, 2008). The survey results demonstrate part-timers to be among the least satisfied workers. Around a third of part-timers were in such work as a result of being unable to find other work, but this share is slightly lower than for other non-standard forms of work. Only 15 per cent of part-time workers said they worked on this basis due to family reasons, whereas 20 per cent worked part-time because they were students. Dissatisfaction is higher for male part-timers, while women are more likely to explain they work part-time due to family reasons (Wakisaka and Bae, 1998). As in Japan there has also been an expansion of part-time work among younger cohorts as young people in education seek to combine studies and part-time working.

## **2.4 Part-time work and the informal and formal economy in developing countries**

For many developing countries, a sensible discussion about part-time employment cannot take place without considering the context of high levels of informal employment (Cardero and Espinosa, 2010). In Latin America, for example, the rate of informal employment ranges from 36 per cent (Chile) to over 70 cent (Bolivia).

In Latin America a large and, in many countries, a growing proportion of the workforce is in part-time work, albeit with longer working hours than those in European countries. The share of employed women working part-time (i.e. less than 40 hours a week) in Latin America has increased from 33 per cent in the mid-1990s to 43 per cent in the early 2000s. Part time is much more prevalent among women. (López Bóo et al., 2010). Formal sector part-time employment does exist and tends to be concentrated among women, young people and in public services (see Saavedra Martínez, 2011 for metropolitan Lima, Peru). While conditions in part-time employment in parts of the formal sector may be relatively advantageous (García Guzmán, 2009), in general it is strongly associated with working in the informal sector in Latin America; shown for example in Gasparini and Tornarolli's (2009) analysis of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela in the mid-1990s and 2003–04.

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A study of the Buenos Aires metropolitan area in 2005 showed that half of all part-time work was informal. A majority of workers also worked at productive units operating within the formal economy, and that, of all informal workers working in formal and informal productive units, 41 and 37 per cent respectively, worked part-time (MTRA and World Bank, 2008). In this context, it is perhaps not surprising that one of the very few studies to look at part-time workers in the Latin American context (a study of part-time work, gender and job satisfaction in Honduras), shows higher rates of job satisfaction among full-time female workers than their part-time counterparts and an overall preference for full-time employment with part-time employment a “luxury consumption” that few can afford and “that working full-time is valued because it allows increasing per capita household income” (López Boo et al., 2010, 1567).

Chile is one of the Latin American countries where there has been pronounced growth in the rate of part-time work (see Section 2.1). Most of the part-time employment is informal, more so than for full-time employment (Box 2.3).

### **Box 2.3 Part-time work in Chile**

In 2006, 16 per cent of employment was part-time; 24.6 per cent of women and 10.7 per cent of men had part-time jobs (Rau, 2010), and women occupied 59 per cent of part-time employment. Informality for part-timers was very high and higher than for full-timers: less than half (48.3 per cent) of part-time employees had an employment contract and a slightly lower proportion (47.2 per cent) were paying social security contributions. Only 26.9 per cent had the right to unemployment benefit. The rate of poverty among part-timers was 10.7 per cent, compared to 7.4 per cent among full-timers. However, part-timers earned more per hour than full-timers. According to human resource managers, they were paid more to make these types of jobs more attractive, especially when the workers were needed during weekends.

Much of the part-time employment in Chile is involuntary; a 2002 study estimated that 44 per cent of men and 56 per cent of women employed part-time were doing so involuntarily (Díaz, 2004). In order to reduce the barriers to the expansion of voluntary part-time work in Chile, Rau (2010) suggests that compulsory nursery facilities by employers should not be tied to the number of women in the workforce (currently the requirement comes into force when there are 20 women in the workplace), given that most part-timers are female. He also recommends a State transport subsidy for part-time workers on the basis that transport costs can represent 9 per cent of the net wage in Santiago de Chile, whereas for a full-time worker the figure is 6.5 per cent. He further suggests the regulation which protects Sunday as a rest day should be relaxed for part-timers. However, he argues that the biggest barrier to the expansion of part-time work is the employers’ negative attitude to it as they associate it with low commitment and high absence rates.

In Mexico between 1991 and 2009 the informal economy created 9 million jobs and the formal economy only 4.4 million, which deepened the segmentation of the labour market, with informal employment offering precarious wages, inferior working conditions and no social protection (Miranda González et al., 2011). A number of features of the Mexican labour market highlighted by Raphael de la Madrid (2012), operate as barriers to the expansion of decent part-time work. These include: the very limited government enforcement of labour and social security law, a common problem in the Latin American region, according to Montaña (2010); the continuing extensive use of child labour; the lack of regulation of domestic labour; and, the extended and permitted practice of pregnancy testing for job candidates. Taken together, the combination of a lack of regulations of labour standards, sex discrimination and widespread child labour means there is little to encourage or compel employers to create good quality part-time jobs.

Thus, on one level it is true that part-time work is common in Latin America. In Argentina nearly half of all women’s jobs, and a fifth of men’s were part-time in 2006 (Cristini and Bermudez, 2007). In Mexico, 36.3 per cent of women and 20.1 per cent of men worked less than 35 hours a week in 2010 according to the Women’s National Institute figures (Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres, 2012), which



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have not changed substantially since 2006 (Garcia Guzman, 2009).<sup>3</sup> However, working short hours is a symptom of underemployment, rather than a choice. Women in part-time work are more likely to be core age than men, for whom this is concentrated among those under 19 and over 60 years old (for Mexico, see Chávez Hoyos, 2010).

In this context, and given the low degree of translation into labour law of international standards (for Mexico, see Fondevila, 2010), the issue of part-time employment receives less prominence in policy debates in Latin America in comparison to its high profile in European debates. This is illustrated by the fact that it is not addressed in reports and documents generated by organizations, such as the Women's National Institute or the National Council for the Prevention of Discrimination (created in Mexico in 2001 and 2003 respectively); it is not a central institutional concern and, as Garcia Guzman (2009) argues, empirical studies of the precariousness characterizing part-time work remain scarce.

Latin American countries' efforts to deregulate the labour market in the 1990s deepened inequalities. This exposed the most vulnerable groups to less protection and worse wage and working conditions, fostering the informal economy growth, particularly in times of economic downturn (Pautassi and Gherardi, 2010). These initiatives were largely abandoned, or reversed, in many other Latin American countries in the first decade of the 2000s. Latin America is the only region in the developing world where the informal economy is now beginning to decline, notably in Brazil.

China is another example of an economy where the little part-time work that exists is closely connected with the informal economy (Box 2.4). Policy developments have been more focused on the challenges of informalization rather than shorter working hours per se. Thus, where part-timers have benefited from labour legislation it has tended to be indirectly and as a result of the changes in policy focus towards informal workers. For example, a regulation setting minimum wages distinguished between employees paid on an hourly and monthly basis and so provided a floor for wages for part-time work (Cooke, 2008 cited by Zhou, 2012).

#### **Box 2.4 Part-time work in China**

Part-time work plays a rather limited role in the labour market. Indeed, in their review of flexible working, Chen and Hou (2010) make no explicit reference to part-time work. In Zhou's (2012) recent review, an attempt is made to estimate the size of the part-time work force. One of the challenges in producing such an estimate is the limited availability of data disaggregated by different forms of non-standard work categories. Wu and Cai (2006) estimate that around 49 per cent of the urban workforce can be categorized as part of the informal economy, but they do not include a separate category for part-time work.<sup>4</sup> Using the 2006 China General Social Survey, Zhou

<sup>3</sup> These figures are higher than those presented in Table 2.1, but come from different sources.

<sup>4</sup> Wu and Cai (2010) use the following categories: (a) employees hired without a labour contract; (b) dispatch workers, domestic workers and hourly workers; (c) community service workers without a work contract; (d) temporary workers; (e) paid helpers in family businesses or self-employed businesses; (f) workers hired by individual business owners (ge ti hu); (g) non-standard workers in formal sector enterprises (dispatch workers, agency workers and casual workers); and, (h) individual business owners.

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(2012) suggests that 7.9 per cent of urban employees have a part-time job. Part of the explanation for the limited availability of data on such working forms comes from the relatively recent transition from a planned economy where “regular full-time jobs that guarantee lifelong employment with a single employer was the main work arrangement for most urban workers” (op cit.,2).

Long hours of work are characteristic of working life in China. Chen and Hou (2010) suggest that less than 10 per cent of those in employment work less than 40 hours per week. Rather than a strong distinction in formal working hours, gender differences appear to be stronger in terms of the extent of informalization – for example, female workers are less likely to have a written contract, have shorter contract length and lower employment stability.

In China, the urban-rural dimension plays an important role in relation to informalization with the “hu ko” system shaping which households can register in urban areas and thus work formally (Zhou, 2012). This segmentation between registered and unregistered workers shapes inequalities, including for working hours, with rural migrant workers having longer hours as well as lower pay, and more limited access to social insurance and other fringe benefits compared to urban workers (Chen and Hou, 2010). The strong urban-rural split is also clear with working hours much longer among rural workers – 84 per cent working more than 44 hours per week compared to 54 per cent of workers registered in urban areas (op cit. Table 5).

A final example is Indonesia, where part-time employment, defined as less than 35 hours per week, has been growing and has helped to expand employment opportunities and reduce unemployment. However, many part-timers are under-employed.

#### **Box 2.5 Part-time work in Indonesia**

The rate of part-time working (less than 35 hours per week) has risen gradually to 19.4 per cent of the employed population in August 2012, up from 16.7 per cent in 2010, and 15.7 per cent in 2008. While time-related underemployment (employed less than 35 hours and willing to work additional hours) has declined, many part-timers are still under-employed. Part-time employment and underemployment are more common among women than men and in rural than in urban areas. While part-time employment can provide a stepping stone into more permanent, full-time employment for some workers, or a means of gaining greater work-life balance, in Indonesia, for many it is associated with economic uncertainties as employers use part-timers to reduce labour costs in order to cope with fluctuations in demand.

Source: Allen (2012).

## **2.5 Employers’ policies and the conditions of part-time work**

The personnel and working-time policies that employers operate within national policy frameworks determine the amount and quality of part-time jobs available. According to labour market dualism and segmentation theory, the basic distinction is whether the type of part-time employment available is marginalized or integrated: is it used largely as a secondary form of non-standard employment or does it integrate and retain workers in the primary or core workforce (Fagan and O’Reilly, 1998).

Part-time working is used by employers for three different reasons:

- It may be used as a personnel recruitment and retention strategy attuned to workers’ working-time preferences, perhaps in connection with an equal opportunities policy, where the impetus is to design jobs which retain workers who do not want full-time hours. This is the basis for an integration strategy.

- It can provide optimal staffing and operational flexibility to get a better match between labour and variation in labour demand across the day, week or season. This may support either integration or marginalization, depending on the details of how the work and pathways for advancement are organized.
- It may be used as a means to create a secondary, cheaper and more precarious pool of workers if the creation of part-time jobs is used to generate low-paid, deskilled job fractions and/or to circumvent regulations and collective agreements that protect wages and other working conditions for full-timers. This is the basis for a marginalization strategy.

The better quality part-time jobs are usually generated from a “retention” strategy. In many countries, this better quality form of part-time employment constitutes a small proportion of the part-time jobs available, as argued, for example, by Tilly (1992, 1996) in his analysis of the United States. An additional complexity is, it may not be part-time work *per se* that is a secondary form of employment, but a period of part-time employment may lead to an accumulation of disadvantages, impacting on the subsequent labour market trajectory, for example reduced training opportunities or promotion only being offered to full-timers.

The quality of part-time employment varies within and across countries. Whether employers primarily use part-time work as a retention strategy, an optimal staffing or secondary form of employment depends on the operational, product and labour market conditions and the regulatory framework in which they operate. This is shown, for example for the United States (Tilly, 1996; Houseman and Osawa, 2003; Kalleberg, 2003, 2000b, 2011), for Japan (Houseman and Osawa, 1998), Australia (Charlesworth and Chalmers, 2005; Charlesworth and Whittenbury, 2007; Pocock et al., 2012) and, in comparative analysis of European firms (Allart and Bellman, 2007, Bosch and Lehndorff, 2005). In a European establishment survey one third of employers reported that economic or organizational needs were the main reasons for using part-time work. For the rest, employees’ wishes, or a combination of business needs and employees’ wishes, were the primary rationale (Eurofound, 2007). Business was the predominant reason in small establishments, and in certain service sectors. Where part-time work was used primarily for organizational needs, there was a higher incidence of practices less compatible with “work-life balance” (working at night, at week-ends, changeable hours and limited scope for employees to adapt their work schedules).

Ulrich and Zilberman’s (2007) study of France, provides an example of the variation of part-time work within a country. They identified six different categories of part-time workers from a sample of over 21,000 employees, differentiated by the type of working-time schedule and job involved, and the workers’ demographic and domestic characteristics (Table 2.5). This ranged from women, who typically worked four days a week in secure employment while raising young children, through to younger men and women with shorter, less regular hours in lower-skilled and less secure employment.

**Table 2.5. Typical categories of part-time work in France**

	Percentage of part-time jobs	Characteristics
Part-time work to cope with childcare responsibilities	31	Long and regular hours (4 days a week, ~30hrs)* with no unsociable hours, typically in public sector, administration and banks. Usually with two children, aged 30–49 years.
Part-time work in health, education and commerce	19	Long but irregular hours (4 days a week, ~30hrs), often at weekend or evenings, typically in public hospitals. Usually younger workers in established couples.
Short part-time jobs with regular hours in services to households	22	Short hours, typically in services to households such as cleaning. Usually older workers without children and non-working partner.
Part-time work based	9	Working 5–6 days per week, medium to long hours (21–30hrs),

on having multiple employers		often involving both Saturday and Sunday. Often low-skilled work. Usually without children.
Part-time work based on temporary contracts	14	Short hours work (less than 18 hours) based on a limited number of days (3 or less) involving unsociable working times. Usually younger workers 15-29 years living in parental home, often men.
Assisted part-time contracts	5	Short hours work (18–21 hours) based on a 5-day week and not involving unsociable working hours. In sectors such as public administration, health, manual work and health promotion. Usually younger workers 15–29 years living with parents, often men.

Note : \* the four-day school week in France has allowed women to work four longer days, but also required them to take care of their children on Wednesdays or find other alternatives.

Source: Ulrike and Zimmerman 2007.

## 2.6 Concluding summary

This chapter has identified seven pertinent issues concerning the quality of part-time employment. First, there is a labour market mismatch between the preferences for, and the availability of, part-time work, and it is important to differentiate between voluntary and involuntary part-time work. The second, and related issue, is that many part-time jobs are of poor quality. Third, the definition and incidence of part-time employment varies nationally, as does the available information. Fourth, part-time employment is largely undertaken by women with family responsibilities, which can reinforce gender inequalities, unless wider measures are put in place to enhance quality and to provide other working time options and infrastructure. Fifth, government policies have shaped the quality of part-time work that has emerged in different countries. Sixth, in many developing countries part-time employment is strongly associated with working in the informal sector, and so its quality is closely bound up with measures directed at improving working conditions and social protection. The seventh, and final point, is that employers use part-time employment to retain certain categories of workers: by responding to their expressed working-time preferences; to secure optimal staffing and operational flexibility; or, to create a secondary, cheaper and more precarious pool of workers. The better quality part-time jobs are usually generated from a “retention” strategy.

In the next chapter, the employment conditions of part-time workers are examined in more detail.

## 3. The employment conditions of part-time workers and the state-of-play in the implementation of equal treatment principles

As outlined in the introduction, there are differences in the quality of part-time work between firms and across countries. Where part-time employment is marginalized as a secondary form of employment, there are penalties incurred in the form of lower hourly pay rates and inferior social protection or opportunities for progression over a working life. Conversely, part-time employment can be considered to be integrated alongside full-time employment when the difference between them is simply that of reduced hours of work. It is this latter scenario of integration that offers the greater prospect of opportunities for good quality part-time work (on the assumption that at least some of the full-time employment available is of a decent standard).

In many countries, particularly those in the developed regions, labour market and social policy frameworks have been reformed to facilitate part-time employment and to improve its quality. A review by the OECD concludes that:

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Since the late 1990s, three-quarters of OECD countries have made changes to working-time regulations to require that part-time and full-time workers receive comparable wages and working conditions and/or made it easier for workers to move between full-time and part-time work as their personal situation changes. Many countries have also eased restrictions on work for recipients of unemployment, disability or social assistance benefits by allowing them to earn more from part-time work before their benefits are reduced or cut altogether. Part-time work, alongside job search and participation in active labour market programmes, is increasingly encouraged as part of a strategy to ‘activate’ jobseekers back into work (OECD, 2010, p. 212).

In this chapter, the equal treatment principle and the progress made in the basic implementation of it is outlined (Section 2.1). The situation of part-timers in relation to social security (Section 2.2), and the legislation giving employees the right to request part-time hours in some countries is then assessed (Section 2.3). Section 2.4 examines how part-timers fare relative to full-timers on key dimensions of job quality. This analysis of job quality documents the persistent penalties that are incurred through part-time employment, in terms of job security, earnings and career progression, access to training and intrinsic job quality. It also identifies the job dimensions on which part-timers fare better than full-timers: working-time quality and a reduced exposure to work-related hazards and health risks. Transitions from part- to full-time employment are reviewed briefly in Section 2.5. The concluding discussion and summary are presented in Section 2.6.

### **3.1 Equal treatment principles and their implementation**

The principle of equal treatment for full- and part-time work is detailed in the ILO Part-Time Work Convention, 1994 (No. 175). This international labour standard came into force on 28 February 1998 and to date has been ratified by 14 member States.<sup>5</sup> It states that part-time workers are entitled to equal treatment with comparable full-time workers for hourly pay (including overtime pay for any hours worked above normal full-time hours) and equal (pro-rata) treatment for all contractual arrangements (including maternity and sick leave), redundancy arrangements, pension rights, and training. It also gives part-timers equal protection of the right to organize, bargain collectively and act as workers’ representatives; and equal treatments with regards to occupational safety and health; and, protection against discrimination in employment and occupation (ILO, 1994).

The connection between working time, family responsibilities and gender inequality is addressed in the ILO Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156) that has been ratified by 15<sup>6</sup> member States. It calls for policy to create effective equality of opportunity and treatment by enabling workers with responsibilities for children, or other immediate family members, to prepare for, and engage in, employment “without being subject to discrimination and, to the extent possible, without conflict between their employment and family responsibilities” (Article 3, paragraph 1). The goal is to create effective equality of opportunity and treatment for men and women by making it an aim of national policy to enable persons with family responsibilities to engage in employment by taking measures – compatible with national conditions – that take account of their needs in vocational guidance and training. It is also aimed at the terms and conditions of employment and social security, in community planning and in the development and promotion of childcare and other family services, whether through public or private provision.

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<sup>5</sup> Albania, Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Finland, Guyana, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, Mauritius, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden. Source: [www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11300:0::NO:11300:P11300\\_INSTRUMENT\\_ID:312320](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11300:0::NO:11300:P11300_INSTRUMENT_ID:312320)

<sup>6</sup> Australia, Chile, Finland, France, Greece, Iceland, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

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In the European Union (EU), the equal treatment principle was incorporated into legislation by the European Union Part-time Work Directive (97/81/EC), based on a framework agreement conferred by European level social partners under the terms of the Maastricht Treaty's social protocol and agreement in 1997 (Box 3.1).

It requires European member States to establish national legal frameworks for the equal treatment of part-time workers in their employment and social protection systems in all aspects of the employment relationship. It was put in place as part of a broader push to promote part-time work within European employment policy. It is meant to enhance flexible work practices and improve the quality of part-time jobs to the benefit of employers, as well as employees, in order to extend the options men and women have for reconciling employment and personal life, taking up education and training opportunities across a working life, and for part-time retirement (Anxo et al., 2005; Anxo et al., 2006; Plantenga and Remery, 2009; Naegele et al., 2003; CEC, 2003; CEC, 2004; CEC, 2006; CEC, 2007).

### **Box 3.1 European Union Part-time Work Directive (97/81/EC)**

The Directive prohibits discrimination against those whose “normal hours of work, calculated on a weekly basis or on average over a period of employment of up to one year, are less than the normal hours of work of a comparable full-time worker” (Clause 3, Framework Agreement on part-time work, as implemented by Council Directive 97/81/EC of 15 December 1997). It states that member States should guarantee the equal treatment of full- and part-timers. Less favourable treatment of part-time workers is only acceptable when it is on objective grounds that are unrelated to sex discrimination under EU law. The court has to find a compromise between the discriminatory nature of the condition and the reasonable needs of the party who apply for the condition. The business needs of an employer may offset the rights of the part-time worker to equal treatment. If discrimination is established against female part-timers, their maximum entitlement under EU law is to equal treatment with male full-timers on a pro-rata basis.

Elements of the principle of equal treatment had already begun to be implemented in legal frameworks and collective agreements in some member States prior to the Directive, but before 1997 ten member States did not have equal treatment laws. The exogenous policy change created by this Directive was an impetus to further labour law reforms. These included modifications to unemployment benefit entitlements and other aspects of social protection systems in many member States, as well as the introduction or extension of entitlements for full-timers to request a reduction to part-time hours (the right to request) in some (McCormack, 2012, and see below). The 1990s reform to relax restrictions on the use of part-time work in Belgium, France, Portugal and Spain were important drivers of growth in its use (OECD, 2010).

The implementation of equal treatment incorporated into legal frameworks goes beyond EU member States. In the majority of OECD countries, part-timers are legally entitled, on a pro-rata basis, to the same contractual pay and working conditions as equivalent full-time workers. Furthermore, in about half of OECD countries, employers are required to notify part-time employees, who want to work longer hours, of full-time vacancies when they arise, and some also require employers to give existing underemployed part-time workers preferential treatment when filling full-time vacancies (OECD, 2010). The variable regulatory approaches have had a considerable impact on the quality of part-time work, differing among countries in terms of career prospects, implementation of equal treatment provisions and the various occupational levels where it has become established as a genuine option for employees (Anxo et al., 2007a). Some examples of policies from different countries are presented below.

The most concerted attempt to develop equal treatment of part-time workers has taken place in the Netherlands, with the Dutch model of part-time employment regarded as one of the best practice models across Europe in terms of: (a) implementing the principle of equal treatment for part-time workers in working conditions and prospects for career advancement; (b) the penetration of part-time employment into the higher occupational levels and organizational hierarchies; and (c) regulations that

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establish the right for individual reversibility of working time arrangements between full- and part-time working. A pivotal moment in the development of part-time work in the Netherlands was the Wassenaar Agreement (1982), which traded wage moderation for employment, and paved the way for the development of part-time jobs in the context of collective agreements. Part-time jobs are mostly open-ended contracts, not a precarious form of non-standard employment. The Equal Treatment (Working Hours) Act (*Wet verbod op onderscheid naar arbeidsduur*, WOA), passed in 1996, prohibits an employer from discriminating between full- and part-time employees, unless there is an objective justification for doing so. The underlying principle of the Act is that part-time work is equivalent to full-time work. It stipulates that permanent and other employees should not face uncertainty about their legal status or experience discrimination on the basis of their working hours. It prohibits discrimination between part-timers, who work more or fewer hours, and a part-time worker is proportionally entitled to the same pay, the same bonuses and the same number of days' holiday (Eurofound, 2007). The 2000 Part-time Employment Act (*Deeltijdwet*) provides employees with the right to reduce or increase their working hours, and employers can refute employee requests for such changes only on the grounds of specific conflicting business interests. It is part of the framework Work and Care Act (*Kaderwet Arbeid en Zorg*), which draws numerous existing and new leave provisions (such as time off to care for family members) together, aiming to help reconcile employment and family care responsibilities. This legislation responds to a trend that was already set in a considerable number of collective agreements (Eurofound, 2007).

In contrast, in the United Kingdom, also with a high rate of part-time employment and covered by the EU Equal Treatment Directive, part-time work gradually gained formal equal treatment in labour law during the 1990s, as a result of advances made in collective bargaining and sex discrimination litigation since the early 1980s. There is now equal treatment protection for all those working eight hours or more. In 2000, the EU Directive on Part-time Workers came into force, which extended the principle of equal treatment. It gave part-time workers the statutory right to equal treatment with comparable full-timers for hourly pay (including overtime pay for any hours worked above normal full-time hours) and equal (pro rata) treatment for all contractual entitlements, redundancy arrangements, pension schemes and training (Fagan, 2009). However, there is a limitation to the law because equal treatment relies upon the existence of a comparable full-time worker, employed by the same employer, under the same type of contract and on broadly similar work. Given the gender segregated nature of the labour market, only one in six part-timers in the United Kingdom are estimated to have a full-time comparator on these criteria (EIROnline, 2000). Poor quality of part-time work in the United Kingdom does not result from unequal treatment at their workplace with a full-time comparator, but because it is usually concentrated in the least regulated and lowest-paid sectors and workplaces. There are no regulations setting a minimum (average) number of weekly working hours for part-timers or a minimum length of work period. Thus, in principle, employers are able to organize part-time working hours into short and fragmented work periods, without the obligation to provide paid rest periods or breaks (Fagan, 2009).

In Australia, there is no equivalent legislation to the EU's Directive. The 1996 Workplace Relations Act provides "regular" part-time workers (irrespective of hours) with the same protection as full-time workers. However, "casual" workers, who make up the majority of the part-time workforce (see Section 3.2.3), have less protection (The Sloan Center on Ageing and Work, 2009). The 1994 ILO Convention on Part-Time Work was not ratified by Australia until 2011. Prior to its ratification, the government participated actively in negotiations towards its adoption, and its principles have been used in contemporary Australian approaches to regulating part-time employment at both the federal and state levels (Vosko, 2009). In Australia, this Convention extends the main elements of the Standard Employment Relationship to part-timers, although only for a subset of this group, i.e. those who work in jobs directly comparable to full-timers. For part-timers that the Convention does cover, terms equivalent to comparable full-timers prevail. Under the Convention, equal treatment is regarded as "equivalency", which means part-timers are entitled to the same level of protection in terms of the rights to organize, collective bargaining, basic wages, occupational health and safety and discrimination in employment and occupation. The payment of differential wages is not permitted but provides for differential non-pecuniary benefit. In other areas, part-timers enjoy conditions equivalent

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to full-timers – with equivalency defined on a proportional basis – for example protections related to social security, certain types of paid leave, contributions and earnings (Vosko, 2009).

Legal provisions allowing employees to seek part-time work in their existing jobs became an explicit right in 2008 in one state in Australia (Victoria), and in 2010 at the national level. There were other limited and complex legal avenues to achieve this, but they only partial success. Australia has an unusual industrial relations system, however, based on industrial tribunals settling terms and conditions of employment in industry by binding arbitration. It sets these terms and conditions, which are bound by law, following intervention from employer and employee/unions' representatives. But, the system has been weakened over the last two decades. Nevertheless, it has historically provided considerable employee protection, particularly in terms of women's wages. This led to a narrower pay gap than in many OECD countries in the 1980s, but has been weakened through deregulation in recent years with one result being the widening of the pay gap (Baird et al., 2010).

In Japan, the Labour Standards Act (LSA) was introduced in 1947. It contained two Articles pertaining to the principle of equal treatment in labour contracts. Article 3 stated that an employer was not to engage in discriminatory treatment with respect to wages, working hours or other working conditions by reason of the nationality, creed or social status of any worker. Article 4 stated that an employer was not to engage in discriminatory treatment of a woman as compared to a man with respect to wages by reason of the worker being a woman. These Articles were inserted to match international standards. Other labour-protective legislation was introduced later, including the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1985, which regulated discrimination against women, and the Act Concerning the Improvement of Employment Management, etc. of Part-Time Workers in 1993. Despite this, Japan has had no explicit provision prohibiting discrimination against part-time workers. According to the general theoretical interpretation of "social status," prohibited as a ground for discrimination by Article 3 of the LSA, the classification of "part-time worker" is not used because "social status" was intended to restrict differences in treatment. Moreover, it was difficult to restrict discrimination against part-time workers through the concept of "indirect sex discrimination" on the grounds that women predominate among part-time workers. Article 4 of the LSA, prohibiting wage discrimination between men and women, has not been interpreted as prohibiting indirect discrimination.

Part-time workers are also not covered by the same collective agreements as regular workers in the same establishment. Part-timers, who usually do not participate in regular workers' unions, therefore do not enjoy the same working conditions. Although the Trade Union Act states that the majority union is extended to members of other unions or non-union members, this extension of collective agreements is limited to the "same type of workers" in the same establishment. Thus, the binding effect is not placed on part-time workers who are not considered to be the "same type of workers" as regular workers (Sakuraba, 2008). Indeed, unlike in the EU, part-time workers in Japan do not have the same promotion and hiring opportunities as full-time, regular employees (Berg et al., 2004).

In Japan, the Guidelines for Part-Time Employment, was introduced in 1993 and revised in 2003. This was a non-binding regulation containing a number of recommendations for the working conditions of part-timers, including equal treatment with full-timers in relation to employment conditions, pay, bonuses and retirement benefits. It also stipulated that employers should endeavour to reach a "balance" in the working conditions of part- and full-time workers and should give adequate consideration to enabling part-timers to enter full-time posts, and provide them with opportunities for education, training and skills development (McCann, 2008). Being a non-binding measure, however, the Guidelines were not particularly effective (Asakura, 2005). Since their implementation, the Japanese Government has been engaged in efforts to address the working conditions of part-time workers and by 2007, they were converted into a legally binding Act with the revised version of the Part Time Work Act passed on 1 April 2008. This ensured equal treatment between part-time and regular workers based on the work that they actually do. The Act also promoted part-timers' movement into regular employment and so it helped to develop an employment environment in which they could exhibit their skills and abilities more effectively (The Japanese Institute for Labour Policy and Training, 2012; see Box 2.1). The recognition that part-time work is predominantly performed by



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women is acknowledged in Japanese policy, including as part of the recent interest in work/family measures fuelled by concern about the country's low birth-rates (McCann, 2008).

In the United States, there are no restrictions against the unequal treatment of part- and full-time workers. The overwhelming majority of workers, who participate in part-time or other forms of non-regular employment, have low hourly wage rates, no benefits, and little employment security (Berg et al., 2004; Valenzuela, 2011). Even under the 1963 Equal Pay Act, part-time and temporary workers are not subject to any strict rules that men and women, doing the same job, must be paid equally. Moreover, many companies that do not want to offer required benefits to employees under the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) are exempt from that law when they employ a sufficient number of temporary, contract or part-time workers (defined in the Act as those who work 25 or fewer hours a week) thereby reducing the number of full-time employees to under 50 (Valenzuela, 2011). This is worrying, since there have been increasing efforts by firms and employers, private and public sectors, to increase their flexibility and reduce costs by making greater use of part-time, temporary and other non-regular workers. Indeed, employment in non-regular work (which includes part-time) is unequal and contributes to labour market inequalities between those employed in stable, regular work and those in non-regular work; this often includes immigrants, racial minorities and women (Valenzuela, 2011).

The impact of equal-treatment laws on the quality of part-time jobs is variable as a result of the different policy approaches across countries; they might be more likely to enact these laws if the quality of the part-time work is particularly poor. However, in countries where part-time workers are paid lower hourly rates and have less benefits than full-time workers, such as the United States, employers may lobby governments to prevent the introduction of equal-treatment laws (OECD, 2010). However, in itself equal treatment legislation will not resolve the various challenges posed by part-time employment. Analysis by the OECD shows that the introduction of the Equal Treatment Directive in the EU had a positive impact on the likelihood that part-time workers held a permanent contract, or received training in countries where there were tight labour market conditions. But, there was no statistically significant impact on equal treatment coverage in countries with relatively high unemployment rates. The OECD concluded that this suggests the efficacy of equal treatment laws rests on the willingness of individual employees, or their unions, to enforce these rights and that this willingness is dampened during periods of economic recession and high unemployment. Workers who are satisfied with their part-time working hours may also feel less compelled to exert their right to equal treatment (OECD, 2010, p. 229).

Another limitation is that equal treatment is with a comparable full-timer. Where the principle of equal treatment has been adopted in labour law, or collective agreements, it has helped to promote equality in the employment conditions and social protection coverage for part- and full-timers with similar jobs. However, it has little direct impact on building equal treatment between full- and part-timers employed in different occupations or with different job titles. Many of the poor working conditions associated with part-time jobs are because they are disproportionately concentrated in a narrow range of low-level and low-paid service occupations. Equal treatment within a segregated labour market structure can only provide partial redress to the penalties incurred from part-time employment. This problem is compounded in those countries where part-time employment is largely concentrated in the informal economy (see Section 1.5 above). In such labour markets, the implementation of equal treatment within the formal economy will only reach a small proportion of part-timers.

### **3.2 Social security protection and part-time employment**

According to Servias (2012), despite the ILO Part-Time Work Convention, 1994 (No. 175) and its accompanying Recommendation (No. 182), part-time workers are often excluded from the social security protection envisaged by the ILO Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102) and subsequent ILO provisions. This occurs because they do not fit the definition or meet the conditions to qualify for benefits, such as minimum length of service or earnings. Furthermore, both these provisions and those on part-time work provide for eligibility adjustments according to

national budgetary constraints, which means employers can do away with certain requirements, amend some thresholds, and redesign basic allowances in ways that exclude part-timers.

The factors, which result in disadvantage for part- relative to full-timers in social security systems, are twofold: those related to eligibility criteria and those that impact on the value of benefits received that can be reduced in terms of the rate paid or by the duration of the payment. Thus, part-timers often have less access to social protection and retirement pensions (Eurofound, 2007; Hegewisch, 2009 cited in McCormack, 2012).

### 3.2.1 Unemployment insurance systems

The eligibility conditions for unemployment insurance systems typically include a minimum work period, hours and or an earnings threshold. Such conditions mean that part-timers are less likely to be covered. Table 3.1 shows that many OECD countries have unemployment benefit systems where eligibility is defined only by a qualifying period, or there is no qualifying period because the support available is social assistance (for example Australia and New Zealand). In a few systems the qualifying period is defined in terms of a working hours' formula that means a part-timer has to be employed for a longer period than a full-timer (for example Belgium, Canada, Iceland and the Russian Federation). In another group of countries eligibility is defined with a minimum hours threshold (for example Finland, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands and Sweden) or an earnings threshold (for example Austria, Norway, Poland, the United Kingdom and the United States; see also Saint-Martin and Venn, 2010). In practice, the hours or earnings thresholds exclude part-timers working short hours, but in some countries it is higher at 15 hours or more (Finland, Korea, Poland and for some part-timers in Sweden).

The few empirical studies that examine the actual impact of the design of national unemployment-related benefits systems generally find a clear penalty to non-standard employment in terms of coverage. Part-timers are particularly disadvantaged in countries that operate earnings or hours thresholds (OECD, 2010).

The limited access to social security is more apparent in marginal part-time jobs. In Germany, mini-jobs and midi-jobs are those in which the wage does not exceed €400 (mini-jobs) or is between €400 and €800 (midi-jobs). Working time is no longer regulated in these jobs, therefore the employee may work a relatively high number of hours for a very low hourly wage. Mini-jobs are excluded from social security regulations (payments and benefits) and, therefore, the status of employees is precarious. However, some of them may be covered by other regulations, such as co-insured by spouse or as students or pensioners (Plantenga and Remery, 2009).

In the Netherlands, most part-time workers pay pro-rata social insurance contributions in exchange for pro-rata entitlements to unemployment, sickness and disability benefits. However, part-timers with short jobs do not receive unemployment benefits if the pro-rata sum amounts to less than one eighth of the weekly minimum wage.

**Table 3.1. Unemployment benefit coverage for part-time workers – OECD survey**

	<b>Qualifying period based on length of service<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Additional qualifying conditions based on previous hours or earnings</b>	<b>Minimum hours per week equivalent at average wage<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>Minimum benefit amount for part-time workers</b>
Australia (UA)	None	No	..	UA = flat-rate payment
Austria	52 weeks/2 years	€358/month	4.6	Yes
Belgium	468 days/27 months	Qualifying period based on full-time equivalent work	Qualifying period longer for part-time workers	Yes

Canada	Based on hours	420-700 hours/52 weeks	8.1-13.5	No
Czech Republic	12 months/3 years	No	..	No
Denmark	34 weeks/3 years	Qualifying period based on full-time Work	..	No
Estonia	1 year/3 years	No	..	Yes
Finland	43 weeks/28 months (34 weeks/28 months from 2010)	18 hours/week	18	UB includes a flat-rate component
France	122 days or 610 hours/28 months	No	..	Yes
Germany	1 year/2 years	No	..	Yes
Greece	200 days/2 years or 125 days/14 months	No	..	UB = flat rate-payment, in part adjusted for working hours
Hungary	365 days/4 years	No	..	Yes
Iceland	10 weeks/1 year	Qualifying period based on full-time work with min. 25% of full-time for 3 months	10	UB = flat-rate payment, in part adjusted for working hours
Ireland	39 weeks/1 year or 26 weeks/current year + 26 weeks/previous year	Reduced benefit if earnings less than €150/week	7.6 (reduced amount)	UB = flat rate payment
Israel	12 months/18 months (300 days for daily workers)	No	..	No
Italy	52 weeks (contributions)/2 years	No	..	Yes
Japan	12 months/2 years	11 days/month in at least 12 months of the past 2 years	..	Yes
Korea	180 days/18 months	60 hours/month or 15 hours/week	15	Yes
Luxembourg	26 weeks/1 year	No	..	Yes
Netherlands	26 weeks/36 weeks	1 day per week	..	Yes
New Zealand (UA)	None	No	..	UA = flat-rate payment
Norway	Based on earnings	NOK100 218/year or 200 436/3 years	6.6-9.9	No
Poland	365 days/18 months	Above full-time minimum wage	16.9	Yes
Portugal	450 days/2 years	No	..	Yes
Russian Federation	26 weeks/12 months	Qualifying period based on full-time equivalent work	Qualifying period longer for part-time workers	Yes
Slovak Republic	3 years/4 years	No	..	Yes
Slovenia	12 months/18 months	No	..	Yes
Spain	1 year/6 years	No	..	Yes
Sweden	6 months/12	80 hours/month	12.2-19.5	Yes, if worked

	months or based on hours	or 480 hours/6 consec. Months with min. 50 hours/month		more than 50% of full-time hours
Switzerland	1 year/2 years	No	..	Yes
Turkey	600 days/3 years, with continuous work over last 120 days	No	..	Yes
United Kingdom	2 years	£87/week	5.5	UB = flat-rate payment
United States	Minimum earnings needed to qualify (qualifying requirements vary by state)	Yes	..	..

UA = unemployment assistance; UB = unemployment benefits.

a) For example, 52 weeks/2 years = employee must have worked for 52 weeks in the past two years to qualify.

b) OECD calculation.

Notes:

*Austria:* Workers earning less than €358 per month are also exempted from paying any contributions to unemployment insurance, pension insurance and health insurance. They can, however, opt in for health and pension insurance, but not for unemployment insurance.

*Canada:* Conditions for receipt vary with the regional unemployment rate. Requirements are 420-700 hours/52 weeks for those who have worked for at least 490 hours in the year prior to the 52-week qualifying period; if not, the qualifying criterion is 910 hours/52 weeks.

*Ireland:* Tax year, not calendar year.

*Norway:* There is no explicit minimum benefit amount, but the minimum earnings required to be eligible for unemployment benefits means that there is a minimum level of benefits in practice.

Source: Responses to the OECD Part-time Work Questionnaire (OECD, 2010, p.235).

Regular part-time work usually gives access to all branches of social security across Europe. In the Netherlands especially, legislation has aimed to eradicate all types of discrimination against part-time workers. Analysis of data from the European Labour Force Survey from 2003 to 2007 found that across the EU, 78 per cent of part-time workers were fully covered, but this varied between countries. For instance, coverage of all flexible workers (which includes self-employed and temporary as well as part-time) is around 90 per cent or higher in the Czech Republic and Luxembourg, but under 30 per cent in Greece, Lithuania and Portugal (Alphametrics, 2007).

Part-time employees, who are covered by the social protection system, as well as full-time employees with low wages, often receive a better return in terms of potential benefits secured against the social security contributions or taxes paid. Unemployment benefits are directly related to former income in most countries, but in some, former part-time workers get higher replacement rates, such as in Denmark (Klammer et al., 2005). In unemployment insurance (or assistance) systems, which provide a flat-rate payment, then part-timers can fare relatively well compared to full-timers in terms of the earnings replacement rate (for example United Kingdom, Finland, Australia and New Zealand). A few countries adjust for this in their unemployment insurance systems (for example Greece, Iceland and Ireland).

In active labour market programmes, those unemployed, who were previously part-time workers, often have similar rights and obligations to former full-time employees to participate in activation measures. In many countries, with the exception of Greece, Slovenia and Spain, part-time workers who want more work can register as a jobseeker with government-funded employment services and obtain assistance in finding a job with longer hours (OECD, 2010, table 4.4). In a few countries this is limited to involuntary part-timers, who are eligible for unemployment benefits or assistance (for example Sweden and Switzerland), or have an income under a specified threshold (for example, the Czech Republic and Slovak Republic). Activation measures may be mandatory for unemployed full-time workers, but voluntary for underemployed part-timers. Participation in labour market programmes may be more difficult for the underemployed part-timers; for example in Mexico some training

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programmes require full-time participation. Subsidized jobs, particularly in the public sector, are often not open to unemployed part-time workers.

Spain is an example of a country where the structure of employers' social security costs makes it more expensive to hire two part-time workers rather than one full-time worker (Anghel and Arellano, 2010). The 2012 Labour Reform introduced social security contribution subsidies to encourage working time reductions as part of a job creation programme. For the employer, the social security contribution is subsidized; for the worker, the receipt of unemployment benefit when on a reduced working time schedule (to compensate for the equivalent reduction in wage) does not reduce their period of contributive membership. However, full-time workers, who have reduced their working time to care for family members, are treated better than workers who may have transferred from a full- to a part-time contract under this scheme, in terms of the calculation of the hours worked (Garcia-Perrote and Nieto, 2010). Furthermore, there are only a limited number of public schemes directly subsidizing the gross income of part-time workers. Subsidies (for example for wages and for social security contributions) are often directed to support those with low incomes or less possibilities in the labour market, but not directly to those with reduced working time.

### ***3.2.2 Retirement pensions***

Periods of part-time employment can impact negatively on pension benefits in retirement, for these are often earnings-related. Part-time employment, combined with women's over-representation in low-paid occupations and jobs, mean that they may not meet contributory requirements. Thus, they are more likely to draw on non-contributory minimum or low-level pensions or old-age safety nets. For example, in 2009, pension payments to those aged 65+ were 34 per cent lower, on average, for women than men. In the United States, women's incomes from public pensions were 40 cent lower than men's in 2010 (OECD, 2012).

Some pension systems include provisions that provide some redistributive effects for part-timers. Some, for example in Switzerland, Germany and the United Kingdom, make provision for periods of inactivity, or part-time employment associated with childcare responsibilities, through credits that help ensure minimum pension benefits are secured. The system of credits in the United Kingdom covers periods for the main carer of school-age children or disabled adults, provided for up to 20 years in total. This extends pension coverage to carers, who are inactive, or earning below the threshold for making social security contributions (Fagan et al., 1994). The German "partial retirement" system also makes provision to protect the pension entitlement of older workers in partial retirement via wage-related subsidies for their contributions, so that this adjustment is supported rather than discouraged (OECD, 2012; Klammer et al., 2005). In Spain, the Pensions' Reform (Law 27/2011), which raises the retirement age to 67, mentions the need to improve the consideration of the periods of membership through part-time work, and new more favourable regulation is expected as a result (CES 2012: 709). The government has also announced its intention to make retirement pensions compatible with part-time work, in line with the EU's employment and social policy strategic objectives, to raise the employment rate for older workers and prolong the working life.

Part-timers, and low paid full-timers, fare relatively well in pension systems that provide a flat-rate rather than an earnings-related benefit. In contrast, in an earnings-related system, such as the German one, it is designed around the idea of equivalence between individual contributions and the level of pensions. Part-timers get the same as full-timers, in terms of their per euro of contributions to the system, but in absolute levels, their pension income will usually be far lower compared to that of a worker with a continuous full-time career (Klammer et al., 2005).

### ***3.2.3 Health care***

Where medical treatment in a national health system is tax-financed, and covers all citizens, as for example in Sweden, Spain and the United Kingdom, part-time workers have a better return on investment than full-time workers, but pay more in taxes compared to inactive persons. The situation

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is generally the same, but even more apparent in medical systems where treatment is financed by earnings-related contributions, as in the Netherlands and Germany. The difference between the Netherlands and Germany is that the Dutch health system is universal, so all citizens are covered, as long as they do not voluntarily leave to become privately insured. In Germany, the statutory health insurance (and care insurance) only covers employees, and their inactive dependants (spouses and children), who have an income above a particular threshold (€400/month). Employees in marginal part-time jobs do not have access to the system through their employment contract, but a significant proportion of them are covered through marriage. However, there is an obvious gap in the social protection record for some part-time employees (Klammer et al., 2005).

The situation in the United States is quite different. There is no universal health care, and health insurance, as well as pensions, is mainly secured via the employer. Part-time workers are much less likely to receive health insurance and retirement benefits, or other “fringe benefits”, in addition to being lower paid (Kalleberg, 2006). It is well established in the United States, as pointed out by Valenzuela (2011), that full benefits, higher pay rates and more permanent positions are reserved for full-time employees. The implications of low pay and a lack of benefits were highlighted in a recent qualitative study of 60 mothers working in the secondary sector (Webber and Williams, 2008). One of the mothers in the study had a part-time schedule, which she preferred, but in exchange received no health-care insurance, retirement plan, paid sick leave, or vacation time (Webber and Williams, 2008).

In Australia, where most part-time work is casual (and done by women), their independent access to extended health care coverage is gendered with only a third of women having such coverage, compared to two-thirds of men (Vosko, 2009, 108).

### **3.3 Legal frameworks that give employees the right to request part-time hours**

Certain employees have the right to request part-time hours in many OECD countries (Table 3.2). The detail and strength of the entitlement varies. Much of this right to request is for a limited period within the parental leave scheme. An employer must provide a business or operational reason for declining such a request, and the part-time period must be taken before the child starts school. Several European countries (for example France, Sweden, Luxembourg and Germany), provide the opportunity of taking parental leave on a part-time basis, and to combine this with cash benefits. The combination of leave and benefits in these schemes usually requires an individual not to exceed a certain income threshold or a maximum number of working hours (Klammer et al., 2005). In 29 of the 34 OECD countries, roughly eight out of ten, some, or all workers, can request part-time work, either by taking parental leave as a period of part-time work or requesting a reduction in working hours. Table 3.2 shows that, among OECD countries, there are no such provisions in Canada, Chile, Iceland, Israel, Mexico or Switzerland. Whereas, provisions appear rather rudimentary in their scope, lack of procedure or no formal procedure in, for example Estonia, Greece, Italy, Korea, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Turkey.

Rights for non-parents are less common than for parents. In a few countries, the right is extended to carers of older children and adult dependants (Belgium, Czech Republic, Japan, Russian Federation, United Kingdom), or to workers who are sick or disabled (Norway, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, United States), or pursuing education or training (France, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden), or to older workers (Belgium, Finland, France, Luxembourg, Norway, Slovenia).

A few countries have provisions for all workers, although employers can generally refuse requests on any grounds. Most categories of workers are covered in France and, in the United Kingdom, the right to request has just been extended to all employees. In the Netherlands, all workers in larger firms have the right to request, and the law places the onus on the employer to provide a justification for rejecting this against a limited set of business reasons; more stringent than in the United Kingdom legislation (Fagan et al., 2006).

In Japan and the United Kingdom, employees have a statutory right to request flexible working arrangements rather than just part-time work. In some countries, legislation was introduced into economies, which already had a high rate of part-time employment, such as Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. In the latter two, prior to legislation, it was already common

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in some sectors for women to negotiate a reduction from full- to part-time employment on their return from maternity leave.

European countries, with more generous rights to request part-time work, have less unmet demand among full-time employed women with care responsibilities that suggests the regulation is helping workers to negotiate reduced hours (OECD, 2012, Figure 4.2). The OECD (2010) concludes that the limited number of studies available indicate that the impact of these laws on individual transitions from full- to part-time is modest compared to the effect of factors, such as other regulatory changes supporting part-time work or informal negotiations that do not invoke a statutory right. Nonetheless, an analysis of European establishments showed that employers were more likely to permit adjustments between full- and part-time working when a statutory right was in place (Fagan and Walthery, 2011).

### **3.4 The employment conditions of part-time workers**

In the introduction, it was noted that research has shown part-time employment tends to be concentrated in poorer quality jobs in the labour market. In most countries, part-time employment is disproportionately concentrated in lower occupational levels and in female-dominated jobs; particularly routine service and intermediate clerical positions. In some countries, part-time work has increased in some professions, but it is still rare in senior grades, male-dominated professions and management (O'Reilly and Fagan, 1998; Houseman and Osawa, 2003; Anxo et al., 2007a; Burchell et al., 2007; OECD, 2010, 2012).

While the following discussion focuses on comparing average differences in employment conditions between part- and full-timers, it is also important to remember there are differences in its quality between, as well as, within countries. The extent of the dissimilarity between the occupational profiles of part- and full-timers is less pronounced in some countries. For example, it is less in the Netherlands than in the United Kingdom (Fagan et al., 1994; Yerks and Visser, 2006). Furthermore, the impact or “penalty” of being employed part- rather than full-time will depend upon the extent to which equal treatment, minimum wage floors and other employment standards are in place in a given country.

This section compares part- and full-time employment on the main dimensions of employment conditions. This was inspired by the job quality framework, developed by Francis Green and Tarek Mostafa (Eurofound, 2012), who make a useful distinction between four conceptual dimensions of job quality:

- prospects (job security, prospect for advancement);
- earnings;
- intrinsic job quality, which has four building blocks – skill use and discretion (skill required, level of autonomy), social environment (social relationships and support from colleagues, quality of line management), physical environment (health and safe), work intensity;
- working-time quality (meets the needs for balance between the demands of work and life beyond the workplace).

Job security, training opportunities, intrinsic job quality, earnings and career progression, exposure to hazards and health risks, and working-time quality are discussed. The evidence reviewed shows that, on most of these dimensions, the average conditions of part-time employment are inferior to those of full-time employment.

#### **3.4.1 Job security and employment protection**

On average, part-timers have less job security than full-timers, measured both objectively, whether or not they hold an open-ended contract, or subjectively, whether or not they feel their job is secure. The OECD (2010, p. 224), calculates that most of the gap in coverage in an open-ended contract is due to

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the shorter working hours, once job and other individual characteristics are taken into account. Not only do part-timers have less job security, if they lose their job, they are less likely to be eligible for unemployment insurance (see Section 2.2 above).

In Austria for example, part-time jobs are usually “short hour”, marginal jobs with a low income; here the risk of losing a job within a year of starting it is much higher for part-timers (Plantenga and Remery, 2009).

In Australia, casual, part-time employment is particularly widespread with 71 per cent of all part-time workers employed on a casual or fixed-term basis, or as self-employed. Here part-time casuals are by far the largest group and the majority, 64 per cent, are women. These casual positions tend to be the only option for many who work part-time because permanent part-time employment is scarce. In professional occupations, such as those in education, part-time casual jobs are three times more common among women than men (Vosko, 2009). In such jobs, the number of hours, times and days they work are subject to change without notice (Baird et al., 2010).

Part-timers generally have lower rates of trade union membership, but the gap with full-timers has narrowed over time (OECD, 2010). This is partly because many unions in the private and public sector have redressed their historic reluctance to promote part-time working, or to campaign for better working conditions for part-timers.

In many countries, there are differences between part- and full-timers in their subjective assessments of job insecurity, but the size and direction of the gap varies among countries. For instance, Fullerton and Wallace (2007) show that part-time work is associated with an increased sense of insecurity in the United States, yet Bockerman (2004) shows that the reverse is true in Europe. Although part-time work is female-dominated in most countries, the job security gap is generally larger for men than for women (OECD, 2010, p221).

### ***3.4.2 Training opportunities***

Part-timers have less workplace training and this contributes to their reduced opportunities for career advancement and their lower rates of pay (OECD, 1999). Empirical evidence shows they are less optimistic about promotion prospects and less likely to receive training and, therefore, at a disadvantage in terms of development opportunities (Sandor, 2011). Part-timers with a non-permanent contract are less likely to benefit from training than those with a permanent contract (Goudswaard and Andries, 2002; both cited in Eurofound, 2007).

According to the European Working Conditions Survey in 2005, although part-timers are less likely to receive training than full-timers, paid for by their employer, the difference is relatively small (Eurofound, 2007).

In the United Kingdom, full-timers have more access to training and development than part-timers. Even part-time professionals are more likely to have poorer access to training and development. Part-time temporary professional staff fared even worse than full-time permanent professionals (Lyonette et al., 2010).

In the Netherlands, access to training is also more limited the lower the number of working hours. Several characteristics of part-time workers can explain this, such as short-term employment relations, lower academic qualifications or jobs having lower task-complexity, reducing the incentive for an employer to train them (Eurofound, 2007).

In Japan, analysis of the 2010 Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training (JILPT) survey, which included 11,010 members of staff from business establishments with 10 or more employees, found that regular (i.e. full-time) workers were more proactively engaged in skills development compared to non-regular (i.e. part-time, temporary and contract) workers (Asao et al., 2012).



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### **3.4.3 Intrinsic job quality**

European research shows that, on average, part-time jobs are generally characterized by higher levels of monotony, lower levels of task complexity and problem-solving tasks, even more pronounced for those with short part-time hours (Eurofound, 2007; Sandor, 2011). This reflects the fact that part-time work is disproportionately concentrated in low-skilled jobs. For example, short hour jobs in retail and hospitality services, taken by workers with low qualifications or students. Some workers, part- or full-time, do not have the skills or experience to undertake more complex tasks (Joseph, 2012). Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that part-timers are more likely to report their skills are underutilized (Eurofound, 2007).

According to the 2005 European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS), part-timers (working less than 30 hours a week) experienced poor psychological working conditions, limited socioeconomic integration and a shortage of career opportunities. They mainly reported poor economic and social integration, such as feeling insufficiently paid, anxiety about being fired and having few friends at work, as well as poor career development prospects (Burchell et al., 2009). In Norway, Kjeldstad and Nymoen (2004) report that the highest share of part-time work is found in unskilled jobs, in small companies and among temporary workers. This is especially true for involuntary part-time workers (Plantenga and Remery, 2009).

The incidence of poor quality part-time work extends to countries outside of Europe. In the United States, part-time jobs are often of poor quality, with lower wages and fewer benefits. This is particularly widespread due to a lack of restrictions against unequal treatment of part- and full-time workers (Berg et al., 2004).

Messenger (2004) argues that the volume of part-time hours worked, and whether part-time employment is voluntary or involuntary, is closely associated with the quality of part-time employment. It appears that there is an association between poor quality jobs and marginal part-time hours. Burchell et al. (2009), argues that mini jobs of eight or less hours a week, which have increased considerably in recent years,<sup>7</sup> are likely to be inferior to other part-time jobs, in terms of job quality, earnings and career progression.

### **3.4.4 Earnings and earnings progression**

The ILO Part-Time Work Convention, 1994 (No. 175) states that equal treatment requires that the hourly wages for part-timers should be the same as those of comparable full-timers. However, even in countries where the principle of equal treatment is largely in place, part-timers often earn less because of other labour market practices. Part-timers have lower average hourly earnings in nearly every country for which data is available: across Europe, North America, South America, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and Korea. This hourly wage gap persists even after testing for differences in job characteristics, such as industry and occupational position, and individual characteristics, such as education and work experience (Messenger, 2004; OECD, 2010; Kalleberg, 2006). In only a few countries is the average gap negligible or non-existent: including Norway and the Netherlands (Hardoy and Shone, 2006, Yerkes and Visser, 2006).

In Australia there is a part-time wage premium, the casual worker premium, paid in lieu of annual leave (Booth and Wood, 2008). Casual workers are paid a higher rate of pay, known as a "casual loading", which is paid on top of the base pay rate for full- and part-time employees. This is intended to compensate for their ineligibility for some benefits, such as paid annual leave and personal (sick) leave. The exact amount of the loading depends on the award or agreement that applies; most modern awards have a casual loading of 25 per cent. Casual workers in Australia may also be entitled to

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<sup>7</sup> Burchell et al. (2009) reported that across the EU15, the number of employees normally working in "mini jobs" of eight or less hours a week has increased considerably over the 10 years from 1995 to 2005. Over this period, the number of these mini-jobs has grown from close to 0 to over 1 per cent for men, and has doubled for women.

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penalty rates, loadings and allowances for working on weekends, early in the day, late at night, overtime and on public holidays (Fair Work Ombudsman, 2013).

European data shows that another layer of financial disadvantage to part-time employees is they are less likely to be employed in occupations with supplementary payments, such as bonuses or premiums (Eurofound, 2007). Marginal part-time jobs (i.e. less than 15 hours per week), tend to be even more poorly paid and require greater flexibility on the part of employees (European Foundation, 2012).

Where overtime premiums are in operation, they are usually designed to provide compensation for hours in excess of the full-time norm. Rarely do part-timers receive overtime premiums, with the exception of the Netherlands and Germany, where collective agreements may provide for increased rates of pay for hours worked beyond those agreed in the individual employment contract (Plantenga and Remery, 2009). The right to premiums for additional hours worked prior to the overtime threshold for full-time work has also been debated recently in Japan, following a 2004 report by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare's Conference to Study the Harmonization of Work and Daily Life. This proposed additional wages for all overtime hours and to mandate a higher premium, than the overtime rate, for full-time workers, as well as to dissuade "haphazard" increases in their overtime work (McCann, 2008).

Part-time workers are worse off in terms of factors that contribute to earnings progression. They have less access to training (see Section 2.4.2 above), promotion and union membership (OECD, 2010). This is partly because of the type of occupations and sectors they work in, and partly because of unequal treatment (Anxo et al., 2007a; Burchell et al., 2007; Plantenga and Remery 2009).

The lower average hourly rate for part-timers widens the gender gap in hourly earnings. This is obviously compounded when weekly earnings are considered, given the fewer hours worked by part-timers. The gender gap in median earnings<sup>8</sup> doubles in many European countries when part-time work is taken into account, and triples in Ireland and the Netherlands. The fewer hours worked by women account for a third of the gender earnings gap among OECD employees on average and increases to 50 per cent in Germany and the Netherlands (OECD 2012, p. 169).

In the United Kingdom, a large proportion of women work part-time at average hourly pay rates lower than those for women employed full-time, producing one of the largest gender pay gaps in Europe. Longitudinal analysis in the United Kingdom shows that a period of part-time work has a negative "scarring" effect on the subsequent trajectory of employment and earnings progression, even for those who move into full-time employment later in their careers (Francesconi and Gosling, 2005).

Research in the United States also finds a part-time wage penalty, although the impact on gender differs. Ferber and Waldfogel (1998), examined the long-term consequences of non-traditional employment among American men and women using work history data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY). After controlling for type of employment, demographic and human-capital variables, they found for both men and women that a non-traditional employment history was associated with lower current wages and benefits, with one exception: no significant wage effect is found for women who voluntarily worked part-time in the past. In contrast, men working part-time, particularly voluntarily, had much lower hourly wages than men in traditional jobs. Moreover, the pay penalty was much more pronounced for men compared to women once controls were introduced. In sum, this study suggests that men suffer larger wage penalties from past and current part-time employment spells than women. There are several reasons why this may be the case. Men may be additionally penalized for pursuing a "female" labour market participation profile, or those, who work part-time voluntarily, may have lower motivation or other characteristics not captured by the model (O'Dorchai et al., 2007).

In comparison, there is no difference in the average hourly pay rate for part- and full-timers in the Netherlands. This is partly due to the implementation of equal treatment within a social democratic coordinated wage bargaining system. This produces a narrower wage dispersion than in liberal economies such as the United Kingdom. It is also partly because part-time working is more established

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<sup>8</sup> Measured as the difference between male and female median wages and then divided by male median wages

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at the higher occupational levels as well as the lower ones (Fagan et al., 1998, Yerkes and Visser, 2006). However, in spite of the better relative wage conditions of female part-timers in the Netherlands, there is still a gender gap in hourly wages albeit much smaller than in the United Kingdom (Plantenga and Remery, 2009).

The United Kingdom and the United States, illustrate how a spell of part-time work can curtail future wage prospects, becoming a barrier to taking it up, as it hinders labour market advancement and career progression. For instance, some aspects of jobs considered demanding, such as meeting quality standards, solving problems, dealing with complex tasks, planning and supervisory responsibilities, self-assessment of work quality and learning new tasks, are more likely to lead to career advancement. Each one of these job features is more prevalent in full- rather than part-time jobs (Burchell et al., 2009; McCormack, 2012). Eurofound research has found that companies generally do not employ part-time workers in highly qualified positions or in supervisory roles (McCormack, 2012). Employers and union representatives report that it is more difficult for part-time workers to be promoted (Anxo et al., 2007a).

Evidence from the United States highlights similar career penalties following a move from full- to part-time positions for women who have children. A study of mothers, who voluntarily worked part-time in the United States, included 41 in “retention” positions. That is, they were highly educated, working in elite, high-paying occupations, where part-time work schedules were usually rare, and who were typically hired on a full-time basis, but later negotiated a reduction in hours (Webber and Williams, 2008). They found that, although jobs were at a higher level, those in retention part-time positions still experienced reduced career opportunities, which were explicitly stated in some cases, or quietly imposed in others. The decision to pursue part-time work, despite these career penalties, was clearly linked to gendered expectations. Part-time work is an option pursued by mothers – not fathers – in elite careers. A similar picture of the “mommy track” is found in research on part-time work among managers and professionals in the United Kingdom (Lewis and Lewis, 1997; Lyonette et al., 2010; Durbin and Tomlinson, 2010).

Thus, it appears to be more difficult to build a career by working part-time. This is reflected in employee perceptions about the effect of part-time work on career prospects. Nearly half (47 per cent) of EU full-time workers believe that switching to part-time would damage their career prospects (Gasparini, 2000). This is also confirmed by Finnish evidence (Kauhanen, 2003), which shows that part-timers perceive less career development opportunities in comparison with full-timers (both cited in Eurofound, 2007). Also, in the Fifth European Working Conditions Survey (2010), around 35 per cent of employees, who work more than 40 hours a week, felt that their career prospects were good compared to only 23 per cent who worked less than 20 hours per week. European women, regardless of their full- or part-time status, always rate their career prospects less highly than men (Eurofound, 2012).

Similarly, just over a quarter of managers and 40 per cent of employee representatives interviewed in the 2004-05 European Survey on Working Time and Work-Life Balance (ESWT) reported that promotion prospects were “slightly worse” or “significantly worse” for part-time workers. Another 61 per cent of managers and 49 per cent of employee representatives reported that promotion prospects were about the same for part- and full-time employees with comparable qualifications. Yet, most employers (79 per cent) agreed there is no difference in motivation levels between full- and part-time workers, and 10 per cent of employers reported that part-time workers are more highly motivated (Anxo et al., 2007b).

Hence, a period of part-time employment can enhance employment integration and work-life balance, but with the risk that it may result in little or no career advancement or earnings progression over a working life. The combination of constrained labour market progression and reduced earnings impacts negatively on pension accumulation in earnings-related pension systems (Fagan and Walthery, 2007; Fagan et al., 2012).

Only part of the pay gap is because of differences in personal and job characteristics. Part-timers are more likely to have a lower educational level, be segregated into certain sectors and employed in smaller firms. But, when controls for individual characteristics (age, education, work experience,

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family situation) and job characteristics (occupation, industry, firm size, contract type) are introduced, it shows, firstly, the latter is more important than the former in explaining differences in wages, training and promotion prospects. Secondly, a considerable gap remains even after controlling for observable characteristics (OECD, 2012, p. 221). This is consistent with most of the existing literature (Plantenga and Remery, 2006). For example, a cross-sectional study of 16–64 year-olds working at least 15 hours per week, using the European Community Household Panel Survey 1995-2000 data, found that the main reasons for the part-time wage penalty were less work experience, in the case of men, and the occupational segregation in the case of women, but the penalty was further increased by being employed in a small firm (fewer than 20 workers) and by being on a fixed-term contract (Pagan Rodriguez, 2007).

### ***3.4.5 Exposure to hazards and health risks***

On average, part-time employees are less likely to report that their jobs are stressful or present a risk to their health and safety (OECD, 2010; Fagan and Burchell, 2002). Empirical evidence also shows that they, particularly women, report higher levels of general satisfaction with their working conditions. They are less exposed to a number of hazards (loud noise, vibrations, handling/breathing dangerous substances, high/low temperatures, radiation), both in the sense of fewer hours and lower risks of exposure. In addition, they are less exposed to poor ergonomic conditions (repetitive hand/arm movements, painful/tiring positions, carrying/moving heavy loads). Similar results are also obtained in a Dutch report (Houtman and De Vroome, 2002 cited in Eurofound, 2007). The clerical occupations and service sectors where they most often work may explain these outcomes (Eurofound, 2007).

The Third European Survey on Working Conditions (2000), also showed that part-timers reported slightly fewer health problems. Dutch evidence has also confirmed that they enjoy a lower level of “emotional exhaustion” due to working conditions (Goudswaard et al., 1999 cited in Eurofound 2007). This positive situation most likely explains why the problem of absenteeism is less widespread among part-time workers (Eurofound, 2007).

Generally speaking, part-timers are at less risk of high levels of work intensity (although it should be noted that in the Second European Survey on Working Conditions, 1995, this was not the case, Eurofound, 2007). This reduced risk means that they are slightly more likely to be in jobs where they never have to work at very high speed. However, this is highly dependent on the type of job and nature of work undertaken. The opposite applies for part-timers in professional and managerial roles, who are more exposed to this risk, and at these occupational levels the multiple demands and work intensity is much greater compared with more routine occupations (see Section 2.4.6). Overall, part-timers are less likely to be employed in occupations where they have to work to tight deadlines or have insufficient time to do their job. These results, also confirmed by Danish empirical evidence (Arbejdsmiljøinstituttet, 2001), explain why part-timers report less need to work overtime (cited in Eurofound, 2007).

### ***3.4.6 Working-time quality***

In OECD countries, part-timers are more likely to have control over their working time than full-timers, particularly in countries like Portugal, Greece, Hungary and Russia where the average level of control is lowest. Part-time work, as opposed to full-time work, is no more likely to involve unsocial working hours, such as Sunday, night work or long days. Indeed, in many countries, part-timers (particularly women), are less likely to work at anti-social times, and in all countries, except those with few long-hours workers, part-timers are far less likely to work more than ten hours per day. This greater working-time quality remains once individual and job characteristics are controlled (OECD, 2010).

Furthermore, part-timers are less likely to have their pace of work set by external factors (i.e. customer demands, work done by colleagues, machine speeds, managers/supervisors’ control), with unforeseen interruptions at work more prevalent for full-timers (Eurofound, 2007).

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Kelliher and Anderson's (2010) study of three organizations in the United Kingdom private sector, found that employees, who worked reduced hours, reported slightly lower levels of stress than those who did not. Respondents felt that having time away from work, through reduced hours, acted as a "pressure valve" for them. However, it should also be noted that for some, reduced hours was a source of stress, for example the pressure to complete their workload in the time available. Indeed, the same researchers also found considerable evidence of flexible workers experiencing work intensification. All but one of the interviewees indicated that they had experienced some form of work intensification; those, who worked reduced hours, often having to work unscheduled additional hours and more intensely when they were at work. Overall, their research found that it was common for them to feel the need to be available even at times not scheduled to work, but when the business was operating. This meant being prepared to take phone calls and check emails when not working.

Similar findings emerge from other United Kingdom studies. For example, for those part-timers in more senior-level positions, where they already tend to work longer hours than in lower-level part-time occupations, most feel they have too much to do in a short space of time. Many women working part time, in professions such as accountancy, are already working long (part-time) hours and often make themselves available on days off for telephone calls and email contact. Trying to maintain a senior position on a part-time basis often means trying to complete a full-time job in part-time hours (Lyonette and Crompton, 2008; Fagan et al., 2008).

Indeed, with regard to working time determinants and their effect on working conditions, the available empirical evidence (for example Fagan and Burchell, 2002), based on the results of the Third European Survey on Working Conditions, supports the view that part-time work does not necessarily protect workers from being involved in schedules that fall out of the "standard" of daytime, weekday hours. Often, part-timers have higher rates of involvement in evening, night-work and weekend work and sometimes, they are more likely to work a variable number of days, and hours per day. This evidence is supported by a Dutch study, showing that full-time workers have more regular working hours than part-time workers. Working only at weekends, evenings or at night is most common among part-timers, especially among those who work less than 16 hours per week (Goudswaard and Tijdens, 2000 cited in Eurofound 2007). In France, part-time jobs are often fixed-term and have atypical, late schedules. Moreover, employment conditions of employees in part-time jobs are often insecure. In Sweden, a considerable proportion of part-time workers work "on call" as and when the need arises (Riedman et al., 2006 cited in Plantenga and Remery, 2009).

When part-timers work unsocial or variable hours, they generally have fewer entitlements to unsocial hours working premiums. Unlike full-timers, they are not likely to receive wage premiums for working more than their normal hours or for working "off hours", such as evenings, nights and weekends i.e. unsocial hours (Messenger, 2004). For example, in some collective agreements in the Netherlands, notably retail, part-timers only receive half the compensation for unsocial hours that full-timers receive. However, in retail they are often employed under regulations allowing them to accumulate rights to holiday pay if they work more hours. Whereas, in the United Kingdom, holiday pay for part-timers would only accrue to normal hours (Fagan et al., 1994).

Another example of unpredictable and unsocial hours in part-time work is in the retail sector in the United States, where schedules are driven by retailers' extension of opening hours, and by wide swings in shopping flows throughout the day and week, as well as seasonally. Retail in the United States relies heavily on part-time workers, who increasingly are guaranteed very few weekly hours, but are expected to "flex up" to 40 hours on demand. These patterns have significant implications for the workforce. Retailers' scheduling practices generate variability and unpredictability in individuals' total hours and in the distribution of these hours (Carré and Tilly, 2012).

### **3.5 Transitions from part-time into full-time work**

The transition from part- to full-time work is rare with only a very small proportion of workers using part-time work as a stepping stone into full-time employment. For example, analysis using the European Community Household Panel (ECHP) for the period 1994 to 1999 shows that only 3 per

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cent of European women and 1.5 per cent of European men, who have worked part-time for up to six years, move into full-time employment. The transition rate from non-employment into part-time and then into full-time work, varied considerably by country, and was higher for women than men. One exception is the United States, where women generally either work full-time or not at all, thus part-time workers are more likely to move into full-time employment (Buddelmeyer et al., 2005; Macunovich, 2010 cited in OECD 2012). However, those who enter part-time employment from inactivity tend to return to inactivity, which suggests that a spell of part-time employment does not necessarily provide a stepping-stone to full-time employment here (Blank, 1994). The same pattern emerges in a study of 11 European countries (Buddelmeyer et al., 2005, cited in OECD, 2012) and other comparative analyses of labour market transitions involving periods of part-time employment (O'Reilly et al., 2000; Fagan et al., 2005).

Studies by McCall (1997) and Farber (1999) suggest that involuntary part-time positions in Canada and the United States are used by both unemployed males and females in the transitional process into regular full-time employment, although to a greater extent for women. Blank (1998), finds that between 1976 and 1989 around 20 per cent of United States females, but only 1 per cent of males used part-time work as a stepping stone into full-time employment. In the United States, for many, part-time work was once a useful stepping stone to full-time steady employment, but over the past several decades it has become increasingly difficult to transition out of it (Valenzuela, 2011).

For Europe, O'Reilly and Bothfeld (2002) show that over the period 1990–95, 2.7 per cent of German females and 4.1 per cent of British females transitioned from non-employment into part-time employment.

An OECD analysis found that the rate of transition from part- into full-time employment is much higher for men than women, and more frequent for younger, more highly educated and highly-skilled workers. For France and the Netherlands, part-timers with short working hours are less likely to move into full-time jobs than other part-timers (Kalleberg, 2006).

Analysis of a representative survey of companies in 21 European countries showed that opportunities for reversing from full- to part-time working, and vice versa, are affected by a number of organizational variables, such as sector, company size, employment trends, incidence of part-time work, number of female employees, work-life balance measures and attitudes (Anxo et al., 2007b).

Generally, there are fewer transitions from part- into full-time employment than from part-time into inactivity and this is particularly pronounced for the working poor (OECD, 2010). Even the distinction between voluntary and involuntary is a poor predictor of subsequent transitions. For instance, Gash's (2008) analysis of the European Community Household Panel Survey, shows that women, who reported working part-time for care reasons, were no more or less likely to move to full-time employment than involuntary part-time workers in France and the United Kingdom, and, in Denmark, no more likely to move into inactivity.

Part-timers, who transition in and out of employment, often remain in part-time work for long periods. In an analysis of 20 European countries, the OECD finds a substantial number of workers move in and out of part-time employment over a 12 month period, but that two-thirds of part-time spells last for more than one year. Rotation rates into and out of part-time work are also higher in countries with low rates of part-time employment. On average, about 15 per cent of part-timers take up or return to full-time employment each year, and slightly less move out of employment. There are considerable country differences in transition patterns, but overall more part-timers remain in part-time employment for at least two consecutive years in countries where it is widespread, but a much lower proportion of them move into full-time employment (OECD, 2012, p. 244). This may be chosen, but can have adverse long-term impacts for individuals' career advancement, future earnings and retirement income. It may also have adverse effects on aggregate labour supply of core-age workers in ageing countries.

Other factors impact on the probability of transitioning from part- to full-time work. For example, multinomial probit regression analysis for 18 European countries showed that, over a two-year period, workers were less likely to move from part- into full-time employment if they had young children, were educated below tertiary level and lived in a couple, particularly so for women. Everything else

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being equal, part-timers living in households with a low disposable income were more likely to leave employment than remain employed, while those in more affluent households had a higher probability of making the transition from part- to full-time employment (OECD, 2010).

The presence of young children in a family is also a significant factor that limits transitions from part- to full-time employment. Mothers tend to increase their working hours only when their children enter primary or even secondary school (Thévenon, 2009 cited in OECD 2012). The operation of a tax and benefits system is also another barrier, as discussed below.

Because there are fewer part-time jobs available in higher-level occupations, it can mean that full-timers, who wish to reduce their working hours, can only do so by switching to a position for which they are overqualified (Sandor, 2011; Fagan and Walthery, 2011). Occupational downgrading is particularly acute for women in the United Kingdom, more than in any other European country. Connolly and Gregory (2008), report that when women in Britain switch from full- to part-time work, a quarter experience occupational downgrading, including over 20 per cent of professional women. As an example, two-thirds of women who leave full-time nursing become part-time care assistants, allowing them to use only a limited portion of their specialized skills (cited in Lyonette et al., 2010).

There is some evidence to suggest that workers, who switch to part-time, are more likely to be given different, less challenging tasks when compared with equivalent full-timers. Owing to the limited nature of available evidence, it should be noted that these differences in assigned tasks could be occupation-specific and may not be widespread across all part-time posts. Also, there are possibly some occupation-specific tasks that are difficult to do on a part-time basis (Lyonette et al., 2010). In spite of this caveat, in the United Kingdom for example, women in professional roles, who are assigned different tasks than their fellow full-time workers, are likely to be impeded from further progression. Not only is this practice common in male-dominated occupations, such as the police force, but also in nursing, a highly feminized occupation (see Lyonette et al., 2010).

### **3.6 Part-time traps in tax and benefit systems**

Tax and benefit systems often reduce the financial gain from working more hours. The OECD estimates show that such financial disincentives reduce the probability of returning to full-time employment and increase the probability of moving out of work, compared to staying in part-time employment.

Tax increases and benefit withdrawal can create a financial disincentive for increasing working hours through the creation of a high marginal effective tax rate (METR), i.e the percentage of gross income that is taken away through the combination of tax, social security contributions and benefit withdrawal. The OECD modelling shows, that for low-wage part-timers, the tax and benefit system substantially reduces the pay-off from taking a full-time job; an average METR close to 50 per cent across OECD countries for which data are available. The METR is particularly high for one-earner households, and for families with young children and for short-hour part-time jobs. (OECD, 2012 p. 247) Higher METRs do not appear in practice to affect the transition probability into full-time employment, but they tend to slightly increase the probability of moving out of work. Net replacement rates for a transition from part-time employment to non-employment increase the probability of moving out of employment (p. 249).

### **3.7 Concluding summary**

Part-time jobs, on average, incur a penalty in terms of job security, training, promotion and average hourly earnings. Even if they receive equal treatment, in terms of current hourly wages and other contractual elements, in most countries a spell of part-time employment has a scarring effect on subsequent labour market advancement and career progression. Part-time workers also have lower access to unemployment benefits and job search assistance programmes if they become unemployed. They are also more at risk of poverty (i.e. more than twice the rate for full-timers on average across OECD countries), not only because of their lower weekly earnings, due to shorter work hours, but



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also because their jobs are less stable and they are less likely to be covered by unemployment insurance systems due to eligibility criteria. For example, the OECD (2012) reports that a higher proportion of part-timers live in a poor household (household income is less than half the median disposable income) in all countries for which information is available. This poverty penalty is also clearly affected by household composition, with the rate much higher in countries where part-time workers are more likely to be the primary worker in the household.

Despite these penalties, there are also some benefits from part-time work in terms of better working-time quality and reduced exposure to hazardous working conditions and work-related stress. Whether this is a sufficient offset for lower hourly pay, poorer job security and career progression is, however, a moot point.

The magnitude of the gap in employment conditions between full- and part-timers varies across country, and remains despite regulatory reforms designed to bring about equal treatment. The OECD (2010) argues that the penalties incurred through part-time work tend to be lower in countries where it is most widespread, while the premiums remain. What cannot be assessed, without more detailed analysis, is whether this is a result of a levelling-up of the working conditions of part-timers, as this form of employment spreads, or a levelling-down of the working conditions of full-timers. The OECD also argues that, in countries where part-time work is established in the economy, mothers are more likely to remain in part-time employment once the care demands of their children diminish. Longer spells of part-time work have negative implications for personal career prospects, poverty risks and, ultimately, for aggregate labour utilization.

Some have argued that, because many women select part-time employment as the best available solution open to them to combine employment with care responsibilities, then this compensates for the costs incurred to earnings and career progression, following the theory of compensating differentials (Rosen, 1986, cited in OECD 2012) or comparative advantage and rational specialization within the home (Becker, 1981). Hakim (2000), has developed this line of analysis further, arguing that part-time employment is a path chosen by those with a lower underlying employment commitment. The OECD (2012), notes that the higher job satisfaction scores reported by women employed part-time on a voluntary basis, lend some support to the idea that the penalties are, to some extent, offset by the gains of reduced working hours. But, it argues that this “may be motivated by short-term time constraints and may fail to take into account the longer-term adverse impacts” (p. 213) on career progression and wages, poverty risks and retirement income. Furthermore, for other part-time workers, the premium does not compensate for the penalty, at least in terms of impact on job satisfaction.

Thus, while there may be some compensating short-term trade-off, it is more difficult for individuals to assess the magnitude of the long-term impact of a period of part-time work on future career progression and earnings, particularly if the current estimate is made on the basis of an expected return to full-time employment that is not subsequently realized. Indeed, working part-time on a long-term basis often impacts negatively on women’s career opportunities because it limits opportunities for developing leadership skills and taking on jobs with high levels of responsibility. And, part-time employment remains under-represented in management and other senior positions.

Encouraging part-time work is still on the policy agenda in many countries, as a means of mobilizing women’s employment while they have care responsibilities, prolonging the working life of older workers, and for facilitating the growth of youth employment combined with education and training. However, there is a need to ensure that the policy framework does not create disincentives to take up or return to full-time employment, including in the tax and benefit system, and in pension systems. Policy frameworks can also provide additional support to facilitate part-time work through employee right to request entitlements that have been introduced in a number of countries, although in most places this is a right limited to particular categories of employees.

It is important to remove barriers that limit transitions from part- into full-time employment. Most workers, who commence part-time employment, expect it to be a transitory state while looking after young children, studying, until their health improves or until they retire. Measures which ease the transition to full-time employment will enhance individual welfare and prevent part-time employment becoming a trap over the long-run, by helping to reduce, or even eradicate, the negative effects on



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career and earnings progression, and retirement income. This will help promote labour utilization, particularly in countries faced with a rapidly ageing population and a sharp decline in the working-age population.

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#### **4. Barriers to part-time work and policies to improve access to quality part-time work to meet the needs of employers and workers**

Governments and social partners have adopted different approaches towards the regulation of part-time work. Some have sought to promote it as part of a broader policy drive towards labour market flexibility, including efforts focussed on raising the quality of part-time work; others have been more passive or resistant to its promotion (see Chapter 1). However, since the early 1990s, the general direction in most OECD countries, has been towards legislative reform, which aims to encourage high-quality part-time work opportunities and reduce involuntary part-time work, although efforts have been variable internationally (see Chapter 2). Some countries have made more headway than others in implementing equal treatment legislation and related measures to ensure the quality of part-time work is on a par with full-time in terms of wages, other working conditions and career prospects. A few have gone further and introduced statutory provisions that give full-time employees entitlements to reduce their working hours to part-time.

Much of the debate about the possible merits of part-time work has focussed on whether it is freely chosen by workers or imposed by employers. For example, in French scientific literature, the discussion of part-time employment has generally been in one of three ways. Firstly, part-time work as a means of reconciliation between private and professional lives (Cette et al., 2005; Tremblay, 2005; Tremblay and Jebli, 2012) and its impact on inequalities between women and men (Angeloff, 2000; Laufer, 1998, 2003; Maruani, 2011). Secondly, a focus on the flexibility of working and management demands (for example Everaere, 2012; Lallement, 2012; Lamotte and Cécile, 2012; Arrowsmith and Mosse, 2000; Baret et al., 1999) and equality at work between women and men (Moncel, 2012; Amossé and Chardon, 2006). Thirdly, part-time work can be a means to ease the transition into retirement (Hill, 2004).

For workers, part-time offers a means of employment integration, a work schedule that makes it easier to combine work with family care responsibilities, or education and training or partial retirement. For some workers the decision to work part-time may be the only feasible option from a narrow set of alternatives. Many women are channelled into part-time because of shortfalls in child and elderly care services. Some part-timers would like to work more hours, but the rate of involuntary part-time work, due to a lack of full-time, is high and rising in some countries in the context of increased unemployment. Conversely, international surveys reveal that some full-timers would like to switch to part-time at certain stages during their working life, but do not consider this to be feasible, either because the option does not exist in their type of job or because of other barriers (see Section 1.3). One barrier to part-time working is that the drop in income is simply not affordable for many households. Other barriers are: the disadvantages and penalties incurred from working part-time; the poorer average job quality in terms of hourly pay rates; reduced opportunities for training and development; and, more limited prospects for progression (see Chapter 2).

For employers, the benefits of part-time work are fairly clear. As discussed in the introduction, they use part-time working for three main reasons: for recruitment and retention; for optimal staffing to provide operational flexibility; or, to reduce hourly labour costs by creating jobs that can be filled at lower hourly rates of pay. Thus, from the employers' perspective, the attraction of part-time work is:

- it means hours can be adjusted to coincide with cyclical conditions;
- part-time hours can facilitate the adjustment of production and labour costs leading to productivity gains;
- flexible hours that meet employee preferences can foster better employer-employee relations in the workplace;
- part-time is a form of work that may make it easier to recruit and retain workers unwilling or unable to work full-time (Sandor 2011; Buddelmeyer et al., 2005).

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These advantages have become even more pertinent following the economic recession as reduced hours allow employers to maintain staffing levels whilst simultaneously reducing overall labour costs (Lyonette et al., 2010).

However, employers' use of part-time work may be inhibited by a range of barriers, the impact of which will vary according to the staffing issues and market conditions of their particular sector. This Chapter identifies those that can inhibit the creation of opportunities for part-time employment that meet the needs of employers and workers. These can exist at the national level in labour laws and regulations, and in the design of social protection and pension systems. They also exist at the organizational level in workplace policies, practices and norms. Personnel policies may be organized on the presumption of full-time working, which might be reinforced in the detail of collective bargaining agreements that may even prohibit the use of part-time workers. It may also be established in some occupations or functions, but may be more difficult to implement in some jobs, such as supervisory or managerial positions. Or, it is not sought after by some parts of the workforce (for example those employed in male-dominated job).

This chapter focuses on the barriers encountered by employers, but first “quality part-time work” is defined (Section 4.1), as well as barriers that can deter the supply of part-time workers (Section 4.2). Then the various barriers that employers can face are discussed (Section 4.3), followed by a concluding section (Section 4.4).

#### **4.1 Quality part-time work**

A number of authors have set out definitions of “quality part-time work” (Fagan et al., 1998, Charlesworth et al., 2002; Chalmers et al., 2005; Sandor, 2011; Pocock et al., 2012; Plantenga and Remery, 2009). The consensus is that quality part-time work is secured through a range of provisions, including those specified in the ILO Part-Time Work Convention, 1994 (No. 175):

- Equal treatment through the same protection as full-time workers in respect of employment protection (redundancy, dismissal, maternity protection), anti-discrimination laws, occupational health and safety, the right to organize and bargain collectively.
- Equal treatment in social protection systems, including maternity and other family-related leave entitlements.<sup>9</sup>
- Equal treatment with an equivalent full-time position through pro rata arrangements<sup>10</sup> for hourly pay and other employment conditions, including performance bonuses, overtime, annual leave and paid public holidays, sick leave.
- Equal access to training and development opportunities to a comparable full-timer in all industries and at all occupational levels.
- Effective access to opportunities to work part-time at all occupational seniority levels and for men as well as women.
- Substantial (half of more of a full-time position, roughly 20–25 hours per week) rather than short hour (mini job) arrangements.

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<sup>9</sup> ILO Convention No. 175 allows that part-timers whose hours or earnings are below certain thresholds may be excluded from certain elements of statutory social security schemes, with the exception of industrial injury benefits, and providing the thresholds do not exclude an “unduly large” percentage of part-time workers.

<sup>10</sup> ILO Convention No. 175 states that this pro rata may be determined in relation to hours of work, contributions or earnings, or through other methods consistent with national law and practice.

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- Part-time work schedules designed to take account of the scheduling needs of different groups of workers, including those with family care responsibilities, older workers, workers with disabilities or those combining employment with education or training.
  - The ability to make the transition from part-time to full-time hours in the same or a promotion level job.

As discussed in Chapter 2, progress has been variable against these criteria, even in the European countries covered by the EU Part-Time Work Directive (97/81/EC), and other countries where the ILO Convention has been adopted. For example, in the Australia Quality Part-time Work Project, undertaken in the period prior to the adoption of the ILO Convention in 2011, Charlesworth et al., (2002), found more progress being made in relation to the principles of equal treatment than in relation to the criteria of substantial hours or work schedules. Subsequently, good practice guidelines were drawn up by Victoria Industrial Relations in collaboration with employers' associations and trade unions representing the sectors of the study (Victoria Industrial Relations, 2005; Bardoel et al., 2007). The guidelines included checklist principles concerning work schedules in recognition that part-time staff have lives outside of their employment.

#### **4.2 The barriers that can deter workers from seeking part-time employment**

The barriers, which can deter workers from voluntarily taking part-time employment, concern the lack of equal treatment and the inferior quality of many of its dimensions. As discussed in Chapter 2 these barriers are:

- lack of equal treatment – inferior pay and social protection coverage (including pensions);
- tax and benefit trap that part-time workers can fall into;
- concern that part-time working will have a negative impact on career progression because of reduced access to training and promotion;
- working-time schedule may not be compatible with family responsibilities or other commitments;
- lack of options for part-time work at the workplace, which for men, includes gender stereotypes (part-time work is women's work);
- the risk that a switch to part-time work will make it more difficult to resume full-time work at a future date.

The working time capability framework illuminates the factors that shape a workers decision as to whether to seek part- or full-time employment (Lee and McCann, 2006). It focuses on analysing the feasible options from which an individual can select: what is genuinely possible in the particular circumstances rather than what may be possible in principle, according to the abstract concept of individual free choice. Lee and McCann draw on Sen's (1999) concept of capability, which expresses this in terms of the substantive freedom of an individual to choose between feasible alternative functionings, or ways of doing things. In other words, the real options open to them, shaped by institutions and social norms, termed social conversion factors. Hence, in the capabilities framework, a mother, who works part-time because this is the only way in which she can earn a living and raise her children, is in a different position to one who has selected from a range of feasible working-time and childcare arrangements. The capability framework brings to the fore the options from which this choice was selected and is concerned with "... the opportunities given to workers to choose and

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change their working time so as to improve the quality of their lives” (Lee and McCann, 2006: 67). The capability framework is a means of embedding a life course perspective into employment and social policy debates. This is because of the focus it brings to the social conversion factors, which enable individuals to move between different working-time arrangements, as circumstances and preferences change.

At a fundamental level, an individual’s capability to secure part-time employment will be affected by whether this form is already a widespread practice in the labour market. In some countries, part-time employment is a common undertaking for women, particularly those with care responsibilities, while in others full-time employment is the norm for women.

In many countries, a decision to work part-time may mean weaker employment protection, either because of qualifying periods or because there is a higher incidence of it among those with temporary rather than open-ended contracts. It may also mean a reduced eligibility for unemployment insurance due to shorter periods of employment and shorter working hours (Section 2.2). These systems can combine to raise the poverty risk for part-timers: less protection against job loss and reduced assistance if the part-timer is made unemployed.

Inferior social protection coverage is another barrier. To redress this most of the European social security systems have various redistributive elements that favour part-time workers (Section 2.2). However, part-time work might still be perceived as unattractive from the individual’s perspective when considering pension income. For example, pension systems with a relatively strong equivalence principle in the pension formula (such as in Germany) might hinder the take-up of a part-time job because they lead to a loss of potential pension income (Klammer et al., 2005). Part-time employees working less than a certain number of hours per week may also have reduced entitlement to benefits.

In terms of collective agreements, part-timers are less likely to be covered in most European countries, particularly when they work short hours. Even part-timers who work longer hours may find their pay is lower than full-timers due to restrictions on their eligibility for extra pay. In the United Kingdom for example, collective bargaining is both less widespread and less codified in written and legal agreements so part-timers may often be excluded from benefits and entitlements without this being explicitly stated in writing (Fagan et al., 1994).

In Spain, although one study has found no difference in the commitment of part- and full-time workers (Alvarez Llorente, 2008), the fact is that a transition to part-time work may have long lasting consequences for careers, albeit not as damaging as work interruptions (Fernandez-Kranz et al., 2011). Thus, for Moral et al., (2012), in Spain, before the crisis, part-time work would only be of interest to those without access to full-time jobs or who were unlikely to be promoted. Some recent legal reforms have been passed to improve their situation. One is the inclusion of homeworkers in the general social security system since 1 January 2012. This was one of the legislator’s commitments in the Law 27/2011 on the modernization of the social security system. It now recognizes part-time self-employment, and establishes that maternity/paternity leave periods count as employment periods for the computation of eligibility for retirement pensions, incapacity benefits, any subsequent maternity/paternity leave, and death benefits for dependants. Another, is Law 3/2012, which gives all workers with one year’s service, the right to a paid permit for professional training relevant to the firm and equivalent to 20 hours per year, where the hours can be accumulated in a five-year period. While many part-timers with fixed-term contracts will be excluded by the one year’s service criteria, this is a welcome advancement, given that Moreno (2012) argues that a policy improving training is essential for improving the quality of part-time jobs. This is reinforced in a few firms by explicit collective agreements giving both full- and part-time workers the right to request training (Garcia-Perrote and Nieto, 2010).

The working-time schedule of the part-time job may also be a barrier. Generally, both part- and full-time workers prefer regular and predictable hours. This can be particularly important for those who need to coordinate their work hours with childcare and other family commitments. Hence, the most popular part-time schedules for mothers are usually weekdays within school hours. Some opt for evening or weekend work if other family members, such as the father or a grandparent, are available to provide childcare. Short hour “mini” jobs, particularly if the schedule is for evening or weekend work,

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are generally less popular, although they do suit some workers, such as students or mothers whose children are very young.

To enhance the quality of working-time for part-timers, unions in some sectors such as retail, have reached agreements to prevent the fragmentation of work periods. For example, the 2006 collective agreement for department stores in Spain, stipulates that the working day for part-timers working four hours or less must not be split into more than one shift. For part-timers with a working day of more than four hours, there must be no more than one interruption between shifts; any such interruption cannot exceed four hours (Garcia-Perrote and Nieto, 2010). Working-time policies and laws extend this principle to all sectors in some countries, such as Belgium.

A key issue, from a capability perspective, is whether there are social conversion factors<sup>11</sup> in place enabling employees to make an individual adjustment between full- and part-time hours while remaining in the same or a similar job, and if there is scope to reverse this adjustment at a later stage (Fagan, 1999; Anxo et al., 2007b). Where employees are able to negotiate reduced or flexible hours in their current job, it may enable them to retain it without searching for part-time work. This in turn provides them with some protection against downward mobility. However, they may still face reduced prospects of subsequent career advancement unless the principle of equal treatment between full- and part-time workers is widely implemented in training and promotion criteria (see, for example, Nord et al., 2002; Smithson et al., 2004). It may also mean they are able to secure part-time work in an occupation, grade or workplace where such an arrangement is uncommon. This may help in the long term to make part-time work available in a wider range of jobs across the economy.

The right of employees to request reduced hours of work is most prevalent in the Netherlands, although such provisions also exist in a number of other European countries, as well as Australia and New Zealand. In a number of countries, parents have a statutory right to work part-time during parental leave periods, or to work reduced hours following parental leave (see Section 2.3 and Fagan and Walthery, 2006). Sweden has the most generous and flexible parental leave system. In addition, parents can reduce their normal hours to 75 per cent until their child has completed the first year of school. As a result, many mothers in Sweden use these parental entitlements to secure part-time arrangements, with hours typically longer than those worked by mothers in part-time jobs in countries such as the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Germany (Anxo et al., 2007a).

In Belgium, the statutory parental leave provisions are a specific component of a broader statutory package of time credit and “career break” schemes. These include the right for eligible employees to reduce working time to part-time hours for a limited period (either a 50 per cent or 20 per cent reduction). The 20 per cent reduction (typically from a five to a four-day week) is the most popular option.

In Germany, a number of instruments have been introduced allowing greater working time flexibility for employees. About 40 per cent are covered by the system of working time accounts, which gives workers the right to switch between full- to part-time work, or to reduce their working hours. In certain sectors, working time can be accumulated over a longer period to allow employees to build up time or monetary claims to be used for early retirement or sabbaticals.

A more modest, but innovative, step in a similar direction has been taken through collective bargaining in Spain. The collective agreement for the education and training sector (2007) eliminates the requirement that part-timers must be employed for three years in order to be given preferential consideration for full-time vacancies (Garcia-Perrote and Nieto, 2010).

Policies enabling workers to request an adjustment to their working hours enhance their capabilities to balance care responsibilities with work, particularly relevant for women, given that they do most of it. But, it also increases men’s capabilities to make adjustments as a means of becoming more involved. For example, several United Kingdom surveys have shown that flexible work options have increased, since the introduction of the Right to Request Flexible Working in 2003. This provided employees,

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<sup>11</sup> Social conversion factors are the social institutions and norms that enable individuals to move between different working-time arrangements as circumstances and preferences change.

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with parental responsibility for children under the age of six (or 18, if disabled), with the right to request a change in how many hours, when or where they work, and to have such a request seriously considered by their employer. This was extended in 2006 to employees who care for a dependent adult, in 2009 to parents of children under the age of 16, and in 2013 to all employees. Following this legal reform, flexible working options, which do not lead to a reduction in salary, such as flexitime, have increased, and both men and women are requesting this, although women are much more likely to for childcare reasons. Part-timers have been particularly likely to (successfully) request flexible working (McCormack, 2012). The introduction of the legal right to request reduced or flexible hours in the United Kingdom has resulted in fathers using this new social right to negotiate such adjustments, even if the proportion of them who make use of this is lower than mothers, and few request part-time arrangements, in contrast to mothers (Fagan et al., 2006). Policies, which enhance an individual's capability to transition smoothly from full- to part-time hours, are also likely to be of growing importance to the policy agenda for prolonging the working life of older workers and helping create more stable pathways into full-time employment for young people entering the labour market via a part-time position.

Nonetheless, in most countries part-time work is rare or non-existent at senior levels in many professional and managerial areas. This creates a barrier to part-time work as there are no role models for workers and employers to emulate. This is particularly stark in science, engineering and technology, where there are widespread skill shortages in some countries like the United Kingdom, yet the limited opportunities for part-time employment produces a high attrition rate for women if they become mothers (Lyonette et al., 2010). This barrier encourages mothers to leave their profession, or become stuck at a level with limited career progression.

Evaluation studies show that, to improve the efficacy of policies establishing an individual's right to request reduced hours of work, several features need to be built into their design (Fagan and Walthery, 2006). First, it is important for the legislation to provide a clear definition of the procedure and the "business grounds" on which such a request may be turned down. The legislation in the United Kingdom provides for very little redress if the employer rejects the request. This contrasts with the Dutch and German legislation, where the grounds for rejecting a request are narrower, and the courts have the right to scrutinize and evaluate the "business case" evidence presented by the employer. Legal provisions allowing for trial periods for new arrangements also help employers and employees to reach agreement. This follows the example set by judgements in New South Wales in Australia, concerning employees with family responsibilities who requested alternative work schedules (Bourke, 2004). An option to request a move from part- to full-time hours is also a necessary policy feature to facilitate time adjustments across a working life.

Second, such a policy tool is more likely to succeed if it is part of broader initiatives to promote personal flexibility and an approach to working time through workplace agreements. This should be combined with resources and training for personnel departments and line managers to devise and implement flexible working arrangements (including training, good practice manuals, budget lines and financial incentives). Third, it also means that reforms may be required in social protection systems to make periods of part-time employment possible, rather than penalizing them.

### **4.3 Barriers that can deter employers from using part-time work arrangements**

The organizational barriers that may deter employers from expanding their use of part-time working include:

- The structure of employers' social security contributions.
- Labour law and employment protection coverage.
- Fixed (per capita) labour costs.
- Work organization, job design and productivity concerns.

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- Organizational culture and norms, which attach more value to full-time work arrangements, including:
    - opposition in collective agreements or among the workforce;
    - a priori preference for full-time work schedules based on a lack of previous experience with part-time work, prejudice and negative stereotypical assumptions about part-time work/workers, or prior negative experiences of using part-time work/workers.
  - Functional alternatives for achieving flexibility are available, for example shift work or overtime by full-time workers, fixed-term contracts.

The extent to which employers assess these as major or minor barriers will vary according to their specific operating conditions. For example, fixed labour costs may only be a minor consideration for an employer with pressing recruitment and retention personnel issues to resolve. Whereas, such costs may be a pivotal factor for an employer deciding whether to cover extended operating hours for minimum wage workers through full-time shifts or part-time schedules.

#### ***4.3.1 The structure of employers' contributions to statutory social security and pension systems***

It is more expensive for employers to increase their workforce, by employing two or more part-time instead of one full-time worker, in countries with statutory social protection systems for sickness, unemployment and pension benefits, if the structure of their mandatory contributions creates a fixed cost per worker. To mitigate this, some national systems operate a working-hours or earnings threshold and employers pay no, or reduced charges, for employees who fall below this threshold (see Section 2.2). However, thresholds create a different barrier, as this element of labour costs rise if the amount of work done by part-timers increases. This creates a cost control incentive for employers to keep part-timers on marginal arrangements of short hours and low earnings to remain below the threshold.

If the system is designed to extend social protection to the workers below this threshold, then reduced contributions have to be offset, either by higher contribution rates for workers above the threshold, or financed from general taxation or other sources. As already discussed (Section 2.2), part-time employees contribute less to social security systems in absolute financial terms, but in some systems they can claim more than proportional benefits. Alternatively, if reduced contributions mean reduced social protection, then the costs fall in the financing of the social assistance system or in minimum pension systems, in countries where such systems are in place. In practice, given that most part-time work has expanded as an alternative to economic inactivity or unemployment, rather than as a direct substitute for full-time employment, it is unlikely to trigger increased expenditure on social assistance in universal systems. For, if not employed part-time, these workers would have access to a universal income guarantee, either on an individual basis or a derived one based on their position as a spouse, parent or other family role (Anxo et al., 2006).

Thus, an increase in the rate of part-time working can place a financial strain on social security systems if they are designed around the presumption that full-time employment is the standard for contributions and benefits. Exemptions below thresholds reduce the barriers for employers to create part-time jobs. However, they can instead produce another barrier by deterring them from creating part-time jobs with longer hours and higher earnings, or from offering additional hours to provide flexible cover for seasonal or irregular peaks in labour demand. How strong this barrier is in practice will depend upon the structure of contribution rates above the threshold relative to other cost gains from employing part-timers. For example, in jobs which can be fragmented into short part-time hour contracts, such as in supermarkets and other large retail units, this may be more of a cost consideration than in other areas of activity. Alternatively, a pro rata contribution for all workers has the merit of



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comprehensive coverage, although this can increase the administrative costs for employers because more workers are not captured by the system.

In France, since 1992, substantial financial incentives to alleviate social contributions have been offered to employers who hire part-time workers. These incentives combine with other forms of financial incentives offered to employers for their low-wage employees. These measures have contributed to the increase of part-time work. More modest examples, aimed at encouraging unemployed people to take part-time jobs while maintaining their social protection coverage, include the structure of the PPE (*Prime pour l'emploi*) tax credits, designed to improve the financial incentives for those who are unemployed to take part-time jobs (Anxo et al, 2007a).

The German policy to promote mini jobs is perhaps one of the most significant of such policy drives for job creation, whereby nearly seven million of them were created by May 2006, 70 per cent of which were taken by women. These jobs involve short, part-time arrangements, which are low paid, and not covered by social protection (Anxo et al., 2007b).

The United States is an important example of a country without a universal social protection system, and where pensions and health insurance are secured through the contract with the employer as “fringe benefits”. As discussed in Chapter 2, in the absence of equal treatment provisions, part-time workers are much less likely to have health insurance or pension coverage (Kalleberg, 2006). Carré and Tilly (1998) point out that when companies in the United States increase their part-time workforce as a substitute for full-time workers, they are able to introduce lower wages, reduce benefits and, in many cases, eliminate medical coverage and expand levels of employment flexibility. The system in the United States is thus not a barrier to the creation of part-time work by employers; rather, it encourages employers in some sectors to use part-time employment to drive down costs through substituting poor quality part- for full-time jobs.

#### ***4.3.2 Labour law and employment protection coverage***

The strength of employment protection, and whether or not part-time workers are covered, can also be a barrier which deters employers from creating part-time jobs. This only applies if the employer's primary motivation for recruiting part-time workers is to obtain a pool of secondary workers who are cheaper and easier to dismiss. The OECD (2012, p. 247) analysis finds a negative association between the strength of employment protection legislation and an increase in part-time work that suggests this barrier comes into play in the decision-making of some employers.

#### ***4.3.3 Per capita fixed labour costs of employing two or more part-time workers instead of one full-time worker***

Fixed costs per worker can make it more expensive for employers to hire two or three part-timers rather than one full-timer. Some argue that these costs might be a contributory factor to the lower average wages of part-timers (O'Dorchai et al., 2007). Fixed costs include, maintaining personnel records and pay-roll systems plus additional costs for recruitment and induction, communication, training, workforce organization and scheduling, and other adjustments to human resource management practices entailed whenever the workforce increases (Evans, 2001 cited in Anxo et al., 2006; Messenger, 2004). There may be additional fixed costs, such as office space or equipment i.e. if part-timers are there during the same period, rather than during different parts of the day or week. If part-time work is used to recruit and retain women with young children then additional space may be needed for breast-feeding facilities (Anxo et al., 2006).

Where a part-time job is taken by someone with limited recent work experience, for example a young labour market entrant or a woman, who has been away for an extended period after having children, there may be additional training costs, such as a more extensive induction, refresher courses or retraining.

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Some fixed costs can be reduced or offset by having part-timers in the workforce. Work stations and equipment can be used more intensively in certain activities where part-time schedules enable extended operating hours and continuous working through “hand-over” shifts. When part-time work schedules are dovetailed to cover regular daily or weekly fluctuations in labour demand, this reduces the labour costs incurred from paying (full-time) workers during slack periods. Charges for overtime, or recruiting temporary cover, can also be reduced if part-timers are available to work additional hours cheaper than full-timers, who cross an hours’ threshold for an overtime premiums rate; or, if part-timers provide temporary cover for the absence of other team members (sickness, holidays).

Spain is an example where administrative and other fixed costs appear to be a barrier preventing employers from introducing more part-time work. There is no legal barrier to part-time work and successive governments have tried to foster its expansion and other flexible working time arrangements. This includes the 2012 Labour Market Reform, whose objective is fostering working time schemes providing flexibility for workers and firms, although it does not say how this will be done specifically. However, there has been little impact to date, even among the largest firms prior to the current recession (Simon, 2011; Moral et al., 2012; Gonzalez Menendez and Martinez Gonzalez, 2012). One regional study shows that, although human resource directors thought these policies would be appreciated by workers, their adoption was not on their firms’ horizon. Only 15 per cent of firms considered changing working time arrangements and only 12 per cent of those mentioned improving work-life balance as a reason to do so (Montanes and Aisa, 2011, p. 198–201). At least part of the reason is connected to cost for, on average, part-time work may be more expensive for employers as a result of administrative and other fixed costs (Moral et al., 2012). Furthermore, Pagan (2007) found that, once the workers and jobs’ characteristics were controlled for, the hourly wage rate was higher for part-time workers. That is, there was an unaccounted for premium for being a part-time worker. This could be an important reason for the limited supply of part-time jobs in Spain: the time flexibility offered by part-time work may not be sufficient to offset other costs incurred.

The legal framework for part-time workers in Spain is generally considered by legal scholars to be more protective in its application of the equality principle than EU legislation (Gonzalez del Rey Rodriguez, 2005). It includes intermittent part-time workers and incorporates an equality principle that may supersede the principle of proportionality (*pro rata temporis*) in employee rights, where a pro rata application leads to unfavourable treatment and the perpetuation of indirect gender discrimination. The general doctrine to the selective application of the principle of proportionality is when a worker right is non-divisible there is no room to apply it, such as certain non-wage benefits (accommodation, maintenance and travel allowances), or the paid time allocated for workers’ representatives to carry out their functions of representation (Garcia-Perrote and Nieto, 2010). The nature of a specific worker right as divisible or non-divisible is subsequently often debated, and a matter for jurisprudence.<sup>12</sup>

#### **4.3.4 Work organization, job design and productivity concerns**

Part-time schedules can provide the workforce cover needed for the operating rhythms of the firm, but when a range of them are in operation at different times of the day and week, it can make team coordination, supervision and line management more complex. The extent to which this barrier is highly variable depends on the tasks involved and the range of schedules in operation. A representative European establishment survey found that: 30 per cent of managers, who used part-time work in their establishments, reported work organization to be “more complicated” as a result; 20 per cent reported that it made it easier; and, the other half reported “no difference” in managing work as a result of the presence of part-time workers (Anxo et al., 2007a).

Job sharing arrangements – when a full-time post is divided into two – are intended to provide full-time continuity, but it makes work organization more complex. For example, research into 470 employees in business organizations in west Michigan, United States, revealed that job sharing required extra effort in communication between two part-time workers and their manager(s). Many of

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<sup>12</sup> For instance, there is a ruling recognizing the right of part-time workers, who only work at weekends, to the bonus for working bank holidays (Garcia-Perrote and Nieto, 2010).

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them felt job sharing was a “hassle”, partly because they found it difficult to assess which jobs were capable of being shared by two employees with similar or complementary skills and experience. Others were of the opinion that allowing some employees to job share had the potential to demotivate others (Crampton et al., 2003).

Unless meetings and training courses are arranged to take account of part-time schedules, it can make it more difficult for the whole team to participate. This can undermine communication and consultation and inhibit skill acquisition, thus undermining the efficacy of the team and its individual members. Part-time workers can become marginalized as a result. For example, analysis of the United Kingdom’s 1998 Workplace Employment Relations Survey by Hoque and Kirkpatrick (2003), showed that among professionals, those with part-time contracts were consulted less, including on workplace changes, and health and safety issues (cited in Lyonette et al., 2010).

Where firms are developing their workforce to be more versatile and adaptable, and to work more flexibly across a range of tasks, this may be more difficult to achieve in some jobs when part-time schedules have to be taken into account. O’Dorchai et al. (2007), argue that these high performance and flexible roles are more compatible with full- than part-time employment, and that the underlying training costs are such that it is cheaper to train one full-timer rather than two part-timers. Whether a certain volume of hours are a necessary input for some, or all high performance roles, or whether this is a presumption that full-time employment is the standard template for work organization (see below), it contributes to a situation whereby, on average, part-time jobs involve less complexity (discretion, problem solving, decision making), particularly for those with short working hours (see Section 2.4.2 and 2.4.3 above).

There are conflicting theories about the relationship between the number of working hours and productivity. One argument is that due to start-up effects, productivity rises slowly at the beginning of a working day. As a result, a worker’s productivity during the last hour of work is above the average daily level (Barzel, 1973 cited in O’Dorchai, 2007). In this theory, part-time workers are less productive because of their shorter working hours. However, others, such as Moffitt (1984) and Tummers and Woittiez (1991), contest this development of productivity model. They suggest that working part-time avoids the negative “fatigue” effect which causes marginal productivity to drop in the case of long working hours or overtime (cited in O’Dorchai et al., 2007). Thus, given average productivity is shown to peak at 34 working hours a week, part-timers are more productive than their full-time colleagues (O’Dorchai et al., 2007). However, the level of productivity is likely to be primarily shaped by factors such as the quality of the job, the flexibility of the hours and the level of pay, regardless of the number of hours worked.

#### ***4.3.5 Organizational culture and norms that attach more value to full-time work arrangements***

In organizations where working long hours is interpreted as a sign of commitment and productivity, this culture can create a barrier to the development of part-time work in general, and of gender-blind part-time work in particular (Dubin, 2011; Moral et al., 2012). In companies where full-time work is the norm, and particularly where there is a “long hours” organizational culture, the barrier to part-time work arises because those who work shorter hours are less visible at certain periods of the day or week. This can fuel perceptions that they are less available, less committed or less productive. Likewise, it is more difficult to progress on a part-time basis in professions with structured career paths because these are premised on full-time employment (Webber and Williams, 2008). To change this aspect of organizational culture requires a concerted effort by employers and line managers over a period of time, and this may deter employers from considering it to be a feasible or cost-effective strategic objective.

For example, Lewis and Humbert’s (2010) case study of *ScienceCo* – a large, multinational Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) company in France employing a relatively high number of female scientists – found that, while there was a flexible working hours policy, in practice the organizational culture placed a disproportionate amount of importance on those, who were available and visible, for

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long hours of “face time”, with many meetings held in the evening. Employees who were around in the evening were more highly regarded than those who were available earlier in the day. This immediately placed women (or men with family care responsibilities) at a disadvantage. The flexible working-hours option was used by many more of the female workers to come early in the morning and leave early to collect children from school, while more men arrived later and worked later in the evening.

Similarly, Australian research on three organizations (a state-owned, utility company; a manufacturing, multinational company; and, the police force of the State of Victoria) found that work in all of them was organized around full-time employment as the norm (Baird et al., 2010). This research examined barriers to the introduction of part-time work in all jobs, including senior ones. It found the main barriers to be: gendered cultures were resistant to change; managers were ill-equipped in skills or experience in managing part-timers; and, there was poor work organization and administration (management processes and systems were built around the template of a full-time job).

Employers may be deterred from creating part-time work options if they are concerned that working part-time is associated with reduced commitment to the job or company. Joseph (2012), suggests that part-time workers have a lower commitment and this may result in a higher rate of absenteeism. A representative European survey found that managers, who reported problems of absenteeism or retention, were slightly more likely to have part-timers among their workforce, but there was no association with the rate of part-time work (Anxo et al., 2007a). However, if there is a widespread perception, misplaced or not, among managers or their workforce, that part-timers are less committed, this curtails opportunities for their access to training and promotion (Lyonette et al., 2010).

Similarly for full-timers, part-timers’ level of job commitment and organizational loyalty are enhanced if they feel their job is worthwhile, they are treated fairly and their contribution is valued by their colleagues and employer. Unequal treatment and inferior job prospects may reduce part-timers’ commitment. Thus, turnover may be higher for part-timers in some sectors, for example if they hold more than one job and are offered full-time employment by one of them (Findlaw Inc, 2000). Part-timers may also be less willing to engage in firm-specific training if they do not see a future for them in the company. This seems to be a common factor encountered by managers in Japan. A recent representative survey of business establishments with ten or more employees, found that non-regular workers, which includes part-time, fixed term, temporary and contract, were less proactive than regular workers in engaging in skills development (Asao et al., 2012).

Where employers operate policies, which enable workers to make adjustments between full- and part-time hours, this may enhance the job and organizational commitment of their workforce, and improve the retention rate for women following maternity leave. These gains in commitment and retention may outweigh the increased complexity of work planning and coordination arising if a range of full- and part-time schedules are in operation (Section 3.2.4 above).

Lyonette et al. (2010), note that research in the United States shows that, as retention strategies for high-skilled workers, some companies have started offering part-time jobs that are high status, career-oriented, have reduced-hour options with pro-rata professional salaries, benefits and promotion eligibility. Hill et al., 2004, citing Barnett and Gareis, 2000, referred to a “new concept of part-time work” or “customized work” (Meiskins and Whalley, 2002). A similar trend is evidenced for some high-skilled professions in the United Kingdom (Lyonette et al., 2010). For example, the *Flexible Career Scheme* (FCS) was set up to help provide additional, centrally funded part-time flexible posts for doctors to encourage better recruitment and retention in general practice. It provides doctors with an opportunity to work flexibly, including less than 50 per cent, within mainstream general practice while being supported in maintaining their careers. It is used by doctors, who want to temporarily reduce their hours, those nearing retirement, who wish to continue working, but at a different pace, and doctors who are resuming employment after a career break and need a period of supervised work. In each case, the scheme can be adapted to different circumstances and provides sufficient medical/clinical practice for revalidation purposes. The FCS is time limited at the outset, with the possibility of a later extension and is centrally administered by National Health Service (NHS) professionals. Doctors on the scheme can work up to 50 per cent, which can be calculated on an

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annualized basis, to enable more work to be carried out at one time and less at others (Department of Health, 2007).

In an evaluation of the FCS, Viney et al. (2007), found that it was seen to be almost universally beneficial: 34 per cent of those on the scheme, mostly women, wanted it to run longer, although there was some concern over job security after the scheme ended. There were some negative organizational knock-on effects on those already working full-time that needed to be resolved, for example information sharing was sometimes a problem. They concluded that it was especially successful in supporting those women re-entering substantive posts, or working as locums or retainers after having children, without having to compromise their levels of skill and experience. However, general medical practice has been recognized as an occupational sector where women can take time out of the labour force, or work part time, without incurring a career penalty. This has led to an increase in the number of mothers (and some fathers) choosing it as a career (Crompton and Lyonette, 2010). This move into general practice, however, is often at the expense of other, highly prestigious medical specialities, such as surgery that do not offer such benefits (Lyonette et al., 2010).

A qualitative research study by Smithson et al. (2004), of 50 accountants, found that flexible working policies were most effective when senior staff, especially men, acted as role models by working flexibly. These findings are also supported by research undertaken to evaluate the United Kingdom government's recent initiative to stimulate the creation of opportunities for part-time work in a wider range of occupations through the "Quality Part-Time Fund" (Lyonette et al., 2010).

In Austria, a telecommunications company offers a range of measures to enable employees to combine work with care responsibilities, including the option to temporarily switch to part-time hours for a specified period (Gareis, 2011). They are permitted to choose a model of working time, in consultation with their manager, with weekly working hours ranging from 15–35. As many positions as possible are made available on a part-time basis, with a formal assessment of each new post as to its suitability for part-time employment. The policy also aims to enable more men to work part-time, which entails addressing cultural barriers, and their reluctance to adjust their working times. Employees are permitted to request job sharing, led by their own demands, as the organization has found that it is a useful tool for transferring knowledge between staff. Along with various leave arrangements, the part-time and job sharing policies in this organization have led it to be ranked among the top ten places to work in Austria and to retain and attract skills when there have been skills shortages. Furthermore, employees are regularly surveyed and report a high level of satisfaction with the support provided by the firm. So far the policies put in place have been received positively and have proven useful in sustaining employees' careers.

One retail company in France, with a rate of part-time work higher than the rest of the sector, conducted an experiment to promote the transition from long part- to full-time hours through an agreement signed by the social partners (ANACT, 2012). This agreement was signed in 2008 and enabled employees with contracts of 33–35 hours to increase to the full-time norm of 36.75 hours on a voluntary basis, providing there would be no decline in productivity. The main obstacle to putting this into practice was that managers found it difficult to rearrange the work to ensure that productivity was maintained through greater functional flexibility. This illustrates how opportunities to move from part- to full-time contracts remain highly dependent on the local situation, and the ability of line managers to reorganize work to facilitate functional flexibility and job enrichment.

The experience and willingness of line managers to facilitate part-time work at intermediate and senior levels is a critical lever for opening up opportunities at these levels (Crompton and Lyonette, 2010). For example, a study of the nursing profession in the United Kingdom found that a switch to part-time work could involve undertaking inferior duties, changing department or even demotion to a lower grade. But, this was less likely to occur where the line manager was supportive of part-time work (Edwards and Robinson, 2001).

Until part-time and more flexible forms of work are recognized, where appropriate, as being good for business, it is highly improbable that employers will make efforts to accommodate more "quality" part-time workers. Some workplaces are, indeed, being forced to think more "creatively" due to the current recession, including the expansion of part-time and other forms of flexible working (Lyonette

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et al., 2010). It seems likely that positive outcomes, such as reduced overheads and better recruitment and retention of trained staff, will encourage employers, and therefore line managers, to be more supportive of part-time work. For example, within the accountancy profession in the United Kingdom, many companies are now promoting themselves as family-friendly in order to attract and retain good employees (Cooper et al., 2001) and to appeal to clients. Edwards and Wajcman (2005), describe research undertaken by PricewaterhouseCoopers in which work–life balance, rather than income, was the main factor in choosing an employer for 45 per cent of new graduates worldwide. Positive changes with regard to quality part-time working may, therefore, come about via the need to make budget cuts during the current recession, a dwindling supply of qualified staff within certain sectors, and also the perceptions of potential staff and clients. However, these pressures are unlikely to have much impact on lower-skill job areas where retention issues and skill shortages are likely to be less acute.

#### ***4.3.6 Other flexible arrangements that can substitute for part-time working***

Part-time work is one of several contractual arrangements that provide employers with working-time flexibility to cover variable or extended operating hours. Other arrangements, which can provide functional equivalence, include overtime and shift working by full-time workers, or temporary hires.

For example, in Spain an indirect barrier, which deters employers from making more use of part-time work arrangements, is the liberal regulation of fixed-term contracts (with very low contract and termination costs), in conjunction with the prevalence of low-skilled economic activities in the economy (Perez Infante, 2008; Moral et al., 2012). Moral et al., (2012), argue that the ease of making extensive adjustments to employment levels (contracting and firing) at low cost means there is little incentive to use part-time, and other working-time adjustments, as an alternative to covering fluctuations in labour demand. More precisely, fixed-term contracts have deterred the creation of part-time work in the core workforce because the rate is higher for temporary employees than for those on open-ended contracts. If regulations were reformed to restrict the use of fixed-term contracts or, as some propose, eliminate them altogether (Alonso and Galdon, 2007), this would improve job security for many part-timers. However, an expansion of part-time opportunities in the higher paid occupations and sectors would not automatically follow.

## **4.4 Conclusions**

Part-time employment has the potential to enhance the working life of some workers, and to benefit employers through gains in flexibility and productivity. However, there are a number of barriers that can inhibit its development.

Barriers, which may deter workers from taking part-time employment, include lack of equal treatment and inferior pay and social protection coverage (including pensions) that can result in the tax and benefit trap. There is also the negative impact it often has on career progression because of reduced access to training and promotion, or the opportunity to resume full-time employment at a future date. The working-time schedule of some part-time jobs is not particularly compatible with care responsibilities hence, it is not always a “family-friendly” form of employment.

Employers may be deterred from introducing or expanding part-time work arrangements by a range of barriers. Some of these barriers are to do with direct additional costs arising from employing two or more part-timers rather than one full-timer. This is due to government policy, notably in the structure of employers’ social security contributions and in the organization of labour law and employment protection. There may also be fixed per capita labour costs to take into account for some occupations. The employer may be deterred from using part-time employment schedules because of limited experience, and concerns that it may impact negatively on work organization and productivity. This may be particularly acute where the organizational culture and norms attach more value to full-time work. This can perhaps be underwritten by collective agreements, prior negative experiences, or negative stereotypical assumptions about the productivity and commitment of part-timers. Likewise, employers may have experience of using part-timers in specific functions and under the leadership of some line managers, but not in other parts of the organization. Therefore, the organizational culture

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may prohibit part-time work in certain occupations or levels of seniority, perhaps through gender stereotypes deeming it to be acceptable for women, but unsuitable for men committed to a career. Finally, there may be functional alternatives available for employers to use flexibility on a full-time basis, for example with shift work, overtime, or fixed-term contracts.

Chapter Two reviewed how countries addressed some of these barriers. The implementation of equal treatment principles is in effect the first step. A second step, taken by some, is the introduction of the right to request laws to help create more secure pathways between part- and full-time working. However, even in those countries that made these progressive developments, there is still a lot more fine-tuning to be done to develop personnel tools and organizational cultures putting part-time work on an equal footing, and facilitating it in all job areas and grade levels for those wishing to switch, or resume full-time work, at different stages in their life.

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## 5. Conclusions

Part-time work continues to expand in many countries. However, due to the different economic and labour market conditions, and institutional frameworks, which shape working-time arrangements and employers' labour-use strategies, its incidence varies internationally. What is consistent across nearly every country is that the rate of part-time work is higher for women, and they constitute the majority of part-timers. This pronounced gender difference in their propensity to work part-time is largely because they become mothers. A part-time work schedule can make it easier to combine employment with raising children, although many mothers are, nevertheless, constrained because a limited availability of childcare services leaves few feasible, alternative options. Although more men are working part-time, this occurs mainly when they are students, approaching retirement or unable to find full-time employment. While part-time work can also make it easier to combine employment with training, or help smooth the transition into retirement, it may be the only labour market option available for some workers. For example, this may occur if there is a lack of childcare infrastructure, or unemployment rates are high. The amount of involuntary part-time employment, due to workers who desire full-time work being unable to find it, has risen with the high unemployment rates in the current austerity period with which many economies, especially those in Europe, are grappling.

Although part-time employment has the potential to enhance the working life of some employees, there are also a number of barriers that may discourage them. These include a lack of equal treatment and inferior pay and social protection coverage (including pensions), the tax and benefit trap, and the negative impact it often has on career progression because of reduced access to training and promotion, or the opportunity to resume full-time employment at a future date. Longer spells of part-time work have particularly negative implications for personal career prospects, poverty risks and ultimately for aggregate labour utilization. This is especially true for a woman's career because it limits opportunities for developing leadership skills and taking on jobs with higher levels of responsibility. Thus, part-time employment remains under-represented in most management and other senior positions. The working-time schedule in some part-time jobs is often incompatible with care responsibilities and, therefore, not always a "family-friendly" form of employment. Alongside this, part-timers are also more at risk of poverty (i.e. more than twice the rate for full-timers on average across OECD countries). This is not only because of their shorter work hours, but also because their jobs are less stable and they are less likely to be covered by unemployment insurance systems due to the eligibility criteria.

Notwithstanding these penalties, there are some benefits from part-time work, such as better working-time quality and reduced exposure to hazardous working conditions and work-related stress. However, it is not clear whether this is sufficient to offset wage differentials, poorer job security and career progression.

Part-time employment can offer productivity benefits to employers. It can be used to optimize staffing levels to match cyclical peaks across the day and week, to redress recruitment and retention problems, and some have used it as a cost-saving strategy by designing jobs with a lower hourly rate of pay. However, there are a range of barriers that may deter employers from expanding their use of part-time working. Direct additional costs may be incurred from employing two or more part-timers instead of one full-timer due to government policy: particularly in the structure of employers' social security contributions and in the organization of labour law and employment protection. There may also be fixed per capita labour costs for some occupations. Administrative, personnel and work organization costs may rise with an increase in the number of part-time workers and range of part-time work schedules. The employer may be deterred from using part-time employment schedules because of limited experience, and there may be concerns about how they may impact negatively on work organization and productivity. This deterrent may be heightened where the organizational culture and norms attach more value to full-time work arrangements; when the employer is experienced in using part-time workers only in specific job areas and where organizational norms prohibit part-time work in certain occupations or levels of seniority; or where gender stereotypes deem it to be acceptable for women, but unsuitable for men if committed to a career.



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Encouraging part-time work remains on the policy agenda in many countries. This is seen as a means of mobilizing women's employment while they have care responsibilities. It can also prolong the working life of older workers and facilitate the growth of youth employment, combined with education and training. It can also enhance organizational flexibility in the more global, complex and uncertain operating conditions that many employers contend with in the twenty-first century.

Policy efforts have been made in some countries to improve the quality of part-time work, but from different starting points. For example, in some developed countries, equal treatment principles have been implemented over a number of years and are comparatively well-established. In contrast, in some parts of the world, such as Latin America, part-time work is largely concentrated in the informal economy. Thus, it is beyond the reach of any regulatory efforts to implement equal treatment.

The first step to improve the quality of part-time work is to extend equal treatment with full-timers in labour law and collective agreements. Of course, the application of equal treatment only improves the quality of part-time work if: (i) there are full-time comparators in the workplace or sector with which to be given equal treatment; and (ii) the operation of labour law and collective agreements provide effective protection for workers, in both the formal and informal economy.

A second related area of reform are the steps taken to modernize social protection systems, including pensions, in order to extend coverage to part-time workers and to ensure a fair adjustment to contribution-based benefits for periods of part-time work.

A third type of reform to improve the quality of part-time work has been taken in some countries to open up the opportunity in a wider range of jobs by introducing the right to request a switch to part-time schedules. In a few countries, the worker also has the right to request a move from part- to full-time arrangements, although in most places this is limited to particular categories of employees.

Alongside these initiatives, it is also important to remove barriers that limit transitions from part- into full-time employment, including in the tax and benefit system and in the provision of child and elderly care services, so a wider set of working-time options are open to those with family responsibilities. Many workers, who commence part-time employment, expect it to be transitory while caring for young children, studying, until their health improves or until they retire. Measures that ease the transition to full-time employment will enhance individual welfare and prevent part-time employment from becoming a trap over the long-run. They can help to reduce, or even eradicate, the negative effects on career and earnings progression and retirement income. This will help promote labour utilization, particularly in countries faced with a rapidly ageing population and sharp decline in the working-age population.

Aside from these important steps, more detailed analysis of organizational processes reveals a number of workplace barriers that need to be addressed as well. Many of these hinge on understanding and changing organizational cultures, still largely premised on the assumption that full-time workers are more productive and committed. Hence, part-time work largely retains a second class status with all of the reduced career and earnings progression that is incurred as a result.

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## Appendix 1: List of ILO data sources on part-time work

There are five databases listed on the ILO website that provide further data on part-time work and working conditions.

### 1. Database of conditions of work and employment laws

This provides a picture of the regulatory environment of working time, minimum wages and maternity protection in over 100 countries around the world. It contains comprehensive legal information so that customized research on a specific country can be conducted in order to compare the legislation of several countries or regions on a particular subject.

<http://www.ilo.org/dyn/travail/travmain.home>

### 2. LABORSTA

LABORSTA is a database of labour statistics and methodologies covering the economically active population, employment, unemployment, wages and related variables. It includes the short-term indicators database providing timely information on the labour market and consumer prices for almost 75 countries, and over 100 indicators disaggregated by sex and also by sectors of the economy.

<http://laborsta.ilo.org/>

### 3. Corenit

This is a database for the regular monitoring of labour standards in the Americas (in Spanish).

<http://white.oit.org.pe/corenit/>

### 4. ILOSTAT database

ILOSTAT is a new ILO database of labour statistics that provides recent data for over 100 indicators and 165 economies. Annual data prior to 2008 and additional information, such as sources and methods, are still available in LABORSTA and will gradually be migrated to ILOSTAT. Labour statistics describe the size, structure, characteristics, outputs and contributions of participants in the labour market, but also how these change over time. From an economic perspective, statistics are useful to analyse, evaluate and monitor the way the economy is performing and the effectiveness of current and longer term economic policies. From a social perspective, they are useful in the fight for *decent work* — through policies and programmes for job creation, training and retraining schemes, and assistance for vulnerable groups, which may include young people, the aged and women in finding and securing decent employment.

[http://www.ilo.org/ilostat/faces/home/statisticaldata.jsessionid=kpGyQnpX8pQcLKQHHTjJScQ6G6rjGg0jnb6sQ3tY2RhTGV7mGky0!-1105239527?locale=en&\\_afLoop=152093511397855&\\_afWindowMode=0&\\_afWindowId=popup#%40%3F\\_afWindowId%3Dpopup%26locale%3Den%26\\_afLoop%3D152093511397855%26\\_afWindowMode%3D0%26\\_adf.ctrl-state%3D156bvrqtwl\\_4](http://www.ilo.org/ilostat/faces/home/statisticaldata.jsessionid=kpGyQnpX8pQcLKQHHTjJScQ6G6rjGg0jnb6sQ3tY2RhTGV7mGky0!-1105239527?locale=en&_afLoop=152093511397855&_afWindowMode=0&_afWindowId=popup#%40%3F_afWindowId%3Dpopup%26locale%3Den%26_afLoop%3D152093511397855%26_afWindowMode%3D0%26_adf.ctrl-state%3D156bvrqtwl_4)

### 5. Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM)

A multi-functional research tool of the ILO consisting of country-level data on 18 key indicators of the labour market from 1980 to the latest available year – on topics such as labour force participation, employment, hours of work, unemployment, wages, labour productivity and income distribution.

[http://www.ilo.org/empelm/what/WCMS\\_114240/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/empelm/what/WCMS_114240/lang--en/index.htm)

## Appendix 2: Statutory rights to part-time work

Country	Eligibility and duration of part-time work	Year introduced	Limits on how often requests can be made	Employer grounds for refusing requests	Right to revert to full-time hours	Dispute resolution procedure
Australia	Parents with 12 months' tenure can request a change in working arrangements (including part-time work) until their child reaches school age (or 18 years for a child with a disability)	2010	No limit	Reasonable business grounds	By negotiation	CA
Austria	(i) Parents of children under 7 years with three years tenure in firms with 20+ employees can request part-time work until the child's seventh birthday. (ii) Employees in smaller firms or with less than three years tenure can request part-time work until the child's fourth birthday.	2004	Once for the whole time and one request to change the conditions (e.g. raising working time). Several times if the agreement does not cover the whole time.	Business/operational grounds	Yes	LC
Belgium	(i) Parental leave can be taken by employees with 12 months tenure in the past 15 months as: (a) 6 months of half-time work; or (b) 15 months of work at 80% of full-time hours. (ii) Family leave can be taken as 24 months of part-time work (50% or 80% full-time hours) to care for a seriously ill family member. (iii) Employees with 12 months tenure are entitled to take a career break which can be taken as (a) 1 year of work at 50% of full-time hours (5 years by collective agreement) or (b) 5 years at 80% of full-time hours. (iv) Employees aged 50+ years can work part-time (80% of full-time hours) until retirement age. (v) Employees are entitled to take leave for palliative care for an incurably ill person as one month of work at 50% of full-time hours	(i) (a) 1998 (2005 for companies with <10 employees); (i) (b) 2002; (ii) 1998; (iii) and (iv) 2002; (v) 2005	(i) Once for the whole period or one of several periods of at least (a) two months or (b) five months. (ii) Each request (renewable within the maximum limit of 24 months) must cover a minimum period of one month and cannot exceed three months. (iii) Once for the whole time or at least once every (a) three months or (b) six months. (iv) None. (v) Renewable once for a period of one month.	(i) Employer can defer the start of parental leave for business grounds during six months at most. (ii) Business grounds for companies with <50 employees and if the employee previously took a 6 month career break or 12 months of part-time work to care for the same family member. (iii) and (iv) Employer's agreement needed for companies with 10 or less employees. Employer can defer		(i) Parental leave can be taken by employees with 12 months tenure in the past 15 months as: (a) 6 months of half-time work; or (b) 15 months of work at 80% of full-time hours. (ii) Family leave can be taken as 24 months of part-time work (50% or 80% full-time hours) to care for a seriously ill family member. (iii) Employees with 12 months tenure are entitled to take a career break which can be taken as (a) 1 year of work at 50% of full-time hours (5 years by collective agreement) or (b) 5 years

	or at 80% of full-time hours.			the start of the career break on business grounds for at most six months.  (v) None.		at 80% of full-time hours.  (iv) Employees aged 50+ years can work part-time (80% of full-time hours) until retirement age.  (v) Employees are entitled to take leave for palliative care for an incurably ill person as one month of work at 50% of full-time hours or at 80% of full-time hours.
Canada	None	-	-	-	-	-
Chile	None	-	-	-	-	-
Czech Republic	Women caring for children under 15 years or employees caring for a bedridden person can request part-time work.	2001	No limit	Serious operational reasons	No	CA, LI, CC
Denmark	Parental leave can be taken as 64 weeks of part-time work, shared between both parents.	2002	..	Any grounds	..	..
Estonia	Employees and employers can agree to part-time work	1992	No limit	Any reason	No	No formal procedure
Finland	(i) Parental leave of 158 days can be taken as part-time work of 40-60% of full-time hours, shared between both parents with tenure of 6 months in the past 12 months, until the child reaches school age. The minimum period of part-time leave is six months. (ii) Any employee can request to work part-time for social or health reasons. (iii) Older workers can request to work 30-70% of full-time hours in the lead up to retirement (partial pension available).	(i) 2004 (ii) .. (iii) 1996	Employer and employee must make a fixed-term contract in force for a maximum of 26 weeks at a time which indicates at least the daily and weekly working hours.	(i) Only in case of "unavoidable severe damage" to operations  (ii) and (iii) Employer must attempt to accommodate requests	Yes	..
France	(i) Parental leave can be taken as part-time work by both parents until child's third birthday.  (ii) Employees in firms with 20+ employees	(i) and (ii) 2000.  (iii) 1990	..	(i) None, but employer can decide hours worked (16-32 hrs/wk)	France	(i) Parental leave can be taken as part-time work by both parents until child's third birthday.

	<p>can request to work part-time. The procedures and reasons for refusal are outlined in CAs or enterprise agreements.</p> <p>(iii) Employees with 12 months tenure have right to work part-time for 1200 hours for education or training purposes.</p> <p>(iv) Employees aged 60+ can request part-time work with partial pension.</p>	(iv) 1997		<p>(ii) Business reasons or because there is no job in the same occupation category</p> <p>(iii) Employer can postpone but not refuse</p> <p>(iv) ??</p>		<p>(ii) Employees in firms with 20+ employees can request to work part-time. The procedures and reasons for refusal are outlined in CAs or enterprise agreements.</p> <p>(iii) Employees with 12 months tenure have right to work part-time for 1200 hours for education or training purposes.</p> <p>(iv) Employees aged 60+ can request part-time work with partial pension.</p>
Germany	<p>(i) In firms with 15+ employees, parental leave can be taken as part-time work (15-30 hrs/wk) for up to three years after the birth of a child.</p> <p>(ii) Employees with 6 months tenure in firms with 15+ employees can request part-time work.</p> <p>(iii) Employees in firms with 15+ employees can request part-time work to take care of a family member at home for 6 months per person in need of care.</p> <p>(iv) Employees aged 55+ with 5 years of tenure can request part-time work with partial wage replacement if the employer hires an unemployed person for hours not worked.</p>	<p>(i) 1994</p> <p>(ii) 2001</p> <p>(iii) 2008</p> <p>(iv) ..</p>	<p>(i) Requests can be made twice.</p> <p>Other: Only once every two years.</p>	<p>(i) Serious business grounds.</p> <p>(ii) and (iii) Urgent operational reasons.</p> <p>(iv) Any reason.</p>	<p>(i), (iii) and (iv) Yes</p> <p>(ii) No</p>	Germany
Greece	<p>Private sector: parents with at least one year of tenure are entitled to reduce the working day by one hour for 30 months or by two hours for 12 months and then by one hour for six months following maternity leave. Fathers can only reduce hours if the mother does not take up the option. Public sector: mothers can reduce hours by two hours per day until the child reaches 2 years or one</p>	<p>1993 (mothers);</p> <p>2003 (fathers)</p>	No limit	<p>None for one hour reduction. For alternative arrangements, employer must agree.</p>	Yes	LI



	hour per day until the child reaches 4 years.					
Hungary	(i) Any employee can request part-time work. (ii) Employees in the public sector with a child under three years can work part-time to care for the child at home until the child turns three.	(i) 2003 (ii) 2010	(i) None (ii) Once per child.	(i) Circumstances of work organization, conditions of the employer's operation and the occupation of the post.  (ii) None	(i) No (ii) Yes	(i) No formal procedure. (ii) LC
Iceland	None	-	-	-	-	-
Ireland	Both parents can take 14 weeks of parental leave as reduced working hours before child's eighth birthday (16th birthday if child is disabled).	1998	..	Any grounds.	Yes	..
Israel	None	-	-	-	-	-
Italy	Employees can request to work part-time.	2000	..	Employer must consider requests and provide appropriate reasons (not specified) for refusal	..	..
Japan	(i) Employees with children under one year who do not take Child Care Leave have a right to part-time work or other flexible work arrangements. (ii) Employees with children aged from one to under three years have a right to part-time work or other flexible work arrangements. (iii) Employees bringing up children under three years have a right to work part-time (6 hours per day). (iv) Employees can request up to 93 days of part-time work or other flexible work arrangements to care for a sick or disabled family member.	(i) 1992 (ii) 2002 (iii) 2010 (iv) 1999	No limit	Employer must accommodate requests and allow part-time work or another flexible work arrangement.	Yes	CA, LI, LC, CC
Korea	Employees can request part-time work for family, education or other reasons.	2007	No limit	Employers are strongly recommended to	No. After 2 years of part-time work, the	No procedure

				makes efforts to accommodate requests	employee is regarded as a permanent employee	
Luxembourg	(i) Employees with 12 months tenure can take parental leave as up to 12 months of part-time work (50% or less of full-time hours) before the child's fifth birthday.  (ii) Workers aged 57+ can agree to work part-time for up to three years and be eligible for a partial wage replacement if hours are reduced by 40-60% and replaced with an unemployed person for hours not worked.	(i) 1998 (ii) 1990	..	Any grounds.	(i) Yes (ii) ..	..
Mexico	None	-	-	-	-	-
Netherlands	(i) Parental leave can be taken as part-time work (50% of full-time hours over 6 months or other arrangement by agreement with the employer)  (ii) Employees with 12 months tenure in firms with 10+ employees can request part-time work.	(i) 1997 (ii) 2000	Once every two years	(i) None for standard arrangement  (ii) Substantial business grounds	Yes	..
New Zealand	Employees with 6 months tenure who work at least 10 hours per week and have care responsibilities for children or adults can request part-time work	2008	Once every 12 months	Specified business or organisational grounds or if it undermines the terms of a collective agreement	By agreement	CA, LI, LT
Norway	(i) Except for the first nine weeks of leave in connection with the birth, employees with 6 months tenure in the past 10 months can take the rest of their paid parental leave (either 37 weeks with 100% compensation or 47 weeks with 80% compensation) as part-time work for a maximum of three years.  (ii) Employees with two years tenure (and three years total work experience) can request up to three years of part-time work for education purposes.	(i) 1994 (ii) 2001 (iii) 1983 (iv) 2008	Unlimited except for (ii) where time since the commencement of the previous educational leave must be at least equal to twice the duration of the leave and at least one year from commencement of previous educational leave, except when this was for a course of	(i), (iii) and (iv) Serious operational or business reasons  (ii) Obstacle to the employer's responsible planning of operations and personnel assignments	Yes	Special court, CC

	(iii) Employees who for health, social or other weighty welfare reasons (including employees with children under 10 years) need to have their normal working hours reduced can request part-time work on these grounds.  (iv) Employees who are 62 years or older can request part-time work.		under one month's duration.			
Poland	Employees with 6 months of tenure who are entitled to take leave to raise a child can apply to the employer to reduce working time to not less than half full-time schedule in the period during which the employee can take such leave (maximum of three years before the child reaches fourth birthday).	2004	None	None	Yes	CA, LI, LC
Portugal	(i) Parents with children up to 6 years can take parental leave as up to 12 months of part-time work (50% of full-time hours)  (ii) At the end of parental leave, parents with children under 12 years (or disabled children or any age) can request part-time work (50% of full-time hours) up to two years, or three years if they have three or more children, split between both parents	1999	None	(i) Urgent business grounds.  (ii) Urgent business grounds or because the worker cannot be replaced.	Yes	CA, LI, LC
Russian Federation	Parents with a child under 14 years or a disabled child under 18 years or those caring for a disabled family member can request part-time work.	..	..	..	..	..
Slovak Republic	Employees can request an adjustment in weekly working time for health reasons or other serious reasons. A pregnant woman or man or woman taking care of a child under 15 years can request to work part-time or to carry out other suitable adjustment of weekly working hours	1966	None	Substantive operational reasons	None	No formal procedure
Slovenia	(i) Older workers can begin part-time work in the same or another suitable position if they have partially retired (i.e. are eligible for the old-age pension and work not more than	(i) 2003 (ii) 1990 (under 3);	None	None	(i) No (ii), (iii), (iv) Yes	LI

	<p>half-time)</p> <p>(ii) One parent can work part-time until their child is aged three (or aged 6 years for two or more children, or aged 18 years for a disabled child).</p> <p>(iii) Child care leave can be taken by one parent as a period of part-time work of 260 days immediately after maternity leave expires (longer periods for multiple children or children in need of special care; shorter period for adoption).</p> <p>(iv) A worker with an illness or injury or an invalidity that means he/she is not capable of working full-time without occupational rehabilitation can work part-time for as long as necessary given illness/injury/invalidity.</p>	<p>2006 (children under 6); 2002 (disabled child)</p> <p>(iii) 1990 (2002 for different duration)</p> <p>(iv) 1992</p>				
Sweden	<p>(i) Employees with at least six months' tenure can take 480 days of parental leave (shared between both parents) as part-time work (min. 75% of full-time hours if parental leave benefit is claimed, no limit if no benefit is claimed) before the child is eight years old or has finished the first year of school.</p> <p>(ii) Employees with at least six months' tenure can work part-time for educational purposes.</p>	1974	None	<p>(i) Substantial disturbance to employer's activities</p> <p>(ii) Limited</p>	Yes	LC, CC
Switzerland	None	-	-	-	-	-
Turkey	Employees can request part-time work.	2003	No limit	Employer must take request into consideration	Not automatic	CA, LC, LI, CC
United Kingdom	Employees with at least 26 weeks of tenure can request a flexible working pattern (including part-time work) to care for a child aged 16 years or under, a disabled child aged under 18 years or certain adults (family/household members) in need of care.	2003 (2007 for carers of adults; 2009 for children aged 16 years and under – previously 6	Once every 12 months	Business and organizational grounds (specified list)	No, unless otherwise agreed	Special procedure – see note

		years and under)				
United States	<p>(i) Employees with disabilities working for employers with more than 15 employees can request part-time work to accommodate their disability.</p> <p>(ii) Employees with 12 months of service working for employers with 50+ employees can take 12 weeks of Family and Medical Leave as a period of part-time work (reduced leave schedule) for the birth or adoption of a child, to care for a spouse, child or parent with a serious health condition or if the employee him/herself has a serious health condition.</p>	<p>(i) 1990</p> <p>(ii) 1993</p>	<p>(i) No</p> <p>(ii) Eligible employees are entitled to 12 weeks leave during a 12-month period.</p>	<p>(i) Business necessity</p> <p>(ii) None if the employee has a serious health condition or is caring for a family member with a serious health condition; any grounds for part-time work after birth/adoption</p>	<p>(i) No</p> <p>(ii) Yes</p>	LI, CC

Source: OECD (2010)

Note: “-“ indicates not applicable; “..” indicates information not available. CA = Dispute resolution procedure in collective agreements; LI = Labour Inspectorate; LC/LT = Labour court or tribunal; CC = Civil court.

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