

**Submission to the 2nd International Conference of ECHP Users
(EPUNet 2004) – Berlin, June 24-26, 2004**

Title of the paper : **Female part-time work in the European Union :
An empirical study based on the ECHP**

Authors : Sabine CHAUPAIN-GUILLOT
Olivier GUILLOT
Eliane JANKELIOWITCH-LAVAL

Address : ADEPS – EPS (CNRS et Université Nancy 2)
Faculté de Droit, Sciences économiques et Gestion
4 rue de la Ravinelle
C.O. n° 26
54 035 Nancy Cedex
FRANCE

E-mails : Sabine.Chaupain@univ-nancy2.fr
Olivier.Guillot@univ-nancy2.fr
Eliane.Jankeliowitch@univ-nancy2.fr

Abstract

In this paper, the question of female part-time work in the EU is explored using cross-sectional and longitudinal data from the *European Community Household Panel* (ECHP). Our empirical study, which provides a comparison between the 15 member states of the EU, has two main objectives : first, to describe the labour market transitions of women working part-time and, second, in the case of mothers with young children, to identify the determinants of the choice between full-time work, part-time work and non-employment.

In many countries, part-time employees, especially those working less than 20 hours per week, tend to be concentrated in low-skilled, low-paid jobs. Starting from this observation, in the first part of our study, we put the emphasis on the transition into full-time employment : Does the transition rate from part-time to full-time work vary from country to country ? What are the characteristics of female part-time workers who are more likely than others to move into full-time employment ? This analysis of labour market transitions is based on data from waves 1-7 (1994-2000) of the ECHP. The sample is restricted to individuals whose employment status was observed each year (at the survey date) from 1994, or at least from 1997, until 2000. Rather than studying the subsequent changes in employment status among a subsample of employees working part-time in a given year, we are interested in the (short-term) occupational trajectories of individuals who *entered* into part-time work in year t . The data relating to all entrants into part-time jobs of years 1995 to 1998 are pooled to obtain sufficient sample sizes. We examine transitions between year t and year $t+1$, as well as transitions between year t and year $t+2$.

In the second part of the study, attention is focused on the labour supply decisions of mothers with young children in each of the 15 EU member states. For these women, part-time work is more likely to

be voluntary, *i.e.* “chosen” for family reasons, than involuntary. Here, we attempt to answer the following questions : Do the effects of individual and family characteristics on the part-time / full-time choice vary across EU countries ? To what extent can the differences observed in the impact of such factors be explained by the specificities of national family policies, regarding the conciliation of work and family life ? The data are drawn from the seventh wave (2000) of the ECHP. The population studied consists of mothers, aged 18-59, whose youngest child is under 12 years old (in total, 13,193 women). Given the small size of some national samples, it was not possible to restrict the study to the case of women with younger children. Both ordered logit and multinomial logit models are used to analyse the choice between full-time work, part-time work and non-employment (separately for each of the 15 member states). The explanatory variables are the following : the mother’s hourly wage rate (estimated by regression, using Heckman’s two-step procedure), marital / cohabiting status, number of children (aged 0-17), age of youngest child, the husband’s (or partner’s) employment status and level of earnings, and some other control variables.

A number of international comparative studies, using micro-level data, have recently been conducted on these two aspects of the question of female part-time work. However, to our knowledge, most of these studies have focused on a limited number of EU countries.

Key words : Female labour market participation, part-time work, conciliation of work and family life, labour market transitions